The Cure:
Of, By And For The People



"Don't miss all the beautiful colors of the rainbow looking for that pot of gold."

Anonymous Proverb

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Long version

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About this edition

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Dedication

This writing is dedicated to the unique, precious and irreplaceable entity known as Humanity, who is the sum total of all that we are, have been and will be.

The body of Humanity is currently gravely ill of a potentially fatal autoimmune condition in which we are consuming ourselves from within and slowly dying of our own toxins.

The root cause is the profoundly dysfunctional dominant socio-economic paradigm operating in the world today, alongside similar socio-economic paradigms. It is not the cause of every ill, but it is the largest single driver of the most destructive and widespread ones.

Global warming and destruction of the environment, most wars, much despotism, poverty, global and national inequity, strife among races, religions, ethnic and other groups, and most of the ills that we are experiencing are, above all, its symptoms. A world population that is still growing, though more slowly each year, compounds them. Our other ills are minor in comparison, as a cold compared to metastatic cancer.

Yet our condition is treatable and our life expectancy need not be tragically cut short. This writing explores and explains the diagnosis and outlines a course of treatment that will most likely return us, as Humanity and as the individual humans who make it up, to a state of robust and thriving health in mind, body, heart and soul.

The time has come to implement a completely new paradigm which is neither Capitalism, Communism, nor Socialism but which benefits from experience gained from experiments in all three and more. In order to achieve human communities that foster the thriving of all of their members and form optimal norms and patterns of co-operation among individuals while honoring the sovereignty of each person in a win-win, rather than a win-lose, dynamic, we must be guided by a deeper understanding of history, science, and the inner workings and responses of the human heart and psyche.

The Transition from the current paradigms and systems to the new ones must be a complete change of paradigm, not a tweak or modification of the current one in any form. It will be gradual, voluntary, democratic and nonviolent, built from the ground up with profound respect for human life and dignity, and it will be firm: it will not yield to attempts to suppress it, and it will not settle for an oligarchy that is merely toned down. Its destination is a world in which no one may own or control what others need and use but they themselves do not. This will be above all a social, economic and cultural change, completed through democratic law. There are no “us” and “them,” no enemies, no “good guys” and “bad guys.” In its essence, it will flow from a decision to stop repeating dysfunctional patterns over and over while expecting different results, to replace an unworkable societal paradigm with a workable one that will evolve and adapt naturally in the direction of ever increasing human well-being, fulfillment, empowerment, and mutually-reinforcing-and-strengthening benefit.

Preface

As you read the pages ahead, you will encounter unfamiliar terms and concepts, some of which will likely seem counter-intuitive or contrary to assumptions that you have never had reason or occasion to question before. These kinds of assumptions exist in every culture. The author has avoided creation of unnecessary new words except to describe concepts for which no satisfactory words exist. Please be patient and read with an open mind. Some of what you read will likely resemble some familiar concepts but is fundamentally different in important ways. If you suspend any emotional responses that may arise out of habit or conditioning, you will encounter data that will make the reasoning and conclusions clear. In the course of this writing, all unfamiliar terms and concepts will be made clear and understandable. A glossary of new terms is included at the end.

We were brought up to believe that "money makes the world go 'round," that it is necessary, that everybody has to pay for everything. That is but an arbitrary cultural myth that is perpetuated to keep us all compliant in holding up the socio-economic pyramid that operates as an anything-but-democratic power structure to our detriment. In reality, money has no real value or function, other than to allow some people to control access of others to the necessities of life, thus enmeshing them in de-facto slavery.

At first, it is not easy, and may seem counter-intuitive to contemplate how things would function without a monetary system of some kind, for the same reason why it would have seemed counter-intuitive to a resident of the European Middle Ages to wrap their head around the concept of a society functioning democratically, with no kings, queens or other royalty. For most people it's all they have known. We've been trained to believe that it is the best and only possible way to do things, and that any other way is contrary to human nature and therefore unworkable. Certainly the Aztecs would have been dumbfounded by the idea of discontinuing human sacrifice. Many cultures have found the concept of gender equality to be hard to process, including the U.S. where women didn't have the right to vote until relatively recently and it was a bitter bone of contention since a lot of people had grown up with the belief that women were inherently incapable of rational or intelligent thought and decision-making. Yet those paradigm shifts were necessary and came about. This one is no different.

The facts are out there to be seen. The dots are on the table. A lot of people are sensing and seeing it on some level. Due to darker aspects of our nature and the psycho-social manipulations discussed later in this writing, we are more apt to look for whom to blame rather than to examine and question the bigger picture, the operating principles of the paradigm that's running, and whether it is working well or poorly. Most people haven't really researched, observed, and studied this situation in depth. Many people are programmed from birth to unquestioningly believe that:

A) Their country is the best place on earth and the best of all possible worlds, B) Capitalism, Democracy and Freedom are all more or less the same thing, C) Anything that isn't Capitalism is therefore Communism or Dictatorship and therefore evil, D) Anybody can make it, so if you aren't making it, it's because there's something wrong with you, E) Any socio-economic system that's radically different from this one is inherently against human nature and therefore can't work, F) We can make things better by working within the system, and G) Don't even think about trying to change it in any fundamental way because it can't be done.

As long as we fail to question such assumptions, we are disempowered and controlled.

In the Appendix at the back of this book, you will find short stories and graphics with data analysis which will clarify the data and flesh out the concepts for people who will find it difficult to process the very idea. In our current culture, this task is kind of like teaching someone how to ski, when you have to instruct them to lean downhill, not uphill, when the student's brain is screaming "but if I lean downhill, I'll fall!" When the opposite is true.

Different people process data in different ways. The data-analysis section of the Appendix is for those among us who are more analytical-minded and want to see the data behind the concepts and conclusions of this book. The short-story dramatizations are for those among us who are more intuitive or experiental-oriented.

The author lived in actual human paradigms similar to the type that will replace the current paradigm: on Kibbutz, with a small semi-nomadic community that prefers to remain unnamed, and in a few other situations. The new Paradigm introduced here is possible and it does work, much better than the prevailing dominant one does. That is how one is able to state with certainty that the new paradigm is not only viable but imperative if we value democracy and a free society. Also, the evidence is overwhelming and conclusive that the current paradigm does not work, and for that matter that any strongly hierarchical social paradigm will inevitably reinforce and magnify the most destructive aspects of human nature while suppressing the most positive aspects. This is demonstrated in science.

PART 1: DIAGNOSIS

Introduction

As this is being written, there are states in the United States of America that are actually lowering their minimum wage, even as the cost of living continues to escalate. Forbes magazine is praising this as sound economic policy, using the time-worn dogma that raising wages causes jobs to be eliminated, prices to rise, and businesses to fail. To quote the article from December 2015 which refers to the action of Kentucky governor Bevin who had just signed an executive order cutting the minimum wage from $10.10/hour to $7.25 an hour:

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"Bevin hinted that he would prefer the state have no minimum wage at all: 'Wage rates ideally would be established by the demands of the labor market instead of being set by the government,' he said…"

Tim Worstall, author of the article, went on to say: "I agree entirely with that statement, indeed would go further. For wages are entirely set by the market: those who don't produce enough to be worth $10.10 or $7.15, end up getting nothing as they have no job at all."

This comes at a time when about half of U.S. wage earners were paid under $30,000/year (50.1% in 2015, Social Security Administration, 2015), which is equivalent to around $15/hour in an economic environment where the majority of employees are unable or barely able to meet basic living expenses.

Taking a longer view, since 1970 the cost of living in the U.S. has gone up approximately 500% overall. CEO compensation has gone up approximately 1,000%, while employee pay has risen less than 12%. It is not unusual for the CEO of a company to make as much or more in one day - or in some cases in one hour - than a typical employee of the same company makes in a year.

Americans and many other peoples around the world have been taught for nearly a hundred years that Democracy is the same as Capitalism, which is the same as Freedom, and that this represents the best possible human society. These same people have been taught that any form of Socialism, or indeed anything other than the purest possible Capitalism, is Communism, which is synonymous with Dictatorship and everything bad.

Unfortunately, few students, teachers, or citizens have taken the time to learn what these concepts actually mean and represent. The above beliefs are cited, believed, fought for, encoded into law and unquestioningly enforced and accepted as true without any serious awareness of what they are… and in utter ignorance.

Democracy, simply put, is government of, by, and for the People. There are many different forms and expressions of democracy, most of which are representative – meaning that the People by one process or another elect representatives who will enact laws, make decisions affecting the nation, set policies, govern and conduct international interactions on behalf of those who elected them. There are two-party systems (usually some version of liberal and conservative), multi-party systems; in some countries one votes for the individual and in some one votes for a party which then assigns their leaders to government roles in proportion to the percentage of the vote that they received. A very few are direct democracies in which decision-making is done directly by the People themselves.

Capitalism is not a system of government but rather an economic system in which private parties determine and drive the economy.

Where some form of democratic political system co-exists in the same community or country with a Capitalist economic system, there exist two separate power structures that are more often than not at cross-purposes. As will become clear in this writing, the Capitalist economic system is a strongly stratified pyramidal power structure in the best case scenario. In extreme cases it is more sharply and extremely stratified than even the Pyramidal model would suggest, driven by the

microscopically tiny segment of the population that occupies the very top of the pyramid. Ultimately, the Capitalistic power structure subsumes and supercedes the originally democratic governmental mechanism and the people in it. Capitalist economic paradigms inevitably give rise to a strongly non-democratic power structure that very closely parallels the Feudal systems of medieval Europe.

Communism is a socio-economic system that strives to centrally coordinate the economy to optimize and balance production, consumption and employment in a way that creates a democratic economy free of class stratification. Sadly, most implementations of Communism since the early 20th century have suffered from a paucity of political democracy, even though the intention of the paradigm is to achieve a free, democratic, and un-stratified Community. The results in most affected Communities have been a different kind of stratification into two classes: Members of the Communist Party, and the rest of the population. This originally was largely the result of the demagogue and political manipulator Stalin in the U.S.S.R., and replicated throughout much of the "Communist" world.

Yet it would be a dangerous and tragic mistake to try to divide these systems into "good" and "bad." Each presents its own strengths and weaknesses; each had some inspiring achievements and some frightening failures.

At this moment in history we do not see true or even much of a semblance of democracy in the United States nor in many countries following the same socio-economic paradigms as the United States. Government is driven far more by lobbyists employed by mammoth multinational mega-corporations under direction of the ultra-wealthy elite who comprise less than a hundredth of a percent of the population, than it is by the will or good of the people. A study of 1,779 policy decisions found that economic elites and business groups have substantial independent influence on U.S. policy, while average citizens have little or none (Gilens and Page, 2014). This skews the priorities of government strongly towards the interests of these wealthy individuals and corporations at the expense of the desires and well-being of the People.

We also do not at this point in history see many examples of real Communism. The People's Republic of China claims to be Communist but in fact practices monopolistic state Capitalism while subjecting many or most of its citizens to unsafe and oppressive working conditions that do not in any way resemble the Communist paradigm, but rather hark back to pre-Revolutionary Feudalism. The same is true of Vietnam. Mao Tse-Tung and any veterans of the Long March would be outraged. Ho Chi Minh would probably vomit in disgust. The post-Stalin Soviet Union, as well, bore less and less resemblance to actual Communism as a caste society formed with Party members enjoying aristocratic privilege while the rest of the population were disenfranchised. The Soviets did, however, provide universal healthcare, public transportation and education, and supported and nourished the arts, sciences and engineering and those who practiced them, though the quality of healthcare stagnated in the Union's later decades. Sadly the Soviet mode of operation was heavy-handed and suppressive of open and free public discourse. Cuba built universal health care with one of the highest ratios of doctors to population in the world (about 9.5 per 1,000 people in 2021, WHO data via the World Bank), and has sent its doctors to serve in many other countries, despite the scarce resources left by a generations-old U.S. embargo that began during the Cold War. That system is now in severe crisis, with shortages of medicines and supplies, long blackouts, and many doctors leaving the country (UN News, May 2026). Cuba also made a place to live a right. The 1960 Urban Reform Law turned tenants into owners: they paid part of their former rent to the state for a set number of years and then owned their homes outright, and today most Cuban homes are privately owned (Peters 2014). Since Decree-Law 288 of 2011, homes may legally be bought and sold (Library of Congress, 2011). In the author's view, that opening of a housing market is better understood as a degradation of the original commitment than as proof that it failed. It was made under the economic pressure of an embargo maintained by every U.S. administration since the early 1960s, much as Israel's kibbutzim were pushed into privatization by a hostile surrounding economy and government policy, though Cuba's own policy choices and its repression of political dissent are part of the story too. It is not the same as China, which kept the communist name while becoming state capitalism.

There are some notable and highly successful examples of social democracy (often called democratic socialism in the United States) which work in practice much better than either Soviet-style attempts at Communism or U.S. style Capitalism. Countries like Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland among others, market economies with strong unions, universal public services and high social trust, achieve a much higher level of individual and community empowerment, synergy, quality of life, dignity and overall well-being than U.S.-style Capitalism or the most common implementations of

Communism have delivered. Many of the necessities of life are guaranteed, resources are managed in a large degree by governments answerable to the people who are free and empowered to vote in free elections, express themselves freely, and advocate for their needs. As discussed later, many of these countries may not even need Transitions, or may naturally transition through social evolutionary processes. Yet in these countries, the use of currency still introduces a degree of non-access, of inefficiency, and of unnecessary entropy, albeit orders of magnitude less than is commonplace under Capitalism and Soviet-style Communism.

We do, in contrast, have an abundance of living examples of true Capitalism. The above quote from Forbes is sadly typical of prevailing attitudes among the economic ruling elite. Under the Capitalist paradigm it actually has validity within that framework, from the point of view of those at the “win” end of the win-lose equation. In practice, we see historically that where there are no labor unions and no minimum wage, there has been wholesale exploitation of employees at the complete expense of anything recognizable as a free or thriving Democratic society.

Economists, activists, lawmakers, judges and others incessantly keep tweaking and adjusting Capitalism to try to make it work better, to curb excesses and abuses as they arise. This fits the classical generic definition of insanity: repeating the same actions over and over while expecting a different result. In fact, the psychological reinforcers at the individual and societal levels, and the fundamental principles of operation of Capitalism translate in practice into a system where it is indeed good and practical economic practice to keep wages as low as possible and prices as high as possible. Under Capitalism it is taken as a given that in order for businesses to thrive and the economy to be "healthy", the majority of people must be kept at sub or barely living wage and be permanently disenfranchised. This obviously is incompatible with government of, by, and for The People, with the unalienable rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness that the Declaration of Independence proclaims for all. It is incompatible with a healthy, free, thriving democratic society of engaged, empowered individuals making their best contributions to the Community while enjoying fulfilling lives.

If there were a sport in which death and maiming of over half the players and much of the audience was a necessary and inevitable result of the game being played well, then that sport would be banned in any civilized country. Yet many countries that consider themselves civilized and enlightened, not only tolerate but enforce an economic system that essentially does the same thing in a much less obvious and flamboyant manner.

In practice, Capitalism functions as a fundamentally flawed, non-viable pyramid scheme, built on the same structure as the illegal ones: gains flow upward from the many to the few, and the arrangement holds only as long as the many keep feeding it. It is an economic system that inevitably and inexorably devolves into a particularly insidious, oppressive and destructive re-creation of Feudalism. Capitalism is by its very nature inimical to, and at odds with with, a free, Democratic and thriving human society. It negates and overrides the principles of the U.S. Constitution or that of any country possessing similar core principles in its defining documents. To keep trying to make it work is like repeatedly re-inflating a lead balloon and expecting it to float - a dangerous, destructive, wasteful and impractical waste of time, effort, lives, and the only home we humans have to date.

Proponents of Capitalism compare it favorably to Communism because they view the centralized control of production and distribution of goods and services under Communism as dictatorial and prone to abuse by those in controlling positions. Indeed in the Soviet Union we observed this phenomenon. Such proponents hold up Capitalism as a contrasting example of a free society. This comparison is misinformed at best and deliberately misleading at worst. In reality, the results are more similar than different. Under Capitalist paradigms, control of more and more resources, production, distribution, and access inexorably and inevitably concentrates into fewer and fewer hands. Control of nearly all resources from living space to food to medical care is in the hands of corporate boards of directors and the ultra-wealthy at their helm. This is exactly the same socio-economic dynamic as is criticized in many supposedly Communist paradigms. The results are exactly the same but even more dire in many ways under Capitalism. It truly makes no difference whether centralized control is in the hands of a government committee or a corporate board of directors. The abuses are the same and the harm to the people is no less. In fact, the reinforcers are stronger for abuse in the Capitalist paradigm. A committee in the Soviet Union was originally tasked with ensuring sufficient, efficient and equitable distribution of goods and services for the people, but they were disconnected from input from or dialog with the people. Their failure was due to the typical corruption that occurs in any hierarchical social structure as well as the non-democratic political system in operation. Under Capitalist paradigms, there is strong

reinforcement for behavior that maximizes profits, market share and stock value, which as we will see nearly always inevitably comes at the expense of the people as surely as the life of a parasite diminishes the life and vitality of its host or victim. There is absolutely nothing democratic about Capitalist paradigms.

If you find yourself thrust into a game where the rule is every person for themselves and the goal of production is to accumulate maximum wealth by maximizing profits and stock prices, you will make very different choices than you will make if you find yourself in a game where the rule is to work together for the greatest good of each and all and the goal of production is to make sure that there is enough of things for everybody at the highest achievable level of quality. The behaviors that are reinforced are what will predominate.

It is time to implement new paradigms crafted wisely in the light of experience of what has been tried in human communities, what has worked and not worked and why/how. It is time for a socio-economic paradigm designed to strongly lean towards and reinforce the mutual co-empowerment and thriving of every human being in a context of a win-win and the best possible human experience for each and all, rather than the win-lose-lose-lose model of Capitalism.

This is NOT a call to arms to displace those in power and punish them for their abuses and misdeeds or to take revenge upon them. Nor is this a call to abandon the rule of law. Humanity is not yet mature enough to be able to function well without some laws carefully designed to support a safe and thriving Community. It is a call to end all or most hierarchical power systems so that none will lord it over or have rights over another.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

It IS a call to mobilization to end the dysfunctional Capitalist paradigm, by nonviolent force if necessary, to bring it to as graceful an end as possible quickly, then to replace it with a socio-economic paradigm that will have as its guiding principles the empowerment and actualization of every person and the community.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

This will necessarily involve the establishment of psychological reinforcers that strengthen and incentivize working together cooperatively (while recognizing, respecting and empowering each individual and their contribution) for mutual benefit among individuals and groups as well as between the individual and the community, while keeping in mind the importance of preserving and sustaining our planetary home.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

This must be done as soon as possible and with no compromise BUT with compassion and non-violently. Force of arms must be the last resort except surrender (which is not an option), and only in self-defense and the absolute minimum necessary. Since we seek to create a compassionate and empowering society, we MUST overthrow the oppressive power structure and once that is done, we must treat the former CEO's and other power brokers with the same firm no-nonsense compassion that we would treat a person with any mental or physical illness or disability.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

As you read these pages, please keep your mind open and set aside any preconceptions you may have about political and economic systems. This is not about Communism versus Capitalism. It is about the deeper fulfillment and more complete implementation of government of, by, and for the People. It is about achieving a thriving, free and vibrant human community/society.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Forcibly and non-violently transitioning from one socio-economic paradigm to another, overthrowing the dominant power structure and creating a completely different non-power structure for one or more entire countries, is a daunting and almost overwhelmingly challenging task that may appear impossible. Yet it would be tragically fatal to fail to attempt it due to such perception.

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From the perspective of a typical inhabitant of the European Middle Ages, Democracy, Communism and Capitalism would have appeared to be impractical, impossible, and against the natural and Divine order. To inhabitants of 17th century Europe, the very idea of out-manned, out-gunned, out-funded colonists taking on the power of Britain, one of the pre-eminent European superpowers of its day, would have seemed a hopeless fool's errand doomed to failure. To dwellers of early 20th century Russia, the idea of a bunch of uneducated peasants taking on the hereditary power of the Czar would have appeared utterly preposterous and likewise doomed. To observers of late-1940's China, no one would have been likely to bet on the chances of a collection of half-starved, untrained, barefoot, illiterate, severely under-armed peasants prevailing against the U.S. - supported anti-Communist forces who had far superior fire-power, expertise and training. Similarly when India undertook her struggle to become independent of her British occupiers and do so by completely non-violent tactics and when the ANC embarked upon overthrowing the generations-long rule of Apartheid - from many points of view their chosen goals and missions appeared nearly or completely hopeless and contrary to common sense. There was a time when the very concept of a heavier-than-air flying machine was considered a complete waste of time by most serious scientists and yet now we enjoy a plethora of different kinds of flying machines and have even made it to the Moon.

The point of this reminiscence is to remind us that the fact that a new idea or paradigm has not been tried or done yet on this big of a scale, or that it appears daunting and near-impossible, is not a defensible reason not to embark upon it.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

The more so because the alternatives: failure to attempt such an overthrow and restructuring on one hand, or else a violent overthrow on the other hand, are far too bleak and desolate to permit to occur.

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To allow things to continue as they are is an almost certain guarantee that the current consolidation of money, power, and resources into the hands of a very few ultra-wealthy individuals, many of them caught in a compulsive drive for ever more money and power, will result, at the rate this process is accelerating, in a situation, in our lifetimes, in which a growing majority of us will be increasingly hungry, homeless and relegated to favelas like those in Brazil. At that point we will be in a much weaker position than now to embark upon this transition.

Similarly, to embark on the transition by violent means would almost certainly give the old guard the advantage and make it easy for them to discredit our Transition.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

The likely result would be blood bath that is avoidable if we choose a non-violent mode of forcing the transition, to be discussed later in these writings.

We must show ourselves and the world a whole new approach to the art of staging a forcible change of paradigm.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

It is important that we change the paradigm for this process as well. Too many well-founded revolutions have devolved into blood-baths with atrocities committed by the side of the just as well as the unjust. The moment that path is taken, the stage is set and the pump is primed for rage and hatred to out-create reason and compassion, which will most certainly compromise the intention of such a transition beyond recognition. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is essential and imperative that we not create power structures that can take on a life of their own, be abused and become a tyrannical end unto themselves.

Chapter 2: It Takes Money to Make Money - How the Stock Market Strongly Favors the Ultra Rich

The Oxford English Dictionary defines Capitalism as: "An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state."

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Merriam-Webster defines Capitalism as: "An economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market."

This gives us only a superficial description but defines the recipe for the creation of an emerging modern feudalism that is at this moment unfolding in the Capitalist world at an ever-accelerating rate. It is ironic that this system has been represented to the world as synonymous with freedom, human rights, democracy, and enlightened civilization – as the opposite of dictatorship and despotism.

Merriam-Webster defines Feudalism as:

"Definition of feudalism 1: “The system of political organization prevailing in Europe from the 9th to about the 15th centuries having as its basis the relation of lord to vassal (tenant who owes the lord homage and obedience) with all land held in fee (in exchange for service to the lord) and as chief characteristics homage, the service of tenants under arms and in court, wardship, and forfeiture.”

2: “Any of various political or social systems similar to medieval feudalism”

The Oxford English Dictionary defines Feudalism as:

"The dominant social system in medieval Europe, in which the nobility held lands from the Crown in exchange for military service, and vassals were in turn tenants of the nobles, while the peasants (villeins or serfs) were obliged to live on their lord's land and give him homage, labour, and a share of the produce, notionally in exchange for military protection."

In the world around us, we can easily see that Capitalism is rapidly reconfiguring societies to closer and closer resemble the Feudal paradigm.

Under Feudalism there was the Crown, the Kings and Queens who owned and controlled everything. Under them were Lords who owned all land and enforced their ownership with violent force of arms. Vassals were permitted to live on the Lords' lands in exchange for serving the Lords' needs and whims. Serfs were forced to live on the Lord's lands in exchange for labor, obedience, and however much of the Serfs' produce, goods, and belongings as the Lords chose to take.

Under modern Capitalism, almost all the land and other resources are owned by a tiny segment of the population, including "Corporate Persons." That tiny segment owns a steadily growing majority of the land and all resources. These are our modern day Kings and Queens. Under these billionaire royals are their Lords, those who are close to them who defend them and implement or enforce their agendas. (Remember that if you are paying a mortgage on your home, you do not own it, the lender does.)

There are another slightly larger but still small segment of the population who serve these Lords and are afforded a greater than average amount of rights, authority and standard of living. These are often the landlords we pay rent to and the regional or local managers of our workplaces. These are the modern day Vassals. They serve the Lords who serve the Crown, the billionaires.

The vast, ever-growing majority of the people are the modern day serfs. The parallel is becoming more strikingly clear every year.

Two things typical in Capitalist societies are private ownership of resources and production facilities and the employer-employee-consumer relationship. Keep in mind that the term “private,” which has cultural emotional connotations that imply the sovereignty and personal space of the individual, has a completely different meaning in this context. Under both Feudalism and Capitalism, all or most lands and resources are the “private” property of the Crown, Lords or ultra-wealthy/corporations, which in practice means that for the typical individual, little or nothing is theirs. If all rights belong to the owner of “private” property and one person owns the land that others live on, then these others have no property and no rights. In Feudalism, the serfs on the property of the Lords are themselves the property of the Lords; under Capitalism the same is true in practical terms, even though the legal definitions are framed differently.

Feudalism is essentially no different from Capitalism. Under Capitalism, an ultra-wealthy few come to control and own more and more land and resources, leaving less and less for the rest of the people. In a society where possession and wealth confer rights, respect, deference and power, this means that all but a very few have few or no rights because wherever they go is the "private" property of a corporation or a more wealthy person. Under Feudalism, all or most land and resources are the private property of the Crown and nobility. All other persons have few or no rights. The end results of the two systems are virtually indistinguishable. Capitalism is actually more insidious since in many Capitalist countries such as the United States, the underlying reality is disguised with a thin but very well-crafted veneer of illusions of democracy and freedom. In Feudal Europe in the Middle Ages, religion, intimidation, starvation and brute force were used very effectively to keep the population compliant. In Feudal China, Confucianism, intimidation, starvation and brute force were similarly employed. Under Capitalist paradigms of the modern age, illusions of democracy, religion at times, and a plethora of distractions serve these same ends. But make no mistake about it, the dynamics are the same. Brute force and intimidation will be applied to any who do not comply.

Proponents of Capitalism like to say that it empowers the common person to be an owner and make money from investments in the stock market. You or I can theoretically buy shares of companies. This is technically true, just as is the statement that "anybody can make it" or "anybody can win big in the casino." But in reality, as is commonly said in Capitalist societies, "it takes money to make money." In practice, only the ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal Lords can effectively take advantage of this in a Capitalist paradigm. According to multiple sources as of 2017 the richest one percent owned 50% of all stock in the United States and the richest 90%-99% percent owned another 42% of all the stock in the U.S. The 50%-90% owned only 7.75% of stock, while the bottom 50% of the economic pyramid controlled just 0.25% of all stock (Federal Reserve, Distributional Financial Accounts; Wolff, NBER, 2017).

The average yearly increase in the stock market is around 10%, while the average growth rate of the U.S. economy is around 2.16%-3% annually, which is less than inflation. In other words, if you are not making money in the stock market in a big way, then you are steadily losing ground.

It is well known that stock markets go up and down more or less unpredictably in the short term but tend to go up on average over long periods of time, like decades. A person who has a large sum of money well-invested will most likely make a profit if they can leave it on a diverse collection of stocks for a long enough time.

A person living on a sub-living, barely living or a little over living wage does not have large sums of money that they can afford to invest in a diverse portfolio and leave there for 10-30 years. Such a person might occasionally be able to buy a minimal amount of stock; but most likely they will need to access that money, even if it means taking a loss, long before a decade passes because of immediate survival needs.

Imagine that you buy a share of stock that costs $100 because you got some money back from your taxes. If that stock earns an average of 12% a year, which at the time of this writing would be considered extraordinarily good earnings, that means that if you sell that stock after one year, will get back $112 ($12 profit), but really less because you pay a fee for the transaction and capital gains tax, so you might get back less than you invested. If you sell that same share after 10 years and it averaged 12% over that time, you would get back $311 before fees and taxes. If you take into consideration an average

inflation rate of 2.5% over that time, its purchasing power will be closer to $243 before fees and taxes. That is hardly a nest-egg. If you invested $10,000 then you would get back $31,100, which would have the purchasing power of $24,300. That would be a meaningful amount but not quite enough for a single person to live on for a year while trying to replace a lost job, assuming no expenses beyond normal daily living costs. In order to attain a return of truly significant magnitude, one would need to be able to invest at least $100,000. Do you have that much on hand to invest for a decade? How many of your friends and family do?

If on the other hand you invested a million dollars, that 12% returns $1,120,000 or $120,000 profit if you sell it after one year. Even after inflation, fees and taxes, that is more than double the U.S. median income from wages or salary. If you were to leave that million dollars invested for 10 years earning an average return of 12%, you would take home $3,105,848 before inflation, fees, and taxes. You can easily see that if you were able to invest a billion dollars at 12% return, then your growth in wealth would dwarf that of the millionaire. People in that situation are also easily able to hire attorneys and top tax professionals to find ways to make sure they don't pay as high a percentage in tax as the typical person would who does not have those resources. Thus we see that investment in the Capitalist paradigm is only practical for those at the top of the pyramid or at least very near to it.

Investors, stockholders/shareholders of a company do have some voting rights in some decisions affecting the company. But the weight of your vote is in direct proportion to the size of your investment. If you have only 10 shares, your vote will never be heard or make any difference at all against the votes of the major stockholders, who usually include the CEO and other company Board officers. It is not democracy in any practical sense of the word, but rather a caricature of democracy.

There are other aspects of stock markets that consistently favor those at the top of the pyramid. Many investments have a minimum. One cannot invest less than $10,000 or $100,000. This effectively bars the vast majority of people from access to these kinds of investments.

In a barter or truly free-market economy where businesses are small and all at the same scale, where all individuals own their dwelling and business, all parties in a transaction meet as equals to arrive at an exchange that all will find acceptable. In a Capitalist economy, the party bringing big sums of money to the table - usually the employer or large investor – is implicitly assigned an advantage, a superior bargaining position, the right to dictate terms, and greater respect and power than the person bringing their knowledge, labor, expertise, or time to the table.

Employers often require new hires to sign an employment agreement which gives the company the right to terminate the employee at any time for any reason or no reason at all, and which also often includes provisions that give the employer ownership over any inventions, processes, innovations, etc. that the employee comes up with while employed at that company, sometimes going so far as to include non-work-related inventions that the employee comes up with at home. If the employee does not sign it, they don't get the job. There is no possibility for negotiating over the terms of the employment agreement. The employer dictates the terms, unless of course you have been offered the position of CEO, in which case you dictate the terms, because you are effectively a Lord of the ruling class; the president and senior vice president and so on are your Vassals seeking a Lord to command them and maximize profits and stock prices.

In any human social undertaking such as a business, all participants together make its functioning possible. But under Capitalism, this is not acknowledged in practice. The largest percentage of employees are serfs, required to live on lands owned by the Lords who determine both how much they will be paid, and how much protection money they must pay for the privilege of being permitted to continue to exist and occupy space... to serve the profitability of the Lords and Stockholders. The difference between Capitalism and Feudalism is hard to find except in the trappings and terminology that clothe it.

As previously mentioned, from 1978 to 2017, the pay of CEOs at large U.S. companies increased by about 1,000% while the pay of typical workers increased by only about 11%, after inflation.

By reinforcing individual acquisition of wealth while failing to reinforce mutuality, symbiosis, cooperation and respect among individuals and groups, Capitalist society creates a human environment where the majority of people will experience strong reinforcement to strive individually to acquire wealth most of the time, just to survive. This behavior is strongly

reinforced. If one gains enough wealth to do more than survive, the strong reinforcers favor continuing to do so without limit. Joint mutual effort, cooperation and sharing are selected against and difficult or perilous to sustain.

While wages increase incrementally, linearly and very slowly, wealth increases geometrically. For those who depend for survival on pay that is barely or not quite enough meet expenses, wealth is out of reach. They must constantly struggle to make ends meet, and any interruption in such efforts is catastrophic and possibly irrecoverable. For those with massive amounts of wealth, wages are unnecessary and irrelevant. Their wealth rapidly and increasingly generates more wealth with no effort, work or productivity needed.

By configuring the economy in a pyramidal hierarchical structure, Capitalism ensures chronic scarcity in the lower to middle portions of the economic pyramid, which along with ever-present strong reinforcements for wealth acquisition, creates an adversarial environment of cutthroat competition among the vast majority of people who occupy the middle to lower segments. This has the added effect of marginalizing and diffusing any potential concerted action to combat the hegemony of the Corporatocracy and create non-Capitalist paradigms in practice. Maintaining the overwhelming majority of the people in a state of constant stress, depletion, exhaustion, and discouragement further dissipates social energy that could potentially focus on questioning and challenging the status quo.

By making it literally illegal to live outside the Capitalist paradigm (Yes, in practical terms this is true. More on this later in this writing.) and painting Capitalism as synonymous with Democracy and Freedom, those in power are able to portray those who oppose, challenge or question it as criminals, subversives or terrorists who are then easy to demonize in the eyes of most of the populace. Furthermore, by teaching each generation of children that they are a free and prosperous society envied by all the world, that there is endless opportunity and that anybody can make it, and by promoting and popularizing anecdotal "rags to riches" stories, prevailing cultural attitudes are cast in a mold of acceptance of, and even pride in, the economic system and its conditioned but inaccurate association with the concept of “democracy” and “freedom”.

One area in which there is abundance and wide access for every segment of the pyramid in Capitalist societies is distractions: entertainments, gadgets, status symbols, drugs, alcohol and more, many of which have versions that are within the budgets of sub-living wage earners if they stretch or use credit, which in turn ensures their entanglement and indebtedness within the system while further dissipating social energy that might otherwise become focused on challenging the economic system and the ones at the top, the modern Feudal Lords. If such an economy were an internal combustion engine, these distractions would be the cooling system, keeping the people from heating up to the point of seizing up the engine.

Like any system or organism, the Capitalist system will fight to protect its existence. We cannot afford to be deterred by this. The American, Chinese, and Soviet Revolutions as well as the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, Gandhi's movement to kick the British out of India, the Israeli Zionist movement and the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa are all examples of fundamental change that was brought about in the face of overwhelming odds and opposition against opponents who were vastly better armed, equipped, trained and supported.

We must learn to always keep in mind that the economic pyramid is not a force or phenomenon of nature that exists in its own right independent of us. It is created, driven and sustained by the cooperation and participation of all of us. It depends on us playing the game by the rules that keep the pyramid in place. That pyramid, and those at the top of it, stands on the backs of hundreds of millions of employees and consumers (human beings) who keep producing, delivering, repairing, selling, buying, consuming and paying. If we remove our backs and choose, millions of us and more, to create a different socio-economic construct, to change the operating principles of the “game” and how it is played from the ground up (not the top down), the pyramid will collapse due to lack of participants. Violence may very well not be necessary.

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Those who are attached and addicted to the pyramidal Capitalist paradigm will try to force it upon the Transitionaries, the change-bringers; but if we are numerous enough, focused enough, dedicated and ubiquitous enough and we quietly claim control over the processes of production and distribution, ignoring the hierarchy as irrelevant and keeping vital

goods and services functioning, there will be little that the Lords of the Capitalist Feudal state will be able to do to stop the change.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Chapter 3: What is the True Function of Money/Currency?

The purpose, function, forms and modes of transaction have changed drastically over the course of millennia. Essentially it is a question of logistics: how do goods and services get shared and distributed within the human community?

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

The earliest human societies were almost certainly hunter-gatherer tribes in which members did not require any form of exchange among them. Each member of the tribe knew their job(s) and performed them organically like the organs in a body, as needed and in rhythms that evolved over time to sustain the needs of the community. There was trade between tribes: fish from coastal tribes in exchange for animal skins or dried fruit from inland tribes, that sort of thing. The exchanges were negotiated between parties on a mostly equal footing.

As agriculture, fishing, and herding spread, permanent settlements gradually replaced nomadic lifestyles. Increasing specialization developed. This led to trade becoming more common. People bartered goods and services among them individually, as did settlements and the still nomadic tribes - a pound of cheese for a dozen eggs, a wagon wheel repair for a day of help around the shop, medicinal herbs from the mountains for medicinal herbs from the lowlands and so on.

As the size and complexity of human cultures grew and new technologies emerged, it became impractical to perform all transactions via straight barter, for a lot of reasons. For example, how much cheese, eggs, meat or flint can you carry around with you for exchange? How do you determine the value of a winter coat in terms of arrows, fishing nets or wheat? Currency in the form of coins and tokens of various kinds became one solution. It is easier to carry around a pocket full of coins or small seashells than a wagon full of wood and nails.

At that point there was nothing resembling the capitalist paradigm that we see today. There were of course gougers and fair dealers, honest people and cheats, thieves, robbers, etc. But it was all on a much smaller scale than today, and whatever inequities existed were much smaller. Remember, if you only give me 8 eggs for a pound of cheese and the chicken farmer down the street will give me 12, then I will go for the better deal. At that point there was no such thing as mega-corporations or vast business empires; there were no quiet agreements among CEO's on the golf course to work together to drive prices up by dollars and then compete among them over pennies. For the most part, each chicken farmer, each arrowsmith, each basket weaver was independent of the others. If there were exceptions, at that time in history, they were on a very small scale.

It is not necessary to track the evolution of currency in minute detail from the distant past to the present. But it is instructive to keep something of a historical perspective.

Let us also look at and understand the significance of the value assigned by different cultures to different items and substances. Some cultures used certain kinds of seashells for currency, and there were other variations. But over time humans came to value gold, silver, and other minerals and imbue them with value by virtue of common agreement and perception rather than actual utility or superiority over other minerals for any particular purpose.

Gold, silver and other metals, of course, were appealing to cultures which had mastered the art of extracting and working them, since they can be fashioned into shapes bearing marks defining their value; they hold their shape and do not easily shatter.

It is important to remember that this valuation of gold, silver, platinum, diamonds and the like is completely arbitrary. Each has their useful and aesthetic properties, but there is no inherent reason to value them above other substances or objects. Yet wars have been fought, murders committed, families and friendships sundered, people enslaved, and civilizations conquered and subjugated in the process of seeking, obtaining and accumulating these things. Blue jays and magpies are drawn to shiny things and apparently so are humans. In and of itself, that is neither constructive nor destructive. The

perception and appreciation of beauty certainly adds to our quality of life. How we express that fascination, however, is entirely and arbitrarily subject to choices we make as individuals and as societies.

At some point, another dynamic began to enter the equation, which introduced new complexities and destructive patterns into the use and function of currency. If I can install myself up-river from a village or town with enough armed fighters to back me up, I can build a dam on the river or divert it to control the availability of water to the town. When the townspeople suddenly find the river drying up, they will come up my way to investigate, at which point I can tell them that if they want water they will have to pay my price. For that matter, I can charge a fee from every town and village down-river from me. As long as I have sufficient arms and a strategically defensible position, there is not much the towns can do about it, unless they can overpower me by force of arms. If I make a few people in each town my agents and elevate them above the rest of the townspeople, keeping them compliant through bribery and intimidation, they will suppress any attempts of townspeople to oppose my power.

Another destructive dynamic that crept into the picture was active threat. We will burn your house down or beat you up, destroy your crop or kill members of your family if you don't pay us a fee. Normally this conjures up images of gangs, the Mafia, drug cartels and playground bullies. But sadly that is largely how most royal families built up their fiefdoms and how many entirely legal and widely respected companies and sovereign countries do business and get away with it, because technically they are not breaking any laws. Capitalist paradigms contain strong reinforcers for these behaviors. As will become clear in the course of this writing, the distinction between street gang, drug cartel, Mafia, royal family, dynasty, and business empire is artificial and flimsy at best.

In the current state of Capitalist society in the world, money for the typical working person has two functions: to acquire desired goods and services (a TV, tickets to an entertainment, etc) and to pay for the necessities of life. Unfortunately, as in the company towns that were common before there were anti-monopoly laws and labor unions in the United States, it is essentially the same tiny segment of the population who determine both what working people are paid and how much they will have to pay for said necessities and amenities. The end result of this is a steady redistribution of money, resources and control from the bottom of the economic pyramid towards the top, since as we shall see, Capitalist paradigms are hierarchical pyramid schemes in which those at the top steadily drain energy and resources from those at the bottom. It is inherent in the paradigm.

Currency has taken new forms undreamt of until recently: paper money originally was linked to the value arbitrarily assigned to silver and gold, but eventually was decoupled from that standard. Now the value of paper and metal currency is arbitrarily determined independent of precious metals. In addition, the majority of transactions at the time of this writing are done electronically and only exist as bits in databases. This clearly shows that currency and its value are purely a matter of concept and imagination, not an inherent set of properties of nature. Yet the way the dominant Capitalist society functions, these bits define and determine our rights, our options, the level of respect or lack thereof that we are afforded, even our right to a livelihood, a place to live or to pursue our Constitutional rights if we live in a country that has some form of Constitution.

As things are now, currency in all of its forms no longer functions primarily as a medium of exchange to facilitate the flow of goods and services among people, nor does it primarily grant access to desired commodities, EXCEPT for the microscopically small segment of the population at the very top of the economic pyramid. In the current state of Capitalist society, in practice, money is used by the ultra-wealthy who control most of the resources to create scarcity and erect barriers to limit and control access to vital goods and services for the vast majority, for 99.5% or more of the population.

Even though the Declaration of Independence proclaims our unalienable rights to "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness," and the U.S. Constitution was written to secure the rights of the People, the economic system places a high price on actualizing those rights, effectively acting as a barrier to exercising them.

Look at one of the most basic of necessities of life: having a place to physically be, to live. In order to have a place to be, in Capitalist societies you have 2 choices: buy a place or rent a place. Either way you are forced to pay to have a place to be. If you are homeless or try to live on public land, land that is not being used, or even in a vehicle such as your own car or RV

outside of an RV park or campground that charges rent, many and increasing numbers of towns and cities have laws forbidding it either expressly or indirectly.

Owning one's own place is of course preferable to renting, since in Capitalist societies it carries a greater degree of freedom and economic safety than renting. In Capitalist paradigms, however, home ownership is always priced far above most people's ability to buy with cash, which forces most prospective buyers to seek a bank loan - mortgage - which effectively translates into the bank owning the home until the buyer pays off the loan with a huge amount of interest. If one is in a weak financial situation, the banks will not loan one the money, making it impossible to own one's home.

Renting means paying money every month to a landlord who has dictatorial rights to determine much of what the renter can or cannot do in the living unit, including having guests or family visit, planting a garden, making improvements or changes – and of course the landlord can raise the rent at will and even revoke the renter's right to be there.

Many American cities have even passed laws making it a crime to feed or help the homeless. An increasing number of American cities are giving the police the power to confiscate the sleeping bags, tents, winter coats and other possessions of the homeless with no due process, in a culture that values private property as sacrosanct. In practice, the sanctity of one's private property is directly proportional to one's place on the economic pyramid.

There a few places that have made it illegal to catch rainwater. Citizens are forced to pay for water even where there is water available to them from nature. In the state of Michigan, millions of struggling people have had their water supply cut off because they couldn't afford the exorbitant cost of water. These people are thus deprived of one of the most basic necessities of life, even if they are working and contributing to the community. (Much of the water supply in Michigan is also contaminated and unsafe to drink due to unregulated industrial pollution) There are many places that have various kinds of laws and regulations that restrict homeowners and renters from using their yards for cultivation of food or the raising of food animals or chickens for eggs. People are forced to have to pay for food, water, and a place to be.

Even though there are not generally laws specifying in so many words that it is illegal to live without paying for the privilege, there are a plethora of laws that translate into the same thing when one does the math. If it is illegal to live on "privately" owned land or buildings, and it is illegal to live or sleep on "publicly" owned land such as city parks and lands, streets or even the gardens along highways or National Parks, and it is illegal to live in a vehicle (including an RV designed for habitation) unless parked on "privately" owned land where rent must be paid, then in practical terms it means that it is illegal to live without paying to occupy space. In such a paradigm, if one is living on unoccupied land, seeing to one's own needs without taking anything from or harming anybody, and not collecting public assistance, then one is still defined as a criminal.

In practice, rent, mortgage and other enforced charges on life's necessities mean that unless one is a member of the extremely wealthy at the top of the economic pyramid who own and control the majority of resources, one's life is unceasingly held hostage. Every month, you forced to pay ransom on your own life. The principle is also similar to that of paying protection money to gangs or the Mafia. Pay your monthly protection or suffer deprivation of home and all the necessities of life. When the only alternative to paying is losing your home, there is little functional difference between rent, mortgage, ransom, and protection money. Only the terminology is different.

Under Capitalism all people are forced to pay to live, to exist at all. In practice, one's rights, freedom, degree of respect received, and options in life are in direct proportion to one's wealth. In this way it is clear that Capitalism as we see it now in the United States is in direct opposition to the U.S. Constitution, eroding, undermining and subverting it. The Declaration of Independence proclaims our unalienable rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, and the Constitution was established to "secure the Blessings of Liberty" to the People. The Capitalist Paradigm creates conditions in which one has NO rights, not even to occupy space, without paying for it with money. This is a direct contradiction. This is a fact worthy of pointing out to the awareness of all who have sworn an oath to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

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If you have sworn such an oath, then it is your clear duty to defend the Constitution against Capitalism and support or protect the Transition to the new paradigm.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Using the concept of "Free Enterprise" to defend Capitalism is a gross distortion, as the business practices of gigantic corporations and the ultra wealthy effectively create an environment caustic to small business, freelancers, and those who wish to live without participating in the money economy. Enterprise is theoretically free to all, but in practice is free only to those at or very near the top of the economic Pyramid, just as theoretically any citizen who meets age and citizenship requirements can become President of the United States, while in practice the only potential candidates who will realistically ever even reach the race are people who are either wealthy themselves or are connected to others who are. It was not that way in the time of Abraham Lincoln, but it is now.

In its current form, money/currency is most frequently used as a way to create scarcity and barriers blocking access to goods, services and even the most basic necessities, as a means of controlling, disempowering, dividing and effectively enslaving the vast majority of people. A populace locked into a constant losing struggle to survive paycheck to paycheck, fighting over meager opportunities for minimal advancement, constantly stressed and exhausted, is a populace unlikely to have the time, energy, will, or cohesion to form a coordinated concerted front to challenge and overthrow the system that is keeping them in that condition.

Add to that backdrop the aforementioned wide range of accessible distractions that disperse and dissipate rather than focus social, emotional, and motivational energy, plus immersion in constant propaganda from birth convincing people that they have freedom, that theirs is the best possible world, and you have an ingenious and insidious way of preventing the people from rising up and challenging the status quo.

Yet it is not a hopeless situation. Historically we see that the Chinese Revolution succeeded against the odds even though the Red Army started out as half-starved uneducated peasants against a militarily vastly superior enemy. The American Revolution was similarly able to prevail against an apparently insurmountable set of obstacles in going up against the most powerful superpower of its day. Both were armed struggles, and their violence is exactly what this Transition rejects. India was able to drive the British, still a major superpower, out of their lands and affairs by determined, unyielding, nonviolent mass resistance.

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Our Transition must strive to be uncompromisingly forceful but also compassionate and always favoring nonviolence over violence.

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The goal is to create a socio-economic system(s) that is compassionate and empowering to all, that fosters symbiosis and mutuality among mutually respecting individuals and groups, rather than cutthroat competition, predation, and manipulation.

Chapter 4: Disparity

It is typical for CEO's to make hundreds or even thousands of times what the vast majority of their employees make. In 1965, CEOs of large U.S. companies earned about 20 times what a typical worker earned. Whether you ever become an active initiator of the Transition to viable paradigms or not, I hope you will come to understand the fact that the struggles you are experiencing (all of us and billions of others as well) are not any indication of a deficiency on your part. The system is broken by design.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

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That is why it must be shut down and a new system put in place to replace it. The people at the top of the pyramid will not willingly allow that to happen so we will have to force the change the same way we would have to wrest the controls of an airplane from the hands of a drunk or delirious pilot, and for the same reasons.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

The disparity in industrialized Capitalist countries rivals, and by some measures exceeds, that of medieval Europe. It is not uncommon for a CEO to make in one week, one day or even one hour what a typical employee of the same company makes in a year. The most extreme disparity in a well-known company as reported under the requirements of the Dodd-Frank Act in 2018 was that of Weight Watchers International, Inc., whose CEO made 5,908 times what their median employee made, meaning that Ms. Grossman made in about twenty minutes what her median employee made in a year (Equilar via Harvard Law School Forum, 2018). Exceeding this extreme disparity is that of Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon. His total increase in net worth in 2017 was $33 billion. Divided over the year, that is about $1,050 a second, so his wealth grew by as much as his median employee's yearly salary of $28,446 (Glum, Money, 2018) about every 27 seconds. Most of that growth came from the rising value of his Amazon shares rather than from pay, but it is wealth all the same. In daily life, this translates into CEO's who live in power, luxury and privilege rivaling or exceeding that of traditional royalty, while typical employees of these companies cannot meet basic living expenses on their salaries. Clearly this paradigm is no more viable or defensible than a boat that cannot float long enough to cross the ocean.

Most if not all CEO's and their ilk are unable or unwilling to grasp that their fantastic wealth is only possible because of the hard work of all of their employees doing their part. The paradigm in operation in this society has trained them, and most of the rest of the population as well, to believe that their disproportionate share of the revenues of the company is justified because of some mysterious something that they have that makes them incalculably more valuable than the typical employee.

Sometimes it is said that it is because they make the company more successful. This is truly no different from the Medieval paradigm that postulated that the kings, queens, czars, kaisers, emperors and other dictators of their day (all the way down to earls, dukes and the like) were in their position because God put them there, having made them inherently more worthy than others. Therefore to rise up against them was to rise up against God which carried with it a sentence of eternal damnation.

A more rational, though circular and equally untenable, justification was that the peasants were ignorant and incapable of governing themselves. Of course they were kept ignorant by design while being constantly overworked, underfed and terrified, leaving them incapable of much more than surviving another day until they couldn't any longer and died. In today's Capitalist systems, the rising cost of education is steering us in the same direction. Likewise the current U.S. regime's

plan to surreptitiously privatize primary and secondary education will guarantee future generations incapable of critical thinking if we do not succeed in thwarting those agendas wherever they occur.

Another example of a country experiencing extreme neo-Feudalistic stratification as the result of Capitalist paradigms is Brazil, where some 16 million people live in favelas, often in extreme poverty, privation, danger and disenfranchisement.

The extreme and growing disparity is further tolerated in Capitalist cultures because of the myth that "anybody can make it," supported by true anecdotal but dramatic "rags to riches" stories that perpetuate the belief that if one is hard-working and entrepreneurial enough, one can ascend the economic Pyramid to the upper reaches where one is free from the constant stress over economic survival, where one is able to purchase the privilege of exercising one's Constitutional rights. Sadly, as is discussed elsewhere in greater depth, this is more myth than reality even through it is not strictly speaking a lie. As in any casino or lottery, anybody CAN "make it big," but very few actually will. The myth ingrains the belief that if one hasn't "made it," it is because of some failure or inadequacy on their part. In reality, it is the economic system which by design cannot function unless very few individuals ascend to the upper reaches.

Due to endemic cultural myths and carefully-crafted propaganda, the majority of people in most countries drastically underestimate the disparity. In a survey conducted in 2005 and published in 2011 by Michael Norton and Dan Ariely (later described in Scientific American), more than 5,000 Americans were asked what they thought the wealth distribution was in the United States. It was discovered that the average American believes that the richest 20% of American households controlled 59% of the wealth, the middle 40% controlled 32% and the bottom 40% controlled 9% of the wealth. In reality, the richest 20% controlled 84% of the wealth, the middle 40% controlled 15.7% of the wealth, and the poorest 40% controlled only 0.3% of the wealth. As of the writing of the article, the Walton family alone controlled more wealth than the poorest 42% of U.S. households together. The article also cited a study done in 2014 which found that the average American estimated that the ratio of average CEO pay to average employee pay was 30:1, when at that time it was actually 354:1. In 1965 it was 20:1 (Fitz, Scientific American, 2015). At the time of this writing, there are companies where the disparity is above 2,000:1 . As well be seen in the more detailed data analysis at the end of this writing, the disparity has grown even more extreme since then.

This underestimation of the extremity of the economic disparity and its continuing escalation is a big reason for the lack of a widespread wave of effective activism to correct this feudalization of the society. The typical citizen is blissfully unaware of the severity of the situation and of its implications. The combination of cultural myths, effective propaganda, and the abundance of diversions and distractions keeps the vast majority of people unaware and even unconcerned regarding the subsuming of democratic institutions and mechanisms under the control of a decidedly un-democratic, authoritarian power structure that is devoted to feeding a dangerous, insidious compulsion, with all the hallmarks of an addiction, in a microscopic few ultra-wealthy individuals and families: the drive for ever more wealth, opulence, privilege and power over others. In our ignorance, we have unwittingly perpetuated this destructive dynamic. It is time to become aware of the full scope and true dynamics and functioning of this socio-economic paradigm and recognize it as inherently destructive and non-viable. We must then retire it and replace it with one that is designed to reinforce and foster the happiness and well-being of every individual and the community, while preserving and sustaining the global biosphere of which we are a part.

Even people in professions that were long a part of the middle class in the U.S. are now, with the acceleration of the Feudalization of the economy, are barely living paycheck to paycheck. There are numerous studies, articles and statistics available that document this (Paquette, Washington Post, 2018).

In your and my life it translates into working harder and harder, seeing more and more hours of our lives required to access the bare necessities. Until the Transition, of course, we have to do our best to survive by going through the motions, but it is a fatal error to focus on coming up with the right job or start a business that will put us over the top and out of perpetual jeopardy. The odds of that succeeding are poor, and they are stacked: a child born into the bottom fifth of U.S. family incomes has only about a 1-in-13 chance (7.5%) of reaching the top fifth (Chetty and colleagues, 2014). The only real viable solution is to bring about the Transition and redesign of the socio-economic paradigm.

Those who urge us to manage our finances better or suggest investing are usually of the ruling elite and utterly ignorant of the world almost all of us live in, or worse yet, taking us for fools. By analogy, if one airplane is only able to reach an altitude of 100 feet and another airplane is able to reach 30,000 feet, the second plane can easily withstand a drop of 1,000 feet in a downdraft, but obviously the same loss of altitude would be fatal to the plane that tops out at 100 feet.

Similarly, a billionaire can easily absorb the loss of a third or even half or more of their income and come out the other side in great shape. In fact, they would probably not pay any taxes for many years; and if things were to get really hard for them, the government would use taxpayers' money to help them out. The banks will waive any fees or penalties without even being asked. If you or I or most of the population were to lose a third to half our income, we would be homeless in short order and severely handicapped in trying to get back up since no bank would give us a loan and potential employers with better jobs would delete our resumes out of hand. More than a third of U.S. adults could not cover even a $400 emergency expense with cash (Federal Reserve, 2024).

The disparities are virtually endless. In the justice system, in the economic system, in every human endeavor, under Capitalist paradigms the economic Pyramid engorges and privileges those at the top by crushing the life out of those at or near the bottom.

There is no way around it. This system truly needs to be phased out and replaced with something that is designed and strives to work for everybody. It is not working. It cannot be fixed or repaired because it is a fundamentally flawed design that cannot be made to serve the well-being, happiness, safety and thriving of any but a very few.

Data and Graphs

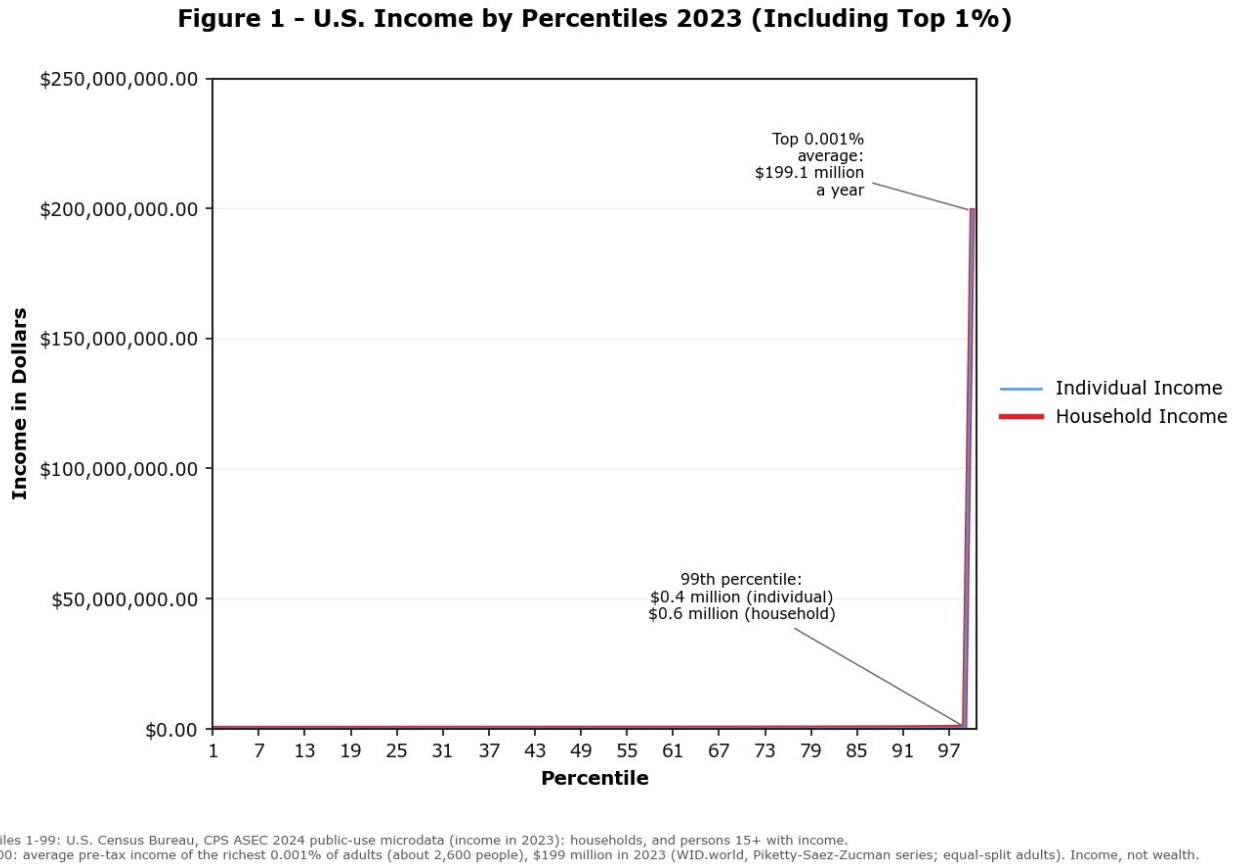
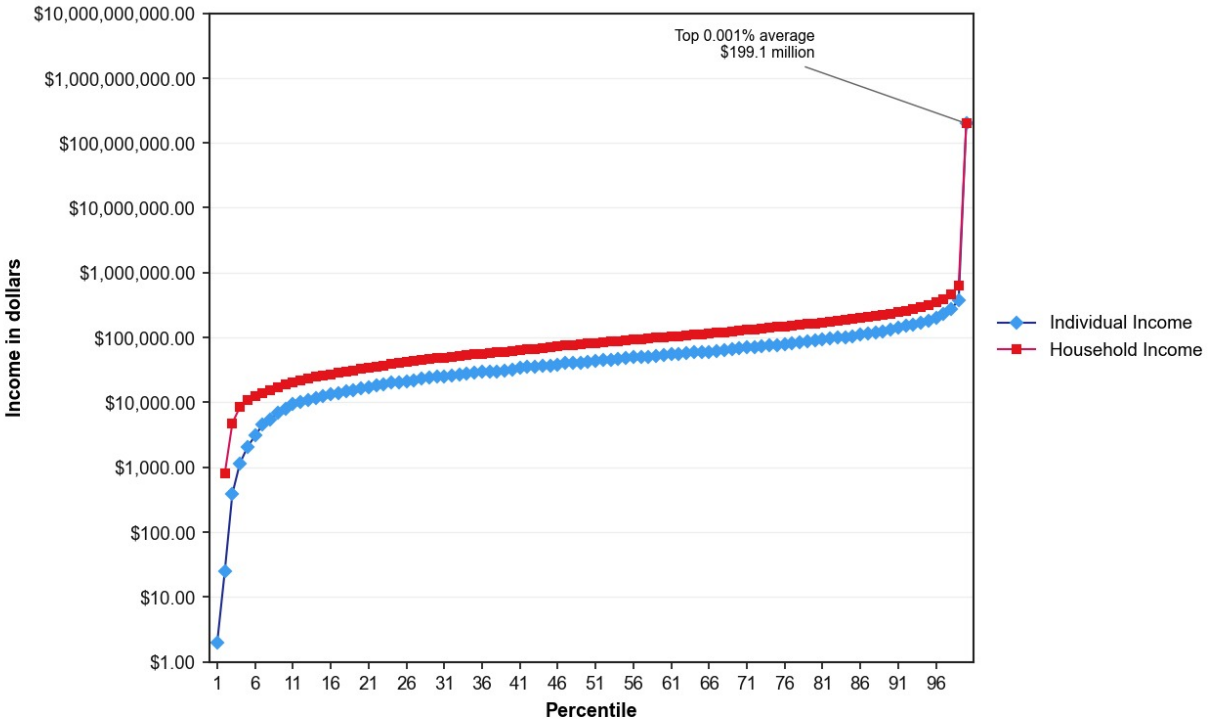


Figure 1: U.S. Income by Percentiles 2023 (Including Top 1%)

Figure 1a - US Income Percentiles 2023 in Logarithmic Scale (Including top 1%)



Percentiles 1-99: U.S. Census Bureau, CPS ASEC 2024 public-use microdata (income in 2023): households, and persons 15+ with income. Percentiles with zero income cannot be shown on a log scale.
Point 100: average pre-tax income of the richest 0.001% of adults (about 2,600 people), $199 million in 2023 (WID.world, Piketty-Saez-Zucman series; equal-split adults).

Figure 1a: U.S. Income Percentiles 2023 in Logarithmic Scale

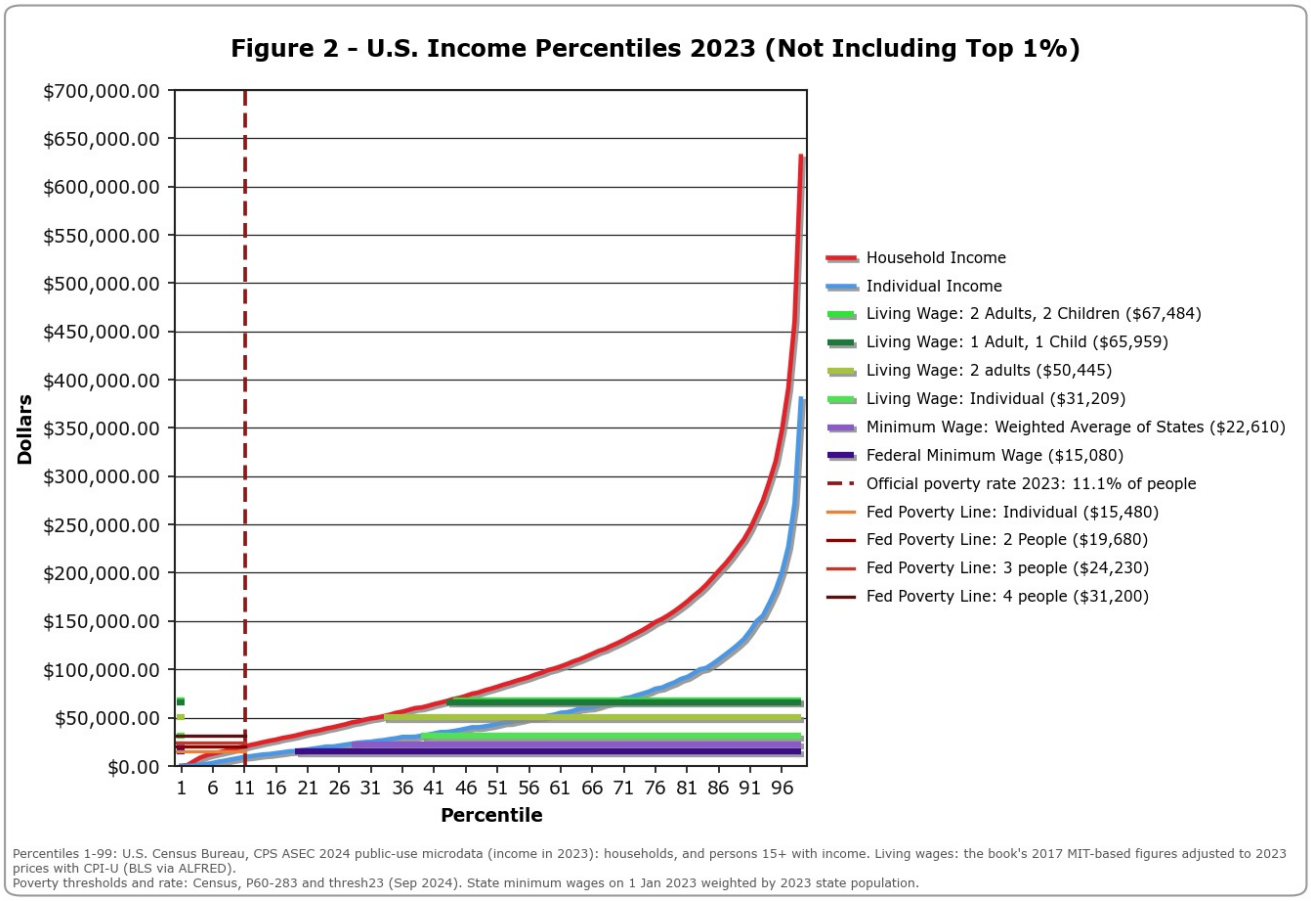
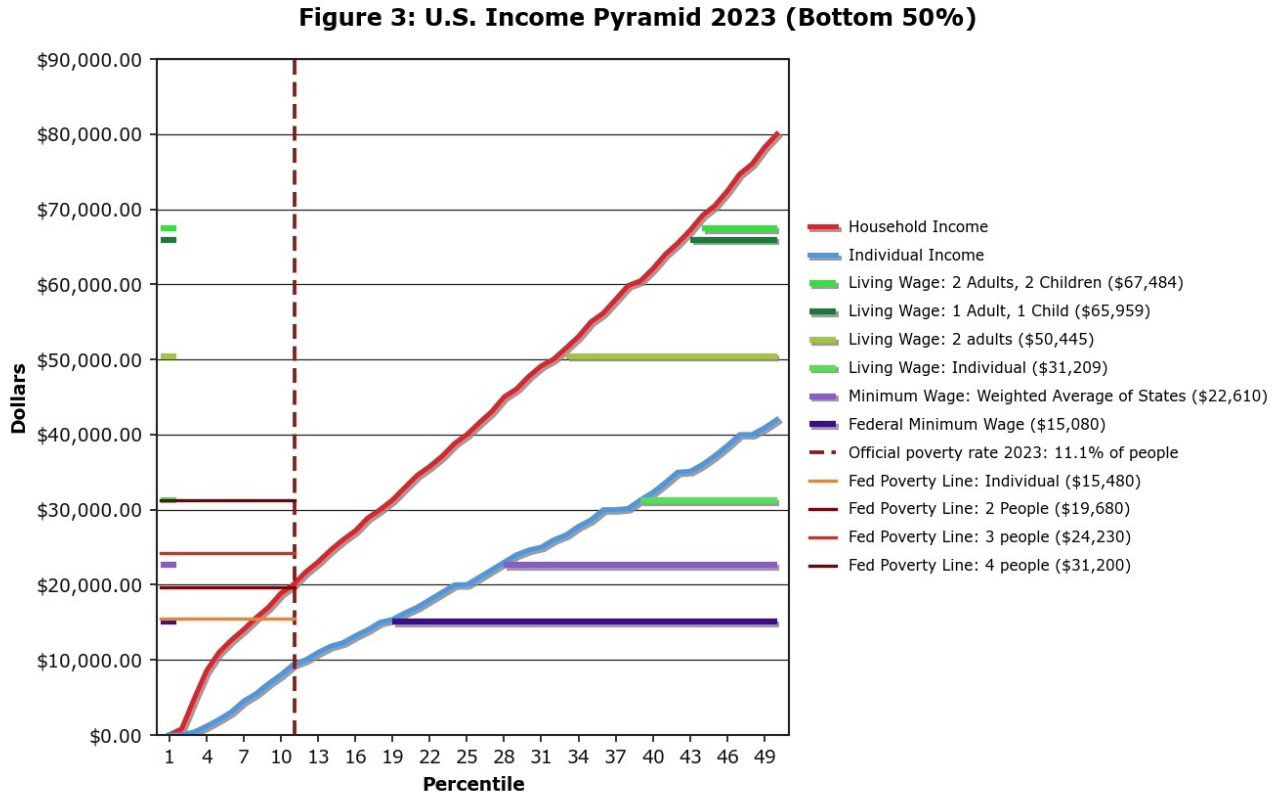


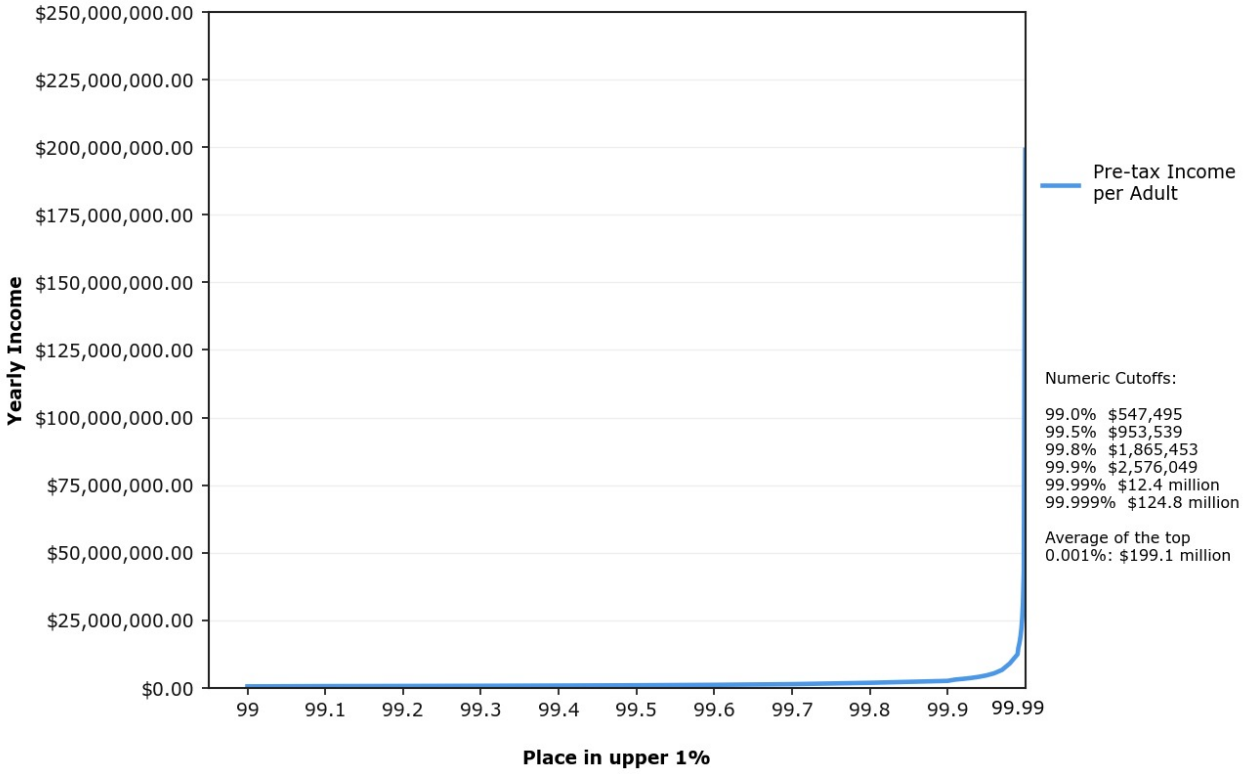
Figure 2: U.S. Income Percentiles 2023 (Not Including Top 1%)



Percentiles 1-99: U.S. Census Bureau, CPS ASEC 2024 public-use microdata (income in 2023): households, and persons 15+ with income. Living wages: the book's 2017 MIT-based figures adjusted to 2023 prices with CPI-U (BLS via ALFRED).
Poverty thresholds and rate: Census, P60-283 and thresh23 (Sep 2024). State minimum wages on 1 Jan 2023 weighted by 2023 state population.

Figure 3: U.S. Income Pyramid 2023 (Bottom 50%)

Figure 4: 2023 U.S. Income (within the Top 1%)



Source: WID.world (Piketty, Saez & Zucman distributional national accounts), pre-tax national income per adult, income of couples split equally, 2023, converted to 2023 dollars with WID's price index.
Last point (100): average income of the richest 0.001% of adults, not a single person's income and not wealth.

Figure 4: 2023 U.S. Income (within the Top 1%)

Chapter 5: Why Is There Inflation? Why Has It Been Almost Constant in Every Capitalist Society

If prices were truly the result of random factors such as weather, changes in demographics, etc, then one would expect prices of most or all things to vary up and down more or less randomly. A flood in potato producing areas, prices up; an abundant harvest above expectations, prices down. Shortage of raw materials, prices up; discovery of new mineral deposits, prices down. From year to year one would expect variation but overall one would expect it to vary across a more or less constant range. It takes the same amount of water flowing through a turbine to produce the same amount of energy now as it did 20 or 40 years ago. It takes the same amount of work to manufacture an automobile now as 20 years ago. A piece of land is the same piece of land now or 50 years ago, yet a house that cost $20,000 when it was built 50 years ago, now costs $4,000,000, even though by now it needs a new roof, plumbing, wiring etc. Clearly there are other factors at work here.

In 1973, during the Yom Kippur War, Arab oil producers cut production and placed an embargo on the United States. The embargo was itself a deliberate use of supply to move prices and achieve political ends, and stories that the world was running out of petroleum added to the alarm.

There was rationing of gasoline, lines at the pumps and widespread near-panic. Oil companies' profits soared. Then, in 1979, the Iranian Revolution set off a second shortage, and again oil companies' profits soared. The average U.S. price of regular gasoline went from about $0.39 a gallon in 1973 to about $0.86 in 1979 and about $1.19 in 1980. Prices stayed far above their pre-1973 levels for years, and producers and oil companies kept the gains.

This is but one very blatant historical example that many of us alive today lived through; but it illustrates the mechanism. Since Capitalism creates the absolute necessity to have and make money to be profitable or just to survive, people and businesses tend to do whatever they can get away with in order to get as much money as possible. This is no less the case among those who have already accumulated more than they or their foreseeable descendents could ever need.

Inflation is often disguised in subtle and insidious ways. A bagged salad may have come on the market at 16 ounces for $1.99. A bag of potato chips may have first appeared on shelves at 8 ounces for $1.50. A couple of years later, the prices haven’t changed but the bagged salad now has only 14 ounces and the bag of chips only 6 ounces. As time goes on, the salad shrinks incrementally, ounce by ounce, year by year until we are paying $1.99 for 5 ounces of salad and $1.50 for 3.5 ounces of chips. The packaging remains identical. The bag of salad slowly shrinks; the bag of chips stays the same size but contains ever more air and fewer chips. This happens so gradually that we don’t notice unless we make a point of looking at the number of ounces and keep track. Thus inflation continues unnoticed by most. This is by design. People won’t get upset about something that they don’t notice happening.

A pair of shoes made in 1965 probably lasted a few years with normal use. A similar-looking pair of shoes built in 2019 will most likely barely last a season. This is another way that inflation is disguised and deliberately perpetuated.

Restaurants also routinely disguise inflation by shrinking portions over time, using cheaper (and often inferior) ingredients, and switching to a-la-carte menu strategies that force patrons to pay extra for everything, while slowly but steadily raising prices.

Airlines routinely raise their prices and charge for literally everything, over and above the cost of the flight. Most airlines charge extra, non-trivial fees for every item of luggage and for any item over specified size and weight limits. They charge for meals, which not that long ago used to be included in the price of the flight. They crowd more seats closer together while raising their fares, which is also a form of inflation because passengers are increasingly crowded and cramped.

The insidious disguising of inflation is epidemic and widely proliferated in every field, industry and sector.

Capitalism overwhelmingly favors those at the top of the food chain. If you or I raise prices for our freelance services or Mom & Pop business, people will just go down the street to a different store or hire a different service provider. But if the

company that supplies 40% of the gas in the neighborhood jacks up their prices and the other competing providers follow suit, then the people are over a barrel even when no laws have been broken and there is technically no monopoly.

The psychological and sociological reinforcements in Capitalist society strongly promote and reinforce gouging and the raising of prices.

Apologists for Capitalism often blame labor costs for inflation, claiming that when labor unions and strong labor protection laws bring about increased wages and protections, employers must raise prices to compensate. In the short term, this is not entirely untrue, but it is only one of many factors involved. It is only one small piece of a much bigger picture.

To begin with, one has to ask why workers feel the need to demand higher wages and protections such as heath coverage. The answer is that they need higher wages to be able to survive the constantly rising costs of living. The larger picture looks like this: Businesses raise prices as high as "the market will bear" (which is Corporate Speak for "we will raise prices as high as we can get away with"). Employees then fight for higher wages to keep up, then the employers raise prices more than enough to compensate for whatever increase the workers got but blame the workers for the rise, thus creating a vicious cycle, a feedback loop that keeps inflation going year after year. Central banks, for their part, deliberately aim for about 2% inflation a year, so prices are designed never to stand still. And when inflation surged in 2022, IMF researchers found that rising corporate profits were the largest single contributor to euro-area inflation, accounting for about 45% of the rise in prices from early 2022 to early 2023, more than import prices (Hansen, Toscani and Zhou, 2023).

Historically we see that before there were labor unions and laws protecting employees, conditions were downright feudal for the majority of workers. Child labor was common. Twelve-hour days, 6 and 7 days a week were the norm. Hazardous, unhealthy, not to mention inhumane, working conditions were widespread.

"Company towns" where employees were forced to live in towns attached to and owned by the factories or refineries where they worked, were common practice. The same company that paid the workers was also their landlord, service provider for utilities, and owned the grocery and other stores in the town. Such companies routinely made sure that the cost of living in the company town was more than they paid the workers, who were thus perpetually in debt to the company, effectively making them indentured servants, or more correctly, slaves in everything but name. Living in the Company Town was mandatory.

At the time of this writing, “Company Towns” have long been outlawed in even most Capitalist industrialized countries due to prolonged large-scale labor movements that yielded changes to the laws. Instead, countries operating under Capitalist paradigms covertly and indirectly function as “Company Towns” on a much larger scale. For the most part, the same tiny portion of the population who determine what prevailing pay rates are, is the same exact tiny portion of the population who determine what the prevailing cost of living is.

Before massive popular labor and civil rights movements undertook a long and costly struggle to improve conditions, discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, gender, etc. was more common than not. Sexual harassment was endemic and the victims had no rights or protections.

Labor movements began because the majority of employees found themselves living like medieval serfs or sharecroppers in an industrial setting. Inhumanity and callous abuse were epidemic and became intolerable. So let us ask ourselves which is the chicken and which is the egg as the initial cause of inflation: employees getting higher salaries, or businesses raising prices while paying the lowest possible wages. The factual answer is that it was the companies, the employers, the Corporations and the ultra-wealthy who control them, who created conditions in which employees had to literally fight for the right to a living wage and reasonable working conditions and expectations. Many union/labor rights organizers and their families were mercilessly threatened, beaten, murdered, terrorized, slandered, harassed and jailed on phony charges by employers to try to prevent them from gaining protections and rights. Even at the height of the significant Civil Rights advances in the 1970's in the U.S., we saw the same phenomenon when the United Farm Workers began to organize, and growers hired the Teamsters union to terrorize and intimidate them. Thus, blaming labor costs for rising prices is rubbing salt in a very deep wound. In principle it is akin to Southern plantation owners blaming higher prices on the abolition of slavery. The argument is specious, untenable, and insulting to the intelligence.

Yet it would also be a tragic oversimplification to simply blame employers and purge them. That would not only destroy what we seek to build, but would fail to address the root causes of the current dysfunctional situation as surely as painkillers given before a work-up can mask symptoms, causing a patient to be sent home undiagnosed with a serious condition. We will not attain a truly thriving community of empowered individuals if we divide humanity up into Good Guys and Bad Guys and then attack or punish all of the Bad Guys. We need to ask ourselves how this whole pattern came about and established itself so widely like a deadly metastatic cancer. The cause is not just that bad people have acted badly. The cause is a dysfunctional socio-economic paradigm that strongly reinforces destructive, predatory behaviors and divides people into subgroups in such a way that the good of one comes at the detriment of the other. This is a win-lose-lose-lose-lose paradigm. As long as we continue to live and act according to its parameters, we are all unwittingly perpetuating it.

One good example of the kind of shift in perception that is needed, can be understood by examining the causes of World War II. It is not instructive to just say that the Germans and Japanese were monsters and leave it at that. There is much more to it than that.

At the end of World War I, the Allies forced Germany to sign the Treaty of Versailles, which was humiliating and debilitating to it. In the economically, socially and psychologically depressed state of Germany after World War I, its population became highly susceptible to the message of German superiority propagated by Hitler. If the end of World War I had been handled by the Allies in the same way they handled the end of World War II, then Germany would have been a much less fertile ground for fanaticism and Hitler would have been just another nut case on a soap box in the park. That is why after World War II, with the Allies immediately setting about helping the defeated Axis to recover, neither Germany nor Japan have ever repeated the destructive cycle of two world wars.

The root of the destructive Capitalist paradigms is that we currently have an economic system that has many strong psychological reinforcements for amassing wealth and power but virtually no reinforcements for sharing, cooperation, collaboration, for synergy. Those who have become abusers and oppressors of others have been molded by, and responded to, the reinforcements present in their environment. They are better adapted to this paradigm than the vast majority who are not at the top of the pyramid

The hard-won laws protecting the rights of employees and consumers are to be lauded and appreciated; but they are stop-gap band-aid solutions equivalent to sticking chewing gum into holes in the hull of a ship that is not seaworthy to begin with. In any case, behavioral science has demonstrated that reinforcement/non-reinforcement is a much stronger motivator than punishment/reward. What is reinforced, predominates. What is not reinforced tends to extinguish.

Even though concerted and focused popular movements can bring about some degree of improvement, historical experience shows that under Capitalist paradigms, in the long run, the pressures of the ultra-wealthy and their Corporations will overwhelm the pressures of working people/constituents in influencing government, as surely as the “house” always wins in the long run in any casino.

Behavioral science research has shown that threat of punishment actually reinforces the seeking of creative ways to pursue the punishable behavior while avoiding punishment, as much as it reinforces compliance, if not more so. Witness Prohibition and anti-marijuana laws in the United States, religious laws in Iran, and prohibitions on religion and private commerce in the Soviet Union. Outlawing predatory and/or other harmful business practices results in the appearance and some degree of compliance for a time, morphing eventually into creative ways of exploiting legal loopholes to avoid compliance and steady lobbying of lawmakers that eventually results in the undoing of limits on the power of Corporations and the ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal lords.

The most powerful way to achieve prevalence of constructive behaviors and near-extinction of destructive/harmful behaviors is to reinforce the former and avoid reinforcing the latter. Where laws are needed to create limits on harmful behaviors, their implementation is best performed in a matter-of-fact way and not in a punitive way. The bully must be prevented from bullying. The first-line response is to not engage the bully, to ignore them steadfastly and unwaveringly, neither complying with, nor being intimidated, nor engaging them in any way. If this fails to de-escalate the behavior, then

the bully must be restrained and placed in a situation where they cannot bully. The spirit of this must be practical, not punitive.

The dynamics of Capitalist paradigms are dysfunctional and quite clear:

1) The society reinforces, even enforces the absolute necessity of money for survival. No other media or mechanisms exist or are permitted or acknowledged.

2) Economically, two subgroups are formed in Capitalist society: employers and employees; landlords/banks and tenants/people buying homes via mortgages, empowered and disempowered, privileged and disenfranchised, Royals/Lords and Serfs.

Remember that home prices are always kept orders of magnitude beyond what almost all employees and small business owners can afford to buy outright, which forces prospective homeowners to take bank loans. The homebuyer holds the title, but for decades the bank holds the real power over the home, profiting immensely off of the interest. The homebuyer is given the illusion of secure ownership. Just try missing a few mortgage payments and see what happens. Even if you have paid off most of the cost of the home plus interest, if you suddenly become unable to continue paying due to unforeseen and unavoidable changes in circumstance, the bank WILL foreclose and take your home.

It is many years before a significant portion of mortgage payments actually applies to the purchase price of the house [principal]. In other words, most people who consider themselves homeowners are actually part of the tenant sector of the culture, not the owner sector. (See the data analysis section at the end of this book for more in depth on this subject.)

These two subgroups – employers and employees, owners and renters, etc. - are set up by the economics of the paradigm to be at odds with each other. Whenever one subgroup makes gains, raises prices, gains legal protections in the forms of limits on the other subgroup, the other group loses ground and experiences the need to do likewise. Yet there is no balance in this back-and-forth dyanamic. These are not two parties meeting as equals to work out a compromise that is fair to both. Owners/employers have no major obstacles to raising their prices or limiting wages. In Capitalist paradigms, the business or landlord controls access to livelihood and living space. Employees/tenants are easily replaced while livelihood and living space are hard to come by, which is inevitable because of the fundamental structure of Capitalist systems. Employees are forced to accept the pay that employers offer, and to pay the prices that companies and landlords charge, or else engage in major struggles at great risk, face hardships and harassment in order to gain any progress in their end of the in-equation. Such progress is almost always eroded away over time through the preponderance of influence over government by large corporations and the ultra-wealthy over that of individuals.

Keep in mind that strikes usually entail going without wages for extended periods for striking employees, who are inherently less able to survive that deprivation than are their corporate employers who often bring in scab labor to keep operating. Demonstrations are often suppressed and are ineffective if under-reported, played down and portrayed as the work of terrorists and criminals. Putting pressure on lawmakers is a losing proposition in the long run when huge corporations are much better equipped to pressure those same lawmakers.

There are also small business-people in such environments, but their situation is closer to that of employees than to that of large businesses. Typically their lives are consumed in the process of making their business profitable while mammoth businesses have extensive resources and can survive down-turns much more readily than small businesses. It is not truly "free enterprise" at this point in history, as witnessed by the typical pattern of large corporate chains moving into a neighborhood and under-pricing the competing small businesses out of business before raising their prices once the small competitors have been eliminated.

Small-business owners are truly in a situation more similar to that of employees than of the neo-Feudal lords at the top of the pyramid in even more ways. Many or most small businesses really cannot afford to pay a living wage, to provide health and dental coverage, retirement or pension plans for employees or other “benefits” that directly impact employees’ quality of life and ability to survive or thrive. The small-business owner frequently makes not much more than their employees, ends up working extremely long hours, and is held responsible for all business expenses, loans, and even absorbing the cost of

theft. Conversely, mega-corporations can easily afford to pay a good living wage with benefits but increasingly often choose not to, resorting to outsourcing, engaging contractors and temps rather than hiring employees, keeping employees at part-time status, reducing benefits, and performing stock buy-backs instead of investing in employees. Stock buy-backs, of course, further concentrate wealth in the hands of the ultra-wealthy at the expense of the rest of the population. While employees typically see raises measured in pennies, CEO's and other company officers typically see raises measured in millions or tens of millions of dollars. In capitalist paradigms, this behavior is strongly reinforced and respected as "good business". The perpetrators of these crimes against the people are not even aware that they are committing a crime. They are unaware that they are doing anything wrong. This is because they have been enabled and even lavishly reinforced and lionized in indulging their wealth-and-power addictions.

These dynamics are the root of the problem. The root of these dynamics is the inherent bias of the Capitalist paradigm. Group is inevitably pitted against group, person against person (everybody needs to make more money, but opportunities for promotion are scarce). In this scenario, the most ruthless, aggressive, and economically powerful are always advantaged. This creates an ongoing redistribution of wealth and resources in the direction of the biggest and wealthiest and away from employees.

Marx appears to have been mistaken in that he underestimated the dissipating impact of disempowerment, alienation, and distraction on the population and the resultant metamorphosis of the society into a Feudalistic model thinly disguised by the illusion of freedom and opportunity. Most likely, the ultra-wealthy themselves do not see their own striking resemblance to the Feudal Lords of a thousand years ago. Marx anticipated that the dynamics of Capitalism would inevitably give rise to revolution and the rise of a classless society. We have seen movements arise in that direction, but such revolutions have been rare. The Soviet Union actually emerged out of a largely agrarian, semi-feudal environment in which capitalism had barely taken root.

Marx made a great contribution to the ongoing quest of paradigms that better empower, synergize, and serve the happiness, well-being and dignity of human beings and communities, as did the founders of the United States of America. Unfortunately, there have arisen historical, social, and economic processes that none of them foresaw or could have been expected to foresee.

When homes are utterly out of reach of the majority but there are affordable but trivial amenities, symbols of prosperity, and entertainment including drugs, alcohol, video games, sports, shows and more, people tend to immerse themselves in those things to maintain the sense of freedom and prosperity and to cope with stress. These distractions disperse and diffuse the emotional, mental, physical and social energy that would otherwise coalesce into recognition of the true situation and galvanize into action to remedy it. It is but a very cleverly crafted illusion that keeps people from confronting the bleakness of their real situation and the daunting, seemingly overwhelming prospect of trying to effect change in an environment saturated with cues, messages and propaganda that reinforce the sense of disempowerment, that the idea of bringing change is futile at best. "You can't fight City Hall; but, hey, there's free beer during Happy Hour and I can buy a big-screen on credit."

Marx said that religion is the opium of the people. Indeed at times it is abused in that way; but in the world of the late 20th and early 21st Centuries, gadgets, affordable status symbols, entertainment, video games and other pleasant diversions have largely taken on that role. These things, like religion, are not necessarily harmful in and of themselves; but they are skillfully used to give oppressed people a way to deal with their stresses and frustrations which channels their energies away from united, focused, concerted action to force a change of paradigm.

Those who occupy the upper echelons of the socio-political-economic pyramid are also not truly free, as they respond unconsciously to the psychological reinforcers of the capitalist paradigm, many becoming driven by an insatiable obsessively compulsive appetite for wealth and power over others. Many of the neo-Feudalistic Capitalist lords are caught in what has the hallmarks of a behavioural addiction, never recognised or treated, which has been enabled and allowed to run rampant, dominating their lives and wreaking untold harm upon billions around the world. Many are as bound to their place in this paradigm as a person with a gambling addiction is to the next bet. Though their cages are gilded and luxurious, the ruling Capitalist elite are also victims of a dysfunctional and vastly destructive paradigm.

That is one more demonstration of why the Capitalist paradigm is fundamentally flawed and cannot ever be expected to give rise to a free and thriving society of free and thriving individuals. This paradigm must be retired as an unsuccessful experiment that has failed to vindicate itself for the benefit of humankind.

Chapter 6: The Biggest Product of Modern-Day Capitalism Is Scarcity and Inaccessibility

People talk about freedom. In the United States, which presents itself to its citizens and the world as a bastion of freedom and human rights, the Declaration of Independence proclaims our unalienable rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, and the Constitution guarantees many more. Yet look at the reality.

Under the current socio-economic system, are we free to choose not to live by Capitalism, to not pay for our existence, even if we don't take from anybody or ask for a hand-out? Are we? Try it sometime.

You aren't allowed to live or create your sustenance on private property, which includes land owned by Corporations and wealthy people who aren't using it for anything. It includes land owned by companies who plan to use it in ways that will destroy it and render it uninhabitable for generations. Such corporations will make vast amounts of money off of it by fracking, strip mining or cutting down every tree. All of the good soil will wash away in the first rain, ending up in the ocean where it will destroy delicate balances that sustain huge areas of coastal ocean. Corporations are allowed to do this if they own the land. Such land is off-limits for you or me if we wish to live on or cultivate it.

So if not on private land, how about living on public land? Try parking your RV or sleeping in your car on a public street, pitching a tent in a park, crashing in an unused room in a public building, on a public street, while maybe cultivating a little bit of vacant land. Really, try it sometime. See how long it takes for the cops to come and force you to leave. Some cities have even given the cops the power to confiscate your tent, bedding and/or vehicle just to make it even harder to do it. Look it up. Research it for yourself.

You can't set up residence in a National or State park. You can't even live in a boat and moor your line to a place on shore where you are not bothering anybody. You must pay a slip fee at a marina or else own the land where it is moored. There is no legal way to live almost anyplace in the United States and other countries following the same economic paradigm, without paying someone for the privilege of occupying space.

If you cannot occupy space, then how can you exercise your rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, or any of your Constitutional rights? Apparently these rights would appear to apply only to disembodied spirits. If you don't have money, the economic system denies you the right to exist, even if you spend your days in service to your fellow human beings, even if you have an invention that could provide free energy to all, even if you are improving your surroundings in many ways. If on the other hand, you have wealth, then you have far more rights and freedoms than those guaranteed by the Constitution, even if you made your money in ways that devastated lives and the environment, causing immeasurable harm in the process.

So don't let anybody tell you the United States is a free country. It isn't. Not at all. Not as it is at this moment in history. It is Capitalism at the point of a gun. Literally.

Did you know that in much-slandered Communist Cuba most people own their homes outright, with no mortgage? A 1960 law made a place to live a right and turned tenants into owners after some years of reduced payments to the state (Peters 2014). Since 2011, homes may be bought and sold there, a change made under steady economic pressure, including a U.S. embargo maintained since the early 1960s. In the author's view, that is a step back from the original commitment rather than proof that it failed, and Capitalist pressures continue, steadily, to push Cuba toward the same paradigm. The U.S. Constitution must be planted in a fertile economic soil crafted with the nutrients of economy of, by and for the People if it is ever to thrive and embody government of, by and for the People and fulfill the promise of a free, democratic and empowered community for which it was intended to be a compass.

A logical question at this point is: how did almost all land come to be private property in the U.S.? It is an important question, because in a culture that considers ownership to be sacrosanct, to be "90 percent of the law," then it is vital to understand the basis of the construct called "ownership," especially of land.

This is not unique to the U.S., but its example is illustrative and typical of the histories of land ownership in most countries. The fact is that when the Europeans "discovered" the continent there were already an estimated 60 million people living in the Americas (Koch and colleagues, 2019), in many diverse cultures and nations, many of which had no concept of land ownership or any other Capitalist concepts.

Disease brought by Europeans killed most of the original population, often spreading ahead of the settlers themselves. War, massacre, enslavement and, in places such as 1850s California, state-funded campaigns of extermination did much of the rest (Madley, 2016), sometimes after the signing of treaties with no more intention of honoring them than Hitler had when he signed the Munich Agreement with Britain, France and Italy in 1938, or his non-aggression pact with Stalin in 1939. He broke the first within six months, and the second by invading the Soviet Union in 1941.

There were even occasions when blankets and clothing from smallpox wards were given to Native American nations as gifts of “good will”, in the hope of spreading the disease. The best-documented case, at Fort Pitt in 1763, was carried out by British officers during Pontiac’s War, before the United States existed, and historians find that such attempts were discussed more than once in eighteenth-century North America (Fenn, 2000).

Biological warfare itself is far older. Some of the recorded instances, from antiquity to the nineteenth century (Riedel, 2004), though it is not always possible to tell a deliberate attack from a natural epidemic:

- about 600 BCE: besiegers of Kirrha, in Greece, poisoned the city’s water supply with the toxic plant hellebore;
- 1155: Emperor Frederick Barbarossa’s forces poisoned the wells of Tortona, in Italy, with human bodies;
- 1346: Mongol forces besieging Caffa, in Crimea, reportedly hurled the bodies of plague victims over the city walls (Wheelis, 2002);
- 1422: during the siege of Karlštejn castle, in Bohemia, the bodies of dead soldiers were catapulted into the castle;
- 1495: Spanish forces near Naples reportedly sold their French enemies wine mixed with the blood of leprosy patients;
- 1710: Russian troops besieging Reval (now Tallinn) catapulted the bodies of plague victims into the city;
- 1763: British officers at Fort Pitt gave Delaware envoys blankets from the smallpox hospital;
- 1797: Napoleon flooded the plains around Mantua, in Italy, to spread malaria;
- 1863: during the American Civil War, Confederate agents tried to send clothing from yellow fever and smallpox patients into Union territory, and armies on both sides polluted the water sources of their enemies.

Biological warfare, in other words, is not the invention of the regimes our history books usually cast as villains. The colonial order that the United States inherited and carried on used it too.

Europeans exterminated the vast herds of buffalo that were an inexhaustible food supply for thriving populations of Native nations. Don't think of them as tribes. Think of them as nations, with their own languages, cultures, laws, religions and everything that defines a nation and a people. To call them “tribes” has come to carry the subtle implication that they were somehow not of the same stature and respect-worthiness as nations. Some lacked technologies the Europeans brought, such as firearms and steel, against which they had at first no effective defence; in other respects, many were far ahead of the Europeans of the time, in self-government, in the standing of women, and in deep knowledge of their land. When two cultures meet, a gap in one kind of knowledge or technology is a reason to learn from each other, not a licence for one to exploit the other.

Several administrations in Washington, and state governments, planned, funded and carried out the removal and, in places, the extermination of those nations. The parallel with Nazi Germany is not a rhetorical flourish: Hitler and Nazi planners themselves held up America’s conquest of the West as a model for their own war of conquest in the East (Kakel, *The American West and the Nazi East*, 2011; Whitman, *Hitler’s American Model*, 2017).

The U.S. government gave out the conquered land in grants to Europeans when the blood of the rightful occupants was not yet dry upon the soil. This is fact. This is history. If you weren’t there when homesteading and land-grants were being given out, then that opportunity to inhabit stolen lands is gone, over. You missed out. Since then, anybody who wants to live someplace has to pay someone for the privilege.

Now every square foot of land in the United States is either private property, or public land, both of which are off-limits to anybody unless they pay a price determined by an owner.

How can we respect that? How are we supposed to believe this is the natural order of things? That this is an inviolable and unassailable pillar of a civilized society? We cannot! One might as well move into a house confiscated from Jews who were forcibly removed to the extermination camps the day before yesterday. If you didn't know this history, then you are not to blame; but once you know the history, it is impossible to be at peace with it.

Thus we see that Capitalism produces scarcity of habitable spaces, enforces inaccessibility of the most basic necessity of life: a place to be. As seen in the chapter on Inflation, land prices in all Capitalist countries always rise over time, sharply out-pacing wage increases for all but very few. This translates into ongoing, relentless consolidation of land ownership into fewer and fewer hands: those of the new Feudal Lords of Capitalism. According to data in The Land Report, a magazine focusing on land ownership, from 2007 to 2017 the 100 largest landowners in the United States increased their holdings from 27,000,000 acres to 40,200,000 acres. The wealthiest 1% own 40% of U.S. non-home real estate. The top 10% together own 82%, which means the bottom 90% among them own only 18%. In 2017, the largest landowner in the United States, John Malone, owned 2,200,000 acres of land, more than the entire state of Delaware, in a country in which over half a million people are homeless. Between renters and people paying off mortgages, 76.34% of the people are paying every month to landlords and banks to keep the roofs over their heads. Eighty percent of residents of the United States live on 3% of the land. The resemblances to classical feudalism far exceed the differences.

What about other necessities of life? How does Capitalism produce scarcity?

One of the central principles in Capitalist paradigm is supply and demand.

For example, everybody needs water. So if I get control of the river way upstream and dam it, I can charge people the most I can squeeze out of them to release it to them. I have thereby created neither value, nor goods nor services. I have restricted access to a vital resource and hold it hostage for a price. If you don't pay my price, then you do not have access to water. Period.

Heed this prediction: instead of stopping the pollution of our air, when one day it will be unfit to breathe, some company will find a way to purify it and charge for the privilege of breathing it. This has already occurred to a small degree in Tokyo, where there are "oxygen bars" and oxygen stations for a cost, due to the high level of pollution in that city. If we do not fundamentally change the operating paradigm, some corporation will find a way to gain legal ownership of the air. Imagine having to pay for air. The regime in power in the United States at the time of this writing would love that and most certainly sanctify, justify, condone and enforce it.

Proponents like to call Capitalism "free enterprise," which looks like a good thing on paper, a guarantee of each person's right to survive by conducting business without government control. Motivation for this originated in Colonial times, when British Corporations and the Crown used the Colonies as economic tools, much as large international mega-Corporations use developing countries as economic tools to this day. The result benefited and enriched the Crown and its Companies to the detriment of the Colonists. In practice at this point in history, Capitalism truly is not "free enterprise" to any meaningful degree.

The Mom & Pop corner store cannot compete with Walmart or Target, who can afford to under-price them until they go belly up. So Mom & Pop go out of business. No one helps them. Then Mom & Pop end up working at Walmart or Target and can no longer pay their mortgage, so they end up quite possibly renting a place from a company owned by the company that owns the company that owns Walmart or Target.

Even though there was no help for Mom & Pop when their business had a catastrophic year, when Walmart or Target is about to go out of business the government (regardless of which party is in power) takes billions of citizens' tax dollars (Including from Mom & Pop who have meanwhile been laid off) to bail them out. In cases where the CEO is found to have caused the failure through incompetence or unethical practices, they are let go respectfully with a hundred million dollar

bonus for doing something that would have gotten you or me fired and a prison sentence had we done something similar on a small scale.

There are many renewable, sustainable alternative energy and transportation technologies that have been known since the 1970's and earlier. Yet for decades these were held back from replacing current fossil-fuel dependent technologies, in large part because gargantuan international petroleum corporations worked hard to perpetuate dependence on fossil fuels: Exxon's own scientists accurately projected global warming from the late 1970s on, while the company's public statements cast doubt on the very science its researchers had confirmed (Supran, Rahmstorf and Oreskes, 2023). In a world where a growing population is dependent on fossil fuels, the handful of individuals who control the mega-corporations that control access to and availability of fossil fuels has power undreamed-of by the most powerful kings and queens of yore. They can, to a large degree, set any price they want with no repercussions.

As described earlier in this writing, the oil shortages of the 1970s followed the 1973 Arab oil embargo during the Yom Kippur War and the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The embargo was itself a deliberate use of supply to move prices and achieve political ends, and oil companies' profits soared in both crises. The average U.S. price of a gallon of regular gasoline went from about $0.39 in 1973 to about $0.86 in 1979 and about $1.19 in 1980, and prices stayed far above their pre-1973 levels for years. Since then the oil companies have played all kinds of games with the price of petroleum and have gotten away with it because nobody sends in the Marines to their corporate offices or arrests their boards of directors to stand trial in the Hague for crimes against Humanity as they should. These corporations are more powerful than the governments of many sovereign countries.

The same is true of medicine in Capitalist countries. Pharmaceutical mega-corporations use patent laws, designed originally to protect individual inventors' rights to the proceeds from their inventions, to control access to often life-saving medications, often pricing them so high that only the ultra wealthy can hope to afford them. There are no consequences and no limitations on this behavior because Capitalist countries are functionally Corporatocracies – governments of, by and for mega-corporations and the Capitalist feudal lords who control them.

The examples are legion and ubiquitous. The evidence is incontrovertible: the largest single product of Capitalist economies is shortage, inaccessibility. It is by its very nature a win-lose-lose-lose-lose-lose-lose paradigm. Every dollar paid in salary to an employee, makes the Corporation many dollars richer.

Chapter 7: The Pyramid Scheme

For our own good and the good of the billions of people of the earth as well as for the survival of life on earth itself, it is clear that we need to focus on decomissioning the Capitalist socio-economic paradigm once and for all, so we can create a better, more sustainable paradigm. We need systems in its place that will serve and foster the happiness, well-being, freedom, dignity and mutual good of all members of the Human community, not for some at the expense of others.

There are many myths perpetuated in Capitalist societies that very effectively serve to keep the lion's share of the people focused on acting within the Capitalist paradigm to their own detriment. This dynamic functions similarly to Medieval European paradigms where the vast majority of serfs and peasants were kept compliant through religiously-based myths instructing them to be obedient and subservient in their life on earth in order to earn their place in Heaven.

One such modern myth is that, by studying people who are "making it" in order to learn what they know, their habits and ways, we can make it too by emulating them. This is a trap and an illusion. It is one of the ways we are kept divided, conquered, and playing the game as established by those at the top of the pyramid on their terms, ensuring that they stay in control and continue to get richer and more powerful.

In practice, even if you or I were to find a way to successfully ascend the economic pyramid, (and don't kid yourself, that is about as likely as coming up with the right "system" to beat the casino) the fact is that the Capitalist economic system is a pyramid scheme which cannot function unless the vast majority of people are kept down. It is set up that way. Your or my success would only serve to motivate those left behind to work harder at staying in the system, trying to climb in our footsteps. Sadly, almost none of them would ever be able to do so.

Consider what happened in slavery days when an individual slave was freed or managed to find a benefactor to purchase their freedom. An individual slave getting their freedom within that system did not end slavery. In fact, the freed slave could potentially become a slave owner, or more likely, be returned to slavery because a slave owner conveniently decided to consider their freedom papers a forgery.

It is dangerous to think primarily in terms of finding a way to make the system work for you. That mind-set keeps the system going and keeps you trapped in it. Yes, we do need to survive in the time before the Transition, but that is not enough. We need to plan, think and prepare to move beyond that socio-economic system and decommission it as the broken down polluting jalopy that it is in order to build something significantly more functional in its place that is based on human and environmental well being, sustainability and mutuality. This Capitalist system is inherently oppressive and destructive, with a reach into ordinary lives that the dictators of any era could only have envied. It was not conceived with that end in mind; but it has devolved into ever-escalating destructive cycles, racing in overdrive towards a new Feudal society that could last much longer than the original Medieval darkness did, unless the earth becomes barren and uninhabitable as a result of headlong exploitation and destruction of the biosphere.

Supply and demand sound innocent enough until a huge greedy bully, or rather a gang of huge greedy bullies, get control of the supply and restrict it so demand will be desperate, then set the price as high as possible.

The next step is to create the demand and control the supply. A prime case in point is to be seen in most of the newest cell phones, which are manufactured with the battery buried so deeply inside the phone that it is nearly impossible to replace it without destroying the phone. This is by design because manufacturers and telecom companies would rather force you to buy a new $850 phone when the battery won't hold a charge any more, instead of buying a $30 battery off of Amazon where they make no profit at all. There is absolutely no technological or engineering reason for this kind of design.

The Pyramid in Pictures

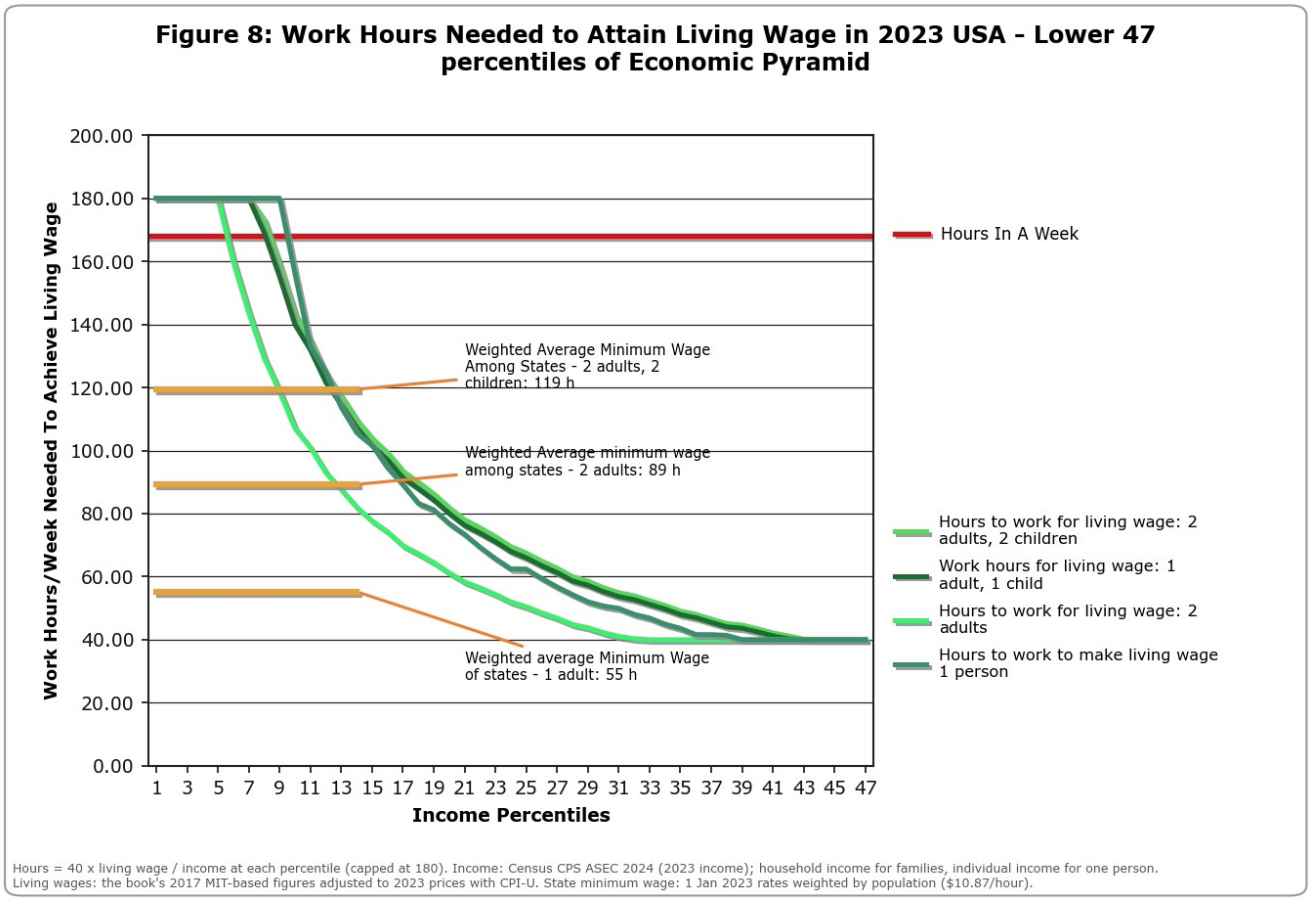
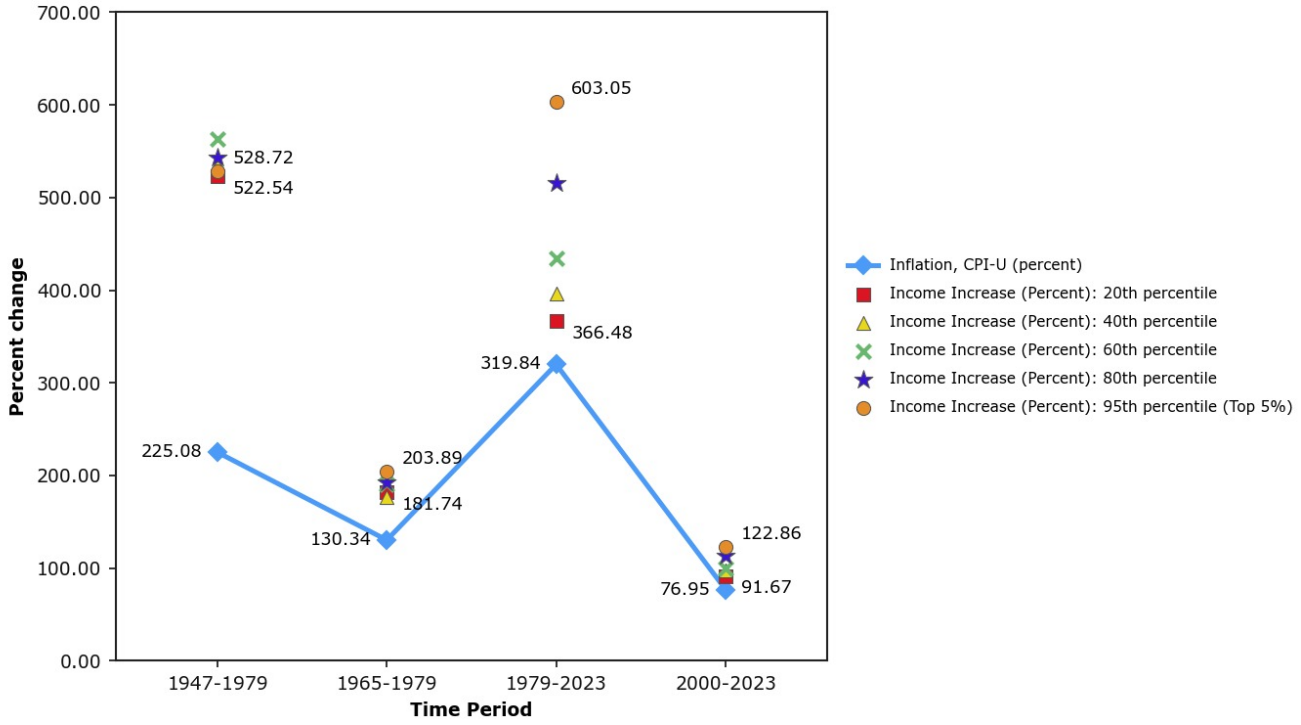


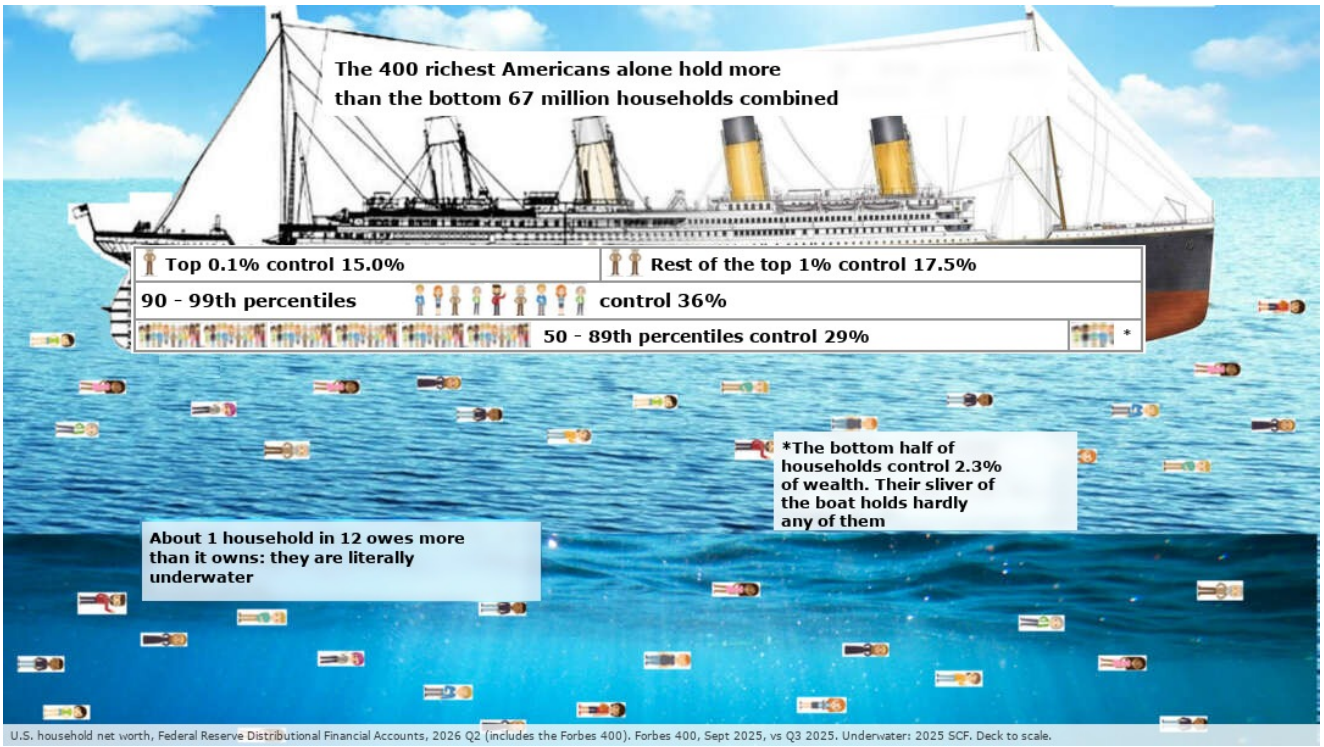
Figure 8: Work Hours Needed to Attain Living Wage in 2023 USA — Lower 47 Percentiles

Fig. 9b - Changes in Inflation Vs. Income at Key Historical Points

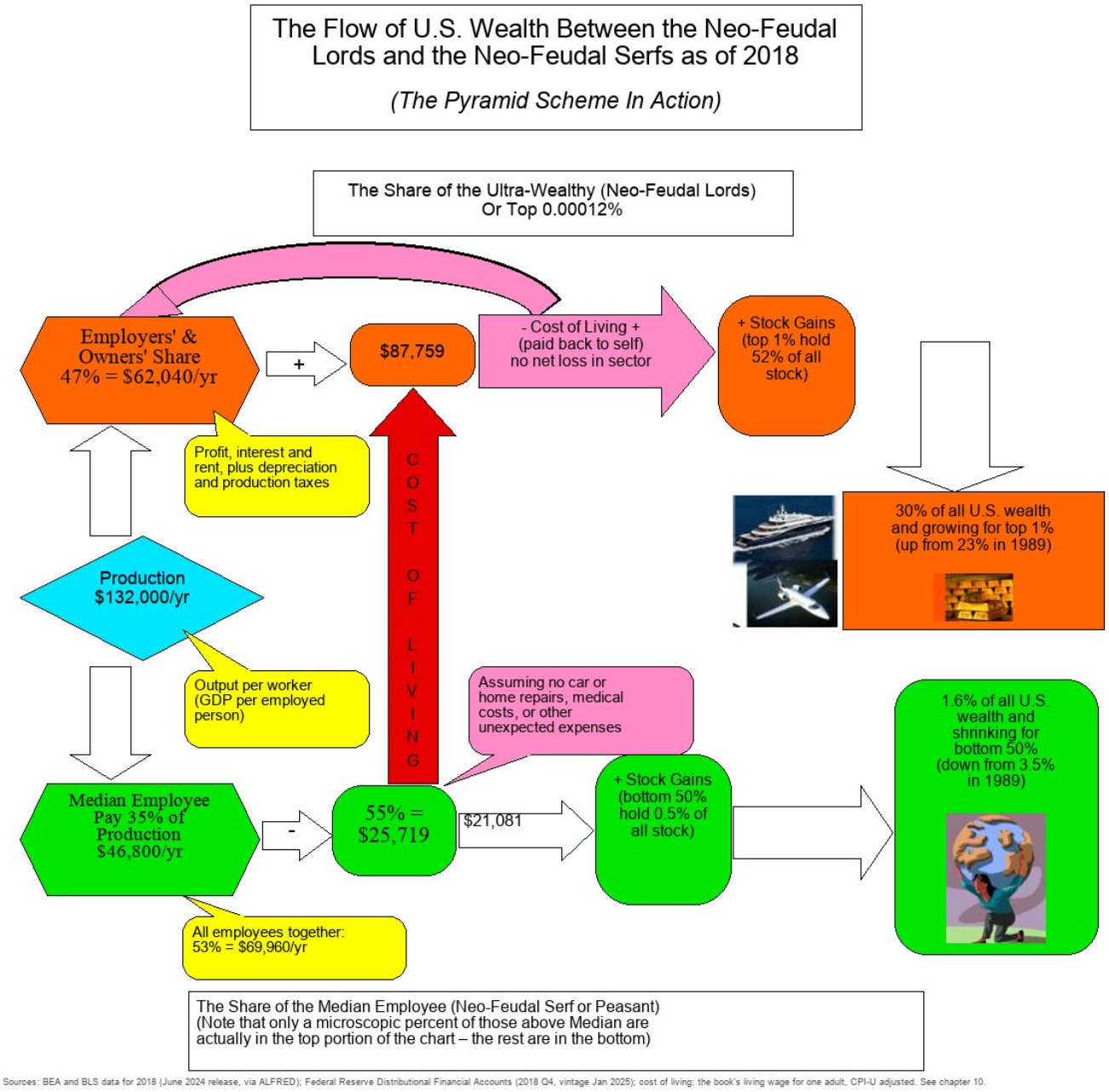


Change in money income at each percentile of families, from the first year to the last year of each period, against the change in consumer prices over the same years.
Income: U.S. Census Bureau, CPS ASEC, Table F-1, income limits of each fifth of families, 1947-2023 (Sep 2024 release). Prices: CPI-U annual averages (BLS via ALFRED, vintage Jan 2025).
All income, not only wages. A point above the blue line means income at that level grew faster than prices.

Figure 9b: Changes in Inflation vs. Income at Key Historical Points



The Pyramid Scheme In Action: U.S. Wealth Distribution, 2026



The Flow of U.S. Wealth Between the Neo-Feudal Lords and the Neo-Feudal Serfs (2018)

Chapter 8: The Casualties of Capitalism: Humanity, Compassion and Common Sense

In Capitalist paradigms your rights are directly determined by your wealth or lack thereof. In practice this overrides any legal or Constitutional guarantees or assertions to the contrary.

Let's look at analogies from engineering and the physical world.

If there were a squadron of aircraft airlifting supplies across a mountain range, the more powerful aircraft will logically be more heavily loaded than the smaller aircraft. If upon approaching the mountains it becomes clear that certain aircraft cannot reach the necessary altitude, then the squadron will land and redistribute the load, moving heavy items from the weaker to the stronger aircraft so that all will clear the mountains.

The same principle would apply to a flotilla of boats. If one boat were sitting low in the water and in danger of sinking, then weight would be redistributed to larger boats that could accommodate the added mass without danger of sinking.

On a bridge, if certain supports are found to be weak and in danger of collapsing while other supports are more than strong enough to support the expected load upon them, then the weaker supports are strengthened, even if it means temporarily closing the bridge for safety reasons. No engineer in the world would waste resources strengthening the strong supports and increasing the load on the weaker supports. Such an engineer would be fired.

Likewise in electrical wiring, if there are multiple circuits available to power an array of equipment, the equipment that draws the most power is plugged into the circuits that can carry the most amperage. No electrician would connect a 200 amp piece of equipment to a circuit that can only carry 40 amps while connecting a 1 amp piece of equipment to a circuit that can carry 500 amps.

Yet under Capitalist paradigms, the norm is to strengthen and to lighten the burdens upon the economically strongest, while placing the heaviest burdens upon and providing the least amount of support to those individuals and sectors of society that can least bear them. Anything contrary to this is almost always the result of strong sustained public activism against this scenario. Such activism eventually puts enough pressure on politicians and legislators to force them to pass laws protecting the weaker sectors of the community. This inevitably comes in the face of strong, well-funded strenuous opposition from the stronger sectors, the smallest minority who wield the vast portion of the power and control the vast majority of resources. Such gains are inevitably and systematically eroded, subverted and reversed over time through sustained action of this same sector of neo-Feudal lords.

Examples abound in every aspect of Capitalist societies.

In the United States, at the time of the financial crash in 2008, Presidents of both dominant parties took billions of dollars of taxpayers' money to "bail out" gigantic corporations that were in danger of going out of business due to reckless unethical practices driven by unbridled greed. The CEO's of these companies received bonuses and exit packages worth tens of millions of dollars even though they were among those most responsible for these abuses. Even the CEO's who were pushed out received such packages. Some of these corporations proceeded to host lavishly opulent meetings for their senior leadership to discuss the crisis, while freezing employees' wages as austerity measures to reduce expenses.

The unprecedented tax breaks given to corporations and the neo-Feudal lords starting in 2017 were publicized by their perpetrators as a measure that would lead to the creation of more and better jobs while benefiting the economy and the American people. In fact, as was observed in the 1980's when this "trickle-down economics" was first tried in the United States, the corporations took their windfall billions and performed stock buy-backs (Gravelle and Marples, Congressional Research Service, 2019), thus concentrating the wealth more firmly into the hands of the few at the top of the pyramid and even giving extra bonuses to CEO's. Many companies used the funds to lay off thousands of employees and close facilities (Nassauer, "Walmart to Trim Store Management Ranks," Wall Street Journal, 2018; Peterson, "Walmart Is Abruptly Closing

63 Sam's Club Stores," Business Insider, 2018; Brodkin, Ars Technica, 2018). Layoffs cost employers money because they are required to provide severance pay and other compensations to laid-off employees. The only jobs created were sub-living wage jobs, while many living or just-over-living wage jobs were eliminated.

Meanwhile wages stagnated. In 2018 most employees got only a small tax cut, about $40 a year for the poorest fifth, while the richest 1% got about $33,000 each and corporations got a permanent rate cut. The cuts for ordinary people were written to expire after 2025, while the corporate cut was permanent; under the law as passed, about half of all taxpayers would have paid more by 2027 (Tax Policy Center). The 2025 follow-up law made the pattern plain: with its cuts to Medicaid and food assistance, the poorest fifth of households lose about $700 a year, while the richest fifth gain about $5,700 (Yale Budget Lab). The national debt skyrocketed as the Neo-Feudal lords consolidated their wealth and control. The legislators who passed the law, being willingly and fully compliant to the will of the neo-Feudal lords, propose to offset this out-of-control debt by eliminating all forms of aid and support for the weakest through median economic sectors of the population.

Meanwhile, small businesses that find themselves in the same position are allowed to fail. The businessmen or businesswomen behind them are left to fend for themselves and held personally liable for the debts of their businesses. There is no significant help for them. Yet the taxes they pay are harvested to fund the mega-corporation bail-outs.

For the individual who makes a living as an employee, the situation is even more dire. When a large corporation or ultra wealthy person experiences a bank overdraft, the bank works with them and waives penalties. When a typical citizen or small business experiences an overdraft, they are subject more often than not to penalties that recur and multiply rapidly into a crippling burden. The worse a person's financial situation, the less banks are willing to work with them, give them a break or waive a fee.

Yes, as Capitalist apologists like to emphasize, there are a few people who choose to spend more than they have; but they are the minority among the lower reaches of the pyramid. Such practices are actually much more prevalent among those near the top of the economic Pyramid. We must also take into consideration that all sectors of the population are constantly awash in a sea of advertisements and a cultural environment that strongly reinforces consumptive behavior.

The typical person's or small business bank account can easily get overdrawn because of timing issues (a bill gets charged before a paycheck comes in) or because, by design, the person is paid barely or less than a living wage. It can also happen because of an unexpected unavoidable expense that depleted their savings, if they had any. To a person living paycheck to paycheck, a rent or mortgage increase, unexpected house or car repairs or dental visit can drive their bank account into the minus.

People in this situation are barely surviving, no matter how frugal they may be. Yet banks in the United States penalize them $35 every few days for any overdraft. It is not uncommon for a small overdraft of less than a dollar to escalate into an overdraft of hundreds of dollars that the bank will take from them. This creates a vicious cycle that can lead to homelessness, inability to keep a job, crippling stress and loss of all quality of life, compounding the plight of hard-working people. Banks strongly select against compassion on the part of their employees – there is a growing trend for bank accounting software to not allow account managers or customer service agents to override or reverse penalty fees. This is absurd, illogical and self-defeating, even for the banks themselves. The more they add fees and penalties to the burden of people in that predicament, the less likely they are to be paid what they are asking. But that doesn't stop them from ruining lives.

Banks also charge fees for having less than a certain minimum amount in an account, less than a certain average amount over time, or for more than or less than an arbitrary amount of activity on the account, while they reward accounts with huge amounts. For people living on a barely or sub-living wage, these fees for not having enough money in the account can push an account that is a few dollars positive into the negative and trigger the cycle of overdraft fees without the account holder spending a penny.

One can easily imagine a person living on sub to barely-over-living income who is down to under $10 a week before their next paycheck. This person prudently and reasonably refrains from making any purchases until their paycheck comes in. Then when it does, they discover their account is several hundred dollars short of what it should be. When they call the bank, it turns out that a week before the paycheck came in, the bank charged the client a service fee, plus a penalty fee for

not enough activity and yet another penalty fee for not maintaining a sufficiently large account balance. This caused the account to go negative, resulting in overdraft fees, which compounded until the paycheck came in at which time these fees were all deducted. The bank employee scolded the client for being financially irresponsible and said that they couldn't reverse the fees. The victim then does not have enough money to meet living expenses until the next paycheck. The cycle escalates until six months later the victim is living in their car. It is not hard to imagine because all too often it does happen.

This is identical to strengthening the strong supports of a bridge while adding more load to the weakest supports, or removing weight from a boat riding high in the water to place it in a boat on the verge of sinking, or redistributing more to supplies to the weaker aircraft from the stronger aircraft before crossing the mountains. The result is that the citizen loses and the bank loses too because the client will be increasingly unable to pay. In the end the bank will end up paying to collect what they have decided they are owed. All parties lose and the lives of struggling human beings are devastated.

Credit card companies follow similar practices. When a client cannot pay the minimum payments, the card company raises the interest rate from sometimes as low as zero or single digits to as high as 35%, making it virtually impossible for the debtor to realistically ever be able to pay off the balance in their lifetime, since the most likely reason why they couldn't pay the minimum in the first place was extreme financial hardship.

Eventually, after repeated harassing calls and letters to the debtor, the account is sent to collections, which leads to an offer to settle for less than the total amount but only if paid in large amounts. For example if the debtor owes $1,000, the collection agency may call the debtor and offer to settle the account with one payment of $500, with no possibility of dividing it into payments. This defies logic and common sense. If a person is in dire enough financial straits that they cannot make a payment of $50/month, then it is clearly illogical to assume that they will be able to make a lump sum payment of $500.

These behaviors on the part of credit card companies and others, lead to a lose-lose situation. The debtor is already stressed and struggling, not surviving on their income. Increasing their debt arbitrarily to punish them for this situation only serves to increase their stress, destroy their quality of life, and reduce their ability to pay off their debts. The credit card companies also lose because, as stated earlier, these behaviors reduce or even obliterate the debtor's ability to pay off the debt, which leads to the credit card company having to expend resources on collections and settle for less than the full amount, possibly paying legal fees if they choose to take the debtor to court. Nobody wins, everybody loses and yet banks, credit card companies and others continue to follow these practices.

A number of recent articles spell out in detail how the current Capitalist paradigm places the greatest burdens on those least able to carry them, thus benefiting nobody (Ehrenreich, The Atlantic, 2014; "It Is Expensive to Be Poor," The Economist, 2015). For the economically weak and disempowered, financial help is less available and loan interest rates are much higher. One is more likely to incur more frequent and higher fees and penalties including reconnection fees, late fees, overdraft fees and the added interest brought on by having to purchase on credit and make minimum payments. Financial planning and investment opportunities are impossible. One is more likely to be unable to keep one’s car insurance, registration and other costs current, opening one up to geometrically escalating fines, loss of license, impounding of one’s vehicle and inability to pay the fines with the added burden of taking longer to get to and from work if there is even public transportation. One is more likely to have more expensive debilitating car and other repairs because one can’t afford to keep up with routine maintenance and minor repairs. The same is true of medical and dental costs. Buying in bulk is not an option, and accessible stores are often those that sell small quantities at gouged prices. If one can’t afford first and last month’s rent plus security deposit, much less qualify for a mortgage, then in order to not be homeless one must pay for lodging by the day which is much more expensive than by the month. One’s physical and mental health are compromised by stress, overwork, and poor nutrition because healthy foods are out of reach, and likely living in more polluted and crime-ridden areas. One often pays a much higher percentage of one’s income in taxes than the wealthiest individuals and corporations. The list is nearly endless.

One of the classic definitions of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results. The current economic paradigm is illogical, impractical, inhumane, cruel, wasteful, self-defeating and has no justification in any conceivable framework. It is equivalent to adding weight to the weakest supports of a bridge.

Of course the ultra-wealthy and gigantic corporations at the top of the economic pyramid are unlikely to ever find themselves unable to pay their debts; but when they are, banks and credit companies are always ready and willing to work with them to make it easy for them to repay debts. This is the same as strengthening the strongest supports of a bridge and makes about as much sense.

Here again we see that given the psychosocial reinforcers that operate under Capitalist paradigms, money and profit are valued far above human beings, who inevitably suffer as a result. The dysfunctionality of the paradigm is clearly evident in the inevitable observable and predictable trajectory of Capitalist principles in practice.

The use of credit scores, financial status and history to judge and evaluate people is further evidence of the ultimate unworkability and anti-humanity of the Capitalist paradigm. In the United States a person's chances of finding a place to live, transportation, and sometimes even a job are heavily impacted and determined by their credit scores and financial situation. The weakest members of our community are effectively shackled, weighted down and excluded from the possibility of changing their situation, even more than their less-unfortunate peers, just by virtue of their situation.

As Medieval society believed that Feudal Lords were in power over serfs and peasants because God had made them more capable and worthy, so Capitalist society perpetuates the same circular logic: that the ultra-wealthy are there because they are superior and deserve to be, while the disenfranchised and poor are there because they are inferior and deserve to be where they are. This is just as insidious, dangerous, destructive and untenable a myth as was its earlier incarnation in the European Middle Ages.

In practice this means that those in a strong financial situation will always be given extra consideration, support, respect, benefit of the doubt and opportunities, whereas those in weak or catastrophic financial situations are effectively doomed and locked into those situations. Employers, landlords and others who have the power to grant or deny access to the necessities of life, will deny persons access simply because of their weakened financial situation. Let the hungry starve and let the wealthy feast upon their meat. That is the essence of the mentality and "value system" that Capitalism fosters, engenders, reinforces and enforces.

In other spheres of endeavor as well, the greatest burden in Capitalist paradigms is primarily on those members of the community who can least bear it.

For example, the U.S. Constitution places the legal burden of proof in a court of law on the prosecution or plaintiff. This plus the presumption of innocence is intended to protect citizens, individuals, from being judged unfairly by rigged courts.

Under Capitalist paradigms, this noble intention goes awry and works against those it was intended to protect when the individual citizen brings criminal charges or a civil suit against a mega-corporation or one of the ultra-wealthy at the top of the economic pyramid. In this scenario, the presumption of innocence works against the victim and protects the perpetrators, especially when the concept of "corporate personhood" comes into play.

This is how it works. In most instances where an individual has been physically, psychologically, emotionally, financially or otherwise abused or wronged by their employer, bank, or landlord, the burden is on the victim to prove that a crime or abuse has been committed. If a corporation or member of the ruling elite is clever, which they almost always are in such matters, then the task of proving discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination or other injustice is an upward battle for the victim.

Mega-Corporations and the ultra-wealthy all keep top-notch legal teams on retainer to service them and only them for whatever comes up. The individual employee, consumer or citizen who has been wronged or harmed is almost always utterly unable to afford any but the worst lawyers, if any. Public defenders are assigned to persons without means who are accused of a crime; but when the plaintiff or petitioner, the wronged party, is a person without means, then they are pretty much on their own.

There are low or no-cost legal aid organizations, which are universally far too understaffed to help more than a tiny fraction of people who need their services. Low-income Americans get no legal help, or not enough, for 92% of their substantial civil

legal problems (Legal Services Corporation, 2022). Attorneys at the low end of the scale charge more for an hour than most clients make in a day or two; the best ones charge more in an hour than most clients make in 2–4 weeks. For most people this means an attorney is out of the question. So the wronged party going up against a Capitalist Feudal Lord or Corporation, is in the position of a half-starved and beaten Christian in a gladiatorial bout against a top-string team of professional extreme fighters and their trained lions.

It is common practice in many companies to surreptitiously keep negative files and performance reviews on every low and mid-level employee, in order to be able to easily fire the employee without having to provide severance and other payments that they would legally owe the employee if they laid them off. Employees are generally not aware of these files and reviews, having had positive reviews and been led to believe that things are fine.

Employers are almost always successful in staging such situations to appear to the court that the employee was the problem and that the lawsuit or charges against the employer or member of the ruling elite is merely a shoddy and tawdry attempt on the part of a substandard employee to smear the good name of the benevolent company or elite member. This is skillfully played out in such a way that the wealthy or corporate party, knowing they are in a strong, almost unassailable position, appears calm and reasonable while the wronged employee or private citizen who is aware that the proceedings are stacked against them, tends to become angry and upset, which can easily be manipulated to bring their mental health into question and make them appear an irrational, vindictive, petty person. It is the same strategy used by abusive spouses to make themselves appear the long-suffering, caring concerned one and their victim appear to be the crazy irrational unstable one.

Corporate Personhood also shields individuals responsible for such offenses from any personal responsibility. Proving discrimination, harassment or wrongful termination is notoriously difficult. It is easy to make the person bringing the charges or lawsuit appear crazy, frivolous or of doubtful character. If the prosecution or plaintiff does not meet the burden of proof ("beyond a reasonable doubt" for a criminal case, "preponderance if evidence" for a civil suit), the court will automatically find the defendant or respondent innocent. There are exceptions; but as a rule, a large corporation or ultra wealthy person will only lose such a case if they have been so blatant, obvious and stupid that the case is provable against them, or if there are witnesses or a paper trail that cannot be impeached.

As you read this, capitalism, as it now operates, behaves like an aggressive cancer. Football can be dangerous too, but no one is forced to play it; people choose it knowing the risks. No one chooses to play this game. Wherever it holds power, everyone must take part simply to have a roof and food. And like a cancer, it does not live in peace beside other ways of life. It crowds them out. It treats every community it reaches as a market, a source of labour or a resource to extract, and works against those that will not become one.

When Chileans elected a government in 1970 that set out to bring the country's copper mines and major industries into public hands, the U.S. government answered with years of covert action. The CIA tried to provoke a coup to stop the new president from taking office, and after the military overthrew him in 1973, it actively supported the junta that ruled Chile for the next seventeen years (CIA, *CIA Activities in Chile*, 2000).

The crowding-out reaches into the home. In much of the United States, zoning law decides who may live together. In 1974 the Supreme Court upheld a village ordinance that let any number of relatives share a house, but no more than two unrelated people (*Village of Belle Terre v. Boraas*). Rules like this remain common. Whatever their intent, their effect is to make it hard for people to pool homes, land and work, and to form the kind of communities that could meet their needs outside the market.

The pattern did not end with the Cold War. On 3 January 2026, U.S. forces entered Venezuela, abducted its sitting president, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife, and flew them to New York to stand trial. Maduro's government was autocratic and stands accused of grave abuses, and he and his wife may well have crimes to answer for. But that is a matter for Venezuela's own institutions. UN human rights experts and international lawyers described the operation as a violation of the UN Charter, which forbids any state from using force on another's territory without its consent (Al Jazeera, 2026). Within the year, under that pressure, Venezuela's interim government agreed to give the U.S. government majority control of a new venture covering seventeen oilfields (House of Commons Library, 2026). The same administration announced that Cuba

would receive no more Venezuelan oil, threatened tariffs on any country that supplies it, and declared Cuba a threat to U.S. national security; in March its president said “Cuba is next,” before asking reporters to disregard the remark (Africanews; The Star).

Healthy cells respect the boundaries of the tissues around them. Cancer cells ignore those boundaries, invade, and take for themselves what the body needs. Nations that respect one another’s sovereignty behave like the first. This is the second.

It is more urgent than ever to stop this spread, and to replace it with a paradigm designed on sound psychosocial principles: one that is sustainable and good for the people who live in it.

A society or civilization that deems itself successful and prosperous because its financial indicators are good, even though the vast majority of its members are withering and dying in despair, is a gravely and critically failing society. It is time, for everybody's sake, to decommission it and redesign from the ground up, guided by what brings out the most constructive attitudes and behaviors in human beings vs. what destroys.

Chapter 9: The Lure and Illusion of Entrepreneurship

Under Capitalist paradigms, as discussed elsewhere in this writing, the economic pyramid is structured so that for the most part one's labor, time, expertise and other work earns one bare subsistence or less, with few exceptions. Truly significant amounts of currency are generally only attainable through investment of large sums of currency or other wealth in stock exchanges, real estate or other investments. This perpetuates the Pyramid by ensuring that with very few exceptions - just enough exceptions to keep the illusion alive that anybody can "make it," - only those at or near the top of the pyramid have the means to amass enough to secure their life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, respect, high degree of freedom and options.

In such a setting, many in the sub to barely-over-living wage sectors of the Pyramid look to the idea of starting their own business, being their own boss, becoming an entrepreneur in the hopes and belief that it will afford them greater freedom, dignity, and possibility of amassing enough wealth to be able to buy and secure their life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. The statistics are sobering. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, roughly 80% of new business establishments survive their first year, only about half survive five years, and only about a third are still operating after ten. (Figures such as "90% fail" circulate widely but are not supported by government data.) And survival is not the same as success: it commonly takes two to three years or more for a small business to become profitable, and during that time most owners live on savings, loans or credit. For someone with little capital, that is a high-risk gamble, while those who already have capital can absorb the losses and try again. Of those that succeed in becoming self-sustaining, a vanishingly small number actually yield the kind of quantum increase in freedom and quality of life that are envisioned by the people who start them.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Business Employment Dynamics, establishment survival by birth year, total private sector (for example, of establishments born in 1994, 79.6% survived one year, 49.6% five years and 33.6% ten years; for those born in 2010, 78.6%, 51.1% and 35.3%); BLS establishment age and survival data.

There are numerous obstacles to entrepreneurship. For anybody living paycheck to paycheck or even able to save a little money, the costs of starting a business are beyond their reach. They must turn to a bank, venture capitalist, or other person or entity who is high enough in the Pyramid to have sufficient funds to loan, and convince them to invest in or loan money for the venture. Most such people and institutions are not inclined to make such a loan to an applicant who is financially barely getting by, with very rare exceptions.

The cost of starting a business legally is almost always quite high. Most businesses require a physical location, licenses, permits, fees, inspections, equipment, and many other up-front costs. It typically takes at least a few years for a new business to reach the break-even point and begin to make a profit. In the meantime the business owner must either have other financial resources to live and run the business from, or must go deeper into debt. For the majority of people in the lower reaches of the Pyramid, this is simply not possible, no matter how strong their work ethic may be.

Competition is fierce and relentless. The small starting business must compete with established businesses small and large, including chains and corporations that can easily afford to undercut the new business long enough to make them fail. The small business simply cannot afford to take a constant loss by pricing below cost. Mega-corporations, large businesses and chains can and frequently do use these tactics to eliminate smaller neighborhood businesses. They often own or have preferred relationships with their supply chains that are not accessible to small businesses.

For the huge majority of aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners, their venture leads to exhaustion, more debt and stress. Among those small businesses that become solvent and self-sustaining, the living it affords the owner and employees is not much better than would come with a typical job. The main difference is more aesthetic than financial, which for some people is important; but it is a difficult trade-off.

In addition, only people with a good talent for business and knowledge of how to run one will have any realistic chance of succeeding. The world is full of excellent, hard-working artists, artisans, chefs, opticians, craftspeople, technicians, masseurs, painters, roofers, mechanics and more who carry crushing debt because their talents and skills did not include those necessary to succeed in business.

Beyond traditional brick-and-mortar businesses, there are now online businesses that are attractive because of the generally lower start-up costs. But in order to succeed, the online entrepreneur must face even fiercer competition and find a niche that is not already saturated. One must master the art of becoming favored by search engines, which often involves paying money to get higher priority, having a high degree of technical knowledge and skill, and being a consummate marketer/promoter/advertiser. The overall prospects are not much more favorable than with traditional businesses.

Lastly, there are the Multi-Level Marketing and Network Marketing outfits. A large percentage of them are pure scams, so the prospective MLM'er must do a lot of research to make sure that the company they select is legitimate and actually affords the possibility of making income legally.

These companies all have certain things in common, though the details vary quite a bit. The “prospect” (You) will be invited to a “business” or “opportunity” meeting where you will hear glowing descriptions and testimonials about the incredible business and the amazing income to be made in pursuing it. They all highlight the fact that most jobs are barely or sub-living wage and carry a lot of stress and loss of dignity (“JOB = Just Over Broke” is a common argument). They all point out that at most jobs the employee is working hard for bare subsistence while making someone else rich.

Some "business opportunity" presenters even point out the fact that the dominant economic setup is a pyramid scheme, and then put forth their company as an alternative to this, emphasizing the concepts of owning one's own business, being one's own boss, having no ceiling on one's possible income, accessible promotion opportunities, lower start-up costs than with traditional businesses, and the possibility of "getting in" with no experience or background. Sadly, though they point out some of the flaws in the Capitalist paradigm, they do not seek to motivate people to abandon the pyramid and replace it with a more viable paradigm. Instead, they offer themselves as a way to be among those who ascend high on the pyramid. As for the rest, the implication is that if they aren’t interested, then they made their choice and deserve what they get.

Success stories are shared of people who joined the business after heartbreaking struggles getting nowhere, who are now making "six figures." In those MLM’s which are actually legitimate, these claims are mostly true.

The majority of them also present their goods and/or services and business model as superior to others, offering multiple ways to sign up: as a customer (get a discount on these awesome products), or as a business owner (agent, associate, representative, consultant, etc). They offer a choice of several levels of business membership, typically 3 or 4 levels that can be summed up as basic, mid-level, and deluxe with maybe a super-deluxe option. Some allow you to upgrade after joining at a lower level, some don't.

Levels typically have impressive-sounding names like Entrepreneur level, Presidential Level, and CEO Level. In addition, one can advance up a ladder of increasingly status-implying titles as one achieves greater levels of success, business volume and recruitment stats. Typical titles are either status symbol names like Diamond, Black Diamond, Double Black Diamond, etc. or Silver, Gold, Platinum, Uranium, Plutonium; or they may have corporate executive sounding names like Executive, Manager, District Manager, Regional Manager, Regional Vice President, etc.

These businesses will usually offer to train new members, which the legitimate ones in fact do, though the quality of training depends on the person who signed you up. A lot is said about "hard work" which in practice is 2 things: sales and recruitment. This is not usually emphasized. In fact, prospective recruits are often told that it is not sales, that it is really more like helping people.

Buy-in costs range from a few dollars to thousands of dollars. Some involve recurring monthly fees. Some involve buying a minimum amount of product monthly. Some require the member to purchase product to sell; others do not.

In all of these types of businesses, one hears the expression: "It's a numbers game." One is usually, though not always, encouraged or required to try to recruit and sell first to family and friends, then to expand through a variety of methods to sell to the wider public. One is usually told they need to sell to 10 - 20 people a day in order to generate a sufficient ongoing steam of new customers and recruits to generate a living income. It is ongoing and never-ending.

There are indeed individuals who thrive in these kinds of businesses; but in practice the overwhelming majority of people who join them invest a lot of time, effort and money but are never able to significantly improve their situation (in a 2018 survey of people who had sold for such companies, nearly half lost money, about a quarter broke even, and only about a quarter made a profit, more than half of them less than $5,000; AARP Foundation, 2018), often doing the MLM business in every spare moment while working their sub or barely living wage jobs. Almost all people who sign up for these businesses are occupants of the lower reaches of the Pyramid, since those few high enough up the Pyramid to be able to purchase their Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness have no need to seek a way to get to where they already are.

While it is in fact possible to ascend the Pyramid through such businesses, in practice very few actually do. In order to succeed to that degree, one needs certain innate talents, abilities, skills, and a certain kind of personality and mindset, including a passion for the business at an almost religious level of intensity. One must be a natural "closer," willing to alienate family and friends if that's what it takes to succeed in the business. One must be comfortable viewing every person one meets as either a potential customer and/or recruit, or else not worth one's time. One must be prepared to live, breathe and sleep the business. One's passion for the business must be equivalent to that of an evangelical missionary, a political or ideological activist, or someone in the grip of a compulsion. If these characteristics don't describe you, then you are unlikely to be successful using these businesses as a way to buy your life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, respect, freedom, and quality of life under Capitalist paradigms.

There are just enough people who are able to thrive this way, to perpetuate the illusion that this is a viable alternative, a way out, a way up, to keep aspiring people signing up. Like all Capitalist paradigms, this is another pyramid scheme and not a true alternative to mainstream Capitalism.

Unfortunately, the Capitalist paradigm is inherently unstable and cannot be made to enhance and sustain the happiness, well-being and empowerment of the people, nor can it be adjusted or modified to foster a symbiotic, synergistic, win-win set of relationships among individuals and sectors of the community. Just as a lead balloon cannot be expected to fly or even float, the only way to create meaningful change in the direction of significantly greater empowerment, happiness and well-being is to transition to an entirely new paradigm based on a whole new set of principles and criteria.

Chapter 10: Metrics

Traditional metrics that purport to measure the health and vitality of a socio-economic community have failed miserably to paint an accurate picture. Such metrics include Gross National Product, Gross Domestic Product, the performance of stock exchanges, the value of local currency on the world market and more similar statistics.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Attempting to craft metrics that at least paint an approximately accurate picture is problematic, to say the least. For example, how does one compare the cost of living in 1900 with that in 2010? Those years describe very different worlds. It can be approximated but it is also subjective to a great degree and difficult to substantiate.

There are some basic quantities and concepts that can be translated, however. For example, a dollar in 1900 is very different from a dollar in 2019, and a typical living in 1900 is very different from a typical living in 2019. Instead of figuring out how much a dollar was worth at any particular time and how much a house, food, etc. cost, we might get a more accurate and true measure of the economy from the working person's perspective, by looking at how many hours of work a month it takes/took to have the basics of life, which themselves change with time. (For example, in our parents' time, one needed to pay for ice to be delivered for the ice box; whereas today Internet access is a basic in many places, because it is necessary even just to look for a job and pay bills).

In the appendix of this writing is a graphical representation and analysis from this perspective. One thing that becomes clear is that the generally accepted standard work week of 40 hours is nowhere near enough to survive upon for ¼ to ⅓ of working Americans at their rate of pay. To survive in this context means living paycheck-to-paycheck, able to pay necessary expenses as long as no extra expenses occur, such as car repairs, dentist visits, non-covered medical expenses, or raises in rent or mortgage. It is more difficult to define the amount of hours or money necessary to purchase secure and reliable access to Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness, beyond living paycheck-to-paycheck, because the kinds of events that can sink a barely-floating family or individual are so varied and unpredictable. There have also been fluctuations over the past century, which are detailed in the appendix.

There are also expenses that can be measured in terms of hours that will not show up in any analysis done in terms of currency. Commute time, for example, has a huge impact upon one's quality of life, degree of freedom and access, as does the amount of time that one has to devote to family and to one's own well-being. This is rarely figured into analyses of the cost of living. It is a very real cost nevertheless.

If one is unable to afford a vehicle and does not live in a city such as New York, Chicago, London, Paris, or Moscow that has an excellent public transportation system, and if one's job is not close to one's home, then commute times are a major cost. In cities such as Los Angeles, California in the United States, for example, commute times of an hour in each direction are considered reasonable. Indeed, a job-seeker unwilling to undertake such a commute is downgraded as an applicant. Yet if one adds an hour commute to the total of one's work hours, it has a major impact. If you work a 9-hour day including lunch and breaks, and commute an hour each way, then your 9-hour day is really an 11-hour day. If you are fortunate enough to get the medically recommended 8 hours of sleep, then you only have 5 hours a day for anything but work or sleep. You need to get dressed, shower, eat, perform household chores, pay bills and more. By the time all is said and done, you are lucky if you have a couple of hours a day for self and family. If you have a job that requires some work at home, then even less.

Doing the math, we see that an hour's commute each way translates to 10 hours a week, assuming a 5-day work week, or 40 hours per month which adds up to 520 hours each year, which comes to a grand total of 21.66 days a year spent commuting. In practical terms, in such a job you are spending over 3 weeks in traffic out of every year, just commuting to and from your job. That is not negligible.

When we try to establish metrics in terms of currency, we immediately run into major problems in trying get such metrics to paint a true picture of the economic reality for the typical human being.

There is a big difference between the quality of life of a family with an income of $60,000/year from one 40-hour-a-week job, and that of a family with the same income from three 40-hour-a-week jobs bringing in $20,000 each. 40 hours a week vs. 120 hours a week translates into major disparity in quality of life between the two families that does not show up when considering income alone.

This is why instead of using income as a metric, a more revealing one would be the ratio of hours worked to hours of work needed to live. This avoids the need to perform complex and fuzzy calculations to allow for changes in the values of currencies over time. This metric can be calculated for any location and time period in a meaningful way by dividing the monthly income necessary for a living wage by the employee's hourly pay rate in currency units per hour.

For example, if the median salary is $400/week, assuming a 40-hour week and the cost of living is $400/week, then it appears that 50% of employees are able to live paycheck to paycheck or better, and 50% are not.

In the above example, if the median salary is $10/hour, then employees at that level of pay must work 40 hours a week to be able afford the basic cost of living. If the median salary is $8/hour, then it takes 50 hours a week to afford a basic living. At $5/hour, it takes 80 hours a week to make the same living. At $20/hour it takes only 20 hours a week to make the same income. In this example, the employee making $20/hour is most likely able to save and invest.

The difference in quality of life is thus more readily apparent.

So if in 1970 the median salary was $5/hour and it took $200/week to afford a basic living, it translates into a 40-hour work week. If in 2010 the median salary was $10/hour and it cost $400/week to live, then it is still a 40-hour week. But if in 2010 the median salary is $10/hour but it costs $800/week to live, then even though there appear to have been salary gains since 1970, in fact the cost of living in human hours has actually doubled from 40 in 1970 to 80 in 2010. This shows a more accurate picture of the reality than currency figures alone.

When looking at and measuring income under Capitalist paradigms, if we wish to gain an accurate picture we must also take into account not just income from wages or salary, but also income generated from investments. One of the hallmarks of Capitalist paradigms is the fact that money can be used to make more money by investing in the stock market, real estate, precious metals, currency exchanges and other kinds of investments. This is money made not on one's labor, time, and/or expertise but upon that of others.

In Capitalist cultures, the saying "It takes money to make money" always arises and comes to be taken as factual wisdom, as discussed earlier in this writing. In fact, under Capitalist paradigms, there is more money-making potential in investments than in employment.

At a superficial glance, this might appear to grant all members of the community a chance to benefit, but that is yet another myth/illusion as discussed earlier. Consider the fact that at the time of this writing, in the United States of America, a 6-12% growth in investments is considered good for small investors. A typical family or individual living at sub or barely living income levels has no money left after living expenses to invest.

So let's look at an individual or family living at a little over living wage, who is able to save a little bit most months after living expenses. Such a person or family must take into account the possibility of the unexpected: a medical expense not covered by insurance, losing a job, rent or mortgage going up too far too fast, a fire, a sick child or parent, automotive expenses, lawsuits, and more could wipe out their savings in a very short time, so most people in this position will not feel safe or free to invest much.

As covered in Chapter 1, you need to be able to invest around $100,000 to generate enough return to have a significant, robust positive impact on your economic situation and secure your right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. In 2017 that was approximately the “net worth” of someone in the 51st percentile; but in practice one would have to be quite a bit farther up the pyramid. Keep in mind that for most “middle class” people, most of their “net worth” takes the form of their home. In

order to realistically have $100,000 available to invest without touching for ten years, one would have to be in the vicinity of the 80th percentile or higher. Remember that the richest ten percent of the population control 84% of the stock.

One possible metric that could be used to track the impact and trends of economic factors on human life and quality of life is the ratio of change in income to change in cost of living. A ratio of 1:1 would mean a stable balance, no significant change in the amount of work needed to achieve a basic living. A ratio greater than one (1.3:1, 2:1, 3:2 etc.) would indicate that the typical member of the community is experiencing an improvement in their situation; a ratio less than one (1:2, 2.2:5) would indicate a worsening of the typical person's situation over time. A negative value in the numerator would indicate a severe decline in quality of life, while a negative value in the denominator would indicate a major improvement. Still, the best metric would appear to be the number of work-hours needed to sustain a basic living with the necessities of life secured and some left over for unexpected expenses, investments, and recreation, education, and other non-survival activities.

One major challenge is to arrive at a definition of what it takes to live, adjusting for historical time period, technology, norms and what is needed in each culture. In paleolithic times, this consisted of having sufficient food, water, clothing, tools for survival and a healthy tribe to belong to as a support system. In the 1800's in the United States, it consisted of some kind of house or tenement to live in, gas or oil lights or candles, a wood stove which also acted as a heater, a bed, kitchen table, a few chairs, dishes and cutlery, an outhouse, a horse or horses, clothing, a few household tools like an iron, a washtub and the like, food, and tools of one's trade. In the early 20th century this came to include indoor plumbing and bathrooms, electricity, a furnace for heating, horse or car, electric lights, a radio, vacuum cleaner, and tools of one's trade. In the 21'st Century it includes car (transportation), many electric appliances such as washer/dryer, computer, telecommunications devices and services, media devices such as TV's, cable/satellite, Internet access (even for job-seeking), etc.

We can possibly simplify this analysis by classifying some items into categories: work tools, furniture, food storage and preparation, transportation, communications, health and medical, home maintenance & repair, etc. A purely objective set of criteria are probably not achievable since determining what constitute "necessities" is always somewhat subjective: in 1940 a credit card was not a necessity; in the 2000's it is a necessity simply because not having one hampers one's ability to do basic things in life. One might argue whether or not anybody really needs a computer, a TV, jewelry, etc. and there are credible arguments for nearly every point of view. A good compromise might be to attempt to define what, in any given time-period and country/community, constitutes the prevailing composition of what's needed to live in a state of non-deprivation.

Certainly percentile, median, and mode are more meaningful than average as statistical descriptors. To illustrate this point, imagine a population of 1,000 people, each making $25,000/year and one individual making $1 billion. In such a community, the average income comes out to $1,023,976.20 for that population. This statistic gives a very distorted and optimistically misleading impression when delivered in a news story stating that this community is an example of a healthy and thriving economy, with an average yearly income of $1,023,976.20.

In contrast, the median salary in that population is $25,000, and the mode is also $25,000. The range here is 999,975,000. The combination of median, mode, and range tells a more accurate picture than simple average. Another useful data point is to compare the median and the mean (average). The more the mean exceeds the median, the greater the disparity in the population.

Stock indices, GNP, GDP and similar metrics as measures of the economic health and viability of a population are illusory, only marginally meaningful, and misleading. For example, under Capitalist paradigms, an economy is generally considered healthy if stock prices are high and climbing, the Gross National Product is growing, along with other financial indices. Sadly, in most situations, these indicators of a Capitalistically-defined "healthy economy" actually come at the expense of the well-being and safety of the vast majority of the population.

The core logic is that if large corporations and ultra-wealthy are gaining wealth, the economy is considered to be in good condition. Yet as we have seen, given the pyramidal structure of Capitalist paradigms, by design every time the few entities at the top of the Pyramid make gains, it comes at the expense of those beneath them on the pyramid, hitting those at the bottom of the Pyramid the hardest.

Therefore for the purposes of crafting and implementing a win-win-win-win synergistic empowering socio-economic paradigm, classical economic concepts of what makes a healthy economy need to be discarded entirely. Any metric that seeks to show a true picture of the economic health of any community must measure how many hours citizens must work to make a living, the degree of happiness, empowerment, thriving, and quality of life of the community and the individuals comprising it, long-term sustainability, and adaptability of the paradigm to continually self-modify under changing conditions to maintain the optimal achievable quality of life for all individuals.

The interaction between government and economy must also be examined carefully, comprehensively, rigorously, and fearlessly. There can be no democracy or freedom without both government and economics of, by, and for the People.

In the Soviet Union and some other Marxist-oriented countries, the lack of political freedom and democracy, as well as the stratification of the community into Party members and non-Party-members, ultimately undermined the original goal of a free and classless society.

In the United States and other purely Capitalist countries, the inevitable stratification of the population into neo-Feudal Lords and Serfs, the disproportionate and erosive degree of influence of the ultra-wealthy and mega-corporations on government, and the rigid, relentless extent to which one's degree of freedom, options, respect, and well-being is determined by one's place on the economic Pyramid, disenfranchises an ever-growing majority of the community. This situation similarly undermines and sabotages any intention of a free, democratic society based on government of, by, and for the People.

It would be useful to develop metrics that compare psychosocial representations of the desires and priorities of the people to the actual legislation and other performance of legislators and other elected and appointed officials, and to compare elected and appointed officials' estimation of their own performance in terms of citizen satisfaction to actual citizens' estimation of same. The former could be represented in tables with one column representing input from the people and the other column containing actual legislation, actions and positions taken by elected and appointed personnel in another. Perhaps a useful approach to the latter would be to survey both elected legislators and officials and the public to rate significant parameters on a -5 to +5 scale with -5 representing complete dissatisfaction and +5 signifying complete satisfaction.

Under Capitalist paradigms, wealth is often regarded as an approximate measure or determinant of a person's productivity, contribution, moral fitness and worthiness of trust and respect. As a metric, this has absolutely no real value.

The illusion of "meritocracy" - the myth that income and wealth are directly or even approximately proportionate to one's contribution to society, to one's productivity, or to how hard one works - is a constantly-reiterated myth employed very cleverly as propaganda in Capitalist societies. This very partial truth is used to achieve nearly universal compliance by perpetuating the belief that anybody at the top of the Pyramid is there because they have worked that much harder and contributed that much more to the community than those at the bottom of the Pyramid.

In other words, if a CEO makes in an hour what a typical employee of the same company makes in a year, assuming a standard 40-hour work week which translates to 2,080 hours in a year, the myth suggests that the CEO is 2,080 times more hardworking and contributory to the community than the typical employee. This is at best an arbitrary assumption based on unfounded assumptions, ignorance, and lack of information. At worst it is a deliberate and systematic manipulation to suppress challenges to the Capitalist paradigm. In reality, the "productivity" of a CEO is often primarily measured in terms of how much they have enriched investors, who are almost exclusively members of the ultra-wealthy sector. This kind of "productivity" almost always comes at the expense of the economic and overall well-being of both employees and customers. The socio-economic paradigm reinforces this dynamic and makes it virtually inevitable.

The thinking goes something like this: If the CEO is way up there, then if I want to get there I have to work harder and contribute more than anybody else. If you are on the bottom of the pyramid, then there must be something morally or constitutionally wrong with you; you must be lazy and undisciplined, weak, stupid, lack dedication or drive, or be shortsighted. If you are at the top of the pyramid, then you must be overall a better person than someone at the bottom. This postulate keeps those lower down in the pyramid blaming themselves rather than challenging the paradigm, keeps them compliant with the paradigm, and keeps them subservient to those at the top of the Pyramid. If you are that rich and

powerful, you must have done a lot to earn it. If you are that poor, then you must be doing something wrong or not doing something right.

In reality, under Capitalist paradigms, employee compensation is almost completely decoupled from employee productivity (OECD Economic Outlook, 2018). In 2018 the U.S. economy produced about $132,000 worth of goods and services for every employed person, while the typical (median) full-time employee was paid about $900 a week, roughly $46,800 a year (Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics data as published in the June 2024 data release, archived in ALFRED). Not all of that output could go to wages, since some must replace worn-out equipment and some funds public services, but all employees together, from cleaners to executives and including benefits, received only about 53% of it. Remember that averages are skewed upwards relative to the median because of the extreme incomes in the upper one percent, which is why the median is the better guide to what a typical worker actually receives. The gap keeps widening: according to the Economic Policy Institute, from 1979 to 2019 productivity grew by about 60% while the hourly pay of typical workers grew by only about 16%. Health benefits, 401K and other "benefits" are already counted in that 53% share, and many employers have been shrinking them, both directly, for example by replacing pensions with 401K plans and shifting more of the cost of health premiums onto employees, and by shifting from direct hiring to outsourcing as well as engaging employees as "contractors," thus relieving employers of any obligation to provide any benefits.

Of course, this analysis does not take into account the danger and gross inaccuracy of measuring productivity in terms of currency alone, which is at best problematic. It is possible to generate tremendous income by taking or participating in actions that cause tremendous harm to human beings and the environment. It is also possible to make tremendous contributions to the community or even the world without generating any money for anybody.

Combining this picture of steadily rising productivity alongside stagnant wages, with the steadily increasing concentration of stock, land and other resources into fewer and fewer hands of the ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal Lords, plus the ongoing pattern of stock gains and inflation outpacing wage growth of at least half the population, we can readily see some of the main mechanisms by which Capitalist paradigms funnel ever-increasing amounts and percentages of resources and wealth upwards to the top of the economic pyramid and away from everybody else. This dynamic is structurally identical to classical feudalism and inimical to any form of democracy.

If we look at the data for inflation, salary/wage growth, stock market growth, productivity and other significant determinants of economic growth and distribution, the trend over time is clear as we can see in the table below. Growth figures are average yearly growth since 1970 unless otherwise noted. If the economic paradigm does not change fundamentally, it will not be long before the neo-Feudal lords at the top of the economic pyramid will control all of the wealth and the median salary will come nowhere close to covering the cost of living. Note that the ultra-wealthiest dwarf the rest of the top 1%, just as the top 1% dwarfs the bottom 99%. One will need to be in the 90th or 95th percentile to make a living wage.

Quantity	2018 Dollars	Annual Growth
Output per Worker (GDP per employed person)	*About $132,000 / person-year*	*1.9% (output per hour, after inflation)*
Typical (Median) Employee's Pay	About $46,800 / year ($900 / week)	0.16% after inflation (since 1979, the first year recorded)
All Employees' Share of Output (pay + benefits)	About 53%	Falling: about 58% in 1970
Stock Market Growth		About 10% (with dividends, before inflation)
Inflation	Median Living Wage: $25,106	About 4%

Quantity	2018 Dollars	Annual Growth
Percent of U.S. stock ownership of top 1%	About 52% of all U.S. stock	
Percent of U.S. stock ownership: next 9%	About 36%	
Percent of stock ownership of bottom 50%	About 0.6%	
Richest U.S. American's wealth	$160,000,000,000	Nearly doubled in a year (from $81.5 billion in 2017)

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis series as published in the June 2024 data release (median usual weekly earnings, fourth quarter 2018; nonfarm business output per hour; consumer price index; GDP; compensation of employees; household-survey employment), archived by ALFRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; Federal Reserve Board, Distributional Financial Accounts (stock ownership, fourth quarter 2018); Forbes 400 (2017 and 2018). Productivity and pay since 1979: Economic Policy Institute, "The Productivity–Pay Gap."

For the purpose of this analysis, the gap between what the economy produces per worker and what the typical worker is paid functionally represents the share taken by the neo-Feudal lords of what the median employee generates in dollars. As the stratification accelerates, the top .001% will soon have total control of all processes and resources, while the rest of the top 1% will be equivalent of the fief-holders of the Medieval feudal period, enjoying a certain level of privilege at the pleasure of the neo-Feudal Lords. The rest of us will be the serfs and peasants.

To grasp the biggest picture, consider that of everything the economy produces, employees as a whole, from the lowest-paid to the highest and including benefits, receive only about half. That proportion is also steadily shifting further to the benefit of the employer AKA neo-Feudal lords at the expense of the employee: the employees' share fell from about 58% of everything produced in 1970 to about 53% in 2018. Then, functionally, the employee pays their living expenses to the neo-Feudal lords, since the lords ultimately own and control the goods and services consumed by the employee. When the neo-Feudal lords pay their cost of living, it is essentially paid back into the same sector even if it changes hands within the sector. So the lords recycle their own living expenses and collect payment from employees. The neo-Feudal lords also increase their wealth through business interests and investments while the median employee has negligible or no income from those sources. Meanwhile inflation outpaces everything except both take-home pay of the wealthiest neo-Feudal lords and the stock market of which the lords control about 52% and their vassals another 36%. The rate of acceleration of stratification is itself accelerating. While it is true that there are small businesses and small landlords, this described pattern is overwhelmingly dominant and becoming more so as mammoth enterprises push smaller ones out of business, consuming them in an ever-expanding cycle of predation. According to data from the U.S. Federal Reserve, from 1989 to 2026 the top economic 1% of households gained about $48 trillion in wealth among them, adjusted for inflation, while the bottom 50%, fifty times as many households, gained only about $2.4 trillion between them (Federal Reserve, Distributional Financial Accounts). That is roughly $36 million for each household at the top and about $36,000 for each household in the bottom half: a thousand to one.

If we do not completely retire this paradigm and its mechanisms, end their capture of our governments, laws and resources, and replace them with a truly democratic paradigm that actively resists stratification while empowering and actualizing the potential of its inhabitants, and do it very soon, then we are reliably headed toward the establishment of a feudal dictatorship that could last much longer than the ones of the Middle Ages. This is an urgent necessity. There is no time to waste.

The degree of deception in the assumption of capitalism as meritocracy is mind-boggling. Remember that an employee is routinely required at hiring to sign an employment agreement that includes acquiescence to terms in which any innovations,

inventions, or ideas developed by the employee are the intellectual property of the company. Thus, if an employee working for $20,000 per year invents or devises something that both saves and earns the company millions of dollars, the employee is not rewarded in any financial way while the CEO will certainly be handsomely rewarded for the gains that happened on his or her watch. The myth of Capitalism as a “meritocracy” is at best a self-deception. At worst it is a deliberate propaganda ploy.

These myths are comparable to the myths used to stimulate compliance under slavery in the United States and in Medieval Europe.

In the case of slavery, the myth was perpetuated that the African dark-skinned slaves were inherently inferior to their light-skinned European-descendant masters. Slaves being superficially very different from owners, and having been brought from a part of the world perceived at the time to be backwards and primitive, made it easy to propagate the myth that Africans were essentially apes slightly more evolved than gorillas or chimpanzees - animal-like, lazy and less intelligent but physically stronger than Europeans, and therefore naturally suited for being slaves, needing the "superior" masters to "civilize" them, give them purpose and keep them from running amok.

Enslaved people were deliberately kept illiterate; in many Southern states it was a crime to teach them to read or write. They were forced to live in squalid conditions, underfed and overworked, and told by word and deed, every day of their lives, that they were inferior to those who claimed to own them. Some of those born into slavery came to absorb that message, at least in part: what psychologists now call internalised oppression. Research on “system justification” shows how people trapped in an unjust system can come to accept it, simply because believing it fair or inevitable makes it easier to bear (Jost and Banaji, 1994). The enforced “inferiority” was then held up as proof that slavery was justified. The degradation was the system’s doing, imposed deliberately to keep people compliant. Yet many resisted it: enslaved people taught themselves and each other to read in secret, kept their own culture and faith alive, and escaped or rebelled at enormous risk.

In the case of the European Middle Ages, peasants and serfs were constantly bombarded from birth with the message that it was the will of God, the Divine Order for kings, queens and other royalty to rule over them. To question or rise up against that paradigm was to go against God and Nature, assuring one a wretched place in Hell. Keep your head down and obey your "betters" and you will be rewarded in Heaven when you die (which you will do pretty soon from a life of being overworked and underfed).

The concept of Meritocracy under Capitalism is merely a remake of the same myth, and a poorly-written one at that. One does not have to look far to see the reality. For every case where employees are promoted or rewarded for their hard work or contribution, there are a plethora of employees working just as hard and contributing just as much who remain unrewarded and sometimes even punished for making someone above them look bad.

Capitalist systems abound in managers unfamiliar with the processes that they oversee and utterly incompetent as leaders who nevertheless enforce their will upon the profoundly more competent and productive employees under them.

There is an unending parade of cases of CEO's and others high up in companies’ Pyramidal hierarchy who cause grievous damage to employees, customers/clients, the community, the country, and even to life on earth and are richly rewarded. Among these cases, the ones we know about are probably dwarfed by the multitude of well-hidden cases that never come to light.

Witness the pharmaceutical CEO whose company did no work whatsoever to develop a life-saving medicine but maneuvered itself into a position to control the rights to this medication developed by someone else, then promptly raised the price of the medication by thousands of percents. Though a crime was committed against Humanity, no one was criminally charged for the price increase itself; only in 2022 did a federal court ban the executive from the pharmaceutical industry for life and order him to repay $64.6 million. The perpetrator unashamedly gloated over what he had done. (More on this later)

In fact, it is not even possible under Capitalist paradigms for more than a very few to advance to the upper reaches of the pyramid from the lower reaches. There simply isn't that much room that high on the pyramid. Consider the physical structure of a pyramid, and transpose it onto the pyramidal structure of a corporation or a Capitalist economy as a whole. If

too many stones are placed too high and too few placed under them, the pyramid will collapse. If all attain the top, then it is no longer a pyramid; it is stones all on the ground at the same altitude, which is what the socio-economic structure will look like after the Transition. In order for all to make it to the "top," the paradigm must be changed; the Pyramid must be dismantled.

In the Capitalist world, one's hard work and contribution play only a small part in determining one's position in the Pyramid. There are just enough anecdotal instances to keep the myth alive by showcasing real-life rags-to-riches stories that people can point to in order to believe in the myth.

In surveys, people consistently rate meaningful work, a sense of purpose and a balance between work and home life as more important than a high salary: in one study, nine out of ten American workers said they would accept lower pay for more meaningful work (*Harvard Business Review*, 2018). The myths must be exposed, debunked and deleted from consciousness in order to empower the people to challenge the paradigm and create one that truly affords all members of the community the fulfillment of the rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, the rights encoded in the Constitution, and all the rights embedded in the hearts of all human beings.

To establish practical metrics in order for all members of the community to express and gauge the general level of happiness, well-being and overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction of people in the community, a distributed Web application and database will be set up that will enable any individual or group to express their perceptions and experience of living in the community. We will collect and analyze the data using existing psychological testing tools adapted to the purpose, expanded and designed to differentiate between satisfaction/fulfillment and well-being levels that arise from the social environment, and those that arise from individuals' personality make-ups. A goal of this is a lively, productive discourse among all members of the community. This could take a form resembling social media but its purpose would be a medium for community introspection and evolution.

We would also do well to design this distributed database to include channels for suggestions, ideas, feedback and requests in every aspect of life: social, governmental, legal, technological, logistical, cultural, scientific and more. Teams of individuals in the various disciplines will peruse, analyze, evaluate, respond to, and when appropriate and logical, arrange for implementation of these incoming ideas and suggestions.

Some Capitalist apologists argue that the typical member of the community is better off than they appear to be, citing the fact that some employers include non-salary benefits such as health and dental insurance, bonuses and retirement plans. While these do have value and there is a degree of truth in these assertions, we need to see this for the sleight-of-hand that it is in the biggest context.

This is especially apparent when we look at trends over time.

Let's look at health insurance as an example.

Under Capitalist paradigms, health insurance becomes a survival necessity because the cost of medical diagnosis and treatment is entirely out of reach of all but those at or very near the top of the economic pyramid. As discussed elsewhere in this writing, this parasitic insurance industry imposes a constant and significant drain on the survival resources of individuals, families, and businesses alike.

Health insurance is not a true need like medical care itself. It is a made-up need, generated out of the uncontrolled inflation in all things medical and dental. The individual or business pays the insurance company a lot of money every month, whether or not any medical procedures or treatment is needed. Yet often when medical needs arise, the insurance company denies treatment, even life-saving treatment or dictates that an inferior treatment be given. Accountants and claims adjusters with absolutely no medical training dictate how and whether doctors and other actual healthcare professionals may practice medicine. The doctor takes an oath to do no harm. The insurance company has a commitment to maximize profits, stock prices and market share, which among other behaviors reinforces the denial of claims wherever and however possible. Stockholders, not patients, are their highest priority.

The insured person has no guarantee of being covered, yet some chance is better than no chance. The premiums for a health insurance plan that has real practical value often rivals the cost of rent or mortgage.

When an employer provides health coverage, they provide a limited selection of options which all entail an employee "contribution" which amounts to a significant portion of their pay being deducted to cover the employee's "share" of the premiums. While the amount is typically less than the cost of a comparable plan on the private market, it is still a large portion of one's pay.

Thus while employer-based healthcare coverage does help the employee in a sense, it is analogous to the employer playing a portion of the protection money that the employee is forced to pay to the local Mafia to avoid fire or injury. In other words, in a truly healthy and functional environment, there would be no gangs or Mafia, and healthcare would be a right enjoyed by all as it is in the socialist democracies comprising much of Europe and other areas.

Imagine a Capitalist culture where all persons were given a highly addictive drug as part of their rite of passage into adulthood, and were required to take it in order to be employable and socially acceptable. If a person "pees negative" then they would be out of the running for a job, place to live, credit, college, even marriage. It would become a "necessity" in that culture, and people would have to pay to get it.

Imagine that an employer would pay part of the cost of the drug. Yes, that would be helpful, but the real solution would be to abolish the drug and provide rehab to all persons to eliminate the "need" for this drug.

It is like offering to exchange a slave's ball and chain for a slightly lighter ball and chain. In reality, one cannot in practice legitimately claim that such "benefits," while preferable to not having them, can be added onto one's salary/wages and be considered equivalent to that much more income, except to a very limited degree.

Being given pain relievers to control the pain of an untreated festering wound is not the same as treating the wound and facilitating its healing or, better yet, preventing it.

Think of a slave with infected welts on his/her back from being whipped by the slave-owner, being given painkillers so they can keep working. One cannot thereby say that the slave-owner takes good care of their slaves. That is an oxymoron. The true solution in that scenario is to abolish slavery altogether. If that inconveniences the slave-owner, it is not a credible argument for allowing slavery to continue.

As long as Capitalist paradigms and systems dominate a community and dictate its parameters of operation, no metric can obscure the fact that the Pyramidal structure inevitably leads to escalating disparity in terms of freedom, options, quality of life, health, power over one's own life, respect one is afforded, and access to the ear and consideration of those in government. This disparity may be temporarily slowed by legislation and popular pressure at times but it inexorably leads to the enthronement of a tiny minority at the expense of the overwhelming majority.

While it is true that the most durable happiness is generated from within the individual and the community rather than from external stimuli, it is also well-demonstrated that disempowerment, disenfranchisement, abuse, and unrelenting stress are among the most destructive factors in human experience with respect to physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

To recap and summarize: under Capitalist paradigms, control of almost all resources is firmly and increasingly in the hands of the very few neo-Feudal Lords at the top of the economic Pyramid. This comes at the expense of the vast majority who must accept whatever the ruling sector will pay, and then pay members of that same sector for every necessity including a place to live, to simply occupy space, thus curtailing the ability of most of us to exercise our Constitutional rights.

We have already seen that in the United States and many other countries, land ownership originally came about largely through murder, brutality, treachery, bullying and dishonest means. It is rooted in blood, deception, and inhumanity. While it is not possible to undo past injustices, crimes, and atrocities, there is no conceivable justification for one person or entity to own or control land or other resources that they are not directly using, in order to presume to demand payment in some form from other people in order to allow them access.

When a person is denied access to even a place to live, then they have no way to exercise their Constitutional rights, starting with Life itself. The only solution is to change laws, practices and norms in such a way that every person, family or other social unit has a right to ownership of a reasonable residence and shared control over their own workplace.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

It must become impossible for any person or entity to claim ownership or control over any resource that they are not using for their own personal or production use. Those who currently own multiple properties will have to choose one for their residence; the rest will become the property of whoever is living in them or of those who formerly worked for the former owner. Otherwise such properties will be available for occupancy. Those who travel regularly as part of their work or lifestyle will not be deprived, since former hotels, motels, and extended-stay facilities will be freely available for the purpose. Production facilities will be owned and administered democratically by all involved in production and distribution. A unique case will be large farms, which will mostly be phased out. Those that remain in operation will typically have the residence of the former owner on-site. In these instances, whoever lives in the residence will keep ownership of the residence while the farm itself will be owned and administered democratically by all involved persons, who will also have the right to construct houses and live on the premises. Former luxury suites and residences in former corporate headquarters will be converted for use by all involved in the enterprise. Country clubs, golf courses and the like will be opened and accessible to all persons. Any who vandalize – be they former elite who wish to destroy rather than share the resource, or other persons seeking to protest former symbols of the former ruling elite – will be charged and prosecuted accordingly.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

In the new Paradigm, once established through democratically enacted law with due process, land and other resources not currently in use or protected as nature preserves will be the common property of all citizens and so accessible to all, in a manner similar to the traditional “commons”. To knowingly or through negligence damage such land (as by polluting, starting a fire that leads to a major blaze, needlessly killing wildlife etc) will be a crime or infraction. When a person, family or other core social unit needs to use such land for habitation or production, they will in almost all cases be able to do so. There will have to be prescribed legal limits on the size and extent of land and other resources that can be claimed by an individual, family, or other core social unit, guided and informed by seeking a balance to make sure people have a reasonable amount of space to live and/or work while preventing some from claiming disproportionate tracts of land and amounts of resources to make themselves a new kind of wealthy class. Careful thought will need to go into it, and there will need to be some flexibility built in to accommodate individual situations. Legal mechanisms and channels will be established to facilitate the process of occupying, transferring and/or using unused land or other resources and to mediate disputes that may arise when there are multiple claimants. National parks, hazardous areas (due to hazardous pollution or other man-made or natural hazards) and areas with endangered or at-risk ecosystems will be under appropriately protected or restricted status for safety and environmental reasons.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

The Transition will involve shutting down and blocking communications of all financial institutions and departments, the universal refusal of persons to pay rent or mortgage, and the shift of control in workplaces to those working in them through the simple peaceful but powerful act of ignoring the command hierarchies that they have obeyed until the Transition. Any system or paradigm only functions through the participation and acquiescence of the people in them. When the people in them change, on a large and massive scale, the paradigm by changing their behaviors and responses, then the old paradigm fades away and a new one emerges. Once the new paradigm is established in practice, legislators will have little choice but to align themselves with the will of the People.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Some would say that since landlords and business owners worked hard to get where they are, it would be unfair to take their supremacy away from them by granting their former tenants ownership over their dwellings, thus taking away landlords' income from rent. Some would say that it would be unfair to business owners to strip them of control in favor of democratic management and decision-making by all involved (including the former owner on a peership basis with all others in the enterprise). But this is a specious argument with no basis in reality.

We must keep in mind that in the new Paradigm, the former landlords, small businesspeople, CEO's and other neo-Feudal Lords will not suffer. Nobody will force them out of their residences, though they will not be able to claim more than one residence. They will still share in the operation of production facilities that they used to rule, but as valued peer members, if they are willing. Currency will no longer be a necessity for anybody, including the former neo-Feudal Lords. They will not experience deprivation of lack. The only thing they will lose will be opulence, control over others, and the cooperation of others in maintaining their delusions of superiority over the rest of the people. They will also lose the burdens of being solely responsible for decisions and operations.

The above argument of unfairness to landlords and business owners has been presented as an objection to the overthrow and extinction of Capitalism. One might as well make the argument that the slave-owning plantation-owners in the Southern United States, or the mine-owners in South Africa who reap boundless profits from gold and diamonds mined by child and slave laborers, worked hard to build their businesses and that, therefore, to deprive them of slaves or child laborers paid pennies a day is unfair.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Elsewhere in this writing, the history of land ownership is traced but to review, in the United States as in most Capitalist countries, thriving populations of people were present before the arrival of the populations who eventually claimed ownership of the land. This claim in almost all cases came after the original inhabitants were slaughtered or forcibly driven from these same lands. Therefore all subsequent claims of ownership are rooted in a bloody barbaric brutality that does not warrant the aura of sacrosanct legitimacy that land ownership assumes in Capitalist societies.

Even in the present time, the predatory, adversarial dynamics between banks/landlords and renters/home buyers is destructive to all parties. Abuses abound among all involved parties.

Land is often, even if not always, acquired by banks, speculators and contractors through predatory, dishonest, even outright bullying tactics, most times causing untold hardship to hardworking individuals and families struggling to survive. Capitalist paradigms reinforce this behavior, and so it predominates.

All too often, land ownership comes about not necessarily through hard work and fair dealing, but through shark-like ruthless business practices on the part of out-of-control wealthy individuals and businesses higher up on the Pyramid at the expense of those lower down on the Pyramid, who are at the same kind of permanent disadvantage as a small business owner against the armed power of a well-established Mafia extortion outfit.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

It is true that there are a few landlords who depend on rental income for their own bare survival, those with small properties including some retired or disabled individuals who may not be able to work. In considering this argument as it applies to this scenario, we must keep in mind that once Capitalism is left behind and the community Transitions to the new paradigms, such landlords will no longer require currency in order to survive, so they will not be negatively

impacted by losing claim of ownership over those former rental properties. They will also be freed from having to resolve tenant disputes and from being responsible for the maintenance and repair of rental properties that they formerly owned.

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The new Paradigms will start with the presumption of worthiness rather than the presumption of unworthiness of each individual. The strongest reinforcers will support co-working to mutual, shared and individual benefit. One person's gain will be the gain of all and one person's loss will be the loss of all. Currency will be irrelevant and unnecessary, and every person and family will be guaranteed not just Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness but also the means to achieve these, which include a safe and optimal place to live, food, medical care, energy, transportation, education etc. In such a paradigm, nobody will need currency in order to survive or even to thrive.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Former landlords will lose claim over properties that they do not personally use and the income that they currently generate; but they will also lose the need for money to pay their own living expenses.

In reality, the only things that landlords will truly lose will be the headaches of dealing with properties they don't even live on and the issues/complaints of the people living on them. They will lose the sense of power over others and of superior entitlement currently conferred by their status. They will lose the burden of expenses associated with those properties.

Landlords who are currently exploitative and abusive towards tenants will lose the resentment of tenants that they have exploited and abused. Landlords who are currently honest and respectful of tenants will lose the stresses and expenses of being responsible for those properties.

Bear in mind that former landlords will retain their own homes, cars, healthcare, friends, families and all of the necessities and amenities except being deferred to because of their status. Former landlords and others higher up the Pyramid will have to learn to live with and accept the basic human respect and camaraderie that naturally occurs among mutually-respectful, symbiotic human beings in any healthy community. The benefits will far outweigh the downsides, even for former landlords and employers, in the new Paradigms.

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The metrics for this will be abundantly clear in the form of plummeting crime statistics, diminished violence, greater peace of mind, improved quality of goods and services, the contributions of a Community of fully empowered individuals, superior productivity, diminished waste and pollution, cultural renaissance, and more.

Chapter 11: Ownership

Ownership is a myth, an unchallenged article of faith perpetuated by Capitalist society. In reality, it is an arbitrary construct, arbitrarily defined, and most certainly not necessary for human society to function. It is one possible construct among many that could accomplish the same function.

In Capitalist paradigms, it is one of the necessary core concepts, without which no implementation of the paradigm can function. In a system based on potentially limitless “private” ownership of resources, the concept of ownership defines who owns what, who has access and who doesn’t, who controls access to what, who must pay whom for what, who are the Lords and who are the Serfs. Indeed, ownership is the underpinning of the entire Pyramidal economic power structure – nine-tenths of the law as it is said.

The concept of ownership can most definitely serve a necessary function: to ensure that each individual or group has what they need, readily available and close at hand with continuity, a shared reality respected by all members of the community. Yet it is most definitely not the only way to achieve this necessary purpose.

When implemented with wisdom, common sense and the good of each and all in mind, the concept of ownership can serve as a way of establishing and safeguarding personal space. For example, it would create no end of problems if you were to come home from work to find that someone else had moved into your home and gotten rid of your stuff, or if you reached for your winter coat only to find it missing, or went to access your computer only to find it gone with works-in-progress on it that you need. The concept of ownership is one way to accomplish the assurance and continuity of personal space, but certainly not the only way.

The root of this concept probably does go back to our early days as a species. In nature, the function of territoriality is to ensure that each individual, herd, or group has access to enough food, water and other resources. Where resources are dense and plentiful, territories can be quite small; where resources are scarce, territories must be much larger. As humans, we are not strictly defined or limited by instinctually hard-wired paradigms as are most other species. Part of our unique make-up is the ability to improvise, conceive, re-evaluate, and adapt our ways of accomplishing necessary functions. We can postulate, however, that when we implement a socio-economic paradigm where resources are readily accessible to all, the need for Capitalist-style definitions of ownership will be largely eliminated. Consider the fact that the Capitalist paradigm’s interpretation of the concept is abundantly demonstrating its non-viability. If the purpose of ownership is to ensure that all communities and individuals have access to necessary resources, then this implementation has failed utterly.

Indeed, the concept of ownership can create more problems than it solves when taken to an unbalanced extreme as it often is in the prevailing socio-economic model that dominates much of the world today. It does an imperfect job at best of accomplishing the safeguarding of individuals' space and reliable access of useful resources. This is evidenced by the proliferation of thieves, scammers, robbers, international invasions and the increasingly blatant escalating trend that funnels an unhealthy, disproportionate amount of ownership and personal space to a very small segment of the population while depriving an ever-increasing majority of many of the most basic necessities, leaving many human beings bereft of any personal space whatsoever. It is an entirely arbitrary construct and concept that has come to be treated as almost a law of physics when in fact it is not. It was created by human beings and can be altered or done away with by human beings.

The concept of ownership has become, in many instances, an illusion, an actual falsehood supported by legal documentation but presented to the people to create the false appearance of ownership. See the chapters describing the history of currency and land ownership.

If you can trade, transact, construct or otherwise acquire something, then by the prevailing cultural concept, you own it. This is true for items like a pen, an article of clothing, a piece of fruit, a work of art or an invention.

Yet even that interpretation of ownership is being circumvented with respect to the individual member of the community via a clever and insidious construct of subscription-based goods and services. One traditional form of this is leasing – the

person or entity using the resource pays the owner or provider an agreed-upon amount of currency every month for an agreed-upon period of time for use of or access to that resource. It is the same as renting but with a contract that stabilizes the terms of the transaction for a time. In the end, you have paid a lot of money and are left owning nothing. This arose from the Capitalist reality in which many resources are beyond the ability of most people to afford owning outright.

A newer version of this paradigm is seen in the software industry, among others. Traditionally, if you bought an app, a computer program, you could keep using it for as long as you wanted and your hardware/operating system would run it. In recent years, a growing number of software companies are implementing a subscription-based model in which the user pays a fee up front, then must pay a subscription fee every month for the software to continue working. If one misses a payment, the software not only stops working but also renders one's own files unusable and inaccessible, holding them hostage for ransom. Microsoft Office 365 is a notorious example. In that context, the corporation not only claims ownership of the software itself, but of your own work that you have done using the software. The company reserves the power to lock you out of your own creations.

The same paradigm is occurring in agriculture. For thousands of years, farmers have kept a portion of their harvest for planting the following spring. Selective breeding led to greater yields, quality, quantity, robustness, etc. over long periods of time. When the farmer bought seed from the supply store, there was nothing and nobody preventing him or her from using the seeds from this year's crop to plant next year's fields. Now using genetically modified seed stock, agricultural mega-corporations are using intellectual property laws to gain unprecedented wealth and control over food production while in the process ruining the lives of farmers around the world, through several mechanisms.

These products are presented to the farmer as being superior to their accustomed seed stock, promising higher yield per acre/hectare and resistance to pests. Initially this appears to have been fulfilled as the farmer sees bigger, more plentiful, stronger, faster-growing crops in their first year. But they cannot simply save seed from that crop for future planting.

In 1998, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the seed company Delta & Pine Land were granted a patent for seeds engineered so that the next generation would be sterile, soon nicknamed "Terminator" seeds. The purpose was plain: to stop farmers from saving seed and to make them buy new seed every season. It was never sold, but not because the industry had a change of heart. A worldwide outcry from farmers, scientists and humanitarian groups forced Monsanto to pledge not to commercialise it, and in 2000 the UN Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a moratorium that still stands. Meanwhile, the same goal is reached by other means. Patents and licensing contracts forbid farmers to replant patented seed; in 2013 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that they may not. And hybrid seeds, which do not breed true, have kept farmers buying new seed every year for nearly a century. This is what the system reliably rewards, and it took organised resistance on a global scale to hold the worst of it back.

To make matters worse for farmers, if one farmer shares this seed stock with a neighbor or relative, then the corporation can sue both parties for infringement of its patent, and some farmers have been ruined by such suits. This strongly reinforces against farmers helping one another. The corporations, such as Monsanto and others, count on the likelihood that many or most farmers do not have the time or background to read the contracts they sign and understand what they are agreeing to.

The implications are even more insidious and dangerous when we consider the concept of owning all instances of an organism (including both plant and animal species) via the construct of "intellectual property." The entity that did the genetic modifications, or that controls the patent on them, claims ownership of every plant or animal grown with those modifications, in perpetuity. In other words, the farmer doesn't "own" the crop, eggs, chickens, cows, etc. that they have raised or grown. The company does.

Imagine what is likely to happen in Capitalist paradigms when emerging genetic therapies for serious medical conditions become widely available. A genetically engineered cure for diabetes. A genetic pre-emptive fix for autism, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, asthma or a host of other conditions that can be diagnosed and treated in utero. Given existing precedents and the prevailing mentality and assumptions of Capitalist paradigms, it is quite likely that individuals benefiting from these therapies will be legally considered the "intellectual property" of the corporations which developed the therapies. Such patients will likely be required to pay fees for life just for their existence. If these paradigms are not

mothballed and soon, then that “ownership” will supercede and outweigh Constitutional rights of the individual as far as the legal system is concerned.

Under Capitalism, those higher up the economic pyramid are always dramatically advantaged over those further down. The ownership wielded by an ultra-wealthy person or Corporation almost universally negates or supercedes the ownership granted to a typical citizen/Serf. To revisit an already-addressed point, the myth of Capitalist ownership is shown clearly for what it is when one looks more closely at the concept of home ownership.

To recap: in virtually all true Capitalist societies, homes are priced so far beyond the vast majority of people's ability to afford, forcing the aspiring home buyer to get a mortgage loan from a bank or other lender. For a long portion of the term of the mortgage, the "homeowner" is paying almost exclusively the interest and only microscopically towards the principal - the actual purchase price of the house.

And it gets worse. On paper, you hold the title to your home. Functionally, as long as you owe on it, the lender holds your home in its hands, because if push comes to shove, the lender can take it. Suppose you have kept up your payments for 29 years on a 30-year mortgage, and then lose your job in a downturn, or fall seriously ill. After a grace period of about two weeks, a late fee is added. At 30 days, the late payment is reported to the credit bureaus, and your credit score drops sharply, just when you most need help. Fees and missed payments keep piling up on a family that already cannot pay. Once you are more than 120 days behind, the lender may begin foreclosure (12 CFR 1024.41). The home is then sold, often at auction, where foreclosed homes sell for far less than they are worth; one major study found an average discount of 27 percent (Campbell, Giglio and Pathak, 2011). The lender’s debt, fees and legal costs are paid first. You are entitled to whatever is left, which is often little or nothing, and in many states, if the sale brings in less than you owe, the lender can still pursue you for the difference. Then you are evicted. It makes no difference that you have already paid more than the purchase price of the home: twenty-nine years of payments did not keep you in it. Your damaged credit then follows you, effectively barring you from recovering for a number of years, assuring your continued loss of life, liberty, ability to pursue happiness, dignity, quality of life, options, even the ability to get a job. It takes years to build a good credit rating in Capitalist societies, but only a short time to crash that rating.

This is one more case where the law protects the individual on paper, and economic power overrides that protection in practice. The title says the home is yours. The balance of power says it belongs to whoever holds the debt. Wherever a legal right collides with the interests of those who hold the money, the side with the money reliably wins. That is how modern feudalism works: not by abolishing the protections that democracy has written into law, but by hollowing them out, so that what the law intends for the individual gives way to the economic power of the few.

With the accelerated redistribution of resources away from 99.9% of the people in the United states and other purely Capitalist countries, a growing number of people find themselves in this position.

As pointed out elsewhere, there are laws in every Capitalist society that make it illegal or virtually impossible to live without paying for a place to be. Make no mistake about it. There are officers with guns, ready to draw and use them if you resist the established order. It does not matter if you are not causing harm or depriving anybody of anything. This is yet further tragic and brutal proof that Capitalist paradigms are fundamentally incompatible with, and inimical to, a free, democratic, empowered, thriving community.

For all who rent, as already described, the situation is even more precarious. Though there are areas of the United States where rent control is in effect, the fact is that the renter is literally paying the landlord for the privilege of being allowed to stay in the domicile. The landlord can dictate whether or not the renter may have pets, keep potted plants, display decorations, have friends or family stay over and for how long and more. As in the workplace, the legal status of the property owner gives them dictatorial power that countermands the Constitution, since the renter is on their “private property” and therefore has few to no rights.

The irony is that, in many cases, the landlord is not even the true owner of the property. They are paying a mortgage on the property. The real owner? The bank, except in cases of the ultra-wealthy who can afford to write a check for tens of millions of dollars. In this scenario, the bank and/or its CEO is the Feudal Lord, the landlord is the Vassal who serves the Lord, and

the renter is the Serf. A Feudal society in practice, behind a thin veneer of freedom and democracy. A fragile wallpaper mural of lofty enlightened principles covering a dark and sinister reality.

To further recap: In a culture that places a premium on ownership, an increasing number of cities are granting their police the power to confiscate the few possessions of the most disempowered citizens, the homeless - basically in order to make them go away out of sight and mind. The police are also allowed in many places to impound the car or RV of someone living in it, just because they are living in it, if it is in a forbidden location, which is generally pretty much everywhere. Those who attempt to help the homeless are increasingly criminalized. Under Capitalism, your rights, options, freedom, the respect you are afforded and your quality of life are almost completely proportional to your altitude on the economic Pyramid. If you are homeless, then your are at the very bottom of the Pyramid, meaning that you have close to zero rights or options, not even the sacrosanct right to own a sleeping bag or coat (Mother Jones, 2016). In such cities, once these items are confiscated, they are often destroyed rather than returned, even though a federal appeals court has ruled that cities may not summarily destroy homeless people's belongings (Lavan v. City of Los Angeles, 2012). And without a fixed address, you will not find employment.

Here again we see clearly how Capitalism subverts the Constitution and creates a situation where one's rights, or lack of them, are determined by one's wealth of lack of it. This is unacceptable in any civilized society and a direct threat to the Constitution itself.

The concept of ownership has been used historically to create and perpetuate slavery in which some human beings were entitled to own other human beings.

In the current socio-economic environment, the concept of ownership is more often destroying people's space and continuity of access to necessities than upholding it.

In the United States and some other Capitalist countries, even the concept of Eminent Domain in which people's homes and other property can be taken from them, with financial compensation, to make room for projects (hospitals, roads, etc.) that the community needs, has been subverted in an alarming number of cases to permit taking people's homes for a large corporation to use the land for a for-profit project that the community emphatically and vocally does not want or need (Kelo v. City of New London, 2005; Southeastern Meats of Pelham v. City of Birmingham, Ala. 2004). Justifications for these seizures typically claim that the creation of jobs and tax revenues constitute an overriding good to the public and the community. In reality, this proves not only false, but quite the opposite. Using what is called the “dark store” strategy, big box stores like Walmart, Target and others manipulate tax laws to where these mammoth corporations end up paying less taxes than were previously paid by the legitimate occupants of the same land, placing heavier tax burdens on homeowners and small businesses in the area and leading to cutbacks in public services such as schools, fire departments, and public libraries (Texas Comptroller, Fiscal Notes, 2017; Badgett, "The State of the Dark Store Theory," Coates’ Canons, UNC School of Government, 2018). In addition, these stores often close after a few years, resulting in displacement of all of the employees hired in the first place. This is legalized rape and pillaging of communities by mega-corporations, enriching the neo-Feudal elite who engorge themselves at the helm of these predatory corporations. Yet under Capitalist paradigms, this behavior is reinforced and legitimized. It is not illegal.

In Feudal times, the King or Queen had similar rights. They could take your farm or shop from you at will. They could tax you at will. Kings even had the power to rape a bride on her wedding night if he so desired, with no legal jeopardy or repercussions. If the wife or her husband or family were to resist, they would be put to death. In Capitalist societies, however, there is allegedly less barbarism. People who resist the power of the new Feudal Lords are simply imprisoned or deprived of the ability to survive, then kept out of sight so they can waste away slowly, unseen, unheard, unknown. Is this more enlightened than shooting them? You be the judge of that.

Ironically, the concept of ownership does only a marginal job of serving the purpose stated at the beginning of this chapter. While ownership is almost universally accepted as a concept, there are always some people who nevertheless do not respect it: thieves, robbers, scammers, predatory banks and credit companies which operate within the letter of the law, speculators, contractors, lawyers who find legal ways to take others' property by exploiting legal loopholes; countries, individuals and

ethnic groups fighting and killing because of disagreements over ownership. Under Capitalist paradigm, we see reinforcement for abuse by those who are driven to constantly expand their sphere of ownership, even when it results in deprivation of millions of others from ownership of the most basic necessities.

As previously mentioned, one of the biggest assaults on the rights and dignity of the People is the legal fiction in the U.S. that grants corporations the status of Personhood. In disputes over ownership, this travesty almost guarantees the corporation's advantage over the common man or woman who cannot hope to afford a competent attorney to do battle against the corporation's army of top-notch attorneys.

But the prognosis is not bleak in terms of establishing and safeguarding the personal space and continuity of resources and access for individuals. The solution, however, does not lie in attempting to modify the existing Capitalistic laws and concepts of ownership, but in a complete paradigm change.

Observe that in the traditional collective Kibbutz, for example, the model most kibbutzim followed until the privatizations of recent decades, there is no formal ownership. Members and other residents are assured a place to live (a home), their personal space, possessions and resources, by virtue of nothing more than common agreement and culture.

In Cuba we see a modern country that made a place to live a right: a 1960 law turned tenants into owners after some years of reduced payments, and most Cubans today own their homes outright, without a mortgage, even though homes may now be bought and sold (since 2011). Many Indigenous nations of the Americas functioned very well without the idea of land as something to be bought and sold: they held land in common and recognised rights of use rather than saleable ownership. A cultural attitude of mutual respect and cooperation fosters respect for personal space, resources and "possessions."

In fact, the case can be made that Capitalism actually fosters disrespect for people's personal space and "property" by creating a scarcity of resources where in fact, there is no actual physical scarcity, by ensuring that most basic needs such as healthcare, transportation, and even living space is so expensive that most people are forced to waste much of their time and life energy just to pay for the necessities of life.

As long as it is permitted and accepted for a person or business entity to own and control access to land, homes, and other resources that they are not actually using to live, produce or function in, there is no truly free society.

When there is widespread scarcity, human nature is such that a certain percentage of the population will turn to theft, robbery, fraud and other non-sanctioned modes of acquiring property. When there is ready availability of most or all things with no artificial barriers such as cost, people will actually be less motivated to violate each other's space or resources.

To any who consider the current system of property to be sacrosanct, it is not difficult to prove that current ownership, especially of land, derives from behavior that even the prevailing Capitalist societies would consider beyond unacceptable.

To review an earlier chapter: Before the Europeans "discovered" the Americas, there were an estimated 60 million human beings living there in a rich variety of cultures and nations. The Europeans and their descendents claimed this already inhabited land as their own while exterminating most of the people living there through force, trickery, biological warfare (both intentional and unintentional) and a State-sanctioned program and policy of extermination, enslavement, and marginalization against a backdrop of prevailing cultural attitudes of dehumanization. Land in the United States and other areas in the Americas was then given out to Euro-American "settlers" or "homesteaders." Thereafter, once all land was thus "owned," all persons must pay money to own or rent.

If France were to do this to England today (or vice-versa), the aggressor would be heavily sanctioned and treated as a rogue nation by most of the world. Entire alliances of countries would come to the aid of the victim country. Witness what happened when Iraq invaded Kuwait. An alliance of countries stepped in to force Iraq out of Kuwait. In the modern world, in most cases where one country invades another, strong international pressure is brought to bear against the aggressor in defense of the victim. Sometimes it involves military means, almost always it involves economic, trade and other sanctions. In short, such behavior is considered unacceptable.

Yet the paradigm of ownership thus set in place is treated as unquestionable, set in stone, not to be challenged. In fact, most countries can trace their ownership lineage back to similar atrocities at various points in the past. Therefore, in the quest to create socio-economic paradigms that truly result in a pattern that works for all, we must be prepared to challenge and re-examine even these constructs that have remained unchallenged and perpetuated for far too long. The unwillingness to re-examine and redesign socio-economic paradigms is dangerous and inevitably leads to dysfunction.

Chapter 12: Production, Distribution, Advertising, Transportation and Community

Life needs to be about the quality of human existence and connection. It does not need to be about consumer goods, gadgets, consumption, corporate profit margins and stock prices. That most definitely does not mean that people should be expected to live an uncomfortable, miserable, deprived life. Capitalism is presented as providing abundance when in practice it creates scarcity. It is a question of priorities and guiding principles.

That acknowledged, the current paradigm for production and distribution of goods and services is wasteful, inefficient, destructive and injurious to the people and the environment. Under Capitalist paradigms, huge companies compete for market share and profits, in the process duplicating efforts while driving up prices. Researchers and developers in competing companies are prohibited from sharing knowledge and collaborating to create the best possible products and services. In the post-Transition paradigms, however, developers will be actively encouraged and incentivized to collaborate.

Under the current model, development and production focus not on quality, customer satisfaction, usability, compatibility, upgradeability or longevity of products and services, but on marketing, selling and predatory business practices. On the contrary, companies go to great lengths to enforce over-consumption through expedients commonly known as “built-in obsolescence.” This includes practices like deliberately manufacturing phones with batteries that cannot be replaced without destroying the device, designing devices to not last long, designing later models to be incompatible with earlier models, bundling goods and services, contracts and frequently redesigning devices while quickly dropping support for last month's models. The purpose of these practices is to force the user to buy expensive replacements more often than they would otherwise wish or need to do. This creates demand that can be maintained endlessly, keeping profits high.

The solution is to replace “private” for-profit companies in the production of goods and services like automobiles, electronics, appliances and other goods and services that are not practical to produce on a small scale, through democratically enacted law, once the conditions set out in the Roadmap are met, and with due process. Instead, these kinds of items will be produced as public services with the mission of creating a number of models that serve the needs and desires of the People, at the best quality that the state of the art permits. Once the design phase is done, production will proceed with the goal of making sure that all members of the community have their needs met. A small surplus will be maintained to cover breakage and anticipated future need. Once those goals are met, production will scale back to just enough to maintain sufficient supply. The workforce of designers, developers, and other skilled individuals that are prevented under Capitalism from pooling their knowledge will be strongly reinforced and encouraged to combine their knowledge, skill and expertise to produce the best products combining the best features of formerly competing manufacturers. Beneficial innovations that were suppressed under Capitalism to protect profits, will be integrated where logical to do so.

The public will be polled and surveyed to know what they want, need and desire. A small range of models can be produced that satisfy these preferences, with easily user-customizable options such as colors, accessories, styles, and other preferred features.

The necessary research and development will be performed collaboratively among teams tasked with producing the best, easiest to use, most reliable, economical, durable and upgradeable automobiles, washing machines, televisions, Internet service, etc., possible at the current state of the applicable technology. The goal will be to make goods and services serve the needs of users, last a long time and are as efficient, upgradeable and environmentally friendly as possible.

Production and distribution goals will no longer be driven by “market forces” to feed the endlessly escalating profit-driven accelerating cycle of overproduction and overconsumption that we see today. The goal will be to supply all real needs of the people and the community, then scale back to a maintenance level of production to compensate for units lost through accident, defects, international trade, or increased need.

The same will be true for telecommunications and other services and essentially all large-scale industries.

Advertising and marketing are essential and vital in a Capitalist paradigm. Yet they are completely parasitic, superfluous, damaging, useless, wasteful, irritating, and contributory to the sensory overload that drives anxiety as well as prices up. They serve as a vehicle to create a culture that substitutes presentation, packaging, advertising and image for substance, quality and function.

There will be no need for marketing or advertising in the post-Transition paradigms. Even in Capitalist paradigms, it does not contribute any value to the lives of the people nor to the community at large, benefiting only large corporations and advertising agencies while degrading the quality of life for the majority of people.

When things that must be produced on a large scale are produced centrally in democratically-run plants designed to create the maximum quality, durability, ease of use, repair, and upgrading, there is no need for advertising.

Everybody knows there are cars; everybody knows there is toothpaste; everybody knows there is food; everybody knows there are clothes. Once we eliminate the Capitalist paradigm and its dynamics, everybody will still know where to go for their needs. Directories online, by phone, and in print will make it easy to find out where to get things, both in conveniently located distribution centers and orderable by phone or online. New innovations, products and technologies will be announced via public informational messages in all media.

With the elimination of advertising, marketing, and the cycle of forced over-production/over-consumption, production demands and resource depletion will drastically decrease, more and more over time. This is not to say that there cannot be small-scale family level or individual level trade, but there is truly no need for marketing and advertising, nor for a stock market or profit-driven privately owned and run production of vital and commonly used goods and services with no oversight by or accountability to the People.

Distribution of new products and technologies will be through appropriate established locations. New electronics will be distributed through former electronics stores that will be re-cast as distribution centers. New kinds of vehicles will be distributed through automotive or bicycle distribution centers that were formerly dealerships.

In the area of transportation, more emphasis will be placed on developing public transportation which is usable, convenient, comfortable, and practical. When it takes two hours to go by public transportation to a destination that would take 10 or 15 minutes by car, then nobody will want to use public options, especially if they are unpleasant and unreliable.

In addition, we will need to place increased emphasis on bicycle, skate-board, scooter and other human-powered and alternative transportation methods, including horses, donkeys, camels, etc. To make these practical, we will need to develop an extensive network of roads, trails, public restrooms, eateries, rest stops and other support infrastructure to accommodate those relying upon these kinds of vehicles so that they truly serve the needs of real people and make it a viable, safe and attractive alternative. This will also serve to reduce dependence on non-renewable and polluting technologies.

In the post-Transition communities, it will be important to emphasize neighborhood and community-centered production, functionality, work, and distribution as much as is reasonably practicable. It is neither efficient, practical nor reasonable for people to have to commute long distances to do their jobs or find things they commonly need on a regular basis.

In Europe, a lot of agricultural produce is already grown and distributed locally. Emphasis is on local production, not on imports from other areas or countries. This allows for more Community consciousness and productive, positive connection and interaction among its members. This is not to say that there should be a ban on international trade or shipping of products between different climatic zones and the like; however, it will greatly improve the quality of life for all if the emphasis shifts to locally integrated models as much as is practical.

A major problem that accompanies the concentration of human beings into large population centers (cities) and the mammoth population worldwide, is human waste and how to process it. There is no way around it. The current model of channeling millions of tons of human waste through sewage systems to central processing plants is a major challenge. This consumes gargantuan amounts of water and produces massive amounts of waste that must be processed into non-toxic forms. Another specific change that will have a dramatic impact on many aspects of life is the phasing in and deployment of

self-composting toilets, especially in residences and small facilities. Properly managed, to the standards set out in the World Health Organization's guidelines on the safe use of excreta, these commodes convert human waste into high quality fertilizer at the individual home or building level, thus eliminating or vastly reducing the need for larg-scale infrastructure, significantly reducing water consumption, and reducing the risk of toxic contamination of the environment. Coupled with the proliferation of home and neighborhood food gardens, this is a natural source of safe, locally-produced fertilizer. Septic tanks can also be eliminated by phasing in this same technology. Composting of other organic waste can also be encouraged and reinforced to the same ends.

We do well to foster a culture that reinforces and encourages the search for such technologies in every aspect of our daily lives.

When local producers, agriculturalists, collectives, factories, service providers and others interact locally, the inhabitants feel continuity, connection and involvement, which are important and essential for a thriving community.

When virtually everything, every aspect of life, is dispersed and long-distance, the individual feels little or no sense of community or connectedness but rather feels alienated and disempowered, an island in a stormy sea. It is a subtle process that is devastating in its impact over time.

When the norm is to commute a long distance to one's work with people who also drive long distances from distant places, when acquisition and production of clothing, entertainment, and other goods and services is spread far and wide, the individual becomes an island, feeling disconnected, alienated, vulnerable. Neighbors do not know each other. This awareness is already an indelible part of modern urban and suburban folklore.

True community does not exist even when there is proximity, because everybody's life is disconnected from each other. There is little or no cohesion. This results in alienation, disempowerment, depression, isolation, lack of community, a sense of futility and ultimately lack of motivation or any sense of belonging. An alienated population also experiences difficulty forming strong mutually-beneficial bonds. Defensiveness and hyper-vigilance make people reluctant to fully trust and open up to one another and work together. This reality further dissipates the potential for concerted wide-spread action to force a change of paradigm. People eventually forget how to unite, even for mutual benefit.

This situation is harmful to the individual and to the community. It prevents a person from making their best contribution to the community, and from experiencing empowerment and a sense of purpose. Such a social dynamic virtually guarantees that the individual and society will be at odds.

We are by nature a social species, optimized to survive through working and living together in mutual support. When that is fragmented and largely missing, we experience a kind of disorientation and alienation that subtly drains and disempowers us, leaving us lacking in ways that are so deeply hard-wired in our nature that we are usually unable to even identify the sensations or their cause. In Capitalist paradigms, of course, this sense of lack, of something missing, is a perfect “hook” for advertisers to exploit by presenting their wares as the way to fill that void.

When the individual is an active, connected participant in a community where their individuality is engaged and valued in mutually supportive ways with others as peer co-stakeholders, they tend to become naturally empowered, involved, motivated, and fulfilled. They can fearlessly make their best contribution from the very best in them, and feel good doing it.

It is true that some things do need to be coordinated, produced and distributed on a larger scale. But even this can be accomplished in ways that further rather than diminish the sense of connectedness, community, involvement, and shared efforts for mutual shared benefit.

For readers interested in direct democracy, *The Green Book* by Muammar Gaddafi (1975) is worth studying for its proposals on governance: basic people's congresses in which every adult takes part in decisions, and economic principles such as "partners, not wage-workers" and "the house belongs to the one who lives in it." Two cautions. First, the book also argues that a society's law should come from custom and religion, which this project does not share; we favour law made openly and democratically by the people it governs. Second, in Libya itself the system was never carried out as written: real power

remained concentrated in Gaddafi and the revolutionary committees, and dissent was harshly suppressed. Good ideas are sometimes poorly carried out, or used as a front for something else entirely, in politics as in business and engineering, where a sound idea can be fraudulently claimed, or promised only to win support and never delivered. That does not make the idea itself wrong. It means each idea should be judged on its merits, and tested honestly. Among its other ideas worth weighing is an emphasis on participatory arts and sports over a separate class of idolized elite professional athletes and artists. This avoids suppression of equally talented performers and athletes who are never seen or heard because they did not make it into the elite.

Nor is this kind of governance Gaddafi's idea alone. Assemblies in which everyone takes part, and enterprises run by partners rather than employees, appear in many places. Some grew up naturally: the New England town meetings, held since the 1600s; Switzerland's open-air cantonal assemblies, the Landsgemeinde, still held in Glarus and Appenzell Innerrhoden; the councils of the Haudenosaunee; consensus decision-making among hunter-gatherer bands; and the assembly of ancient Athens, open to all its citizens. Others were built deliberately: worker cooperatives such as Mondragón in the Basque Country, founded in 1956; the general assembly of the kibbutz; the Paris Commune of 1871; participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where residents have helped decide the city's spending since 1989; and the rotating councils of the Zapatista communities in Chiapas. (See Documented Alternatives.)

Sources: Landsgemeinde; Participatory budgeting (Porto Alegre, 1989); Mondragon Corporation.

Chapter 13: Capitalism and Human Relationships

By imposing an adversarial environment which pits individual against individual for artificially scarcified insufficient resources and opportunities for advancement for survival, Capitalism creates and reinforces alienation and isolation of individuals while strongly reinforcing against cooperation and synergy, effectively dividing the people and defusing any potential dedicated, concerted efforts to challenge or change the status quo.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Let us examine how this plays out in various aspects of daily living:

In The Workplace

In current Capitalist societies, it is popular to believe that cutthroat competitiveness, greed, short-term selfishness, bullying/domineering attitudes and behaviors are natural parts of human nature while cooperation, synergy, mutuality, altruism, and the seeking of long-term mutual good is unnatural and against human nature. It is not hard to see how this belief perpetuates, since these societies strongly reinforce the former traits but not the latter ones.

These societies operate on a win-lose-lose-lose-lose-lose paradigm. For one to win, many others must lose.

Picture a business where there are 50 employees. One supervisor position will open when the current supervisor is promoted, dies, retires or leaves. Only one employee will be promoted, if any. The company may choose to hire someone from outside rather than promote from within. Promotional opportunities are few and far between. It will probably be years before the next opportunity opens up.

All of the employees except the supervisor are paid a sub or barely-living wage, surviving paycheck to paycheck. Raises are measured in pennies while the cost of living goes up in dollars. The supervisor doesn't make much more – just-over-living wage - but at least he or she won't be short every month. This paradigm fosters a mind-set that there isn't enough to go around. If one person succeeds, gets a raise, promotion or a bonus, it means implicitly that someone else won't. Many somebody elses won't.

Such an environment strongly reinforces intense predatory competition among all 50 employees. One will win. The rest will continue to lose. Unless the employees are all above average in compassion and empathy, this situation encourages and fosters a toxic, stressful atmosphere of suspicion, jealousy, distrust, and anxiety that works powerfully against cohesiveness, solidarity, mutual supportiveness and trust.

Individual responses will vary, of course. Out of those 50 employees, some will not allow this situation to affect how they treat their fellow employees, but many will find themselves refraining from being helpful to one another. If Freddy makes a mistake, many fellow employees will let him get written up rather than either fixing it or warning him so he can fix it before the boss discovers it. A few will report him, although Fred might also try to make it look like Jake's fault. Some employees may actively sabotage one another in order to gain an advantage.

It is a well-known fact of behavioral science that behaviors that are reinforced tend to predominate. In an environment that strongly reinforces mutually-destructive competition, abuse of power, selfishness and avarice, those behaviors will predominate while co-operation, compassion, united action and mutual supportiveness will not, since they are not reinforced.

This is borne out historically. In Nazi Germany, many studies have been made of how people who were not true-believer Nazis, or even particularly political and not psychopaths, became willing party to atrocities, cruelties, and callousness of which these same people would not normally have been capable (Lyubansky, "The Psychology of the Perpetrators,"

University of Illinois). Husbands, wives, parents, and children commonly informed on each other to the Gestapo. Friends turned in friends. To do so carried reward and assurance of survival. Failure to do so was likely to curtail survival...

Psychological studies have consistently confirmed this. This does not mean that we are inherently that way. The other side of this dynamic is that in an environment where cooperation, initiative, mutual supportiveness, contribution, creativity, respect, and concerted effort for mutual good are reinforced, these behaviors and attitudes will predominate over destructive competitiveness, greed, abuse of power, etc. Where there is no power structure, there is no power to abuse.

While we cannot control the laws of physics or nature, we have a very large degree of control over what kind of social, economic and political environment we live in. We create it. We define it. We create the reinforcers, both consciously and unconsciously. It is absurd therefore to tolerate and perpetuate social and economic paradigms that reinforce the most destructive attitudes and behaviors in us. It is utterly indefensible.

"One man's loss is another man's gain" is a common saying in societies that operate on this paradigm. This sets every individual against every other with respect to survival. Generally speaking, each individual or family is cast as an island in a hostile and stormy sea.

Beyond the confines of the workplace, we now take a look at society in general, especially at the impact of the Capitalist paradigm on family relationships and friendships.

In The Family

In the socio-economic environment created under the Capitalist paradigm, each individual and/or family must constantly come up with a steady supply of money in order to pay for the privilege of being allowed to live, occupy space, eat, and survive. For the steadily growing majority of these individuals/families, the supply of money is barely sufficient (if sufficient at all) to cover living expenses. A great many people in Capitalist societies live in an almost constant state of unrelenting stress as a result of this situation: in the United States, more than a third of adults could not cover even a $400 emergency expense with cash (Federal Reserve, 2024).

Except among those who occupy the very uppermost reaches of the economic pyramid, who experience a different kind of interpersonal stress, this constant stress, frustration, disempowerment, depletion and overextension of mind, body and emotions results in varying degrees of chronic strain on all interpersonal relationships.

When each family member in a household is exerting to their fullest extent, doing the best they can yet still experiencing no relief or improvement in economic situation or quality of life, resentments tend to arise as each may come to feel like the other(s) aren't doing their part. If any family members are in fact not, for whatever reason, contributing much to financial survival, whether from sickness, depression, lack of success finding a job, or being burnt out and unable to face the struggle, then those resentments and frustrations are exacerbated.

When gambling, compulsive shopping, drugs or alcohol are involved, as sometimes happens as coping mechanisms under chronic stress, it can rip families apart.

Many other factors can complicate family relations and further strain the bonds of love, trust, empowering interdependence and heart connection among family members. In Capitalist societies, people are predisposed through a lifetime of saturation with advertising in a consumeristic culture to shop, to seek entertainments and distractions as coping mechanisms. When barely making it through the month and constantly under stress, the need to conserve resources constantly conflicts with the need that family members feel to relieve stress in ways that cost money.

One family member buys new clothes or shoes. Another family member buys a new computer or tablet. Yet another one goes to an expensive play or sporting event. Each family member feels justified in their own expenditures. Each resents and criticizes the others for theirs. Family members end up blaming each other for the dire stressful economic situation. Those who are able to refrain from these coping mechanisms will feel even more resentful of the ones who are unable. All of this forms a feedback loop that escalates the disconnection and alienation among family members.

Many families are torn apart by the effects of these stresses, which in turn weakens the situations of the now separated family members as each must survive individually. Even in families that stay together through these stresses, the health and quality of life and relationship is frequently seriously compromised.

In a system characterized by the constant need for money, where money is hard to come by, it is not uncommon for siblings and other family members to become bitter enemies and conspire against each other when a parent dies leaving an inheritance.

A healthy, viable, well-crafted socio-economic system does not guarantee perfect interpersonal relationships. Humans are complex and imperfect organisms, and so are our relationships. But the kind of social and economic paradigms we create for ourselves to live in do have a profoundly defining impact on the quality of our lives and relationships.

It is true that one's own inner attitudes largely determine one's experience in an existential sense. If one is predisposed to be dissatisfied, one will tend to find things to be dissatisfied about; while if one is predisposed to be appreciative and see beauty, one will tend to find things to appreciate in the same environment. Yet it is a dangerous oversimplification to leave it at that and perpetuate an unnecessarily stressful and destructive paradigm when we are capable of creating better ones. Life presents us with challenges and difficulties all on its own. It is masochistic and ill-advised for us to create unnecessary suffering and deprivation and then justify it by saying it “builds character.” That is a frequent theme in Capitalist attitudes and social myths. The damage done by prevailing conditions within Capitalist paradigms is described in numerous studies (Wilkinson and Pickett, The Guardian, 2018). It is time to break these mental chains.

There are good reasons why people have always tried to migrate from place to place to improve quality of life. While it is true that there were people in German concentration camps, Japanese POW camps and other horrific environments who achieved an indestructible happiness in spite of those conditions, no one would choose a concentration camp over a life of freedom and prosperity. No one would choose slavery over freedom. No one would choose dictatorship over democracy.

Once we humans recognize that we are capable of creating social paradigms that foster a high degree of safety, well-being, quality of life, dignity, peace, thriving, and fulfillment, it is our right, our duty, and our responsibility to do so.

Capitalism and Friendship

The impact of Capitalism on friendships mirrors that affecting families. Friendships are often strained to the breaking point because of money issues and financial survival. Everybody knows examples of friendships that have eroded or even ended over money issues.

When one friend finds him or herself jobless or even homeless due to layoffs, predatory mortgages, catastrophic medical expenses uncovered by insurance or other situational calamities, it is natural that he or she will turn to friends and family for support through the difficult time while they "get on their feet again." And it is equally natural that friends and family would jump in to help and support willingly.

Capitalism, however, makes this extremely difficult and strongly reinforces against this response. Since so many people live paycheck to paycheck or close to the margin, helping out a friend financially becomes either impossible or a potential risk to one's own future survival. What if we need car repairs or dental work? What if I get laid off? What if I help them out and then need that money later on?

Even a loan will be perceived as risky, because in a Capitalist society, those who find themselves at the very bottom of the economic pyramid, down and out with no income and/or homeless, are rarely likely to be able to repay a loan in the foreseeable future.

Please keep in mind that in today’s economic climate, a person who has been jobless for more than three or four months is almost always automatically dropped from consideration for employment simply because they have been jobless for so long. Added to that is the fact that having no fixed address eliminates one from consideration in any job search or even for many kinds of aid. If one has a bad credit score, this too makes finding a job and/or place to live even more unreachable.

Capitalism generates a society that effectively defaults to an outright denial of life that must be bought out of constantly. The result is that in most instances, when a person is in dire financial circumstances, many friends who would willingly help are unable to do so. Many who do have the ability still tend to perceive themselves as unable to do so. Even if the person in need has friends who are high enough up the economic pyramid to be able to help with no risk to their own survival or comfort, such friends have almost always, in the process of reaching that economic level, developed an attitude that precludes them from helping a friend in dire straits.

Even more to the point, in the rare instances when a person makes a quantum leap from a paycheck-to-paycheck existence to the upper reaches of the economic pyramid, they tend to disassociate from their friends in the lower reaches of the pyramid, at least partially, because they do not want to be reminded of how easily they could end up back there again.

This does not happen 100% of the time. There are exceptions; but the predominant cultural attitudes in Capitalist societies leave the individual or family who falls by the wayside, alone and on their own.

Once again we see that Capitalism has a destructive effect on human interpersonal relationships at every level. Plentiful examples abound: people who marry or befriend each other for money; people who use and betray each other for money, gain, or influence; people who are unable and unwilling to trust or open up to others. All of these behaviors are magnified and intensified as a direct result of adaptation to surviving in the Capitalist environment.

Of course not all will exhibit these behaviors; but they are still the most common in Capitalist society and rare in egalitarian, co-operative, synergistic, symbiotic societies. Behavior that is reinforced always predominates; behavior that is not reinforced tends towards extinction.

In Society at Large

In society at large, Capitalism has the same divisive and destructive effect that it has on interpersonal relationships. The paradigm creates multiple mutually-opposing castes, classes and groups in an environment that predisposes them to be at odds and conflicted with one another by the very nature and structure of the system.

This helps ensure that the population is divided and conquered, blaming each other rather than the socio-political-economic system that defines the parameters which set them against each other: landlords and tenants; management/bosses and workers; employers and employees; rich and poor; native-born and immigrant; ethnic, racial, religious and political affiliations; regional factions; urban and rural and more.

For that matter, the American Civil War was fought largely because the states of the Confederacy had developed an economy based on slave labor and were unwilling to give it up. From a business perspective, if you can pay a one-time price for a worker and thereafter not have to pay them anything, your expenses are greatly reduced, your profits increased and you can undercut the competition that actually has to pay their workers. There is absolutely nothing in the Capitalist paradigm that precludes slavery. That slavery has been abolished in the majority of Capitalist countries is an empirical proof of the inherent nature of compassion and mutuality in the innermost makeup of Humanity.

Under the conditions of created and enforced scarcity that most of the population believes to be a fact of life beyond their control, all of these groups tend to blame each other for the situation. In addition, they perceive any gains made by an opposing group as a loss or threat to their own group, which in this paradigm is often actually the case due to the paradigm's fundamental operating principles. When there are already tensions among these groups, they are exacerbated under the conditions in Capitalist paradigms. Often those at the top of the economic pyramid actively propagate rumors and subtle propaganda to further encourage and add fuel to the fires of these divisions and conflicts.

In the World At Large

In the world at large, the impact of Capitalism in its current form, in which gigantic multinational corporations wield economic and sometimes even military might greater than many countries, we see similar dynamics with even more dangerous, destructive behaviors and norms coming into play.

So-called First World countries and mega-corporations find some very insidious ways to improve their profit margins and degree of control. One way is outsourcing. Many companies in many industries, including computer and software development, information technology, manufacturing, remote technical support and others, pay professionals in "developing" countries like India or the Philippines $40 or $50 per day or less, rather than pay that amount per hour to a professional in the home country. This leads to massive job loss in the home country. Better paying jobs dwindle, to be replaced by low-wage jobs in the home country. Witness the collapse of much of the information technology industry in the United States in the early 21st century, in which highly-trained technical professionals who were previously able thrive on their salaries, are now working in sub-living-wage jobs in retail.

Many industries, including textiles, footwear, high-tech electronics and many more, outsource production to countries that routinely use sweatshops to produce cheaply, paying pennies an hour to workers in unsafe and unhealthy conditions.

As covered earlier in this writing, agricultural mega-corporations con traditional farmers in developing countries into buying genetically-engineered seed stock by promising increased yields; then the farmers find that patents and contracts forbid them to save and replant that seed, so they must buy it again every season (Barlett and Steele, Vanity Fair, 2008). In South America, during the soy boom of the 2000s and 2010s, Monsanto collected royalties at the grain ports even where the law protected farmers' right to save seed, and landowners expanding their plantations used hired gunmen, private security and, at times, local police to drive peasant and Indigenous families from their land. Peasant movements documented intimidation, evictions and the killing of their leaders. Resistance can win. In 2014, Guatemala passed a law under which saving protected seed without permission could mean up to four years in prison; after some ten days of mass protests led by Indigenous and campesino communities, Congress repealed it that September (Waging Nonviolence). (See Chapter 18 for more details and sources.)

Many huge corporations in the beef and soy industries, and increasingly palm oil, already a leading cause of forest loss in Southeast Asia, are responsible for the wholesale destruction of the Amazon river biosphere and the cultures who live there, employing irreversibly destructive techniques to make maximum profits as quickly as possible until the soil is depleted before burning and bulldozing yet more thousands of acres of jungle. Keep in mind that the Amazon rain forest is the planet's greatest store of carbon on land and of biodiversity, and makes the rain for much of South America (National Geographic). Yet these unchecked mega-corporations continue wantonly destroying that environment for immediate gains that gravitate inevitably into the hands of the ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal Lords.

This follows the pattern of addiction. In the people at the top, the drive follows the same pattern as an alcoholic's or a gambler's: a compulsion that persists even as it destroys what they depend on, and it deserves to be recognised as such. In the society as a whole, it resembles something far worse: the drug Krokodil (desomorphine), which literally rots the flesh from its users' bones while they keep taking it. A society hooked on endless extraction keeps consuming the living world it depends on, even as the damage spreads.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Allowing them to continue as they are is equivalent to allowing a drunken pilot to fly a passenger airliner instead of mandating treatment. It is a travesty against all parties if we do not quickly bring this pattern to a halt.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

The fishing industry does the same in the oceans, as does the logging industry in our forests worldwide. Massive factory ships still prey upon whales, pushing them inexorably towards extinction, even though literally all products of whaling have less expensive alternatives derived from renewable sources. The only exception is whale meat that is considered a delicacy in Japan and Norway. The loss of this "delicacy" is assured one way or another. If whales become extinct, there will be no more whale meat anyway. Therefore it is time for people to give it up before whales go extinct. There is absolutely no possible justification for continuation of the whaling industry for any purpose. Yet under Capitalism, the prime reinforcers are profits, stock prices, market share, and control of resources.

The quality of food suffers as well, because Capitalism incentivizes maximum quantity of corn, potatoes, beef, chicken, lettuce, tomatoes, etc. in the shortest time. In practice, this translates increasingly into artificially forcing both plants and animals to grow bigger and faster, almost always at the expense of both taste and nutritional content. This means that the same amount of food does not sustain you as it would have fifty years ago. Nutritional analyses have shown that a tomato or chicken leg today has only a fraction of the nutritional content of ones produced by traditional methods without hormones, artificial acceleration, and genetic engineering. It is also well-demonstrated that the use of growth hormones and antibiotics to force rapid growth is dangerous to the health of humans, animals and the global biosphere.

The tourist industry destroys much more than most people know.

When a luxury resort is built, usually in a place of natural beauty with a poor, disenfranchised populace so land prices are low and the people poorly equipped to defend themselves, it destroys the local ecosystem and drives the cost of living so high that the rightful residents cannot afford to live there.

Tourism also creates a rigid class stratification in which tourists, who are rich beyond any local standard by comparison, are the over-class, served by a select few locals who are always subservient to the tourists and the corporate owners of the resort, who in turn become a new over-class relative to the rest of their countrymen. This is the Feudal pattern replicated yet again: Royals, served by an over-class vassals who rule over serfs and peasants who have no rights.

Even in countries that are more resilient, we see damage to the quality of life of the home population. The term “overtourism” has recently been coined. Imagine your neighborhood or town overrun with so many tourists that it becomes daunting to do your normal daily errands due to congestion, high prices, and an unending stampede of people, cars, trash and noise (Jet, Forbes, 2018).

Human trafficking often thrives in those environments, even though it is illegal in most countries, because there is a demand. In reality the difference between illegal Capitalism and legal Capitalism is mostly an arbitrary definition. The same principles operate. Selling ornamental flowers is legal Capitalism; selling marijuana was illegal Capitalism until many places legalized it, and the business itself barely changed. Where the line falls is largely arbitrary.

Overall we can see that the Capitalist paradigm fosters alienation, conflict, exploitation, untold human suffering, and constitutes a very real threat to the long-term survival of life on earth.

Yet those who are at the top of the pyramid are not entirely to blame; it is the paradigm itself that reinforces those behaviors. We can see from this that as a socio-economic paradigm it is untenable, a poor design even more poorly implemented. If it were an airplane or a car, it would never have been allowed to go into production. If it were a ship, it would have sunk long ago.

The Travesty of "Corporate Personhood"

Ever since corporations have been granted Personhood status in the United States, the rights and respect of actual human beings have been compromised and degraded to a shadow in practical terms.

Corporate Personhood has repercussions beyond just the theoretical. For example, a corporation is treated the same as a human being in many civil and criminal legal proceedings. The typical human being is inevitably at an extreme disadvantage in any lawsuit or other legal action against a corporation, equally so as plaintiff or respondent, for a number of reasons.

One reason is the extreme cost of hiring an attorney. Unlike most products whose success in the marketplace is often as much or more a result of marketing and packaging as of quality, the best attorneys for the most part tend to charge high rates, because people are willing to pay more for a better attorney who gets the best results.

Unfortunately, the outcome of court cases depends as much on the relative skill of the attorneys as on facts, evidence and laws. When a typical natural human being who is living paycheck to paycheck is facing a typical corporation in a court of law, the corporation has resources measured in millions or billions of dollars and employs a team of well-paid top-notch

attorneys on retainer to fight for their interests. Since the attorneys are on retainer, the extra cost to the corporation is minimal.

Even if costs escalate, the corporation can easily absorb legal costs in the hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars with very little long-term impact. The typical citizen however, even one who is not entirely living paycheck to paycheck, has a very limited budget. Let's say you are working for $15 an hour. Attorneys start at about $150 an hour while $300 - $600 an hour is common for decent attorneys. The best attorneys charge thousands of dollars per hour, and there are additional costs that can go much higher. You will not be able to afford the best attorneys, private detectives, researchers, filing fees and other court costs, if you are able to afford an attorney at all.

In a civil case, U.S. citizens are not provided an attorney if they cannot afford one. The individual in a legal battle against a corporation, whether they are the plaintiff or the respondent, is in a situation roughly equivalent to going into combat alone with only an assault rifle and a couple of magazines of ammunition against an armored division with unlimited ammunition.

In a criminal case, the citizen is provided with a public defender if they are the defendant and cannot afford an attorney, but not if they are the plaintiff. If you are bringing charges against a corporation, you are in the same position as you would be in a civil suit, except that some attorneys in a civil suit will work for a percentage, assuming they win.

If you are the defendant against a corporation and can't afford a top-notch attorney, you are represented by an underpaid public defender with a massive case load, which puts you in a position similar to two people with two assault rifles, 4 magazines of ammunition and one grenade launcher with 10 RPG's... against an armored division with unlimited ammunition.

Public defenders' reputation as not being the best attorneys is not entirely fair or deserved. There are some excellent ones. However, they almost always have very heavy caseloads and extremely limited resources. Corporate attorneys on the other hand have light case loads, may even be assigned solely to that case, and have a team and virtually endless resources at their disposal.

The dangerous legal fiction of "Corporate Personhood" completely undermines the Constitutional rights of the vast majority of people in legal proceedings, even though on paper it is not obvious that it does. Occasionally a natural person does win a lawsuit against a corporation, but the legal odds are stacked extremely heavily against the human person.

The same dynamic occurs when a typical person is in legal proceedings versus a member of the ultra-wealthy class. The dynamics are stacked heavily in favor of the ultra-wealthy. Once again we see that under Capitalism one's rights are determined more by one's wealth, or lack of it, than by the Constitution.

"Corporate Personhood" also shields guilty or responsible persons within a corporation from being held personally responsible for their actions. When the corporation is legally treated as the "person" in a lawsuit, the individual within the corporation who was actually responsible for a wrong or injustice, cannot be singled out and held to task any more than a pickpocket's hand can be tried for the crime or a slanderer's vocal cords can be sued for the words spoken.

"Corporate Personhood" has no place in a truly free or healthy society that values and respects the individuals in it. Actually, Corporations themselves have no place in such a society.

Social entities are not the same thing as corporate personhood. An individual is a person. A family is a social entity: two or more adults, any children they have, and other relatives or people living with them as extended family. A social club, a house of worship, a factory, a shared farm, a software development team or a distribution centre is also a social entity. Each is the shared property and the shared responsibility of all the people who run it, operate it and work in it, and it is administered on a peership basis, as a partnership of equals. Its ownership rests on that shared nature: it belongs to the people who make it up. This bears no resemblance to corporate personhood under capitalism, in which a legal fiction is treated as a person in its own right, is owned by shareholders who may never set foot in it, and is run on their behalf through a chain of command that the people working there do not control. A social entity is not a legal fiction standing apart from its members; it is its members, holding and running something together.

Chapter 14: Your Constitutional Rights End at Your Workplace Door... and Where You Live

The U.S. Constitution guarantees us many rights and freedoms, including freedom of speech, the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of the Press, protection from illegal search and seizure (this right is currently being directly violated in many cities with respect to the homeless – see earlier in this writing), equal rights before the law, presumption of innocence and more. Members of the military, police and other similar agencies swear an oath to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. The Constitution is at the heart of the fundamental intention of the formation of the United States of America.

Yet the economic power structure and prevailing Capitalist norms directly threaten, undermine, contradict and nullify these Constitutional rights. Part of this tragedy arises from the concepts associated with private ownership of land and buildings, especially as embodied by the devastatingly destructive concept of "corporate personhood," that allows control of ever-expanding resources to concentrate into a very few hands. Part of this comes from the dictatorial power that the Capitalist paradigm confers upon the employer in the employer-employee relationship and the landlord in the landlord-tenant relationship.

Here is one of the inherent contradictions and damaging paradoxes of Capitalism. Note that in the workplace setting, the one bringing the check to the transaction has rights over the one bringing their time, energy, expertise, labor, etc. - except for the CEO and very few others at the top of the pyramid, who dictate the terms and conditions. Yet in the vast majority of living situations, the one bringing the check to the transaction, the tenant or homebuyer who actually lives in the home, is forced to live under terms dictated by the one supplying the place to live. Notice that in both situations it is the same party who is bereft of rights: the employee/tenant/homebuyer - the person in the weaker economic position. Capitalism is truly a "heads I win, tails you lose" dynamic in which the party at the top of the economic pyramid sets the terms and conditions that everybody else is expected and compelled to live by and under, with no appeal, negotiation or discussion.

Because the workplace is considered the "private property" of the "person" (Corporation or ultra-wealthy human), of the employer, the employer is legally given the right of dictatorial power over employees. Since virtually all lands and locations are owned privately under Capitalism, our theoretical Constitutional rights are superceded in practice by the rights of the owners of the place where we are standing, sleeping, working, eating, studying, living, etc.

As a result, in spite of Constitutional guarantees to the contrary, we can have our free speech curtailed, can be fired (deprived of livelihood and possibly becoming homeless) for any reason or for no reason at all, as embodied most commonly in the United States by the concept of "at will" employment, in which either employee or employer can terminate employment at any time with no repercussions. Proponents say it is fair and equitable because the employee is also free to quit at any time. This is yet another case of verbal and logical sleight of hand, since in Capitalist paradigms it is analogous to one person holding a rope at the other end of which another person is hanging over an abyss. Saying that either person is free to let go of the rope at any time is a cruel and insensitive travesty.

In the workplace, under Capitalist paradigm, we may be pressured, harassed (as long as such harassment does not cross legal lines regarding race, religion, gender etc), intimidated, censored, censured, searched, bullied, spied and eavesdropped upon, held to task for everything we do, down to the point of regulating the length and frequency of permitted restroom use. When accused of wrongdoing, we are presumed guilty, not innocent, often with no appeal or opportunity to prove our innocence. “Innocent until proven guilty” does not apply in the workplace or in the rented or mortgaged home.

Employees have been fired for postings in social media or involvement in social or political causes that have nothing to do with work or their employers, simply because their boss did not like or agree with the post or the cause. Many employers monitor all employee phone calls, keystrokes and mouse clicks on computers, the length and frequency of bathroom breaks, even when a medical condition is involved.

Many companies make it clear that they reserve the right to search employees, their belongings and vehicles at any time on the premises. Any expression of dissatisfaction or even constructive criticism can often be grounds for dismissal, even when justified.

It is understandable that an employer would want to make sure that employees are doing their jobs and not spending work time on personal or recreational activities. It is also reasonable that employers would wish to ensure that employees don't steal. Such concerns arise from the inherently divisive and adversarial nature of the Capitalist paradigm, which pits group against group and individual against individual even within an endeavor or enterprise. This dynamic is at odds with the fact that the success of the enterprise is in the best interest of all concerned. When employees feel exploited and are unable to survive on what they're paid, some of them will feel justified to steal.

The reinforcers are powerful and ever-present. The oppositional behaviors become a fight for survival. The interests of employee and employer are in direct conflict in more ways than not. The mutual distrust that arises from this situation engenders these draconian policies on the part of employers as well as some destructive behaviors on the parts of some employees.

Under the Capitalist paradigm, the employer is almost always given preference and rights over the employee. When an employer fires an employee and gives him or her a bad reference or even simply states that they would not re-hire the employee, future potential employers almost universally reject the job applicant out of hand. Just the fact of having been fired will severely reduce the likelihood of the employee being hired elsewhere, regardless of circumstances. Quitting a job greatly likewise reduces the applicant's chances of being hired elsewhere.

Yet if an employee or ex-employee makes any negative or critical statement about a current or former employer at a job interview, such a statement is held against the applicant, not the former employer, by interviewers. This is the case regardless of the details of the circumstances of the employee's firing or quitting. Under Capitalism, the employer's word is almost universally believed over the employee's. No research or fact-finding is ever performed. In the world of the workplace, accused is taken as guilty, and the privilege of being permitted to make money to pay for the privilege of occupying space is functionally revoked.

Since employment is the most common way of coming up with one's monthly ransom money, a negative parting between employee and employer has no significant impact on the employer but can devastatingly threaten the survival of the employee and their family. Offending, annoying or inconveniencing the employer, taking too many restroom breaks, calling home to touch in with a sick family member, expressing an opinion that the employer does not like, participating in a demonstration on time off that upsets the boss, making a superior look bad, failing to meet metrics set by the employer, or even being the most convenient person upon whom a manager can shift blame for their own mistake - any of these and more can result not only in loss of livelihood but also in loss of ability to find a different livelihood. One's Constitutional rights are superceded under Capitalism by the preferred status accorded the employer over the employee, both in law and in custom and cultural attitudes. With no employment, there is no money. With no money, we are unable to pursue the Life, Liberty and Happiness that the Declaration of Independence proclaims as our unalienable rights. And because Constitutional rights restrain the government, not private employers, our Constitutional rights end at our workplace door.

For the vast majority of people, the situation in one's place of residence is very similar. Here as well, we have opposing groups and classes created by the Capitalist paradigm, strongly reinforced in their adversarial dynamics.

For renters, who are multitudinous, the landlord is legally allowed to dictate how many people can live on the premises, whether one may have children, whether or not they may have guests, what changes or improvements residents may or may not make, where residents may or may not park, what residents may or may not plant in any yard or garden on site, whether residents may have pets, whether or not residents may hang laundry outside to dry in order to save energy and more. This writer knows of a case in which a renter's elderly parents came to visit them in their motorhome and the security guards employed by the owners woke them up at 3 a.m. to make them leave.

Some areas do have one version or another of "rent control," a set of laws aimed at protecting renters from some kinds of abuses by landlords. In these situations the predation, abuse and advantage-taking are mutual. Not universal but certainly

common.

Even "homeowners" (both real and mortgaged) are not immune. There are towns (and homeowners' associations) in which regulations impose fines on homeowners whose lawns go brown or whose gardens don't conform to arbitrary specifications. These fines can be financially significant.

Yet during times of drought, states and towns naturally fine people for watering their lawns and gardens, in order to conserve water. However, the regulations against brown lawns are still enforced. Thus residents (renters and "owners") alike, are fined if they water their lawn to keep it green and also if they comply with drought regulations by not watering.

Incidentally, if the reader is thinking that these green lawn laws are not the result of Capitalism but of local lawmakers and legislators, then the reader is not aware of the whole picture. The motivation behind laws dictating the form and condition of residents' lawn and gardens is to keep property values as high as possible.

In the Capitalist construct called real estate, property values (which equal profits for the real estate industry and among wealthy people who "flip" houses, not to mention other parasitic industries that support the real estate industry) are capriciously influenced and impacted by people's subjective perceptions and emotional reactions to arbitrary factors.

A brown lawn, wild un-manicured garden, farming the yard for food, the presence of cows, goats, chickens or other food animals, windmills, any vehicles on the property in the process of being repaired, an RV or trailer on the premises, any artistic or experimental projects visible, a house in visible need of painting (which can occur because the occupants cannot afford to paint or have it painted) - all of these and more cause property values to go down.

In some time periods, the presence of dark-skinned people or immigrants in the neighborhood has also had the same effect. This drives landowners, realtors, and residents to pressure lawmakers to pass laws and regulations that force occupants to refrain from any practices that might adversely affect property values.

In Capitalist societies, the less-well-off are looked down upon and their presence is not welcomed. Attitudes prevail that it is a bad idea to associate with people in that situation. Even among people in those circumstances, there is often a tendency to try to associate with more affluent people. The attitude almost reaches the proportions of a superstition: It's bad luck to hang around poor people AKA "losers" and it's good luck to hang around affluent people, as though these circumstances are highly contagious either way.

Thus, once again we see that to a critically large extent, one's degree of freedom, respect and options is not determined by the Constitution so much as by one's financial circumstances under Capitalism.

Public schools, which are intended to be Constitutionally guaranteed, not-for-profit public institutions supported by the community, have in some instances formed business arrangements with soft drink and snack food companies in such a way as to take away the freedom of choice from students, teachers and staff. Some campuses are Coke campuses and some are Pepsi campuses. Some have even gone so far as to punish individuals who bring their own soft drinks of the non-approved brand.

In the United States and some other countries, since the 1980's there has been a relentless and escalating trend towards what is called "privatization." In Capitalist cultures the term "private" carries an unspoken subliminal emotional implication of applying to affirming the individual, their private life, their home, their autonomy, rights and dignity. People in Capitalist paradigms have been trained, when they hear the words "private" or "privatization," to perceive it as an affirmation of their personhood and rights, as compared to government control, which is perceived as authoritarian. Many people associate the term "private" or "privatize" with a positive emotional tone. Yet in reality, in any country with a democratic Constitutional set of principles similar to those in the U.S. Constitution, elected officials are tasked with administering public resources such as schools, libraries, parks, nature preserves, public hospitals, transportation systems, roads, defense forces, emergency responders and more. These same elected officials work for the people, for their constituents who have the right and ability to fire or replace them at the next election or even sooner if they commit sufficiently grave betrayals of the public trust. Privatization of these same resources and services explicitly means placing them into the hands and control of for-

profit corporations run by the neo-Feudal Lords of Capitalism, who are utterly and absolutely insulated from any accountability to the people whatsoever. Privatization of essential services has repeatedly resulted in improved financial efficiency and profitability for the corporation at the expense of increased prices, steadily degrading quality and quantity of services, and reduced accessibility and availability (Denniss, The Guardian, 2018). This pattern recurs across Capitalist environments.

As has been discussed elsewhere, the media in the United States and other countries operating under similar models, are rank with censorship and propaganda, in direct contradiction to the Constitution. Any programming that is offensive to one or more major sponsors, or to Network executives, is suppressed, even if it is extremely popular among the audience.

As is also discussed elsewhere, free and open dialog and information sharing among scientists, engineers and developers is suppressed in the name of the "intellectual property" of companies and corporations. As previously discussed, this goes to the point where the individuals actually doing the research and developing the technologies are denied ownership of the fruits of their own labor, by employment agreements forcing them to relinquish any ownership or rights over their own products and signing the rights over to the employer. In a society that places highest importance on ownership, the individual human being is once again denied the fruits of their labor, knowledge and experience in favor of the parasitic corporation and the billionaires at their helm.

In Capitalism, as in Feudalism, the Feudal Lords of the ruling classes take what they want from the serfs or employees working for them under their control and domination, typically leaving them not enough with which to survive.

So where can one truly enjoy the exercise of one's Constitutional rights under the Capitalist paradigm? Certainly not in most workplaces. Equally certainly only to a limited degree in one's residence. Perhaps in public places? Think again.

Most towns and cities have ordinances banning and severely suppressing behavior outside of the Capitalist norm. For example, if the paradigm truly supported "free enterprise," then street and sidewalk performers would be treated as a welcome and legitimate addition to the environment. Yet many cities and towns restrict street performing with permits, fees and designated zones, or allow it only in very limited and highly regulated locations. This applies whether the performer is putting out a hat for money or just sharing their craft for free.

Such restrictions have nothing to do with the artistic or aesthetic quality of the performance. Under Capitalism, what is reinforced is performance through, and under control of, corporate channels: star artists generating massive revenues for large corporate entities. Small independent performers, if allowed to flourish and thrive, would cut into the profit margins of those larger enterprises, especially if the quality and variety of the small street performers were comparable or superior to the performances marketed by said entertainment conglomerates.

Predictably, as is typical in Capitalist paradigms, the persons who enjoy the smallest portion of said copious revenues are the writer and performer. Often the performer or writer receives less than 10% of what their craft generates. The parties who rake in the lion's share of the funds are the parasitic business apparatus whose only contribution to the music, acting, or other performance is to market it and ensure that all is done in such a manner as to best benefit the Corporation and its major stockholders. Here again we see how freedom of expression is curtailed by the Capitalistic power structure. The method is quieter than under Soviet “Communism”: no one is sent to a labor camp, but a career, a show or a book can disappear just as surely when it offends those who pay.

As discussed elsewhere, in order to pursue one's rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, one must have a place to be; yet under Capitalism "ownership is nine-tenths of the law." In short, if you do not own the space that you occupy, then whoever does own it is allowed to dictate what you can or cannot do there, or even whether or not you can be there. Therefore, if you do not own any piece of land, you can exercise your constitutional rights only on someone else's terms.

Money and physical resources are not the only things artificially scarcified under Capitalism. Freedom is at best a costly and exceedingly unevenly-distributed commodity, made scarce by the socio-economic presumptions upon which the paradigm is based.

No matter how much propaganda and carefully-seeded folklore may speak to the contrary, the fact is that Capitalism is incompatible with, and long-term fatally toxic to, a free and open society, inimical to government of, by, and for the people. In functional, objective terms, Capitalism can be accurately described as Feudalism wearing new clothes and citing new justifications; but the socio-politico-economic dynamics are very nearly the same. The only way to achieve a truly free and democratic society is to weave together both political and economic democracy. Government of, by, and for The People can only thrive when there is economy of, by, and for the people.

Chapter 15: Capitalism and Science/Development

Proponents of Capitalism believe and claim that it produces superior scientific research and product quality compared to collective-based collaborative paradigms, because the profit motive stimulates competition, which motivates competing researchers, developers and producers to achieve their best efforts.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

There is no doubt that competition does in some situations serve to inspire competitors to exceed each other and themselves to reach high levels of excellence and innovation.

Part of this is due to biochemistry, and parts of this phenomenon are due to psychological and emotional mechanisms. Certainly the human propensity for sports emerges from a side of human nature that enjoys some forms of competition to varying degrees. But like any aspect of our nature, we have better results if we examine closely where each facet of our nature truly furthers human happiness, well-being and quality of life, and where those same qualities cause harm.

For example, there is an aspect of human nature that is capable of fighting and killing. This aspect serves us well when we are faced with a direct and immediate threat; but that same side of human nature causes untold suffering when it is applied in context of a disagreement, argument or moment of anger. Similarly, the instincts of compassion serve us well in most everyday situations and even in many extreme situations, but cause harm when we encounter a psychopathic killer, terrorist, or sociopath who plays upon our compassion in order to scam, harm or use us. Likewise, we do well to examine how and where competition improves our quality of life and relationships, as well as how and where it compromises or degrades our quality of life and relationships.

In the area of scientific research, we only have to look at current and historical examples to see that scientific research thrives best and progresses fastest when there is free and open collaboration and interchange of information among scientists. Such interchange is essential for both collaboration and competition. Competition can stimulate extraordinary efforts when different teams or individuals have differing competing theories and each is motivated to validate their own. For that competition to have that beneficial effect, even the competing scientists need to be able to freely exchange information, since they will be eager to verify or falsify each other's results, to find the flaws in each other's work. When researchers and developers are restricted from communicating and collaborating freely, scientists, society and science all suffer. Competition and collaboration are both severely handicapped. It matters not whether the restrictions come from government or from industry.

During the Cold War, scientists and engineers on both sides of the Iron Curtain were constantly frustrated by the fact that most of the time they were prevented by both the U.S. and the Soviet governments from sharing their knowledge, research and findings. Exceptions were few and far between. The mutual hostility and distrust of the political establishments became a major impediment to the scientific development of both countries and their respective blocs of allies.

The Space Race was a good example. Early U.S. efforts were dismal failures as time after time U.S. test rockets blew up on the launch pad or in the air. In the end the U.S. made it to the Moon first. Meanwhile the early Soviet tests were more successful but they had more fatal accidents. Each country's space program had their strong and weak points.

The Soviets favored land landings; the Americans favored ocean landings. The Soviets in those days surpassed the Americans in development of robotic space vehicles and exploration, while the Americans surpassed the Soviets in manned space vehicles and exploration. If the scientists on both sides had been able to collaborate and compete freely, openly and without restrictions, it is obvious that both space programs would have benefited. If the two superpowers had found a way to work together in a joint effort, undoubtedly Humanity would have set foot on the Moon sooner, and most likely space exploration would have evolved a lot farther than it has at present.

The same was true of medical research. The Soviets developed diagnostic capability superior to the U.S. The U.S. developed treatment capability superior to the Soviets. If the international community of medical researchers and practitioners had been able to collaborate freely, then patients in both countries would have enjoyed superior care to what they did.

This is true in every area of endeavor. The lack of ability to collaborate and freely share information creates wasteful duplicated efforts on the one hand, as each separate entity must invent the wheel on their own, and lopsided development on the other hand.

Even beyond science and medicine, both the Soviet Union and the United States suffered in other ways as nations and peoples from the Cold War's lack of cooperation. Each country developed some ways of doing things that worked well and some that did not.

The Soviet Union did a superior job of fostering and supporting the optimal robust development of scientific research, engineering and the arts. Persons of ability and commitment to these fields were supported and given the best possible training and resources, and were put to work in their fields and encouraged to ply their crafts. They were not burdened with crippling student loans, constant need to scramble for funding, danger of losing funding, or having to work low-paying menial jobs outside their fields while seeking employment after obtaining their degrees.

At the same time, the Soviet government was suppressive and controlling to the point that there was no safe forum for free and open discussion, debate and dialog in most areas of public and private life. A comment critical of the government could land a scientist or artist an assignment in Siberia.

On the other hand in the United States, people of ability and commitment in the arts, engineering and sciences have always had to scramble for funds, work menial low-paying jobs, incur crippling student loans and experience constant pressure and inordinate stress just to get trained and earn a degree in their fields. Many in the Soviet Union were able to develop into contributing members in their fields, while in the United States many talented individuals were routinely held back due to financial constraints and barriers.

After finishing college, starting out with hefty student loans, these valuable contributors must hustle and struggle to find employment. Those who do not find employment in their field are generally never heard from or seen as they are forced to find whatever work they can in whatever field they can.

Those who do find work then find themselves censored and controlled by their employers more quietly than their Soviet counterparts were by their government, but often just as effectively.

The situation in the arts in the U.S. has traditionally been much worse than in the sciences and engineering. The pyramid is in few places more blatantly imposed than in the arts.

Those who become stars, enjoy celebrity status and high income. The vast majority of the rest of equally-able artists generally find themselves having to ply their craft on the side after a full day in a dead-end job that leaves little or no time or energy left over.

Even the "stars" are disposable, at the mercy of those at the top of the pyramid. For example, during the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's many artists and others were forced out of the country in the fanaticism of the McCarthy witch-hunts in which anybody even suspected of being a Communist or sympathetic to Communist ideas was censored, blacklisted and rendered unable to work or live in the U.S. Many fled to Europe. This persisted even after the "House Un-American Activities Committee" was shut down.

Beyond that, many artists in the U.S. have been censored and/or threatened with blacklisting simply because of displeasing a sponsor. Examples include Mary Tyler Moore, whose sponsors limited how often she could be shown wearing slacks, at a time when they believed that women should only be shown wearing dresses. The series Star Trek nearly never made it to the air. Its first pilot had a woman, "Number One", as second-in-command; the network rejected the pilot, and in the new pilot her role was gone. Similarly, the Smothers Brothers comedy show was canceled because of having offended sponsors and the government with their political commentary. There are many more examples.

Here we see that under Capitalism, even in a country that has Constitution that guarantees all citizens freedom of speech, the power of those at the top of the economic pyramid, the ultra-wealthy few, nullifies the Constitution. (See the chapter "Your Rights End at Your Workplace Door") Censorship is alive and well in every country under the Capitalist paradigm, even in those which present themselves to their citizens and the world as democracies that value and champion freedom and human rights.

Cold war restrictions on scientific collaboration are functionally identical to corporate restrictions and "closed shops." Under the Capitalist paradigm, it is typical, routine, and expected that scientists, engineers and developers in competing companies (who are colleagues in the same fields) are forbidden from sharing professional information. If two chemists, software developers or mechanical engineers working at competing companies choose to openly share information connected to their work, they risk being fired, sued and shut out of their profession, and where trade secrets are involved, criminal prosecution carrying up to ten years in prison (18 U.S.C. § 1832).

Just about every developer/engineer in the "private sector" must sign a nondisclosure agreement upon hiring, that forbids them from sharing any technical or company information outside the company or even outside of their team within the company. The penalties for violation can be more severe than for some crimes in which people are seriously hurt or even killed. In addition, the employer often explicitly asserts the rights to any and all innovations, inventions, ideas, processes, improvements or other contributions that the employee makes while working for the company, in many contracts even those made at home and having nothing to do with the work environment, although several U.S. states, including California, limit such claims.

Here we see yet again the parallel to Feudal society. The Lord reserves the right to claim as much as the fruits of the serf's and even the vassal's labor as they choose, and the serf or vassal has no appeal or recourse. Don't take the job or don't like the one you have? You have the freedom to quit or not take the job but you won't have money to pay for the right to occupy space. This is the illusion of a choice.

Under the Capitalist paradigm, we see wasteful duplication of efforts, giving rise to competing products that are all inferior to what would be possible if the developers involved were collaborating - and competing - among themselves freely as a professional or scientific community.

Since the researchers and developers in each company are forbidden from sharing their knowledge and work with their counterparts in competing companies, tremendous amounts of resources are wasted. Each company has to come up with its own steering mechanism, its own navigational algorithms, its own fuel injectors, its own avionics, its own sorting mechanism, its own signaling protocols between mobile devices and towers, its own cancer drugs, etc.

While most functionality will be similar among competing similar products and services - which underscores the wastefulness of all of that duplicated effort - each producer's version will inevitably have innovations lacking in the others. Some will have generally superior products that still lack important innovations present in other competing products, which may be inferior except for those innovations. Some products will even be completely inferior to the others, in which case their development and production is a complete waste of resources and effort.

This puts consumers in a position where they must choose between a car with better miles per gallon and power but with an inferior braking system and tending to need a lot of repair, versus a car with the best brakes in the industry but with poorer miles per gallon, reliability and power. This is just an example to illustrate the point.

When, however, development and production are freed from the shackles of "private" bondage to competing companies, when instead all of the researchers and developers in a field are free to collaborate with the goal of producing the best possible version for the good of all, the process will be vastly more efficient and the result will be a product or service that will embody the best features, technologies and production methods that the best minds in the field can produce.

The competition will then be between different ideas or approaches, rigorously tried and tested. Competition in the new Paradigms will serve to hone the edge of research and development. Competing teams will discover and highlight the flaws and weaknesses of each other's designs, and will be free to adopt and incorporate each other's successful features.

The result will be, for instance, a car with the best braking system, the best fuel efficiency and power, the best navigation, the maximum longevity, the best safety rating, etc. emerging in one product or service superior to what any company would have been able to produce in a Capitalist, closed shop environment.

When researchers, designers and developers are incentivized, reinforced and encouraged to do the best job possible instead of to get the product to market ahead of the other company, the results will be spectacular for all concerned. Pride of workmanship will displace profit motive as the driving force behind research and development. That, and the ongoing quest to improve the quality of life for self and others, knowing that one has made a positive difference.

We can already see this in action in the world around us. Here we will examine one example in detail; but the same dynamics and results can be seen in any area of endeavor.

Witness the contrast in the field of computer software between the traditional Capitalist closed-shop development environments of Apple and Microsoft on the one hand, and the openly collaborative (and competitive) world-wide Open Source movement with its flagship product, the (many incarnations of the) Linux operating system (along with Open Source applications like LibreOffice, GIMP, Audacity, Blender, GNUCash, and many more which are the Open Source applications equivalent to Microsoft Office, Photoshop, Pro Tools, Maya/Final Cut Pro, QuickBooks and other competing products, respectively).

This area of endeavor lends itself more easily than some to the completely open development paradigm involving widely scattered, globally collaborating participants, because the products are easily generated, shared and stored electronically, requiring only computer and Internet access and the necessary knowledge, ability and skill. No large-scale facilities such as factories, refineries, or generation plants are necessary for production. No fleets of trucks, ships or aircraft are necessary for delivery.

The evolution of this Open Source movement serves as a living practical example of the peer-based collaborative (and competitive) non-profit-motivated development and production paradigm, in contrast to the highly hierarchical, profit-driven commercial closed-shop development and production model that exists under the Capitalist paradigm. The same principles would apply to any endeavor, any kind of product or service, with adaptations of course to the specific needs of the technology and processes involved.

All three operating systems, Microsoft Windows, Apple OSX, and Linux, do pretty much the same things. Each has their advantages and disadvantages. Each has its fiercely loyal adherents and its equally fierce detractors. Any of these operating systems will enable you to use your computer to do whatever you need or want to do: write letters, do email, view and post videos, participate in social media, manage your finances, edit family or professional photos and videos, play music, etc.

There are, however, very important differences.

At companies like Apple and Microsoft, a limited number of developers are employed, determined by the "business needs" of the company. The company employs exactly the number of developers that the decision-makers at the top of the company believe will allow them to produce their product the quickest with the lowest expenditure (keeping in mind that salaries and employee benefits are categorized as expenditures, the quantity to be minimized in a Capitalist enterprise).

These developers are tightly controlled from the top down. Managers and supervisors constantly monitor their work and dictate their mode of operation. Often the rush to get the product to market out-creates the goal of producing of the best product, especially since both companies make money off of technical support, so the existence of preventable bugs is not an undesirable thing from a business point of view.

Windows and OSX each have their strengths and weaknesses. Developers at both companies are forbidden to discuss their work with one another across company lines. Thus, neither product is able to benefit from innovations and developments of the other.

Each company has its list of colossal failures: Windows Millennium, Windows Vista, Windows 8 and 8.1 were examples of Microsoft's major fiascoes. Windows Vista proved to be unstable, difficult to use, and suffered from widespread

compatibility issues. In true Capitalist fashion, Microsoft, having the largest share of the Operating System market, resolved the problem by putting the burden of compatibility on hardware manufacturers. Effectively they said if you want to ship your computers with Windows, it's up to you to make sure your hardware is compatible with Windows Vista. There is hardware still out in the world that is only able to run Windows Vista and no other system.

Apple's screw-ups are more subtle but equally glaring: the El Capitan version of OSX made perfectly good WiFi connections become unusable, and Yosemite introduced still more bugs. Apple is also known for the deliberate, well-planned sabotage of their own products in order to force customers to upgrade. Two well-known examples are the crippling of iMovie by removing the time-line in Version 7 and above, rendering it useless for any serious video editing, and the notorious iPhone software updates of 2016–17 (iOS 10.2.1 and iOS 11.2), which secretly slowed older iPhones with worn batteries, leading many owners to buy new phones when a new battery would have done; Apple denied wrongdoing but paid up to $500 million to settle the resulting class action (NBC News, 2020).

Apple being a semi-monopoly (Many computer manufacturers ship their products with Windows but only Apple ships hardware with OSX.), they are notorious for video hardware that suffers known weaknesses that ultimately force users to buy a new computer when it fails. Mac hardware replacement parts are only available from Apple at a high price. It is often cheaper to buy a new Mac than it is to buy a new video board for an existing Mac.

Once you have your Windows PC or your Mac up and running, you have few or no useful applications. Those must be acquired separately and always at a price, unless you avail yourself of Open Source apps.

Contrast this scenario with Open Source software development and the Open Source Movement which creates the Linux operating system in all of its variations, as well as many free Open Source applications that duplicate the functionality of popular commercial applications but which are distributed legally free.

The Open Source development paradigm is a sharp contrast to that of commercial software development. Whereas developers in commercial environments under the Capitalist paradigm do not own their creations and are prevented from collaborating outside their team and company, Open Source developers, volunteers and company-paid alike, in every part of the world, collaborate (and compete) completely openly and freely with no restriction. The creators of Open Source products own their work and share it freely.

When Windows and OSX are distributed (sold) to the public, the source code (what the programmers write before it gets turned into machine code that only the machine can understand) is not included. Source code is forcefully quarantined to the rigidly-controlled confines of the company campus.

Open source licences, on the other hand, guarantee that anyone may read, change and share the code; no one can lock it away. Much of the work is driven by pride in workmanship and belief in free sharing of information, and under licences such as the GPL, even the companies that pay developers to contribute must share what they build. Linux itself began in 1991 as a student’s unpaid hobby, built by volunteers; paid work came later, in large part because its developers, like everyone else, had to make a living in a money-based world. Many projects, such as Debian, are still run mainly by volunteers.

Competing Linux developers can freely see each other's program code, criticize it, be inspired by it, modify it, learn from it, and even use it if they wish. Such competition is truly based on the quality of the product, not on marketing or packaging. That which works well and is easy to use, survives. That which does not, either improves or falls by the wayside.

There are sites like distrowatch.com where anybody can download any version of Linux, install it, comment on it, even make contributions to it or start their own Linux version. The different versions are rated according to number of downloads. It is truly survival of the fittest in the most positive sense. Nobody's livelihood is in jeopardy, even those who do not create the best product.

The Open Source movement includes more than just the Linux operating system. Every kind of software that you can buy commercially, you can find in the Open Source community at a similar level of quality. In contrast to Windows or Mac OSX, most versions of Linux install with all or most of the applications that you are likely to need and with easy access to

additional free applications in case you have additional needs. All Open Source software is completely free to use, copy and share.

Linux is in many ways superior to both Windows and OSX, though of course preference is a personal, subjective matter. Contrasting several areas of operating system functionality will illustrate, hopefully without getting too technical:

	Windows	Mac OSX	Linux
HW Compatibility	Little to none without drivers which must be installed at factory or manually for each component.	100% because hardware and operating system both made by Apple. Not compatible with any hardware not made by Apple.	Compatible with most hardware that will run Windows or OSX. Auto-detected during installation. More drivers available free online if needed.
Security	Many vulnerabilities, with millions of viruses and other forms of malware targeting Windows.	Very few vulnerabilities	Very few vulnerabilities
Price	$120 - $200	$129 for many years, dropped to $29, now upgrades are free	Free
Versions	Windows 10 comes in: Home Pro Enterprise Mobile Mobile Enterprise Education IoT Core	1 version with downloadable add-ons	Hundreds of versions including ones oriented towards education, multimedia production, different religions and ethnicities, small and Enterprise business, science, research, engineering, gaming, cyber-security, software /hardware development, and more
Installation Contents	Operating System only with a minimal crippled browser, Contacts, primitive text editor and graphics program, calendar, calculator, Windows Media player, Windows Movie and very little else. Apps must be acquired separately.	Operating System only with a buggy browser, primitive text editor, iTunes music player and store, iPhoto basic image editor/organizer, AppStore, calendar, calculator, DVD/video player, iChat, Contacts, and very little else. Most useful apps must be acquired separately	Installs with dozens of apps including ones completely compatible with and functionally equivalent to all commercial apps such as Microsoft Office, Photoshop, QuickBooks, Adobe Premiere, Pro Tools (audio editing and production), games, circuit design, game design and more
Installation Media	Pre-installed or downloadable and DVD. Installation media can be used for installation only.	Pre-installed or downloadable and DVD. Installation media can be used for installation only.	Downloadable, burnable to CD/DVD or flash drive. Installation media can be used to install operating system and apps; system can also run from installation media to "test drive" before installing, serving also as a way to get up and running in a hurry in the event of hard drive crash.

Windows Mac OSX Linux HW Compatibility Little to none without drivers which must be installed at factory or manually for each component. 100% because hardware and operating system both made by Apple. Not compatible with any hardware not made by Apple. Compatible with most hardware that will run Windows or OSX. Auto-detected during installation. More drivers available free online if needed. Security Many vulnerabilities, with millions of viruses and other forms of malware targeting Windows. Very few vulnerabilities Very few vulnerabilities Price $120 - $200 $129 for many years, dropped to $29, now upgrades are free Free Versions Windows 10 comes in: Home Pro Enterprise Mobile Mobile Enterprise Education IoT Core 1 version with downloadable add-ons Hundreds of versions including ones oriented towards education, multimedia production, different religions and ethnicities, small and Enterprise business, science, research, engineering, gaming, cyber-security, software /hardware development, and more

Installation Contents Operating System only with a minimal crippled browser, Contacts, primitive text editor and graphics program, calendar, calculator, Windows Media player, Windows Movie and very little else. Apps must be acquired separately. Operating System only with a buggy browser, primitive text editor, iTunes music player and store, iPhoto basic image editor/organizer, AppStore, calendar, calculator, DVD/video player, iChat, Contacts, and very little else. Most useful apps must be acquired separately Installs with dozens of apps including ones completely compatible with and functionally equivalent to all commercial apps such as Microsoft Office, Photoshop, QuickBooks, Adobe Premiere, Pro Tools (audio editing and production), games, circuit design, game design and more Installation Media Pre-installed or downloadable and DVD. Installation media can be used for installation only. Pre-installed or downloadable and DVD. Installation media can be used for installation only. Downloadable, burnable to CD/DVD or flash drive. Installation media can be used to install operating system and apps; system can also run from installation media to “test drive” before installing, serving also as a way to get up and running in a hurry in the event of hard drive crash.

In this thriving example, we see that the completely free, open, peer-driven nonprofit development and production paradigm that drives Open Source and Linux produces products that are as good as, and in many ways superior to, similar products produced under the Capitalist paradigm. Proponents of Capitalism are fond of saying that without profit motive and a hierarchical command structure, human nature is basically lazy, unproductive and uncooperative so there would be no real motivation to produce if not stimulated by the monetary incentives and fear-based hierarchy present in the Capitalist paradigm. This thriving real-life case study shows that assumption to be utterly false and baseless. This example is included to show that this peer-based, collaborative-competitive, profitless development and production paradigm is not just a nice-sounding but unrealistic theory. It is proven in the real world.

Detractors of Linux like to point out that Linux occupies a much smaller market share of the Operating System industry than Windows or Mac OSX, and that there is no central number for technical support.

This is a stretch because Linux does not advertise, as do Microsoft and Apple. Computer users tend to be very attached and loyal to whichever operating system they are used to. Windows, Mac, and Linux users all tend to be very resistant to change. Linux does not advertise, yet it is nevertheless widely used in the enterprise servers of many major companies, libraries, school systems, government labs and more. Linux is even at the basis of the widely used Android operating system present in most smart phones and tablets.

Historically, during the early decades of personal computers, when both Windows and OSX captured the market for mainstream users, Linux originated as the personal project of Linus Torvalds, a Finnish techie genius seeking to create a UNIX-like environment for his own use. This developed into the international Open Source movement, which in its early days was mainly a forum of, by and for techies. At that point in its evolution, it was not attractive to mainstream, non-techie users and it acquired a reputation as such. That reputation has remained in popular lore. As time went on, Linux developed a mission of equaling or surpassing Windows and OSX for mainstream use. Public awareness of Linux is driven by word-of-mouth, not by advertising.

Regarding technical support, it is true that there is no central tech support number to call. However, Microsoft free technical support is short lived and after it expires, technical support becomes costly. Apple maintains Genius Bars, which offer free technical support in their Apple Stores, but many issues lead to for-pay levels of support. Linux users do have for-pay

technical support options as well, but there are an abundance of online user groups, forums and manuals populated by knowledgeable enthusiasts happy and proud to offer their assistance. In fact, pride of workmanship, open and unrestricted collaboration and free, healthy competition (as opposed to the Capitalistic style of competition) produce superior results and a higher degree of developer, producer and customer satisfaction than the Capitalist equivalents.

True Progress vs. Packaging and Presentation

Capitalist competition is driven by profit motive. The company seeks to maximize its profits and if it is traded on the Stock Exchange, its stock prices as well. This reinforces and incentivizes reducing costs of materials, manufacturing, labor, shipping, taxes, etc. as much as possible while maximizing prices of goods and services produced. In other words, in a Capitalist paradigm, a company must keep salaries as low as it practically can in order to survive.

Under Capitalism, marketing, packaging and sales are as important as the quality of the product or service itself, often more so. The goal is to generate the public perception of superior quality and desirability, independent of whether or not the product is in fact superior.

Another important factor is commonly called built-in obsolescence, which is practiced explicitly in order to force users to replace products more often than would be necessary if the products were manufactured at the highest achievable level of quality and user friendliness. Products are often deliberately manufactured with inferior quality in order to ensure frequent need for replacement.

The texts of product warranties are almost always long, written by attorneys in language difficult for lay people to understand and printed in tiny, hard-to-read fonts. Warranties are almost always measured in months, even in the case of products costing hundreds or thousands of dollars. Stories abound of devices that break down very shortly after the expiration of the warranty. This is no accident.

To make matters worse for mainstream users, in a recent escalating trend, many companies employ business strategies that are designed to force a higher cost, such as Microsoft's Office 365 which is subscription-based. You cannot buy the software and use it as long as you wish. The user must pay every month to keep using it. This is much more profitable than just selling the license to the software for indefinite use.

Since pre-365 Microsoft Office is expensive for most people's budgets, it is not uncommon for users to keep using an older version of Office for many years, since it serves their needs with no reason to buy a new version. The subscription model forces users to pay constantly and perpetually in order to keep using the product. As discussed elsewhere in this writing, as if it is not sufficient for the product to cease functioning if the subscription is not paid, it will also lock the user’s files so they cannot be accessed in any way until the fee is paid.

Often the resources and effort devoted to packaging and presentation rival or exceed those devoted to actual product or service development. In one case study, an insider at an automobile plant reported on hundreds of thousands of dollars spent to develop a car door that sounds solid and well-built, rather than to be solid and well-built. Frequently, restaurants display photographs that any impartial observer would notice grossly overblow and fail to represent the quality or quantity of food actually served, which is often severely inferior to what is represented.

There is no end to the verbal sleight-of-hand that is used. When telecom companies realized that a growing percentage of subscribers were increasingly reluctant to enter into two-year contracts, they came out with "contract-free" plans that were presented as an alternative to contracts. The end result, however, is no different. The subscriber ends up paying about the same amount per month as in a contract. Terms are configured so that if the subscriber leaves the carrier before two years are up, they are charged about the same amount they would be charged if they left a contract early. In practice, the language and packaging have been reworked so that the customer is led to believe that it is an alternative plan, when in reality it is the same plan wearing a different package.

We must also keep in mind, of course, that companies have their teams of attorneys on retainer to make sure that their tactics fall within the letter of the law so the company cannot be taken to task. Often functionality or “features” are included

that are not fully functional or even functional at all, in order to impress customers into believing they are getting added value. A similar ploy is the inclusion of crippled "Demo" versions that are essentially useless unless one pays. Under the Capitalist paradigm, what is most strongly reinforced is "success," which means maximizing profits, market share and stock prices. Quality is not strongly reinforced.

At the time of this writing, another prominent example of built-in obsolescence is the practice, started by Apple with its iPhones but now adopted by Samsung, LG and other leading manufacturers of smart phones, of burying the battery so deeply in the devices that the user is more likely than not to destroy the phone in the process of changing a dead battery.

For years, it was a simple and inexpensive matter to replace a phone battery: they could be purchased from the manufacturer for around $50 - $100 or from Amazon for $20 or so. A new better Smart Phone typically costs $600 - $1,000. Many users are living paycheck to paycheck and prefer to replace a $20 battery rather than a $750 phone, as long as the phone still serves their needs.

Phone manufacturers and service providers of course pursue aggressive advertising campaigns; but now that almost all manufacturers are using non-replaceable batteries, users are forced to replace their phones when the battery will no longer hold a charge. There is no technical or functional advantage to this design strategy. It is driven purely by the core Capitalist imperative to increase profits, even if it means sabotaging their own products to drive sales higher than they would naturally be.

Advertising and marketing in every industry are extremely costly and enjoy huge budgets. Pharmaceutical companies are notorious for spending dramatically more on promotion than on research (in the U.S. in 2004, an estimated $57.5 billion on promotion against $31.5 billion on research and development; Gagnon and Lexchin, 2008), even while they falsely claim that the exorbitant prices they charge for medications are necessary to cover the cost of research (Anderson, BBC News, 2014; Swanson, The Washington Post, 2015). A TV ad during prime-time costs millions of dollars for a commercial less than a minute long (Ad Age, 2015). Advertising and marketing executives are paid a premium. These expenses inevitably drive up the costs of products and services by a huge amount (WebFX, 2018). In fact, the reinforcers in capitalist environment select strongly for high advertising budgets which are directly linked to higher prices (Farris and Reibstein, Harvard Business Review, 1979).

The cost is passed on to the user/consumer, who pays a premium to cover the cost of marketing, advertising and packaging for products that are intentionally far inferior to what is possible. This further sustains and maintains the economic pyramid in which the vast majority of the employees of the manufacturer or service provider are paid sub-living wages while the CEO and others at the top of the pyramid make in day or an hour what their typical employees make in a year (Horowitz, CNN Business, 2018).

Some Capitalist apologists claim that advertising increases sales volume, which brings down prices since manufacturers can afford to lower prices and still remain profitable. This is, however, a specious argument. Studies exist showing that the most profitable configuration is a high advertising budget and high prices. It is also irrefutably logical that the high cost of advertising must be passed on to consumers. The social dynamics of Capitalism strongly reinforce raising prices as high as possible. It is also not at all uncommon for competing manufacturers to tacitly agree to raise their prices by large percentages and then compete over pennies.

This mode of operation would never survive in a truly free and democratic economy and government truly of, by, and for the people.

Space exploration is one of few frontiers that is largely unexplored and promises to expand our knowledge and possibly our resources and available living space. The exploration of space is a frontier that belongs rightfully to all of Humankind and any other sentient civilizations that may exist in the galaxy and the universe.

Technologies developed in that endeavor have already often translated into useful innovations to improve the quality of life on Earth. These are collateral benefits of space exploration.

Even the Space Race between the Soviet Union and the United States ultimately came to represent all of Humanity. The historic quote "One small step for a man, one giant leap for Mankind" sums it up. Had the Soviets been first to the Moon, the same or similar quote would have been expressed in Russian.

At the time of this writing, there is a disturbing trend towards privatization of space exploration and development: space flight for a price for the wealthy, space hotels and tourism, the projected private development of Mars. Both Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk (Both billionaires and powerful, ruthless neo-Feudal Lords) have expressed an intention to colonize the moon and Mars. All of these things are seriously being pushed forward by these commercial interests who intend to make space and other worlds the private playground and property of the ultra-wealthy Lords and the largest multinational corporations. These individuals speak in humanistic, altruistic terms of saving Humanity, expanding our living space, and spreading Earth-life to preserve it. In reality, however, that if they succeed in carrying out their plans, they will, in inevitable Capitalist fashion, claim those worlds as their own personal or corporate private property. If you go there, everyplace you go will be owned by them. They will become the functional government of those worlds. There will be no democracy and no rights for the serfs who live and work there.

This cannot be allowed to happen. Capitalism, as it now operates, behaves like a disease in the body of humankind, and it must be stopped and replaced with all urgency. Its symptoms are measurable: it concentrates wealth, power and privilege in a tiny minority to a degree never seen in history, while leaving billions disempowered, deprived and, in effect, bound to work on others' terms; and through the self-devouring cycle it treats the living world as something to extract and use up rather than to care for and sustain. Its reinforcers are rapidly magnifying and intensifying our most destructive range of behaviors in a feedback cycle which is on the verge of destroying hundreds of years of human rights progress and even the ecosystem that makes this Earth habitable.

Just as a drug or gambling addiction drives otherwise reasonable people to make choices that ruin their families and their lives, this economic paradigm feeds and amplifies the dangerous addictions to wealth and power that drive some of those at the top of the pyramid to ever more frenzied and dangerous excesses.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

As is the case with any addiction, addicts must be taken out of the patterns of their addiction, go through withdrawal, detox, therapy, treatment and rehabilitation. In some cases, interventions are necessary.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

To do otherwise spells our collective doom and possibly the end of life on our planet. As long as a system that behaves like a cancer drives our behaviour, sets our priorities and chooses the missions we pursue as nations and as a species, we have no right to carry it out into space and to other worlds. We would only spread it.

Medicine is yet another area that is severely crippled by being forced to operate under the Capitalist paradigm. This is because both clinical medicine and medical research are driven by "market forces," or in other words profit motive, far more than by the healthy quest for improved health and quality of life for human beings and the human community.

The purpose of medicine is to maintain and restore human physical and mental health to the best ability of the technology and skill of the practitioner. Unfortunately, under the Capitalist paradigm, the reinforcers for maximizing profits and stock prices are much stronger and more compelling than the reinforcers for putting patient well-being first, even though doctors take an oath to "do no harm."

People's health is naturally important to them. When one is sick, injured, or in pain, care becomes urgent. It is not something that can be postponed, like getting the computer fixed or repairing the dishwasher. This creates a very high demand, which in a Capitalist paradigm means, from a business point of view, that providers (doctors, hospitals,

pharmaceutical companies, prosthetics manufacturers, and the insurance companies that are theoretically supposed to pay for these services) can charge a high price. People will have little real choice but to pay.

If you need a procedure to save your life or the life of a loved one, or if you or your loved one is in pain or in danger of losing an eye or a leg, then you will probably risk losing your house or your nest-egg to get the procedure done. "Private," for-profit medicine has engendered a culture of unrestrained price-gouging in every aspect of healthcare in the United States and all purely Capitalist societies emulating its example.

This is classic Capitalist supply-and-demand economics. This is what happens when “market forces” drive medical care and research. It is the Capitalist paradigm, functioning as designed. Believing that this situation can be remedied through legislation and regulation is equivalent to believing that a Bengal tiger can become an herbivore through sufficiently skillful training.

This incidentally applies to dentistry and law as well.

Even in undergraduate university pre-med departments, the gouging begins. This writer was witness to this up close. In the University bookstore, textbooks were divided and shelved by departments. There were a few textbooks that were used by classes in several different departments. The exact same textbook appeared in the Engineering, Science or Humanities shelves for about $100; but in the Pre-med shelves the price was around $200. One such book was also for sale in the general bookstore for about $40. The identical book could be purchased directly from the printer in Taiwan for $10, if one knew someone there.

The cost of everything is drastically higher for pre-med and pre-law, for medicine and law majors on the graduate level, than for other majors. This equally affects students of alternative medicine such as naturopathic, Traditional Chinese Medicine and other related disciplines. In Capitalist societies, just about any kind of healthcare, dental or legal professional walks into the world to start their career with their hard-won certificate and license... and hefty student debt, often $200,000 to $300,000 or more for new doctors and dentists (AAMC, 2024; ADEA, 2023). Naturally, this drives up the cost of medical or dental care and legal representation in order for these professionals to be able to make a living while paying off their debt. And of course the reinforcers are in place to ensure that most practitioners will also raise their prices as high as they can get away with.

Some doctors in the United States have even gone so far as to charge patients a hefty monthly fee just to keep them as patients, above and beyond the charges for any medical services rendered (Lincoff, Healthline, 2015). This is couched in the elite-sounding term of “concierge doctors,” a term carefully chosen to give patients the suggested impression that they are getting special status or treatment. This subliminally manipulates some patients into accepting this practice by appealing to their ego. In a Capitalist paradigm, there is literally no law or principle that discourages this practice. It is completely consistent with the core principles of Capitalism. Patients could force a change by boycotting these doctors, effectively removing all reinforcers for this practice; but in an environment where scarcity is carefully maintained, this is easier said than done.

Pharmaceutical companies are likewise notorious for putting profit far above patient well-being. These companies almost always justify this price gouging by claiming that it is necessary to cover the cost of continuing research to produce life-saving medicines.

Yet the true motives were clearly seen by all the world a few years before this writing in a well-publicized scandal when the Turing pharmaceutical company succeeded in gaining control of all rights to the life saving drug Daraprim, the only effective treatment for certain deadly protozoan infections, a drug that had been around for 62 years that they had never researched or produced. As soon as they gained that control, they raised the price of the drug from $13.50 per pill (already way beyond reach of most people) to $750 per pill. Even after public outcry, the CEO Martin Shkreli remained unresponsive and impervious. No one was criminally charged for the price increase itself, because under the Capitalist paradigm, there are few, very limited or no laws against price gouging. Only in 2022 did a federal court, in a case brought by the Federal Trade Commission and several states, ban Shkreli from the pharmaceutical industry for life and order him to repay $64.6 million. Reinforcers are in place to maximize profits and stock prices. No similarly strong reinforcers are in place for putting the

good of the patient first. This is only one well-publicized case, but it is symptomatic and representative of the culture and attitudes that pervade all aspects of the healthcare system in the United States and similar countries and societies. Shkreli did make it to prison, however, on an unrelated hedge-fund-related financial crimes. The same kind of thing is happening now with insulin products, which have been around for nearly a century. The costs have gotten so high that diabetics are risking their lives by skimping on insulin because they can't afford enough to be safe as insurance companies cover less and less of the cost. People are dying. Yet the cost of production has not increased.

Because all things medical and dental have become too expensive for any but the ultra-wealthy to afford, costs are further driven up by the flourishing insurance industry, a lethal parasitic infestation of the healthcare system that drives the cost of living ever higher. People are forced to pay ever-increasing premiums every month in order to be assured of the possibility of getting healthcare that they could never afford in case of illness, injury or other health problem. All the while, those steadily rising premiums buy the patient less and less, with steadily rising deductibles, steadily shrinking coverage with more and more escape clauses to allow insurance companies to find more excuses to deny claims.

It is not hard to see the parasitical nature of the health insurance industry. In accordance with the Capitalist paradigm, insurance companies are businesses that can only survive if they very profitable and their stock prices are high. These corporations make many billions of dollars in profits every year, which is obviously above and beyond any claims that they pay and any research costs. The law requires them to spend at least 80 to 85 percent of premiums on care (KFF, 2023), but the remaining slice, covering administration and profit, still adds up to vast sums across hundreds of millions of policies. Some patients are indeed helped, some are not, and some incompletely or insufficiently. But the staggering profits of these corporations are extortion money that comes from your pockets and mine, and those of hundreds of millions of other people and finds its way straight into the pockets of CEO's and other billionaires.

To rub salt in the wound, every insurance company has employees whose job is to go through every claim with a fine-tooth comb to find any legal way to get out of paying, even when it translates to loss of life, quality of life or mobility for the patient. In 2023, insurers selling plans on HealthCare.gov denied one in five in-network claims (KFF, 2025). The cost of paying those employees is passed on to the insured people as part of what they pay for premiums. This is completely legal and acceptable in Capitalist societies.

Hospitals routinely inflate charges to an extreme and arbitrary degree: medical-billing advocates have documented charges of $8 for an ordinary box of tissues, $10 for a small plastic medicine cup and $53 for a pair of non-sterile gloves (Becker's Hospital Review); a journalist's review of real bills found diabetes test strips charged at $18 apiece that cost about 56 cents at retail (Brill, *Time*, 2013); and across U.S. hospitals, list prices rose from about one and a half times costs in 1996 to nearly four times in 2017 (Linde and Egede, 2022). Once again all of the reinforcers in Capitalist societies are to make the most money possible and charge the most the market will bear.

When people are hurting, sick, injured, scared, their life and health hanging in the balance, that is exactly when empathy and supportiveness are called for. Instead, predatory greed unsheathes its fangs and bites deeply with no compassion.

It is worthy to note that Cuba, long maligned by the United States and its allies as a quintessential example of an inhuman society, built universal health care with one of the highest ratios of doctors to population in the world (WHO data via the World Bank), and has sent its doctors to serve in many other countries. It did so as a small, poor country, kept poorer by a U.S. embargo that has impeded Cuba's ability to trade for decades. Today that system is in severe crisis: shortages of medicines and supplies, long blackouts and the emigration of many doctors have left more than 100,000 patients waiting for delayed operations (UN News, May 2026). The embargo, tightened in 2026 by a cutoff of oil supplies, is a large part of the cause; Cuba's own economic choices are another.

Capitalism does not tolerate anything that resists its ways and domination. The right to free healthcare is written into the Cuban Constitution, as is the right to a place to live. Contrast this to the United States, one of the wealthiest countries in the world where the quality of one's healthcare is largely determined by one's place in the economic pyramid and decided by accountants and adjusters rather than by doctors. That is not to say that Cuba doesn't have its serious flaws, but it is

important to learn from the successes, failures, and experience of all societies present and past, in order to create ever better paradigms.

Lines of scientific and technological research are often suppressed directly or simply languish unsupported and unfunded due to being perceived as unprofitable or as being a threat to more profitable lines of inquiry. Pure scientific research expands human understanding of our world, our universe, ourselves and how things work. In addition, it often leads to innovations that improve our quality of life in small and large ways. Unfortunately, it can also lead to innovations that harm our quality of life and cause great suffering.

There are always choices to make as to what directions of research to pursue and how to pursue them. Such choices help to determine whether the outcome is a more empowered, healthy, vibrant, fulfilled and thriving Humanity or a more oppressed, unhealthy, disempowered, stressed Humanity. Though we often cannot foresee the results of a line of research or development, the criteria we use to determine which lines of research and development to pursue and how to apply the findings, are what helps ultimately to determine what kind of world we live in.

Unfortunately, under Capitalist paradigms, reinforcers and incentives are directed by the drive to maximize profit. The impact upon the quality of life for human beings as individuals and as communities, and on the environment of the only world we have at present to live on, does not come into serious consideration except as it might affect profits and stock prices. Oh yes, and companies need to determine whether the costs of abiding by environmental and other laws is more cost effective than the costs of ignoring them and paying the fines. Many companies often choose the latter.

Often research that would clearly benefit human beings or the environment is either not pursued or is actively suppressed in favor of a different avenue of research that is more profitable. The level of corruption involved is staggering.

Consider the case of Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A., which is very illustrative of the degree of destruction, corruption and sabotage that companies are driven to under the Capitalist paradigm and the degree to which these societies tolerate such practices.

Until the 1930's, Los Angeles had a well-developed fledgling public rail and bus transportation system that would normally have developed and expanded as the city and its surroundings grew and developed into the metropolis that it is today. That natural process was prevented by a systematic and coordinated series of actions by the tire, automotive and petroleum industries that ensured that this public transportation system was destroyed and prevented from developing any further.

As intended, ever since then, inhabitants of the greater Los Angeles area have been utterly dependent on cars and live in ever-worsening congestion and traffic conditions that severely compromise the quality of life for all. In 1949 the companies involved, including General Motors, Firestone and Standard Oil of California, were convicted of conspiracy. General Motors was fined $5,000, and one of its executives $1, which tells you how seriously the system took it.

There are many other examples of high-level profit-motivated decisions being made which caused significant harm, either directly or indirectly through the prevention or suppression of research and development that would have resulted in significant benefit for the majority of people. One example has to do with energy production/conservation and transportation technologies.

Since the 1960's and even earlier, there have been a number of different technologies available for development in energy generation and transportation applications. These include, but are not limited to, solar, wind, geothermal, tidal generators, mechanochemical engines (See work by A. Katchalsky, A. Oplatka, and the U.S. Air Force), artificial muscles, Sterling engines, magnetodynamic systems, alternative renewable fuels, bioelectric technologies, passive energy building techniques that drastically reduce the need for heating and cooling, and maglev transportation systems. This is not to mention the potential viability of horses, bicycles and other human-powered transportation that are rendered dangerous and impractical by the lack of sufficient dedicated bicycle roads and much more.

There is a plethora of energy producing/saving and transportation technologies that, if developed and disseminated, could break our dependence on large-scale power generation by hydroelectric, fossil fuel and nuclear means. This would allow people all over the world to be more self-sufficient, empowered, secure, and free from a major constant demand to pay

money, while at the same time vastly reducing the damage done to our environment by traditional large-scale power generation facilities and the use of fossil fuels.

By diversifying our power and energy-producing technologies, shifting emphasis away from large-scale facilities to distributed simpler, low-cost and low-maintenance small-scale technologies on the home, block, community and local level, we can vastly reduce and in some cases eliminate the need for massive dams, nuclear and fossil fuel powered plants and the like. This will render us less vulnerable to corporate manipulation, terrorist attack, geo-political manipulation, natural disaster and technological malfunction or human error. A lot of emerging work is identifying the issues, challenges and solutions involved in shifting from centralized to diverse distributed energy resources (Australian Energy Market Operator, 2019; Bird, Milligan and Lew, NREL, 2013).

The tapestry of technologies will naturally vary widely depending on local geography, climate, geology, population, industry, agriculture and countless other factors. Obviously areas with long periods of sunny weather will favor more solar technologies than places with ongoing overcast conditions. Windy areas will lend themselves to windmills, wind turbines and the like while agricultural areas might favor using agricultural byproducts to create alternative fuels for small-scale power generation. And new technologies are constantly appearing on the horizon (Huan and colleagues, PNAS, 2019).

When each neighborhood, home, community, factory and farm is producing power using the technologies most suited to local conditions, some at any given moment will produce more than they consume and some will produce less than they consume, while others will break even. When all are linked into one grid, the overall effect will meet all or most of the energy needs of the majority of regions. There may still be some need for larger power generation facilities in some places, but that need will be a small fraction of what it is today, so such facilities can be smaller and fewer than now.

The advantages of widely-distributed small scale power generation are many.

Power generation is thereby placed into the capable hands and minds of all of the people, empowering them, freeing them from dependency upon and constant pressure to pay money to energy mega-corporations. This will help stimulate a greater sense of empowerment and connection in neighborhoods and communities, and reduce people's feelings of isolation and disempowerment. This paradigm will also vastly reduce damage to the environment typically resulting from large-scale power generation.

The grid will be significantly more robust and secure than it is now. Failure of a few windmills or solar panels for any reason will have a much smaller impact on the grid than the failure of a major power plant does under the current paradigm. Failure, manipulation or sabotage of major facilities can incapacitate major sectors of the community or even take out whole regions. We have seen examples in the past half century, such as the 1989 Geomagnetic Storm which took out power in a wide area of the U.S. and Canada.

A distributed, diversified power system designed to adapt to a heterogeneous infrastructure will more readily lend itself to adaptations that will transform massive power surges from ion storms caused by solar coronal mass ejections from catastrophes into free energy to be captured, stored and harnessed. Research into energy storage in cryogenic superconductor coils is very promising in this regard, and could lead to a practical way to capture electricity from not just ion storms but potentially from lightning as well.

Currently virtually all people and enterprises are dependent on mega-corporations which set prices as they see fit. The shift to distributed small-scale power generation and the decommissioning of the Capitalist paradigm will place power generation mostly into the hands of the people using it. Profit motive and the unnecessary entropy that it generates will be absent.

Dependency on large-scale power plants puts power generation into the hands of large corporations which, in normal Capitalist fashion, seek to maximize profits and stock prices. This in practice translates into ever-rising prices and the cutting of corners that leads to failures down the line and to massive environmental damage.

There is no profit in taking measures to minimize environmental damage. Such measures translate into expenses, losses. It is often much more cost-effective to pay lobbyists to pressure legislators to reduce regulations on their activities.

There are strong reinforcers in place to prioritize short-term profits over long-term safety. It goes against logic, but examples abound: Fukushima (2011), 3 Mile island (1979), the BP Deepwater Horizon petroleum drilling platform disaster (2010), the Exxon-Valdez spill (1989), the recent Oroville Dam rupture (2017), all of which were due to known weaknesses that were exposed but steadfastly ignored. When pressure is high to see immediate and sustained profitability, it is easy for the human mind to rationalize ignoring possible future disasters that would cost time and money to address in the present.

In nearly every sphere of human endeavor, diversification is a more effective model than dependency on one specific resource or methodology.

In agriculture, at least until recently, farmers have known the benefits of growing diverse crops instead of only one. Certain crops complement each other. If planted together or in rotation they keep the soil supple and prevent need for purchased fertilizers. Permaculture is a rapidly developing agricultural modality that will become increasingly important. This approach has the added advantage that, if one crop fails for any reason, it is extremely unlikely that all crops will fail at the same time. Farms will not be wiped out by the failure of one crop. This practice weaves a combination of edible species into a tailored micro-ecosystem in which the species sustain and support one another and keep the soil supple and balanced.

In manufacturing, it is common to produce a variety of products rather than devote all resources to only one product, which if rendered obsolete would drive the entire facility or enterprise extinct.

Even in the Capitalist paradigm, investors routinely invest in a "diversified portfolio" strategized so that even if some of the stocks decrease in value, others will increase so that over time the overall increases outweigh the decreases.

It is instructive to observe how power generation based on large facilities costing enormous amounts of money in order to generate even more enormous amounts of money, is highly profitable even though it disempowers and degrades the quality of life for most people while leaving the society highly vulnerable to any act or event that disables these facilities.

Distributed diversified small scale power generation will empower and improve the quality of life for the vast majority of people. It would not be profitable for a large corporation bent on enriching itself in the energy field.

It is time for we the people to change this situation by joining together to implement inexpensive do-it-yourself small scale power generation on a vast scale. In so doing, we can render the energy corporations obsolete and unprofitable while improving our quality of life and strengthening our security. We can begin even before the actual Transition.

Pure scientific research always suffers under the Capitalist paradigm. There are no reinforcers or incentives in place to support such endeavors. By its very nature, pure scientific research is unpredictable. Its potential to yield profitable, exploitable technologies is limitless but also nearly impossible to forecast.

For example, on the one hand space exploration generated many technological innovations that lent themselves very well to profitable applications. On the other hand, Relativity and Quantum Mechanics, astronomy and astrophysics, paleontology and archeology, etc. have rarely yielded findings that led to massively profitable applications.

Under a Capitalist paradigm, companies with the financial ability to fund large-scale pure research have always opted to fund applied research that they deem likely to lead quickly to profits. Pure research, like the arts, is largely dependent on funding from government sources.

In democratically Socialist countries, this is usually sufficient for meaningful research; but under Capitalism, the corporate infrastructure and power structure generally dictate government policy more than the people themselves, always exerting their influence to discourage government spending on projects and undertakings that do not enhance their interests. Such projects are generally funded by tax money which the ultra-wealthy and corporations fight hard not to pay. In addition, potentially profitable outcomes from such research would be less profitable to mega-corporations if discovered and published in the public domain, which renders it freely accessible to all.

A good example of the results of this pattern was the Superconducting Super Collider in Texas, cancelled by Congress in 1993 after $2 billion had been spent and 14 miles of tunnel bored, as estimated costs rose past $11 billion. This project would

have greatly expanded the frontiers of physics for a long time to come, but it offered no avenue for corporate revenue, and so had few powerful defenders when costs rose. There was not enough prospect of profit perceived in the ability to probe the understanding of the fundamental fabric and workings of matter, energy and the Universe.

Yet, pure scientific research adds to the quality of life in the long run and enriches the human community in ways that cannot be quantified in monetary terms. Once again we see that Capitalism actively suppresses the advancement of the greatest good and of human knowledge and expression. It is a system that has been extensively tried and shown itself to be nonviable and destructive.

It is past time to deactivate this paradigm and create new ones that benefit from human experience and strive to reinforce cooperation, empowerment, mutuality, and thriving, in a culture of mutual respect and valuing of each individual in a cooperative setting.

Chapter 16: Capitalism and Women

Any paradigm or system that aims at achieving the highest level of human happiness, well-being, empowerment and fulfillment in a Community that reinforces cooperative, synergistic interaction at every level for the good of each and of all, must value, support and empower each and every member of the Community.

Sadly and tragically, under many paradigms including Capitalism, women are devalued, underpaid, suppressed, marginalized, even brutalized. While Capitalism is not the only paradigm where this tragedy occurs, it is a dominant factor in its perpetuation in most industrialized cultures and countries. It is a well-known and documented fact that in most Capitalist countries women are still paid less than men, and that even after accounting for occupation, industry, experience and hours worked, part of the gap remains unexplained, a residual that economists widely attribute at least in part to discrimination (Blau & Kahn, 2016).

There is no logical or practical reason for this. In a culture where one's degree of freedom, respect, options, quality of life and very survival are directly proportional to one's financial status on the economic Pyramid, this pattern translates into a deeper and more pernicious default negation of the right to exist for women than for men.

Some employers attempt to rationalize this practice by arguing that women will likely have kids and not stay at the job long-term, or may be less able to perform their job functions due to menstruation, pregnancy or post-pregnancy leave. Yet men are not economically penalized when they are members of the military reserve, which directly translates into missing work on a regular basis with an increased likelihood of being killed or disabled in combat; in the U.S., federal law expressly forbids employers to penalize them for it (38 U.S.C. § 4311). Nor are expectant fathers penalized for their upcoming parental status, even though fathers may also need to take time off during their wives' pregnancy, birthing, and the early period after the baby's birth. On the contrary, U.S. data show men's earnings rising by about 6% when they become fathers, while women's fall by about 4% for each child (Budig, 2014).

In other words, under Capitalist paradigms, women are penalized for keeping the human species alive, for guaranteeing our future.

Under Capitalism, employers are primarily concerned with profits, stock prices, market share and growth. If they perceive (whether accurately or not) someone as less serving those priorities even to a small degree, then they will devalue the employee. In their ideal world, employers wish for employees who will work long hours for little or no pay, or better yet in their view, machines which can do the job in place of human beings.

It is true that many of these attitudes and policies towards women originated from long-held cultural beliefs and customs that are independent of any economic paradigm. Yet, as with many other deleterious behaviors, when such attitudes meet a Capitalist paradigm, they become magnified, entrenched, perpetuated and set in stone, translated into norms that go largely unchallenged, just as all hierarchical social and economic paradigms magnify, institutionalize, legitimize and enforce the dysfunctionality and destructive proclivities of those at the top of the hierarchy. As discussed elsewhere, we now know that holding power over others inhibits compassion and empathy to a measurable degree; in experiments, even a small or momentary sense of power has this effect. Over time this can release abusive potentials. The effect tends to ease when power is relinquished.

Additional harm comes to women under Capitalist paradigms via other mechanisms as well. The constant pressure to come up with money to pay off the relentless denials of the right to exist, coupled with the lower pay frequently allotted to women, creates a situation that triggers many women to look for a husband who makes or has a lot of money. Marrying for money or security leads more often than not to relationships in which both parties are using each other rather than sharing in a heartful, fulfilling, authentic relationship. This scenario in turn contributes to human unhappiness, unfulfillment, and alienation, further entrenching a culture in which it becomes normalized and accepted for people to use each other instead of authentically relating to and sharing with each other.

Prostitution and the sex trade in general are particularly odious effects of Capitalistic paradigms. When people become desperate enough, they sometimes take actions to survive which seriously compromise, endanger, and degrade themselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and otherwise.

Deleting such attitudes from the mindset of a culture is a long, challenging process; but when we have mothballed Capitalist and other hierarchical socio-economic paradigms, the task will become much more attainable in the absence of being enforced and institutionalized by a power structure that coerces compliance under threat of loss of livelihood.

The culture that will naturally arise in the post-transition Community will be influenced and shaped by strong new reinforcers for cooperation, collaboration, mutually respectful synergy, and empowerment. There will be no reinforcers for bullying, abuse, exclusion or intimidation. Over time this will naturally tend to select against sexism, racism, and other dehumanizing attitudes and behaviors that plague much of the world today.

Where there is no hierarchy and no artificially enforced scarcity of resources, there is no motivation to try to be above others, no fear of being at the bottom, no worry about not being able to have freedom or quality of life, no reinforcers that would drive people to exert themselves to climb a nonexistent ladder. But for the best results in terms of human happiness and well-being, we will need to do more, and do it consciously and with wisdom and sensitivity.

The fundamental paradigm change after the Transition will greatly reduce enforcement and reinforcement of the devaluation and exploitation of women; but history and human experience show us that the economic, political, ideological or ethical social paradigm is only one of multiple factors that generate and perpetuate or discourage these attitudes and practices.

Examples are numerous.

The Soviet Union strove for and devoted considerable efforts to fostering a culture of unity and mutual respect among their numerous cultures for several generations, which did generate some progress. Yet, as soon as the Union dissolved, many pre-Soviet ethnic animosities resurfaced.

In the People's Republic of China, a major emphasis of the Revolution was parity and respect in every way for women, since pre-Revolutionary cultural attitudes towards women were among the most oppressive in the world. This was successful to varying degrees at the time. Yet when China instituted the one-child rule to curb overpopulation, female infanticide reared its bloody head to the point where at the time of this writing, the ratio of men to women is so out of balance that many heterosexual men cannot find a mate, since not enough female babies lived to reach adulthood for too long a time (Wee, Reuters via Scientific American, 2015).

In the United States, generations of progress, from the abolition of slavery to women getting the right to vote, to the Civil Rights Movement, steadily advanced the principles of respect and equality for all. Yet at the time of this writing, we see an alarming resurgence of racism, sexism, Taliban-like religious compulsion in the name of “religious liberty”, neo-Nazi white nationalism, and the systematic deliberate acceleration of the feudalization of the economy.

Therefore, we dare not content ourselves with the degree to which these issues will naturally resolve as the result of the Transition to the new Paradigms. The status of women, ethnic, religious and racial dynamics and similar issues will shrink from mountains to foothills, but not yet to molehills.

Our goal in all of the new Paradigms is the fullest possible empowerment, valuation, actualization, happiness and well-being of every individual and subgroup in all of our diversity, in a synergistic dialog oriented towards expanding the quality of life for each and all. We seek to level the hierarchical mountains that stratify communities into haves and have-nots, empowered and disempowered, over-valued and under-valued. We must resolve and expect to work unceasingly to level these mountains completely.

We cannot achieve these goals by assuming that once we've achieved our Transition, we have solved all of our problems. Nor can we ultimately succeed if we suppress destructive norms and attitudes in such a way as to drive them underground where

they would fester, feed on a self-perception of being an oppressed minority and be covertly passed on from generation to generation.

Even though such perceptions of being a persecuted minority are not based on reality, they are perceived and experienced nevertheless. The Nazis in Germany believed themselves to be the victims of a vast sinister Jewish-Communist conspiracy, even though they themselves were the ones in power. Those who formerly enjoyed privilege and power over others often feel oppressed and besieged when that status is removed. It is a variation of the emotional responses of any addict when deprived of the object of their addiction.

The full range of human attitudes and behaviors must be clearly visible if we are to successfully address those that cause harm and transform them into ones that nurture well-being. On the one hand, we will not thrive if we enable attitudes and behaviors such as bullying, demeaning or devaluing groups or individuals, abuse, violence, discrimination and similar behaviors. On the other hand, we cannot make progress if we drive them out of sight by criminalizing and suppressing them to fester unseen. We must strive for a delicate balance.

It will be no secret that one of the central principles of the new Paradigms after the transition will be to forge a Community on local and national levels which strives to empower each and every one of its members, with no exceptions, guaranteeing each human being unobstructed access to all goods and services, the right to participate in and contribute to the Community, each in their own unique way.

The primary organizational structures of all undertakings and enterprises will be peer-based and non-hierarchical. The degree to which individuals or groups will be able to express or impose biases, prejudices, exclusion or favoritism will be massively reduced from that possible under Capitalist paradigms. There will be no employers, landlords, nor lenders so there will be no way for people to block other people from access to living spaces, transportation, medical care, etc.

Of course a prejudiced individual or group of individuals can take bullying actions against those whom they would exclude, use derogatory language, attempt to physically block the objects of their hatred from accessing resources or places, and/or conduct smear campaigns, spreading lies about their targets, to turn others against them.

Such behaviors are, however, already illegal in most modern nations and states. People perpetrating discrimination, slander, assault, libel, or vandalism will be prosecuted under the applicable laws. If found guilty, perpetrators will be restrained from continuing these behaviors and offered treatment. Anti-discrimination laws will need to be strengthened and carefully, scrupulously enforced, regardless of who perpetrates such behaviors against whom.

Some such exclusionary racist, sexist, and nationalist attitudes are germinated, fed, and propagated under Capitalist paradigms due to the artificially perpetuated shortage and inaccessibility of everything. Living-wage or better employment, medical care, safety, education, living-space and everything else is kept in short supply. There is not enough to go around, by design. In such environments, individuals and groups are often pitted against one another.

The perception of "not enough to go around," tends to exacerbate the frictions and animosities between groups. It's all because of those <Jews> <immigrants> <blacks> <whites> <Armenians>, etc. that We are shut out of the best options, that We are suffering.

Such divisions are often based on the fact that one group or another tends to occupy the stratosphere of the socio-economic Pyramid while other groups tend to be relegated to the crushing depths at the bottom.

Women are frequently farther down the economic pyramid than their racial, ethnic, religious and national male peers. The Capitalist economic paradigm lends itself very easily to stratification, prejudice, exclusionism, cronyism, and similar phenomena. In fact, such divisions are frequently encouraged and magnified by those at the top in order to keep those at the bottom focusing their resentment upon one another rather than working together in unison to challenge and change the dysfunctional, oppressive economic paradigm itself. This is done so that those at the top of the pyramid will not be deprived of the objects of their addiction: wealth, privilege, influence, opulence, power over and control of others.

In the absence of these dynamics of wealth, power and control, these mechanisms of enforcement of harmful discrimination and bullying will be eliminated. All persons will have access to everything they want and need.

Resentments and distrust may remain as a carry-over from inequities experienced under Capitalist paradigms before the Transition. It will be important to encourage open public dialog. When nobody has control over another's access to housing, food, transportation, education, or livelihood, then the mechanisms of exclusion will be largely absent. The behaviors will not be reinforced and will tend to lessen on their own. There will be no "overclass" and no "underclass."

Anybody trying to prevent another from accessing a workplace, distribution center, transportation nexus, or other site or resource will be dealt with as a bully perpetrating an assault. They will be guilty of a crime and will not be emboldened or backed up by any hierarchy or economic system.

Prejudiced people might refuse to work with those whom they hate. Unethical or racist doctors and other professionals might attempt to withhold services from those whom they dislike. Admissions boards might attempt to exercise discrimination in admitting applicants to educational institutions. We will need strict enforcement of laws requiring admission to be based entirely on ability and qualification, and such laws will have to be strengthened and taken with utmost seriousness. Some, such as law enforcement workers, may attempt to abuse the exercise of the more limited degrees of authority that will exist in the new Paradigms.

In order to curtail such abuses and prevent their mainstreaming, absolute transparency must be maintained. Any individuals or groups who perpetrate them must be removed from positions and roles where such abuses are possible. This must not be done in a punitive framework, but more in the spirit in which a person whose eyesight has been compromised or who has a seizure disorder may be prevented from driving, not to debase or punish them, but out of safety concerns.

One would not ask someone struggling with alcoholism to work at a liquor distribution center, or someone struggling with drug addiction to work at a pharmacy. In just the same manner, a person who is unable to overcome their prejudice against <women> <Muslims> <Christians> < Blacks> <Whites> etc will not be allowed to be in a situation where they can carry out their destructive compulsions. Individuals who exhibit aggressive and dangerous expressions of such beliefs will, of course, along with child molesters, rapists, and similar violent offenders, have to be physically restrained from committing such acts and offered every opportunity to avail themselves of the best therapy available.

We would do well to foster a lively public dialog about these topics. In that manner, concerns can be addressed and answered; progress can be made. "We suffered at the hands of those people" can be answered with "That is now a thing of the past" in a context where that is true. "We are downtrodden because They exclude us" will be shown to be outdated.

The only remaining, un-answerable and un-resolvable versions of these attitudes will be those based purely on ingrained prejudice and hatred. People holding such attitudes and beliefs will remain impervious to objective facts and demonstrable changes in the social dynamics. At that point, we are dealing with hatred itself. Hatred is not a medical diagnosis, but it is a different thing from anger. Anger is aimed at what someone did, and seeks to change it; it can drive people to right a wrong. Hatred is aimed at who someone is, sees them as unable to change, and seeks to harm or exclude them (Fischer, Halperin, Canetti and Jasini, 2018). It has no constructive side. It is a dysfunctional state of mind, harmful both to its targets and to the people who hold it, and it calls for patient work to undo it, through contact, education and support, while the law protects its targets from harmful acts. Those who would act on it will need to be prevented from doing harm, without being debased or disrespected, with every effort made to give them the opportunity to change. The Norwegian prison system is a good model to study in crafting a new approach and infrastructure to accommodate these situations (Sterbenz, Business Insider, 2014).

While we are unlikely to ever completely eliminate all dysfunctional attitudes from the human community, the extinction of Capitalism and the establishment of the post Transition paradigms will empower us to reduce the prevalence of sexism, racism, divisive nationalism and ethnic friction from a festering wound to a pimple.

Such attitudes and behaviors can be expected to steadily diminish as generation after generation grow up in the new Paradigms as fully empowered, actualized individuals in a mutualistic, synergistic, cooperative Community in which none

are blocked from access to life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, nor any other right, resource, or basic respect. The benefits of the post-Transition paradigms will grow and deepen over time, just as the damage from Capitalist paradigms has grown and deepened over time. A Paradigm that is based on the reinforcement of the most positive, creative, beneficial aspects of human behavior can be expected to keep evolving into ever more enlightened forms and expressions.

Chapter 17: The Issue of Quality, Integrity, and Truthfulness of Readily Accessible Information

Under Capitalist paradigms, the primary reinforcers are for amassing money or wealth in all its forms and attaining power over others. Incentives are strong. One result is ubiquitous advertising and deliberately misleading disinformation intended to induce people to buy products and services. The truthfulness or usefulness of the information has little or nothing to do with such messaging, except to the extent that the law requires.

A person living in a Capitalist environment is constantly awash in a virtual sea of intrusive information presenting itself as factual or even as scientific proof that this or that product is beneficial, necessary, superior, or unique. Much of this information is misleading, selectively framed or unsubstantiated, and very little of it has been independently verified. A person would have to be a specialist and expert, or else perform an impossible amount of exhaustive research in order to determine the accuracy of such claims. The advent of the Internet and mass communications has exacerbated and magnified this phenomenon.

"Nine out of ten doctors recommend our product," "Our supplements are 90% more bio-available than any others on the market thanks to the patented process found only in our products," "Faster streaming video than our competitors, using our exclusive XYZ technology," "Our cars are safer than the other brands," and so forth are what one finds when one searches for medicines, supplements, devices, services, etc.

If one were to believe these claims, then there are hundreds of competing products that are all the "best on the market, superior to all others." No manufacturer or service provider will ever advertise that "Our products are made of inferior materials and produced in slip-shod sweat-shops by half-starved underpaid workers using a defective design that allows us to maximize our profits and stock prices primarily through superior advertising." Nor will any company ever advertise that "Our products and services are pretty typical of what's on the market. We just charge more."

The reinforcers dominating Capitalist paradigms and systems are to sell the most. Dissemination of accurate information is not reinforced, except where laws are in place, usually due to sustained and concerted pressure from the Community, that force compliance.

As we are seeing in the world at the time of this writing, and quite blatantly in the United States, lawmakers are under constant pressure from mega-corporations and the people at the very top of the economic Pyramid who control them, to undo such laws. This is inevitable, since such laws run counter to the central, most potent reinforcers in Capitalist paradigms.

From time to time movements surge among the People that are able to bring enough pressure to bear upon politicians to make them to pass such laws. Yet under Capitalist systems the voices of the Feudal Lords of the Pyramid will reliably outweigh the voices of the People, just as casino patrons may sometimes win big sums, yet in the long run the "house" comes out ahead and the patrons come out behind. A study of nearly 1,800 U.S. policy decisions found that economic elites and business-oriented groups have substantial independent influence on policy, while average citizens have little or none (Gilens & Page, 2014).

To make matters worse, as the economic stratification of a society deepens and consolidates, a bigger and bigger percentage of the members of the Community become unrelentingly worn down by the losing struggle for economic survival, their dwindling reserves of time and energy increasingly dissipated by stress and distractions. Individuals do not have the wherewithal to do thorough research.

To compete the picture, given the power of the media to control the information that people see, hear and read, in context of the escalating sophistication of propaganda and advertising, we see that Capitalism is a fundamentally flawed paradigm that reinforces against the dissemination of truthful information. Without access to reliable, accurate information, the people are unable to make well-informed choices and selections.

Capitalism strongly reinforces against the unrestricted availability and flow of truthful and accurate information. The information to which we are exposed has tremendous impact on our perceptions and decisions. For those at the top of hierarchical power structures, controlling and carefully tailoring the information disseminated to the public is a powerful tool for manipulation of large populations.

Under any Capitalist system, truthful and accurate information is lost and buried amidst the ongoing onslaught and overload of propaganda otherwise known as advertising. Make no mistake about it: advertising is a particularly pernicious form of propaganda. Even when the truth is told, it is presented in a partial and misleading way; outright lies and unsubstantiated claims are routine.

Consider the case of Purdue pharmaceutical company who knowingly advertised oxycontin as a safe, non-addictive, painkiller, even though they knew from studies that they suppressed, that the opposite was true. This is only one example from one company in one industry.

Seeking factual information is doubly thwarted by this overwhelming overabundance of misinformation, and by the laws and norms in Capitalist paradigms which often render honest facts inaccessible as "intellectual property" of the manufacturers.

One might turn to scientific publications, and indeed the fare is better in that setting; but under Capitalist paradigms, the overwhelming dominant reinforcers for making money intrude and distort the scientific community as well. Furthermore, such publications are usually only comprehensible to members of the target scientific community. Lay people struggle to understand such articles.

Like all inhabitants of Capitalist systems, scientists are in the position of needing money to survive, both personally and professionally. A scientist who lacks funding for their research and is not personally wealthy is an out-of-work scientist. This effectively suppresses whatever research they would otherwise do.

In Capitalist paradigms, the only form of scientific research that is consistently well funded is that which is seen by wealthy people and companies as likely to lead to serious profits. Government may also fund some pure research aimed at expanding human knowledge and quality of life; but funding for such programs is constantly under assault from the private sector, whose Feudal Lords are reluctant to have any of their wealth taxed to support projects that will not profit them. Nor are they eager to support research where results will be freely available to the public and therefore not subject to exclusive and restricted ownership as “intellectual property.” The reinforcers are too strong. Over time, under Capitalist paradigms and systems, the support for non-profit-driven research steadily dwindles.

Scientists working for a corporation or Feudal Lord are under the strict control of their employer, who pays them to work on and find what they want them to find. Any scientist who finds that a company's major money-making products are unsafe for human beings or the environment upon which all living things depend to survive, will either find their research suppressed or be fired and discredited and most likely blacklisted through carefully crafted propaganda. If they publicize their findings to the Community, then they can expect to be sued, and in trade-secret cases even prosecuted, for violation of nondisclosure agreements that they were required to sign as condition of employment and for infringement of "intellectual property," even though they were the ones doing the research, since all rights to any work they do are owned and controlled by the company.

Accurate and useful information is available; but it is buried and thoroughly overwhelmed by the Niagara Falls of advertising, misinformation, and disinformation in which we are immersed, like the trickle of a tiny mountain stream mingled in the waters of the Amazon.

At this point in history, the United States government is actively suppressing scientific data, research, and even discussion of vital findings on climate change which have implications that would compromise the power and profits of some of the largest corporations on the planet if this data and these studies were actively and openly released into the public dialogue. This suppression is directly at the behest of the Feudal Lords controlling these Corporations. Its withholding is an omission that potentially threatens the long-term survival of our species and even of life on earth altogether.

A prime example is the universal dependence on fossil fuels, which has been scientifically demonstrated since the 1970's to be causing global warming, threatening the future of life on earth in very immediate terms. This information makes us responsible to minimize and strive to eliminate our use of fossil fuels and other technologies that accelerate this process. Doing so would obviously destroy much of the profits and control of some of the most powerful corporations and Feudal Lords on the planet. The petroleum industry knew nearly fifty years ago that the use of fossil fuels would come to jeopardize life on earth: Exxon's own scientists projected global warming accurately from 1977 onward, while the company spent decades publicly casting doubt on the science (Supran, Rahmstorf & Oreskes, 2023). Predictably, they chose to aggressively and systematically suppress what they knew (McKibben, The New Yorker, 2015; Wang, Climate Liability News, 2018). The reinforcers for profit-making are so powerful as to create classical addictive behaviors; these companies and their Lords prefer to gamble with the climate on which all life on earth depends, rather than let go of their unimaginable wealth and power. A hallmark of addiction is that it supercedes even the very survival instinct of the addict.

We must keep in mind that, in many cases, advertising and propaganda are presented as scientific fact, often with scientists' names attached to lend credibility (Oreskes and Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, 2010). This is not surprising when we realize that scientists are no different than other human beings in that they respond to the behavioral reinforcements of their environment.

Under the Nazi regime in Germany, otherwise credible scientists found "scientific proof" that Aryans were superior to other ethnic/racial groups and that Jews were inferior, justifying their extermination. During the era of slavery in the United States, some well-credentialed scientists published studies supporting the claim that dark-skinned Africans were subhuman and therefore suitable as beasts of burden. In the current era, there are scientists who will "find" whatever the highest bidder wishes them to "find." This is not an attack upon the integrity of scientists as a group; it is only a statement of the responses and behaviors that prevail under Capitalist paradigms among all sectors.

The task of separating the signal of accurate and verifiable facts from the overwhelming mass of noise in the form of advertising, propaganda, interest-serving opinions stated as facts, and articles published by people lacking any scientific background who express their beliefs and opinions as fact, is so daunting as to be largely impractical. With a great deal of effort, one might be able to determine which of several products is indeed superior; but it is impossible in practice to sort truth from propaganda in more than single items or questions at a time; and even then there is an unacceptably wide margin of uncertainty.

Once Capitalism is decommissioned and replaced with the new Paradigms based on mutuality and reinforcing co-operation, efficiency, and the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of individuals and of the Community, the mass of advertising and propaganda will dwindle from a Niagara Falls to a dripping faucet, from a supernova to a candle flame.

There will be no reinforcement for advertising and propagandizing behavior. Currency will be obsolete and irrelevant. There will be nothing to gain, no reinforcement for flooding the surroundings with propaganda designed to drive sales or market share. The very concepts of "sales," "market share," and "stock" will have no meaning, function, or existence. In fact, there will be strong reinforcers against spreading disinformation or misinformation, since doing so will result in the originator's losing the trust of the their audience.

Of course human beings will always lie to one degree or another on an individual basis, though the reinforcers for lying will be greatly reduced. However, the blaring cacaphony of disinformation will go extinct for lack of motivation.

Among scientists there will always be disagreements, competing theories and hypotheses. The human ego will always play a part in human interactions. But the size, degree, and quantity of misleading information will be reduced from epidemic and dominant to individual and sideline in scope.

Information will be freely and openly shared among all interested parties to the benefit of everyone. There will be no nondisclosure agreements or corporate "intellectual property" preventing such sharing. The Internet will become a venue for Community-wide, nation-wide, worldwide databases and forums for dialog, debate, discussion and information sharing as well as socialization. Competing theories, technologies, and methodologies will prevail, wither, thrive, and evolve based on their actual practical merits rather than on presentation, packaging, data-tweaking and the politics of wealth and influence.

Access to the latest factual information will be direct and immediate. There will be no need to try to decide between the safest car, the most reliable car, the car with the best mileage, or the most affordable car. All cars will be manufactured with the best designs and features that the state of the art allows and will be designed to be easily upgradeable and serviceable. There will be no proprietary tools or exclusive technologies held ransom for a high price reserved only for the wealthy.

The choices for someone desiring a vehicle will be simple and straightforward: does one need or prefer a passenger car, a utility vehicle or a truck; a long-haul vehicle or a commuter vehicle, what size and with which features, what color, etc. Every car made will combine the best that the technology can produce.

A person in need of medical care will be presented with choices among the safest and most effective medicines and treatments possible. No studies will be suppressed or co-opted, no data will be hidden; no advertising will cause confusion. Only medical considerations will drive diagnostic and therapeutic decisions.

Law enforcement and employee intervention may need to be called upon to prevent the heads of current pharmaceutical companies from destroying their research out of spite once they learn that their days of privilege and control are over and that all medicines will be freely given to all who need them. Any such attempts will be met with arrest and criminal charges with subsequent prison time if found guilty.

In the absence of the reinforcers of Capitalist paradigms, the truthful sharing and presentation of data among cooperating and competing researchers, engineers, designers, etc. will be reinforced. These new norms will result in the best currently attainable quality of life for each and all.

Chapter 18: Capitalism, Health and Well-Being: Mental, Emotional, Physical, Spiritual, Individual and Social

Under Capitalist paradigms, profit motive, market share and stock prices are the prime considerations and motivations driving behaviors and decisions. The survival, rights, options, access to resources, ability to thrive, choices and quality of life of an individual or of a company are determined primarily by their amount of wealth or the lack of it. In practice, this creates strong reinforcement for putting profit and market share above all other considerations.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Classic Capitalist logic is strongly influenced by "the law of supply and demand." This means that when demand is high for a product or service, especially when supply is limited, the supplier can raise prices. Thus the supplier can drive prices even higher by deliberately reducing the supply, creating an artificial shortage. Under Capitalist paradigms this is accepted, unchallenged and considered on a par with the laws of physics.

In all matters of health, dentistry and the like, this leads to a massively destructive and dangerous dynamic. When people are sick, injured, in pain, dying or in danger of losing mobility, quality of life or the ability to function normally, they are highly motivated and often desperate to remedy the situation.

This is both conscious and instinctual. An animal caught by a bear trap will chew its own leg off in order to escape, since to remain in the trap is certain death. Likewise, a human who is in pain, injured, sick or receives a death sentence from cancer or heart disease, will often go deep into debt or sell their house if that is the only way to get relief or have a chance of survival.

The healthcare industry capitalizes on this in the extreme. Anything medical, dental or health-related is hyperinflated.

Because the stakes are high, demand is high. Capitalist reinforcers are compelling. Prices of medicine, medical procedures, lab tests, doctor visits, prosthetics, rehabilitation, hospital stays and everything in hospitals, ambulances, surgery, even vitamin supplements and foods perceived to be healthy are as high as the market will bear, hundreds or thousands of percent above actual production costs, cripplingly high.

In healthcare professions, as well as in all sectors of a Capitalist model, there is sharp disparity. Even though an ambulance ride might cost $1,500 or more, the emergency medical technicians manning the ambulance and saving lives often earn under $40,000 a year; in May 2023 their median pay in the U.S. was about $38,930. Nurses and doctors generally earn a living wage, while top hospital and insurance executives can be paid many times what frontline staff make.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2023: Emergency Medical Technicians.

As mentioned previously, even medical and dental schools are dramatically more expensive than all other fields except law. This is as much the case in "alternative" as it is in "mainstream" healthcare industries.

The pharmaceutical industry is also destructively shaped by the reinforcers built into Capitalism. When faced with a choice to develop and produce two equally effective medications for treating the same condition, these companies reliably choose to develop the more profitable one, even when the other one is easier to produce and make easily accessible to patients, even when the less profitable one is therapeutically superior.

Pharmaceutical companies frequently rush through the clinical trials needed to test efficacy and safety of medications, in order to get them to market more quickly. Profit routinely comes ahead of patient safety and well-being in the order of

priorities. Freed of profit motives after the Transition, medical and other scientific research will be able to focus only on human health and well-being.

As previously mentioned, parasitic industries have grown up around and intertwined with the healthcare industries like an invasive malignancy: not just insurance companies, but also billing industries, collections agencies, medical attorneys, financial speculators who profit from buying and selling medical debts, advertising and marketing industries, lobbyists (who push healthcare corporations' agendas upon legislators), scam artists pushing untested remedies, and more.

Billionaires at the top of the economic pyramid always have access to the best medical care available. For the rest of the population, it is ultimately not even doctors or other healthcare professionals who decide what care a patient gets. Such decisions are made by accountants, insurance adjusters and company reviewers who are pressed, and at times paid bonuses, to deny or cancel as much coverage as can be legally defended (GAO, 2011; Lazarus, Los Angeles Times, 2017). One California insurer paid an analyst bonuses for meeting targets for cancelling members' policies (California Healthline, 2007), and in 2022 Cigna's medical directors denied more than 300,000 claims in two months, spending an average of 1.2 seconds on each (ProPublica, 2023). Through this parasitic arrangement, the insurance industry dictates to medical professionals what treatment they may or may not give.

In circumstances where common sense and basic human instinct would demand putting the good of the patient above all else, profit and stockholder gains are the prime motive. Patient well-being is of secondary, tertiary or quaternary concern, sometimes not considered at all except in terms of public relations to the degree that they impact profits. It is not uncommon for bitter disputes to arise between a healthcare professional bent upon giving a patient the best care possible and an insurance company, accountant or administrator bent upon maximizing profits and minimizing expenses. They are at cross-purposes. Medical considerations routinely yield to financial considerations, even when a life is at stake.

Capitalist reinforcements more often than not favor denying the best treatment, unless the patient has enough money to make it financially worthwhile. Here again we see how Capitalism favors and reinforces lack of compassion and common sense, putting profit far ahead of human well-being and even human life. It is not unheard-of for an insurance company to repeatedly deny a patient's claim and keep it tied up in paperwork when the patient is in imminent danger of dying, delays that in documented cases have outlasted the patient and spared the company the expense of treating them. In 2007, 17-year-old Nataline Sarkisyan died hours after Cigna, under public pressure, reversed its refusal to pay for her liver transplant (NBC News, 2007).

We humans are a social species. A good portion of our strength comes from pooling our knowledge, skills and resources. To knowingly allow a human being to die, suffer, or become disabled through going untreated or not properly treated, is inhuman, inhumane, and against the survival of our species. When one of us is weakened, we are all weakened. When one of us thrives, we all benefit. Yet under the Capitalist paradigm, statements like "It's nothing personal; it's just Business" are commonly used to justify business decisions that ruin the lives of human beings. This justification is almost universally accepted as valid and unassailable.

This reflects the degree to which people are culturally indoctrinated to accept that Business supercedes the good of human beings, in much the same way as, for centuries, much of Chinese society accepted the cruel and debilitating practice of binding girls' feet, until Chinese reformers, many of them women, campaigned it out of existence in the early twentieth century, and some cultures today accept female genital mutilation as a necessary rite of passage. This mindset contributes to the cultural acceptance of dehumanization and the devaluation of human life.

Note again the feudalistic parallels: those at the top of the economic pyramid always have direct access to the finest health, dental, legal and other care because they can always afford whatever it costs. Since Corporations, which are legally recognized as “persons” “who” happen to occupy the highest reaches of the Pyramid (even hospitals are corporations or owned by corporations), ultimately serve to concentrate wealth and power into the controlling hands of those at the top, we see that once again the occupants of the top of the economic pyramid ultimately (directly and indirectly) dictate who gets or does not get what medical treatment. Medieval royalty likewise had the power of life and death over their subjects.

Under Capitalist paradigms, the reinforcers in place strongly select in favor of denying the best treatment to most patients, most of the time. Capitalism is fundamentally and functionally incompatible with achieving an optimal level of healthcare for all human beings in the community. This applies to both mainstream and alternative medical treatments.

The pattern of extreme inflation of prices of health-related goods and services does not end with actual medical care. Typical examples are "health foods," organic foods, supplements, weight loss programs and more. For example, foods known or perceived to be healthier than mainstream foods, as well as prescription diets and supplements, are universally dramatically more expensive than similar foods more affordably available at supermarkets. Such foods and supplements often cost double or more the price of more mainstream versions of the same foods.

People living on sub-living or just-above-living wages, are usually not able to afford the healthier versions. Even within supermarkets, one frequently finds, for example, oranges for $1.50/lb, while oranges in the Organic section may cost upwards of $5.00/lb. Health food stores are universally radically more expensive than mainstream grocery stores. The reasons and mechanisms are the same as with medical treatments: when people believe that their health and survival will be much better eating certain foods, they are willing to pay a lot more for them.

Under the reinforcers of Capitalist societies, producers and distributors will take advantage of this demand by raising prices to maximize profits. Here again we see the feudalistic socio-economic pattern: the occupants of the upper levels of the economic pyramid can easily afford to eat the healthiest foods while the rest of the population cannot. This is so well understood that advertising for unhealthy food and drink is concentrated where people have less money: outdoor ads for sugary drinks are denser in low-income neighborhoods (*Journal of Urban Health*, 2015), and candy, sugary drinks, snacks and cereal made up 73% of food advertising on Black-targeted and Spanish-language television in 2021 (Rudd Center, 2022; see also U.S. Right to Know). Those at the top determine the cost of most things and the salaries of most people while they themselves can afford to stay healthy and be treated when something goes wrong. The vast majority can afford neither.

There are also parasitic industries in this field, businesses and individuals who take advantage of people's survival instincts: supplement manufacturers who charge exorbitant prices for their products, packaging and presenting them as somehow vastly superior to less expensive products. Many of these claim to be unique and the best available.

Similar practices extend to allegedly “enhanced” versions of bottled water, herbal preparations, diet drugs and regimens, seminars and "retreats" for physical or psychological/emotional/spiritual well-being, spas, and other goods and services purporting to be essential and uniquely indispensable for health and well-being. Whether they actually function as advertised or not, they are unaffordable on most people's budgets. When confronted with this fact, purveyors inevitably use a manipulative psychological gambit with words to the effect that "you don't want to skimp on your health, or the health of your loved ones do you? What price is too high for perfect health and long life?"

One must also ask, why are more affordable foods often so much less healthy than expensive foods in the first place?

This question reveals once again the now-familiar pattern that is replicated throughout the Capitalist paradigm. Profits in agriculture are generally based on size, weight and appearance of produce. The higher the yield per acre, the higher the profits. The more potatoes or apples per acre, the higher the profits. The redder, bigger and plumper the tomatoes, the bigger the profits.

Corporate agribusinesses and independent farmers (in order to survive in competition with large Corporate producers) expend tremendous resources to maximize profits. How these measures affect the nutritional quality of produce is a secondary or tertiary consideration, and even then often primarily motivated by avoiding expensive legal consequences.

For centuries farmers have used selective breeding to improve both crop yield and quality; but today, the overwhelming trend is towards large-scale agriculture that favors practices that almost always cause a degradation of the nutritional quality of produce and damage to the environment that is our only home. In the production of vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, dairy, and more, the pressure is to push for rapid growth to large sizes, through breeding crops for yield and through growth-promoting hormones and feed in livestock, often at the expense of taste and nutritional content. Between 1950 and 1999, the nutrient content of 43 U.S. garden crops fell measurably, with median declines of about 15% in iron and vitamin C, 16% in

calcium and 38% in riboflavin, largely because higher-yielding varieties dilute the nutrients (Davis, Epp and Riordan, 2004); British food tables show iron in fruit and vegetables down by about half between 1940 and 2019, and copper by nearly as much (Mayer, Trenchard and Rayns, 2022). Rising carbon dioxide adds to the loss: the largest study to date, covering 43 crops, finds that plants grown under higher CO_2 contain less zinc, iron and protein (ter Haar and colleagues, 2025). And the way industrial farming treats the soil may be part of the problem: ploughing and heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides damage the fungal networks that help plants draw minerals from the earth, and early studies suggest that farms which rebuild soil health can grow markedly more nutritious food, though the evidence is still mixed (*The Guardian*, 2026; FoodFacts).

Tomatoes may be bigger, redder and more drought-tolerant. Steers and chickens may get bigger faster using these methods, but almost universally the nutritional content of a pound of food is far less than of a pound of food raised without these methods and is bland tasting by comparison.

These practices also often contaminate waterways with hormones, drug residues and other substances that can adversely affect the population (USGS, 2002). These practices also deplete the soil, necessitating the use of ever more fertilizers. The overuse of pesticides further contaminates the surroundings and results in pesticide-resistant pests.

Currently we see corporate agribusinesses using genetically modified crops (GMO's) to achieve increased yields, resistance to pests and other marketable traits into both plant and animal crops. These are marketed to farmers at all levels around the world with promises of increased profits when using these seeds and animal stock.

One can understand the logic behind splicing genes for desired traits from one organism into another organism: blight resistance spliced into the genes of potato plants from some species of plant that has this resistance; drought tolerance spliced into corn crops from some species of desert grasses, etc. This topic alone could fill a book, but here we look at the impact upon farmers and other sectors of the population. Keep in mind that seemingly unrelated traits are often regulated by the same genes, so the effects of genetic re-sequencing could be unknown for a long time. It is too soon to know the full long-term effects of genetically editing the genomes of food crops on their nutritional content or on the ecosystem at large, although a major 2016 review found no substantiated evidence that foods from the genetically engineered crops then on the market were less safe to eat than conventional foods (National Academies, 2016). The socio-economic impact on many farmers around the world, however, has been devastating. In GMO'S we have a situation where Capitalist paradigms allow corporations to actually patent organisms that carry the genetic modifications that they added to the genomes of the naturally occurring varieties. The fallout has already been destructive in the extreme.

Saving seed from one harvest to plant the next is as old as farming itself. Patented seed changed that. Farmers who buy it sign contracts forbidding them to save it, and the companies enforce those contracts. A 2013 report by the Center for Food Safety found that Monsanto had filed more than 140 lawsuits against more than 400 farmers and some 50 small businesses in the United States, winning over $23 million, and some farmers were ruined. That same year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously, in *Bowman v. Monsanto*, that a farmer may not replant patented seed without paying. The companies employed investigators and ran anonymous tip lines, and independent seed cleaners, who had cleaned farmers' saved seed for generations, were sued until many found the work too risky to continue. Stories of farmers sued merely because patented pollen blew onto their fields are not borne out by the court records. The reality is quieter and in some ways worse: an ancient freedom turned, by contract and patent, into a liability.

The destructive impact on farmers does not stop there. In 1998, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the seed company Delta & Pine Land were granted a patent for seeds engineered so that the next generation would be sterile, soon nicknamed "Terminator" seeds. The purpose was plain: to stop farmers from saving seed and to make them buy new seed every season. It was never sold, but not because the industry had a change of heart. A worldwide outcry from farmers, scientists and humanitarian groups forced Monsanto to pledge not to commercialise it, and in 2000 the UN Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a moratorium that still stands. Meanwhile, the same goal is reached by other means. As described above, patents and licensing contracts forbid farmers to replant patented seed, and the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld them. And hybrid seeds, which do not breed true, have kept farmers buying new seed every year for nearly a century. This is what the system reliably rewards, and it took organised resistance on a global scale to hold the worst of it back.

In South America, during the soy boom of the 2000s and 2010s, the pressure took two forms. In Brazil and Argentina, where the law protected farmers' right to save seed, Monsanto set up a private royalty system at the grain ports: harvests were tested for its genes, and 2 to 3 percent was deducted from any farmer who could not prove the fee had been paid. Brazilian farmers' unions challenged it in court and lost in 2019. Meanwhile, as genetically modified soy spread across millions of hectares, landowners expanding their plantations used hired gunmen, private security and, at times, local police to drive peasant and Indigenous families from their land. Peasant movements documented intimidation, evictions and the killing of their leaders. In Córdoba, Argentina, residents who blockaded a planned Monsanto seed plant were beaten by men linked to a construction union while police stood by. They held their ground, and in 2016 Monsanto abandoned the plant. No conspiracy was needed. A corporation collecting royalties, landowners expanding their holdings, and authorities who protected the powerful all profited from the same boom, and each reinforced the others. That is what oligarchic capture looks like on the ground (see The Structural Dynamics of Oligarchic Capture).

Sources: Boston College Law Review on genetic use restriction technologies; Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, "Terminator Technology"; *Bowman v. Monsanto Co.*, 569 U.S. 278 (2013); The Guardian on the Center for Food Safety report (2013); The Conversation on Monsanto's royalty system in Brazil; La Vía Campesina on Argentina; The Ecologist on the Malvinas Argentinas blockade.

We must not underestimate the degree to which human beings are and can be devalued, disempowered and marginalized under Capitalism. These precedents in agricultural genetic engineering create a fertile legal environment from which dangerous trends can launch. Medical research is on the verge of dramatic breakthroughs in genetic treatments that could easily prevent and/or cure previously incurable conditions. One can imagine genetic engineering eventually being applied to human beings for noble purposes such as preventing diabetes, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis or other debilitating genetically-caused health conditions. So far so good.

Given the history of Capitalist societies, however, it is not at all a stretch of the imagination to picture individuals born or treated with these modifications being declared the intellectual property of the patent-holder of such treatments, or being born into a life in which they will be legally obligated to pay fees to the patent-holder for all or much of their lives. There is nothing in Capitalist societies to prevent it. There are very strong reinforcers for companies to engage in such practices. Should this occur, once again we would see how the Constitution guarantees rights in theory which Capitalistic constructs override and negate in practice.

Historically, the role of Capitalism in food production has been mostly deleterious to the greater good. For example, when the European settlers swept west across what became the United States, they encountered a free, virtually inexhaustible, robust, maintenance free meat supply in the form of vast buffalo herds. But it was impractical to make much of a profit off of it. Anything that is in plentiful supply and freely available to everyone is an anathema to Capitalist motivations and society. Once a market was found, the herds were slaughtered almost to extinction: in the 1870s new tanning methods made buffalo hides valuable to tanneries in the East and in Europe, and with no rules on the kill, hunters shot millions for their hides alone. Expensive, high maintenance European cattle then took over the emptied plains as a profitable food source. It was common for passengers on trains traveling through the buffaloes' environment to shoot hundreds of them as they passed by just to pass the time, and for the U.S. army to do so in order to starve out the Native American Nations who fed upon the herds.

Sources: M. Scott Taylor, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison" (NBER Working Paper 12969; *American Economic Review*, 2011).

The funerary industry is another example of how the reinforcers built into the Capitalist paradigm generate parasitic, predatory and destructive dynamics in a society while placing hurtful, unnecessary burdens on people in their times of greatest pain.

Funeral practices vary widely from culture to culture. Some cultures bury their dead, some cremate, some have other practices. In the United States, one of the most aggressively Capitalist societies in the world, the funerary industry forces loved-ones to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars to bury their deceased.

For most of American history, families buried their own dead. Today that has become remarkably hard. In Washington State, burial is allowed only in a cemetery owned by a corporation or similar organization; Indiana requires a licensed cemetery, and California requires county approval for a family burial ground. In nine states (as of the Federal Trade Commission's 2012 list), families must hire a funeral director even if they do everything else themselves. No state requires routine embalming; the practice spread during the Civil War, to ship soldiers' bodies home, and has been sold ever since. But time limits, zoning, setback rules and deed requirements put a simple family burial out of reach in much of the country.

Even the right to buy a coffin elsewhere had to be won: only in 1994 did the FTC's Funeral Rule stop funeral homes from refusing, or charging extra for, a casket bought somewhere else. And gentler alternatives such as human composting have needed new laws, state by state, beginning with Washington in 2019. Even cremation is very expensive, costing hundreds or thousands of dollars. Under Capitalism, even dying incurs an expensive financial burden.

In reality, the process of embalming is a far bigger threat to public health than natural decomposition. The chemicals used in embalming are extremely toxic to the environment and prevent the natural process of decomposition, which is part of the natural cycle. Burying one's deceased loved-one two meters underground does make sense in terms of public health. Infusing the corpse with toxic chemicals and encasing it in an expensive box is actually more harmful than simply burying the bodies in their natural state and letting them decompose.

To reiterate, the funerary industry has long used lobbyists to enlist lawmakers in rules that steer families toward paying its fees, one way or another. At one of the most vulnerable times in a person’s life, these vultures prey upon their grief with the most macabre manipulations with sales pitches like "You loved your mother. You wouldn't want her to be buried in a plain pine box. Surely if you want to honor her memory, you want her to be embraced in our deluxe coffin for $10,000? You wouldn't want to skimp on you mother's final resting place, would you?"

Sources: Washington RCW 68.20.010; FTC Funeral Rule.

How does it affect one's psyche, one’s mental health, to grow up and live in an environment where one must constantly struggle against an implicit denial of one's right to exist, in which the people around one are potential competitors or exploiters? How might it affect one's psyche to live and grow up in an environment where one is embraced and supported by a social environment which encourages, affirms, and supports one's existence, empowers one to reach one’s full potential, where one's right to exist is affirmed and embraced, in which the people around one are a support system?

Under Capitalist paradigms, the individual is by default under constant siege by an unceasing lifelong economic denial of their right to exist, against which they must constantly battle. This situation produces a pervasive state of irresolvable stress and, for many people, an ongoing series of traumas that leave much of the population living with chronic stress and free-floating anxiety.

We humans evolved as hunter-gatherers. We are well adapted to crisis situations of short duration where we are able to respond in whatever ways are needed to resolve a threat or emergency: an encounter with a predator, a fire, flood, landslide or other natural disaster, extreme weather, disease, accidents, etc. We are not evolved to live under constant unrelenting stress in a situation where we are blocked from taking actions to truly remedy and resolve the situation, living in chains forged of an economic system that intrinsically denies their very right to exist, barred from exiting the system by laws that define alternative lifestyles as criminal.

There is also a vast array of indirect secondary and tertiary kinds of damage and degradation of the quality and vitality of life that have a pervasive negative impact on all who live in Capitalist paradigms. For example, the fragmented, alienated lifestyle in these paradigms creates a plethora of unnecessary complications and inefficiencies that consume a disproportionate amount of our time and energy while rendering us physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially drained.

Our hunter-gatherer and agrarian ancestors ate food, when they could obtain it, that supplied all of their nutritional needs, lived in close contact and association with family and friends, experienced vigorous cardio and strength training as part of their daily activities of living, and were integrally connected to one another in a strong social support network. In contrast, under modern Capitalist paradigms, we most often commute to work far from where we live. We must make time (and pay

money) to belong to a gym in order to get exercise to stay healthy (unless we work in farming, construction, mining, metal foundries, athletics or other highly-physical jobs). Many of us pay still more money for dietary supplements to make up for diets that convenience and cost push toward industrially processed food. Then we pay money for activities and entertainments to de-stress ourselves. More often than not we commute long distances to spend time with loved-ones, always having to find ways to fit these activities into our lives in such a way that it doesn't conflict with the demands of our jobs, which are all the more demanding due to the artificially enforced overproduction/overconsumption of deliberately short-lived goods and services. This fragmentation is a secondary effect of Capitalist paradigms yet is reinforced by them and inevitable. If food does not provide full nutrition, then there is a profitable market for supplements. When sedentary life inherently lacks exercise, there's a profitable market for gyms, exercise equipment, fitness products, and personal trainers. Capitalist reinforcers favor the fragmentation and exacerbate it.

The intention of this comparison is not to romanticize our hunter-gatherer and agrarian past or to suggest that we turn back the clock. Food was not always attainable. People frequently fell victim to predators, infections, injuries, disease, and natural disasters. Cultures ran the gamut from peaceful, highly synergistic and supportive to warlike, brutal and authoritarian. Contact between groups was sometimes traumatic. Lifespans were generally shorter and infant mortality higher. Some early and traditional agrarian societies were rigid and repressive. It goes without saying that it would not be practical for eight billion of us to return to a hunter-gatherer or agrarian lifestyle, even if we all wanted to. Yet it is important to be aware of what strengthens and sustains our mental, emotional, physical, spiritual and social well-being and thriving and what does not. It is a mistake to compare different eras of human history and rank them. It is important to learn, both from what worked and from what didn't work, in all known eras and cultures past and present. Part of our task is to combine and synthesize what works into viable ways of life while knowingly avoiding repeating or perpetuating what doesn't work. We evolved as hunter-gatherers and as such we require a certain level of exercise, nutrition, continuity and connection to one another.

We will thrive best if we learn from hunter-gatherer, farming and industrial cultures alike, each with knowledge the others lack, take what works from each, and weave that distilled knowledge into ways of life that truly serve human happiness and well-being while sustaining our natural ecological support system. A good portion of modern technology, medical and other scientific knowledge, and creative media are most certainly beneficial and enrich our lives. Other portions are destructive, toxic and degrade our well-being and quality of life. A good portion of the lifestyles of our hunter-gatherer and agrarian ancestors would not be beneficial to re-enact; yet other aspects of those ways of life would greatly enrich and enhance our well-being. Wisdom and best results will come from synthesizing ways of life that integrate and combine the most positive life-enhancing features from all known human societies. An integrated lifestyle that inherently and routinely includes healthy exercise, fully-nutritional food, meaningful work, play and sharing with loved-ones, creative expression and other human activities needed for full well-being is vastly preferable to a fragmented lifestyle in which the needs of every aspect of our humanity are separate, cut off, and available only for a price.

To grow up and live in a society that nurtures and reinforces one's individuality, talents, and contributions, one can easily imagine will result in a population of symbiotically, synergistically thriving individuals with a higher general level of physical, emotional and mental health than has been observed in the absence of such a paradigm, and a reciprocally empowering cycle of mutual benefit among individuals as well as between individuals and the community.

From similar paradigms that have been observed, one can infer this as well. The kibbutzim of Israel were never more than a few percent of the population, yet for decades they supplied a far larger share of its leaders. In 1967, when kibbutz members were about 3% of Israelis, they held 15% of the seats in the Knesset; they provided around a quarter of the army's officers and farmed about a third of its agricultural land; and one of Israel's Nobel laureates, the chemist Arieh Warshel, grew up on a kibbutz.

In broader terms, there are good reasons why people almost invariably seek to leave repressive, restrictive, abusive and dictatorial regimes to emigrate to freer, more open and tolerant societies. We have a large body of data that show that people who grow up in loving, positively functional families and communities tend to function better and have better mental, emotional and physical health than people who grow up in dysfunctional, abusive families and communities.

Many psychological studies have shown that "normal" well-adjusted individuals can become torturers and abusers when such behaviors are encouraged and reinforced. Look up Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men* (Reserve Police Battalion 101), Jane Elliott's "Blue Eyes-Brown Eyes" exercise, the Milgram Experiment, and The Wave (Ron Jones) to see some powerful examples.

Under Capitalism, people in the lower echelons of the economic pyramid cannot afford to eat healthy, belong to a gym, etc., whereas in post-Transition communities, healthy food and exercise facilities will be accessible to everybody. There will be almost no reinforcement for the production of unhealthy food.

There is little data to go on, since what this Transition aims to create has not been done yet on such a scale. The kibbutzim of Israel are one well-known example. A number of peoples in the Americas lived by similar principles before the European invasion and colonization; but most of those were violated, exterminated, and forced to adopt European culture at gunpoint. There have been a wide variety of smaller-scale paradigms that have been quite successful. This dovetails with the results of many psychological studies.

Each culture tends to see its norms as universal traits of human nature, and so tends to produce and focus on studies proving this belief to be true. Fewer studies and resources are devoted to studying alternative or unfamiliar paradigms. Since hierarchical, Capitalist societies have dominated much of the world, few studies have been done of synergistic, mutualistic, non-hierarchical peer-based models, since they are assumed to be impractical and contrary to human nature. But we can extrapolate from small-scale experience and data to predict that people's overall level of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social well-being and health will improve dramatically (see Gray, Psychology Today, 2011).

More on Healthcare

A 2018 report called "The Genome Revolution" published by Goldman Sachs epitomizes the incalculable harm that Capitalist paradigms do to the People of any community.

It states that new genetic treatments show promise of great benefits for patients and society, but rather than enthusiastically advocating an aggressive push forward in that area, instead of urging for accelerated research to develop these treatments as widely and quickly as safely possible, the report questions their viability in terms of "sustained cash flow" and "the sustainability of a franchise." Its analysts asked their investor clients outright: "Is curing patients a sustainable business model?" (CNBC, 2018). Goldman Sachs advises investors rather than conducting research itself, but the question shows what the system rewards: research that cannot promise a lot of money over a long period of time struggles to attract the investment it needs.

Along the same lines, also in the United States as discussed previously, we can see how the reinforcers present in Capitalist paradigms led to and engendered the Purdue Pharmaceuticals fiasco in which the company knowingly and deliberately advertised the opioid painkiller oxycontin as non-addictive and safe, which exacerbated the epidemic of prescription medication addiction, abuse and escalating death toll.

Between this behavior of the mega-pharmaceutical corporations and the interposition of the completely parasitic healthcare insurance industry as gatekeepers between patients and healthcare professionals, it is a wonder that the death toll is not higher. In addition, it is not at all surprising that U.S. life expectancy stalled for a decade (Donnelly, Fortune, 2018; BBC News, "US Life Expectancy Declines for First Time in 20 Years", 2016) and fell sharply in 2020 and 2021; even after recovering to 78.4 years in 2023, it remains years below that of other wealthy nations, as healthcare industry corporations tighten their stranglehold on the availability and development of care while a constantly growing number of people struggle in an increasingly bleak uphill battle of financial survival.

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics, "Mortality in the United States, 2023", Data Brief 521 (December 2024).

The message is clear in any Capitalist paradigm: the ultimate and only criterion is profit. Anything, including human life, well-being, and quality of life will be sacrificed if it in any way, however small, compromises that metric.

This cannot ever be truly corrected by attempting to regulate such behaviors. These are core behaviors that are the most strongly reinforced in Capitalist paradigms. Businesses, especially mega-corporations and the ultra wealthy who run them, will always find ways to ignore and circumvent regulations, or to manipulate lawmakers, courts, and regulatory agencies to neutralize regulation. The only remedy is to decommission the entire Capitalist paradigm and replace it with one that empowers and synergizes all members of the Community at every level.

To use a metaphor, a healthy organism is made up of many individual cells organized into organs, structures and systems that work in concert to ensure the survival and thriving of the organism and the cells comprising it. What benefits one organ, cell or system, strengthens the other organs and the organism as a whole.

Under Capitalistic paradigms, a business/corporation survives and thrives by maximizing profits and minimizing expenditures. From the corporation's point of view, employee salaries and other compensation are expenditures, part of the category to be minimized. A business would thrive best if it could get the maximum work out of its employees while paying them as little as possible, which is why the Southern states of the U.S. were willing to fight a bloody war to try to preserve their slave economy.

Capitalist paradigms cannot function without creating an environment in which businesses must compromise the good of both employees and clients in order to thrive. In the United States we can see this also in laws that some states have that allow businesses which gross less than a specified amount in a year to pay employees less than the minimum wage, which itself is sub-living in all states. (Oklahoma's law, for example, still sets a rate of $2.00 per hour for businesses employing fewer than 10 employees or making less than $100,000 a year, though the federal minimum of $7.25, unchanged since 2009, now covers most such workers (Minimum-Wage.org, Oklahoma). Under federal law, tipped workers may be paid as little as $2.13 per hour, as long as tips bring them up to $7.25; if they do not, the employer must make up the difference.) To put this in perspective, the yearly living wage for an individual in the U.S. in 2017 was $25,106, which comes to $523.04 per week. Even at the federal minimum of $7.25 per hour, one would have to work more than 72 hours a week to achieve a bare living.

The sad reality of Capitalism is that often a small business often cannot survive if it pays employees a living wage and health coverage. When wages go up, prices go up which then perpetuates the vicious cycle of mutual predation. The businesses that reliably thrive are the mega-corporations, which steadily funnel more and more resources up to the top of the pyramid at the expense of those further down the pyramid.

A Capitalist society as a whole suffers from this same dynamic systemically. In such environments, “It’s business” is an argument used to justify policies and practices that cause ongoing grave harm to individuals and to the Community. What benefits one portion of the system routinely harms the other parts.

Therefore, a Capitalist business or society, large or small, is analogous to an organism whose various cells and organs survive by preying upon one another while the organism itself slowly devours the cells within it. In Nature or medicine, such an organism would be suffering from a terminal autoimmune condition. No natural species could survive if it were genetically constructed on this model. Individuals with such a condition would perish without constant immunosuppressant drugs. Such a social structure is similarly nonviable by nature and cannot be fixed, any more than poisonous mercury can be changed into drinkable water.

If we are ever to achieve a thriving community of thriving, symbiotically empowered and fully engaged individuals, and true government of, by and for The People, then we must completely abandon all Capitalist models and start from scratch with entirely new models that embody economy of, by and for the People.

In the new post-Transition paradigms, healthcare, wellness, medicine, and prevention will develop freely and unfettered, driven by the ingenuity of researchers and medical practitioners, motivated by the pursuit of human health and well-being. Even the competition among researchers with their egos in full swing, will embody the kind of healthy competition that produces superior results for all persons.

In the absence of the need for currency, researchers will freely collaborate and share their findings to develop the best diagnostics and treatments possible. When a new and promising development occurs, there will be no holding back, no consideration of cash flow and franchises. The only criteria will be what best serves the health and well-being of human beings. All treatments will be available to all who need them. We can expect to see longevity and wellness statistics begin to improve once again for the community, individually and as a whole.

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As previously mentioned, we must be prepared to physically intervene to prevent the heads of for-profit pharmaceutical and other research facilities from destroying or hiding their research once the realize that they are no longer in control. Some of them may well attempt to destroy their work out of spite, or to smuggle it out of the Transitioning country to continue their for-profit operations abroad.

Employees can accomplish this from within these facilities, and law enforcement can be engaged when necessary. Ownership of research and products will revert to the scientists and engineers who actually developed them and will be administered to facilitate their availability to the people who need them.

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Below please see quotes from the Goldman Sachs report cited above:

"The potential to deliver 'one shot cures' is one of the most attractive aspects of gene therapy, genetically-engineered cell therapy and gene editing. However, such treatments offer a very different outlook with regard to recurring revenue versus chronic therapies," analyst Salveen Richter wrote in the note to clients Tuesday. "While this proposition carries tremendous value for patients and society, it could represent a challenge for genome medicine developers looking for sustained cash flow."

Richter cited Gilead Sciences' treatments for hepatitis C, which achieved cure rates of more than 90 percent. The company's U.S. sales for these hepatitis C treatments peaked at $12.5 billion in 2015, but have been falling ever since. Goldman estimates the U.S. sales for these treatments will be less than $4 billion this year, according to a table in the report.

"GILD is a case in point, where the success of its hepatitis C franchise has gradually exhausted the available pool of treatable patients," the analyst wrote. "In the case of infectious diseases such as hepatitis C, curing existing patients also decreases the number of carriers able to transmit the virus to new patients, thus the incident pool also declines ... Where an incident pool remains stable (eg. in cancer) the potential for a cure poses less risk sustainability of a franchise."

Chapter 19: Capitalism and Resource Management, Long-Term Sustainability, and the Environment

The drive for ever-growing profits, stock prices and market share leads to runaway forced compulsive overproduction, overconsumption, waste, stress, needless depletion of resources, pollution, and the deliberate manufacture and design of inferior products in a dangerous feedback loop that threatens to destroy life on Earth itself if not halted and dissipated in the near future. The demands of this vicious cycle create a work environment of constant, ever-increasing stress in order to maintain the unrelenting, escalating pace. And all of this pattern is utterly avoidable and unnecessary. There are no beneficial side-effects of this phenomenon.

In fact, we could call this cycle forced overproduction/overconsumption the self-devouring cycle, since on the production end, it necessitates the needless escalating depletion and pollution of both natural resources and employees' time, health and energy, while on the consumption end it forces endless consumption and replacement of deliberately short-lived inferior goods which end up discarded, further depleting space and environmental integrity. Employees are literally forced under economic coercion in a kind of forced-march atmosphere to produce an endless torrent inferior products which we are then forced to consume in order to function in the society. We are literally devouring ourselves, our time, our energy, our spirits, and the physical world for no justifiable purpose except to keep the Capitalistic economic pyramid in place squarely on our shoulders.

An infrastructure devoted to the well-being and quality of life for each and all would make the best products possible in sufficient supply for all. Products would be designed to be easily upgradeable and user-serviceable whenever technically safe and practical. Once every household is provided with a TV, a music player, an oven and stove, a car, etc., then production can be throttled down to a trickle that suffices to keep up with real need due to breakage, immigration, population growth, etc.

If the best possible units are distributed to all, then there is no need to keep changing models and specs every few months; no need for reliance on presentation and packaging to sell products; no need for advertising and built in sabotaging of products to shorten their lifespan to ensure an artificially forced endlessly escalating demand.

In a society which makes its choices based on human well-being, qualify of life, empowerment and actualization, enough is sufficient with a slight surplus to cover the unexpected. This frees up energy, human effort, time and resources for true research and development (both pure and applied) and for artistic, cultural, creative, innovative and other truly meaningful pursuits.

The current level of stress and pressure on people to produce at a furious pace will be reduced to a much more relaxed one that does not deplete the physical, mental, emotional, social and creative energies of working people. This will create an environment primed for a renaissance culturally, scientifically, artistically, socially, and in every other way.

In the new Paradigms, research, development, design, production and distribution of products and services will be freed from the burden, drag and hindrance of having to make a profit, keep stock prices up, and expend resources on marketing, advertising, packaging and presentation. Developers and producers will be freed from the restrictions and tyranny of nondisclosure agreements and corporate hierarchical dynamics and whims (Cronin and colleagues, Scientific Reports, 2015). They will instead be encouraged to collaborate and compete towards the goal of producing the best achievable products and services for the people (of whom these developers and producers will be part and parcel) in the most sustainable and upgradeable forms.

The people will be freed from the constant compulsory burden of coming up with an endless supply of intentionally-scarcified money to pay off those who are in the business of denying them access to goods, services and life itself. Then we will see Humanity thriving in every home and in the community as a whole, in a healthy and resilient ecosystem that will sustain a high quality of life far beyond the foreseeable future.

In such a culture, motivations will shift from alienated financial gain to the joy and pride in workmanship that comes from the creative and collaborative process itself, which is one of the first casualties in a Capitalist paradigm. Public celebrations marking the appearance of new innovations and the reaching of milestones and goals can further reinforce these behaviors as those responsible are lauded, publicly appreciated and celebrated. Social, public acknowledgement and expressions of appreciation for innovators will replace financial rewards, which under Capitalist paradigms are too often withheld from those who actually create them.

Public feedback and request channels will be established in order to allow users to send in requests and suggestions to be acted upon by researchers, developers and producers when warranted. If many users are reporting that the gear shift lever tends to fall off in the family sedan, or the 19 inch TV is too small and the 26 inch is too big, could we maybe have 23 inch TV's as well?, then those involved in generating products and services will be set up to respond directly to user needs and requests.

In contrast, Capitalist producers will always do what generates the greatest profits regardless of whether it benefits, hurts, or frustrates users, often over their objections. Current examples include the change in cell phone manufacture from using easily replaced batteries to built-in batteries that cannot usually be replaced without destroying the phone. In that same industry, there were well-known recent instances where Apple pushed software "upgrades" that secretly slowed down older iPhones, leading many owners to believe they needed to buy newer ones; Apple said the aim was to prevent ageing batteries from causing sudden shutdowns, denied wrongdoing, and paid up to $500 million to settle the resulting U.S. lawsuit (9to5Mac, 2020). Another familiar example is subscription-based software that stops working and locks the user's own created files, holding them for ransom until payment is received. In other words, the software vendor blocks your access to the products of your own creation. Witness also the practice of "bundling" among telecom companies – a subscriber cannot choose exactly what they want, no more and no less. One must pick a "bundle" including a lot of unwanted channels, in order to get a few that one does want. Car manufacturers have taken to designing vehicles in such a way that the owner cannot change a headlight on their own, since doing so involves dismantling much of the front of the car, which only a dealer is equipped to do. The examples could fill many volumes.

The end of Capitalism and its replacement with a synergistic, democratic socio-economic paradigm will also result in massive reduction of waste, pollution, landfills, and unnecessary resource depletion that are the inevitable result of the self-devouring cycle that is necessary to keep Capitalist societies functioning optimally.

From an estimated 2,000–10,000 humans in the distant past (about 70,000 years ago, according to genetic drift studies) scattered widely across North Central Africa in small groups of a few dozen, to today's 7 billion and growing rapidly, humans have come a long way, for better and for worse.

We have changed from hunter-gatherers to agriculturalists to today's population increasingly concentrated in metropolises of millions across the world. Our lifestyles have gone from stone-age hunter-gatherers forging tools from natural materials at hand to modern technological engineers, reshaping our environment on an unprecedented scale. Our current global lifestyle generates massive amounts of waste, much of which is toxic to the environment and to ourselves as well. In our quest for profits, we ravage the earth on a gargantuan scale in the pursuit of resources to exploit. We have gone from having a negligible impact on the world to being the single biggest factor impacting the entire planet and the ecosystem of which we are a part and upon which we depend for our survival as much as any other plant or animal.

Picture the impact on our physical environment due to our pattern of forced overconsumption of cell phones, washing machines, computers, clothing, cars and every other kinds of products that are made to last just past warranty (in a setting of massive advertising, propaganda, incentives and pressures on citizens to replace them as frequently as possible)! Picture a pile of 7 billion discarded cell phones! Picture this every year. Then apply the same picture to every kind of consumer product. Where can we put it? It is staggering and utterly unjustifiable. The depletion of resources involved in this runaway compulsive producing/consuming is artificially hyperinflated and unsustainable. Resources that could last centuries, millennia, or longer if used only in proportion to real need, are being depleted in a matter of decades. The destructive and potentially extinction-level impact of this occurs at every phase of this unsustainable cycle. Forced overproduction devours natural resources at an ever-accelerating pace worldwide. Many production processes generate proportionally-escalating

amounts of pollutants that inevitably have to end up someplace. Packaging materials require the ongoing destruction of forests to produce cardboard and paper with further consumption and pollution in the production of plastics. Such packaging quickly ends up in landfills, landscapes, or oceans. Advertising consumes still more paper, plastic, and energy. Then when these products break as designed or are forced out of service by upgrades and other business ploys that render them unusable or frustrating to use, such as phasing out support, the products themselves endlessly pile up in the environment, often laden with toxic materials. All of this is utterly avoidable.

In the new Paradigm, products will be designed to last as long as technically possible and be easily repairable and upgradeable. The above issues will shrink to utterly manageable proportions. New production models will also include recycling and reclamation of discarded products, which will progressively reverse at least some of the damage done under Capitalist practices.

Surely even those completely ensconced in the upper reaches of the economic pyramid are smart enough to know that our resources are finite and this kind of forced consumption will deplete them in the foreseeable future. When raw materials are exhausted, the profits will stop. The problem is that, like anyone caught in an addiction, those in that position who are driven by this compulsion are not able to see or reason clearly where their addiction is concerned. The physiology is real: brain-imaging studies show that the prospect of winning money activates the same reward circuitry that cocaine does (Breiter and colleagues, 2001), and gambling disorder is now formally recognised as an addiction. It is the same predicament faced by a person with a gambling addiction who cannot stop even though they know they are about to lose their house. Addiction is known to actually rewire the brain.

Unlike a gambling addiction, however, the money/power addiction of some of those at the top of the pyramid is enabled, reinforced and encouraged in Capitalistic societies. They are even held up as role models for the rest of us to emulate. To make things worse, Capitalist society perpetuates in them the belief that they will always get their way, that they can buy and bully their way through any calamity. This of course is not true, but that fact will not help any of us if the system continues to reward these dangerous compulsions.

To call this an addiction is not an insult. Addiction is not a moral failing; it is a pattern that takes hold of people, and anyone can be caught in one. The relentless drive to accumulate ever more wealth, power and privilege, at almost any cost, including the extraordinary lengths some go to avoid taxes, hoard wealth and escape regulation, has all the hallmarks of a behavioural addiction, like gambling disorder or gaming disorder, both recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO). It is not yet a recognised diagnosis. That is not evidence that it isn't an addiction; it reflects a culture that admires this compulsion, holds it up to be emulated and defers to it, instead of questioning it. Gaming disorder itself was recognised only in 2019. Left unrecognised, this compulsion can dominate the lives of those caught in it and harm many others, as other addictions do. It is not true of every wealthy person, and it is not a reason for contempt. People caught in it deserve understanding and the chance to get free of it, which a society that no longer rewards it would finally give them.

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The situation is analogous to a passenger airliner being piloted by a delusional pilot who believes they can fly through a mountain, bent upon proving it to all present. The cockpit must be breached. The controls must be wrested from their hands. The plane must be landed safely. Then the delusional ones must get therapy and rehabilitation just like any drug, alcohol, gambling or video game addict or OCD sufferer.

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A better picture: we are all passengers on an airliner whose flight plan points it toward a mountain, set by rules that reward flying ever faster in that direction. We don't need to fight the pilot; we need to change the flight plan, democratically, before it's too late. And the people now at the controls, many of whom sincerely believe they can always buy their way through any danger, deserve the same care and respect as anyone else as they adjust to a world in which no one holds that kind of power over others.

Some may still try to force the old way back, through intimidation, sabotage or violence. That cannot be allowed, and it need not be met with vigilante action. A society that has chosen the Transition democratically protects it the way any democracy protects itself: through lawful, accountable law enforcement and the courts, using only the minimum force necessary and the same rules that apply to everyone; and through institutions designed so that no one can again seize control of what everyone depends on (see Phase 7B and its safeguards).

To allow the current course to continue is irresponsible and mass-suicidal.

Of course, overpopulation is an extremely serious global issue. With the current population it is still possible to provide the necessities and a high quality of life to all if we create sane, workable, equitable, balanced, coordinated and sustainable paradigms. But there is still a practical limit to how many humans the earth can sustain with any worthy quality of life.

We cannot continue multiplying indefinitely without facing a future crisis in which there will be no possible solution to avoid mass extinction or crushing deprivation for millions or billions, even with the most efficient and equitable harmonious system possible. There is only so much space. Resources are not inexhaustible. And we do not live in a void. It is neither possible nor desirable for humans to crowd and pollute the ecosystem into extinction in order to make room for more and more of ourselves. The result would be very much like the world depicted in the movie “Soylent Green”: a dying world in which only humans are left, dying out but surviving for a time by eating their own dead.

It is vital to begin dealing with this issue now, not when mass extinction is at hand. It is one of the most challenging issues. Failure to resolve it wisely will certainly lead to disaster on an unprecedented scale. In order to protect our beloved future generations from this fate, we must come up with proactive practical solutions almost immediately.

This is an extremely controversial and volatile issue. It touches on one of the most basic instincts of all living creatures and brings into focus a potential conflict between the long-term survival of our children's children's children, versus the fundamental right of a family to have children in the first place. This does not have to be a conflict. Any solution must take into account the long term good of all and the rights and freedoms of individuals and families in the present in a balanced way. Any discussion of this topic must be done with utmost mutual respect and sensitivity by all concerned, as emotions will run extremely high.

It is an issue that touches on cultures, traditions, religion, personal freedom, social responsibility and more. It is not specifically an issue of Capitalism as such, but it is nevertheless a vital issue that must be addressed and acknowledged in any socio-economic or political paradigm. Sadly, Capitalism is extremely unlikely to encourage addressing the issue, as doing so would most likely be contrary to short-term profitability. A shrinking or stable population means flat or shrinking profits.

There are obviously three possible ways to keep the population from becoming catastrophically high:

1) Reduce the birth rate 2) Increase the death rate/decrease lifespan 3) Undertake massive colonization of other worlds

Since we are striving to create a compassionate and empowering society, Option 2 can be discarded immediately. Option 3 is attractive theoretically but has multiple drawbacks, most notably the fact that the only viable other world in our neighborhood is Mars, which would require massive resources to terraform and probably take too long to accomplish. It would also most certainly be physically impractical to relocate a few billion human beings and a whole ecosystem plus infrastructure from here to there. Colonization of Mars is a possibility, but relocation of enough people to ease overpopulation is not likely to be a real option at this time. In addition, even if it becomes practical, it would only postpone the crisis for a few generations, after which it would overtake not one but two worlds.

That leaves reducing the birth rate as the only viable way to prevent an overpopulation disaster. This will be extremely challenging to resolve, because it involves one of the most intimate, personal aspects of human existence. No compassionate civilization would presume to try to dictate people's rights to have children. On the other hand, even though growth is slowing, the world's population, now more than 8 billion, is projected to keep rising until it peaks at around 10.3 billion in

the mid-2080s (United Nations, 2024); combined with the consumption habits of the wealthiest, that is a heavy load for any socio-economic paradigm to carry without famine and privation.

Certainly educating people, making them aware of the long-term realities is one obvious way to proceed. If people are aware that this is a factual survival issue rather than a political one, then many or most will probably respond accordingly. Yet it is unlikely to be enough by itself, partially because this issue touches on religious and cultural attitudes which brings in daunting levels of complexity. It must be handled with utmost sensitivity.

In India in the decades after independence, family-planning posters contrasted a large, struggling family with a small, prosperous one. One account tells of people asked about such a poster who felt sorry for the small family, and asked whether medicine could help that couple have more children. In its context the reaction made sense: in farming households children were needed labour, and with infant mortality high, many children were insurance against losing some (Socio.Health). As conditions changed, so did choices. As child survival, schooling, women's education and economic security improved, Indian families chose to have fewer children, first and fastest in states such as Kerala that invested most in health and education. India's fertility rate fell from about six children per woman in the 1950s to about two today, below replacement (World Bank). Coercion, by contrast, backfired: the forced sterilisation drives of the 1975–77 Emergency left a lasting distrust of family planning.

Other countries tell the same story (NOVA). China forced birth rates down with its one-child policy, enforced in places with fines and forced abortions, at a terrible human cost, including the abandonment and killing of baby girls in families that wanted sons; yet most of China's decline had already come in the 1970s, as health and schooling improved. Kenya left the decision to families while spreading information and access to contraception, and fertility fell from about eight children per woman to about four. Security and education, not control, bring birth rates down.

In the pre-technological societies of the distant past, infant and child mortality rates were high and lifespans were short, so it was essential to the survival of the individual, family, community and species to have as many children as possible and start as early as possible.

In agrarian societies, having many children insured sufficient workforce for planting and harvesting, and created a strong support system. Again, the mortality rate was generally high and lifespans shorter than now.

Like any life form, we have an instinct to procreate. Doing so is one of the most rewarding of human experiences.

In current times, infant and child mortality rates are generally low in much of the world, and lifespans are much longer than ever before. We have not yet fully realized the impact of this on our present or our future. We still have the tendency to think and feel as our agrarian and hunter-gatherer ancestors did about such things. We have not fully adapted to the changes we ourselves have made to our world. What was imperative when 8 out of 10 people born never lived to be parents, is dangerous when 9.8 out of 10 people born live to become parents.

If Capitalist societies have an impact on population growth, it is most likely to encourage it. A steadily growing population is an ever-increasing market and workforce to sustain the ever-accelerating self-devouring cycle perceived to be necessary.

In contrast, the new post-Transitionary synergistic paradigms may well be more fertile environments for cultural and perceptual mentality shifts favoring slowing population growth to a hopefully stable, sustainable level or even zero.

Historically, the gradual transition from a tribal/community based society, to an extended-family-based society, to the nuclear-family-based society that is dominant in much of the world now, has come at the price of alienation and loss of community cohesion and connectedness. We humans are a social species. When our primary social center consists of only one's self and at most one other, then our sense of community is virtually nonexistent, or rudimentary and tenuous at best.

In the new paradigms, economic pressures that divide and isolate people will be absent. In a more community-based society where processes like energy and food production, sporting and artistic life and most other activities are more participatory and centered in neighborhoods and communities instead of mammoth central facilities, community life will likely begin to flourish and become a more active and meaningful aspect of people's lives.

Under Capitalist paradigms, people tend to experience very little sense of healthy interconnectedness or community. People usually live one place, work someplace far away (not in the community or neighborhood where they live) with other people who live in distant, spread out locations. There is little chance for true community to develop.

Production of goods and services happen at a centralized, mammoth corporate level. The people of the community are not involved in it. Thus shopping and provisioning are yet other activities that fail to foster development of community.

Nearly all of life's activities and functions are done on an individual or nuclear family basis. There are indeed friendships, but very little in the way of community. When people's lives are so fragmented that there is little or no connection between the people they work with, the people they live with, and the people who grow the food they eat and so on, then each family unit is an island, isolated. Yet there is something in us that needs, seeks and values community.

When people experience being part of a community of mutually interconnected, interdependent, supportive people, then the children of the community will become more a part of the lives of all the community and vice versa. Each family will enjoy a community of children mutually involved in their lives. Having only one or two children will not feel too small when there are often five, six or eight children around the house. This is borne out in fact, in Kibbutzim and in many communities with a strong level of mutual engagement among members. Based on existing experience, the new post-Transition paradigm will foster and reinforce mutual involvement of all generations and walks of life. Economics will not only cease to divide people, but will take a form that engenders beneficial interdependence and mutuality in a symbiotic dynamic.

A transition from the nuclear family, back to the extended family (which in the modern context may not necessarily be related by blood), and ultimately back to the community as a social focal point, source of strength, and support system, will re-integrate us into a synergistic whole. Empowering healthy interconnection will displace caustic alienation and isolation. The nuclear and extended family will actually be strengthened by existing as part of a strong support system rather than as an isolated, economically besieged island in a stormy sea.

Regarding the challenge of overpopulation, it is wise to look at and learn from societies and countries that currently have zero or low population growth in the absence of government regulation. This points primarily to the Scandinavian countries, which are socialistic democracies that have long treated issues of procreation, sexuality and childrearing in a balanced and matter-of-fact way. Family planning, human sexuality (in all of its aspects), hygiene and related matters are an integral part of school curriculum in middle and high school, alongside mathematics, language, history and so forth.

The topics are treated neither as shameful, immoral, or dirty (which attitude acts as a reinforcer to stimulate curiosity, negative attention-seeking, and the whole forbidden-fruit syndrome), nor as the be-all, end-all to be rushed into as soon as possible with accompanying social and peer pressure to participate in order to prove one's self. There is no social, cultural, family, or peer judgment for having sex or getting pregnant, nor for not doing so. By the time young people become interested in romantic bonding, sexuality, procreation, and related aspects of coming of age as a human being, they are well informed about the mental, emotional, physical and other aspects of life and well equipped to make wise, well-informed decisions.

All aspects of this side of our nature are free of taboos or restrictions. Birth control is readily available along with all relevant medical and health care including obstetrics. Work environments support employees taking maternity leave, both parents. Inhabitants are free to have as many or few children as they wish, and yet birth rates have fallen well below replacement level without any coercion (Nordic Statistics). That shows that education and security, not control, bring birth rates down, though it raises its own questions about an ageing population. Future studies may point to an optimal population range to aim for. In the meantime, if we can reach a growth rate of zero, it will be a good starting point.

Religion is not suppressed in these social-demorcratic countries either. There appears to be a spontaneous balance between citizens who choose to have larger families and those who choose to have one, two or no children. All countries at all levels of development would do well to study these countries' approach to population growth and adapt it to the post-Transition society, or even sooner.

One hopeful note, though somewhat counter-intuitive, is the tentative observation that many societies that enjoy a higher general degree of well-being and harmony tend to have lower population growth rates than countries with greater levels strife, poverty, disparity, and privation. One possible explanation might be that on some unconscious instinctive level, an environment of privation, danger, strife, and adversity represents a high threat to survival which instinctively triggers an unconscious sense of urgency to procreate as many children as possible to maximize the chance of survival of family, community, and country.

Conversely an environment with a high degree of well-being and safety may unconsciously signal a diminished sense of urgency to out-procreate the death rate. It may be as simple as populations responding to an innate imperative to strive to ensure that the birth rate always outpaces the death rate. If there is such a mechanism at work, then in a post-Revolutionary society in which individuals and the bigger community enjoy a heretofore rarely experienced universal sense of well-being, fulfillment, empowerment and optimism, such mechanism would tend to act to adjust the birth rate to just above or approximately equal to the death rate (see National Academy of Sciences, 1963; Pew Research Center, 2015).

There are no easy or simple resolutions to the issue of overpopulation, but they must be addressed, wrestled with, and solutions found if we are to survive in the long run and having survived, find it to have been a worthwhile endeavor.

Another aspect of resource management has to do with the choices we make about which technologies to favor over others in order to accomplish a given purpose or fill a given need.

In Capitalist societies and paradigms, the choice is made that favors maximum profits and stock prices. This may or may not be the same as what most benefits the people or is most sustainable and best for long-term survival or quality of life. In fact, in more instances than not, what best serves the profits of large corporations is not what is best for the people.

Examples abound and are discussed elsewhere in this writing. They include the buying up of streetcar systems in Los Angeles and other U.S. cities from the late 1930s by a company backed by General Motors, Firestone and Standard Oil of California, which replaced them with buses; the companies were convicted in 1949 of conspiring to monopolize the sale of buses and supplies to the transit lines they controlled, hastening the end of streetcar systems that were already in decline (Wikipedia); the aggressive marketing of infant formula to mothers in low-income countries, where unsafe water and diluted formula sickened and killed babies, until worldwide outrage produced the 1981 WHO marketing code (WHO, 1981); the switch by cell phone manufacturers to non-replaceable cell phone batteries; companies acquiring patents on innovations that could reduce their profits, and then using them to hold those innovations back, as when control of the key patents on large electric-car batteries passed to an oil company (Institute for New Economic Thinking); suppressing development of alternative technologies in order to extend and entrench dependence on petroleum products; use of inferior materials to insure rapid product failure in order to force demand for replacements; favoring designs using non-user-serviceable parts over designs easily serviced by users... the examples are legion and well-documented.

In a post-Capitalist synergistic society, the choices will be very different.

One can envision the proliferation of passive-energy designs, materials and building techniques to produce buildings that make clever use of materials and designs to maintain a more or less constant temperature in the human comfort range. This will greatly reduce the need for energy consumption to heat and cool (Passive Solar Industries Council, NREL and Charles Eley Associates, "Passive Solar Design Strategies"). Such design principles are known and documented but have not become the norm, partly because of lack of public awareness of them, and partly because energy companies, air conditioning and heater manufacturers, and the ever-lurking petroleum industry all would lose massive profits if these became the norm.

In a synergistic society, the economics of energy efficiency will predominate. There will be no profit motive. Similarly a diversity of energy technologies will be able to proliferate and flourish when not suppressed by a massive Capitalistically driven fossil fuel energy industry. There are existing technologies that are orders of magnitude more efficient, sustainable, clean and easy to produce and maintain, but which are not known by the vast majority of the population. Multi-fuel vehicles. Mechanochemical engines. Bio-electronics. The list is impressive. And this is only in one area of technology: energy production.

Under Capitalism, mechanical devices, electronics, appliances and the like are designed and built for the most part to be non-user-serviceable, to be replaced as often as possible. Under a synergistic humanistic paradigm, we could expect that such things will be designed and built to be as easily user-serviceable as possible, with longevity in mind, and with easy upgradeability.

For example, similar to some military designs in which troubleshooting needs to be quick and simple, many new-paradigm devices will be troubleshootable by looking up light patterns or error codes in a manual and replacing specific circuit boards or components depending on the malfunction. In many cases it is not necessary to replace the entire device.

Upgradeability will follow the same principle. For example, every washing machine has certain parts: a controller, sensors, a pump, a soap dispensing mechanism, a drum, motor etc. If designed and built properly, then when an updated controller or more powerful but energy efficient motor is developed, the user will be able to unplug the old controller or motor, snap it out, snap the replacement or upgrade into place, plug it back in, close up the machine and be ready to go. Instructions will be in plain, easy-to-understand language with images and diagrams.

Such a paradigm will foster a greater sense of empowerment among people, greatly reduce waste, eliminate unnecessary overproduction and allow for technological progress to be integrated widely and much more quickly than is the case in Capitalist paradigms.

Transportation is another example, touched upon elsewhere in this writing. In a more humanistic, synergistic paradigm, infrastructure and technology will diversify. Extensive networks of trails, paths and other infrastructure will be built for bicycles and other human powered and low speed vehicles that will render them more practical and attractive. Mass transit will be expanded as well.

Transportation technologies will diversify, thus greatly reducing dependence on, and pollution because of, fossil fuels. An increase of emphasis on quality public transportation will greatly reduce road congestion.

China's early model of supplying free bicycles for public use can be expended to cars, Segueys, and other types of vehicles to insure that all citizens have access to transportation when they need it.

Safety and maintenance will most certainly be superior to current conditions, since a growing number of people are forced to put off repairs and maintenance due to high cost. Maintenance and repair facilities will be placed in convenient locations in each neighborhood, and mobile mechanics will be dispatched when needed.

These are but a few examples of how the new paradigm will function and the kinds of decision-making processes that will likely transpire. The important principle to keep in mind is that practical and aesthetic considerations of the people will predominate once human societies are freed of the compulsions and constraints forced upon them under Capitalist paradigms.

Chapter 20: Capitalism and Automation

Automation has long been a double-edged sword. On the one hand it can often relieve human beings (and animals) of many dangerous, mind-numbing, or unsatisfying tasks. On the other hand, in a Capitalist economy it often eliminates jobs. If a company can pay once for a machine that will do the same work as ten people and pays for itself in five years, and if the machine is expected to function for twenty years, then the reinforcement is there to buy such a machine and lay off the ten replaceable people, who are then left without livelihood. There are then fewer jobs for them to find. We see this in many areas: self check-outs in stores, completely automated answering systems in which callers have no way to speak to an actual human being, offices that are only accessible online, and now even an entire store with no human employees. The trend started in the nineteenth century and continues in every industry today.

In and of itself, labor-saving technology can improve the quality of life for countless human beings by transforming tasks involving drudgery and long hours into simple, quick procedures. Examples abound: washing machines and dryers that save hours of hand-washing, motor vehicles that transform a 4-hour walk into a 10-minute drive; automated manufacturing that relieves thousands of workers of lifetimes of repetitive unchallenging labor; automated check-outs which reduce the need for cashiers and baggers. All of these are jobs rated low in job satisfaction surveys.

Unfortunately, under the Capitalist paradigm the benefits of automation become a threat to the livelihood of many people in the hardest struggling segments of the population. This creates a lose-lose situation for all but the top executives and investors in a company. If automation is implemented, there are fewer jobs. On the other hand, automation has cut deepest into routine middle-wage jobs, pushing many displaced workers into lower-paid service work (Autor, 2015). Employees are thus in a position to have to fight to keep jobs that often pay less than a living wage, because the alternative is to have no job at all. The only reason why a large company would not automate as much as possible is if the price of paying salaries is lower than the price of automation or if popular pressure on legislators results in laws limiting automation where it reduces jobs.

Under a synergistic, peer-based paradigm, automation can be implemented with only beneficial effects. Money will be obsolete and not necessary for survival. All manufacturing, services, and distribution will be operated by and for the people, not for profit. Then, the primary function of automation will be to relieve people of tasks that most people would not want to do, while making workflow more swift and efficient.

Of course, sensitive and well-thought-out decisions need to be made regarding where, and how much, automation is beneficial and where it is not. For example, if automation of a given process would damage the environment or create an unhealthy or distressing result for human beings, then the decision will need to be made against it. Similarly, if the amount of production needed to meet the people's needs does not justify massive automation, then it would be wiser to hold back.

It goes without saying that one would not want to automate the arts, therapy, or medicine in general. Yet practitioners in these fields can be more effective with automated tools to improve and expand their ability to do their jobs. The important distinction between automation in Capitalist paradigms and in the more viable paradigms, is that under Capitalism it primarily benefits only those at the top of the economic pyramid at the expense of the rest of the population; whereas in a synergistic cooperative symbiotic paradigm, all people benefit and it occurs with their knowledge, consent and participation.

There is rarely the need for an absolute choice between automated processes and human processes. For example, in carpentry, cabinetmaking, precision machining and similar endeavors, the optimal configuration is most likely a dynamic interplay of human craftsmanship and automation.

There will always be a place for skilled carpenters, cabinetmakers, welders, machinists, etc. There is no substitute for the quality and aesthetics of handcrafted products, and there is much satisfaction in producing them. On the other hand, when thousands or millions of identical dowels, cams, rods, fittings, or other parts are needed, then automation would seem to be indicated, both because of the speed and reproducible precision of such processes and because most workers would find little satisfaction in hand-producing 10,000 identical parts repetitively. Yet there might be a few individuals whose talent

and enjoyment come from performing a repetitive task and doing it well. Such individuals should not be displaced by automation.

Again, the important factor here is that such decisions will be made from the standpoint of what produces the best quality of life for each individual and for all of the people: the workers, the consumers (often one and the same), the community as a whole, and the environment.

In the new paradigms, we will be free to explore and apply automation in ways that allow people to work shorter hours and accomplish more, while having more time free for other endeavors. This is the vision that was propounded at the dawn of automation and yet rarely achieved due to the contrary reinforcements present in the Capitalist model.

Under Capitalism, such decisions are made from the standpoint of what produces the best "bottom line" - profits, growth, stock prices. This generally translates into degradation of living conditions for employees through job loss, making life harder for more people than it benefits.

In the absence of the artificially forced and hyper-inflated demand-production-consumption cycle imposed by Capitalist paradigms, automation will lead to reduced demands upon the time and energy of workers, translating info fewer hours of time needed to produce what is needed to keep life going. This will free people to accomplish more for self and community with a higher level of vitality and lower level of stress.

If judicious and appropriate application of automation can ensure that all necessary goods, services, and functions needed for thriving lives and community are produced in fewer work hours with reduced redundant drudgery, then automation can contribute significantly to the quality of human life. This process will be fine-tuned with feedback and shared decision-making involving all involved parties.

This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Capitalist environments, where automation routinely costs many workers their jobs and livelihoods, leading to more scarcity and friction over shrinking jobs and resources.

Chapter 21: Law, Order, Crime, and Living Together in Ways That Make Sense

What is the relationship between the socio-economic paradigm we live in and the nature and prevalence of crime? This is a complex question, almost as complex as human nature itself, but there are some very useful and instructive generalities that can be drawn from readily available data.

First, we need a definition of "crime." In a compassionate symbiotic society, a good generic working definition might be "any deliberate behavior that knowingly causes harm."

In Capitalist societies, the definitions are much more numerous and complex.

It is a crime to sleep on land owned by someone else. It is a crime to drive a car without paying a fee. In some cities in the United States it is a crime to feed the homeless or to grow and raise food for one's own use. To grow lettuce is legal; to grow marijuana is a crime in many countries.

Historically, the definitions of crime have often been capriciously determined by economic, cultural, religious and other utterly arbitrary means. In Singapore it is a crime to spit on the street. For a long time in Saudi Arabia, women could not go out without being completely covered, nor travel without a male guardian's permission; those rules have since been loosened. In Iran the hijab is compulsory, and women have been imprisoned, and have even died in detention, over the way they dress. In Afghanistan under the Taliban, women must cover their faces in public and may not travel any distance without a male relative. In all three countries alcohol is banned. In World War II Japan it was a crime to practice any religion but Shinto. In pre-Civil War United States it was a crime in slave states to hide or protect an escaped slave, to teach slaves to read or write, or to help slaves escape. In some U.S. states before the Civil Rights movement and in some countries around the world even now, it was a crime to marry someone of a different race or religion. The list is virtually endless.

In the Feudal societies of medieval Europe, it was a crime for a serf or peasant to deny a nobleman anything they demanded; yet it was not a crime for a nobleman to kill, rape, or otherwise brutalize anybody who wasn't a churchman or of noble birth.

What we are concerned with here is determining what criteria to use in defining what is criminal behavior in a compassionate, empowering synergistic egalitarian society.

Under Capitalism crimes fall into a few broad categories:

1) Crimes of direct harm to living beings: assault, murder, kidnapping, rape, false imprisonment, slander, intimidation, harassment, etc, which will certainly still be crimes in the post-Transition paradigms.

2) Crimes in which people are hurt indirectly, or their property is damaged or taken away: theft, fraud, robbery, vandalism, discrimination (in hiring, renting to, doing business with targeted individuals or groups), nonpayment for goods or services, failure to provide paid-for goods and services, identity theft, false advertising, breach of contract and more.

3) Financial crimes: embezzlement, ponzi schemes, counterfeiting, insider trading, manufacture and distribution of designer knock-offs, smuggling, money laundering, illegal gambling, securities and insurance fraud, tax evasion, etc.

4) Arbitrarily defined administrative crimes: Living in a vehicle, doing business without a license, camping outside of designated campgrounds, failure to pay arbitrarily legislated fees, parking in certain places, possessing or growing certain plants, fishing without a license, turning 18 while in a sexual relationship with a 17 year old who won't turn 18 for a day or more afterwards, failure to renew a license or certificate, expressing strong emotion (especially anger) in a government or corporate office, sharing work-related technical information with a friend or family member who works for a competing company, marrying a person of the wrong sex or more than one person (even with consent of all involved), etc.

While it is likely that some kinds of crimes in category 1 will never be completely eliminated in any human society, categories 3 and 4 can be expected to all but disappear, crimes in category 2 to decline sharply, and the frequency of many crimes from category 1 to dramatically diminish or cease as well, in a mutualistic synergistic paradigm.

In a society where every individual, family or other social unit has their needs fulfilled by default: a place to live, food, medical care, safety, education, recreation, respect etc; when money is not needed or demanded just to be allowed to live, then crimes like robbery, theft, murder for money, fraud, looting and similar crimes will be virtually unheard of, in sharp contrast with what is common in Capitalist paradigms. If anybody can acquire a TV, smart phone or computer by going down to the local supply center and picking one up, there will be no need to steal one. When money is not needed to exist and function day-to-day or to even enjoy entertainments or diversions, then there will be little or no reinforcement, incentivization or motivation for crimes aimed at acquisition of goods or money.

Crimes of passion may happen in any paradigm. Two people get mad enough to fight and someone is seriously injured or killed in the process. A person walks in on their spouse or significant other being unfaithful and violence ensues. This kind of scenario may never completely disappear from human societies.

Yet it is undeniable that the constant stresses generated by life under Capitalism degrade the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of individuals and relationships, greatly increasing the propensity for crimes of passion, desperation and despair. When people are constantly on the edge, always one missed paycheck away from being homeless, then they are much more likely to lash out at each other, fight, exercise dubious judgment, steal, and harm themselves or others as a result.

Arbitrarily defined administrative crimes have no place in an egalitarian, synergistic, free society - meaning that there is no reason or justification to define any action as a crime, which hurts no one (or other living thing) nor the community and does not damage the environment.

Another problematic set of issues under the Capitalist paradigm has to do with the law enforcement and prison systems. A society that defines many things as crimes will have many criminals. Maintaining them in prisons consumes a lot of resources and, as is well documented, creates what amounts to training centers for criminals to learn how to be better criminals (Zoukis, HuffPost, 2017; International Centre for Prison Studies via BBC News, 2006).

In addition, many "soft" criminals devolve into "hard" criminals just to survive the prison environment. On top of that, prisons have become a reservoir of nearly free labor: in the U.S., some 800,000 prisoners work for pennies an hour or nothing at all, mostly maintaining the prisons themselves, with a smaller share producing goods and services for state-run industries and private firms (ACLU, 2022). The potential for abuse and exploitation is enormous, and the instances of it are well-documented in the United States and many other countries. It is no coincidence that the United States had, for many years, the highest imprisonment rate in the world, and it still has one of the highest, far above any other wealthy democracy (World Prison Brief).

Where many human behaviors are defined as crimes, many more resources must be set aside for law enforcement officers, investigators, prosecutors, defenders, judges and more. This creates a further drain on resources even as it does create some more jobs.

In the coming future, more egalitarian, synergistic paradigms in which there will be no need for money, there will likely be no prostitution or pimping, human trafficking, large-scale smuggling, sweat shops, poaching of endangered species which possess marketable qualities, illegal drug trade, robbery, cons, fraud, identity theft, and many more crimes. Profit - the acquisition of wealth - is the prime and only motive for these kinds of activities.

When money has been rendered irrelevant and a fully vibrant, stimulating, empowering, fulfilling quality of life has become the norm, the reinforcers and motivations for such crimes will be virtually nonexistent.

Of course, there will still be individuals who repeatedly harm others, through violence or in other ways; but such cases will be relatively rare, individual (not endemic or social), and more readily identified, contained and resolved, handled, or

treated. There will be no social reinforcers for such behaviors so they will tend towards extinction. Most certainly there will no longer be conditions present to encourage and establish them as a pervasive subculture or dominant culture.

The only behaviors that really need to be defined as crimes, as necessitating the confinement of individuals or their restriction, are behaviors that harm others, the community, or the environment. Obvious examples include murder, rape, assault, bullying, intimidation, extortion, kidnapping, imprisonment, enslavement, human trafficking, depriving someone of access to necessities of life such as their place of residence, water, medical care, food, etc.; child abuse of any kind, polluting of air, water, land, food or other vital resources; poaching, strip mining, logging of old-growth forests, genocide, inciting to violence, etc. These are examples of behaviors that can justifiably be defined as crimes. Note that some of the above list are also crimes in Capitalist societies while others are considered acceptable in those societies.

In the new Paradigm, under the community's democratically enacted law, it will be a crime to withhold access to goods or services from any person in any public venue, service provider entity, Distribution Center or Depot. This is to be differentiated from what a person has in their home or place of production. It will still be a crime to steal somebody's equipment or other belongings in their home, person, vehicle, or place of work. But for a person staffing a public venue, service provider entity, Distribution Center or Depot to withhold its goods or services in demand of some form of payment or favor, or on the basis of prejudice or hatred of an individual or group, shall be a punishable crime, as will be the robbing of distribution centers for the purpose of smuggling and selling things overseas in capitalist economies.

The decriminalization of behaviors that harm no one is an important aspect of creating a functional, compassionate, dynamic, synergistic society.

Chapter 22: Capitalism and Logistics / Rhythms of Life

In a society under a Capitalist paradigm where life is dominated by the forced demands to constantly come up with ransom money, one's job is essential to survival, even if it is damaging to one's health and well-being. Most employers offer little or no flexibility or tolerance for anything that interferes with the employer's perceived business needs. Yet life doesn't always fit into that constraint. People have doctor appointments and medical procedures; cars need repair and servicing; toilets overflow; roofs leak; extreme weather makes commuting to and from work hazardous; loved ones come to visit and only have a day or two; loved ones get sick or need rides to necessary appointments; errands sometimes need to be run during work hours; court appearances need to be made and more. Yet most employers place strict limits on when and how the employee is permitted to respond to these kinds of situations without endangering their job, meaning their survival. One is forced to choose to take sick days and lie about it, take unpaid days off, or use one's vacation days to take care of errands and so forth, always subject to the approval of the employer.

It is true that there is variation among employers in this matter. Some employers are very accommodating and others utterly inflexible. The overriding reality, the norm in a Capitalist paradigm is that all such activities are subject to the whim and approval of one's feudal Lord AKA employer. Under Capitalism the employer has the right to approve or not approve, has the right to terminate the employee at any time for any reason. The employer is lord and dictator of your life and time during the hours that they specify. Many employers specify and limit when, how often and how long one may or may not go to the bathroom. Under the "at-will" employment paradigm, this situation has become even more dire. Under Capitalism this is deemed to be their right.

Apologists for Capitalism point out that the employee is also free to quit at any time, but this is a largely meaningless assertion. If the employee quits without having another job or source of income in hand, many will face homelessness in a very short time; in 2023 only 63% of U.S. adults said they would cover an unexpected $400 expense with cash or its equivalent (Federal Reserve, 2024). Survival will be denied if not paid for. For the employer on the other hand, loss of the employee is usually a minor inconvenience at worst, since there is often no shortage of people applying for most jobs. In addition, under Capitalist paradigms most jobs will suffer from the same stresses and dysfunction as the one the employee left. Any laws protecting employees in such societies were passed only after a long and bitter struggle against an army of powerful mega-businesses working to block them.

Under Capitalism, people's lives are fragmented. The job dominates existence. Still more time and energy go into the process and mechanics of paying the various parties that one is forced to pay for the privilege of being permitted to continue living. There is little or no flexibility to enable one to weave one's life together into an organic integrated whole. Instead one must do all of one's necessary activities and errands under stress and on the fly, often missing paid work days and having to choose between livelihood and the other necessities of living. This creates constant conflict, intensifies stress and perpetuates alienation and the lack of healthy continuity.

In post-Transitionary paradigms, demands upon the individual will reflect actual, rather than artificially conceived, enforced and inflated, need and necessity. Hierarchies will be replaced with peership. Human happiness, well-being and quality of life will replace profit motive and "business needs" as primary criteria for deciding priorities. Nobody will need to come up with money to live. The logistics and choreography of daily life will have the flexibility to allow truly integrated lifestyles to develop and flourish.

Of course, there will still be situations where one will have to put their job first and leave other things on hold temporarily. Examples include harvest time in agricultural settings, crises in a hospital due to accidents, disasters or epidemics, and other real crises that occur in life. But these will be real situations, not artificially imposed from above as is the case in Capitalist societies, where artificially-inflated overproduction and cutthroat competition translates into capricious, arbitrary deadlines and production demands on employees. If it will improve stock prices to get the latest model out before the next financial quarter, even if the new model has no real improvements over the previous model, then employees will be under a level of

stress and pressure that is best reserved for true emergency and crisis situations. Under normal circumstances after the Transition, one will be free to choreograph one's life in ways that serve self and others in balanced and reasonable ways.

Chapter 23: Capitalism and Education

Under the Capitalist paradigm, a typical young person growing up faces the prospect of having to prepare, strategize and plan for the approaching time (the age varies from country to country and culture to culture) when they will have to start coming up with a constant supply of money in order to pay to be permitted to continue living. In such paradigms, college education or training in a skilled trade (carpenter, electrician, machinist, etc) often improves one's chances of being able to survive or thrive. It doesn't guarantee but it does improve one's chances.

In some Capitalist countries a basic education is officially free, but in practice the quality of education is largely determined by economic circumstances (Chetty, Hendren, Kline and Saez, 2014; Chetty and colleagues, Mobility Report Cards, 2017). The United States suffers from one of the worst educational disparities among what is commonly called the developed or industrialized nations, due to runaway unregulated Capitalism: OECD data rank it the second least equitable of its member countries, after Mexico, in how it allocates educational resources (OECD, 2014). Most schoolchildren in the U.S. are given a primary and secondary education that does not fully prepare them for college; in 2023, only about one in five high-school seniors who took the ACT met all four of its college-readiness benchmarks (ACT, 2023).

As is typical in Capitalist societies, one's freedoms and options are mostly determined, defined and limited by one's economic situation. Depending on where a child's family is situated on the economic pyramid, their education prepares and programs them for obedience, critical thinking and creativity, or command in an unofficial but very real caste system. There are numerous studies confirming this (Ogbu, *Minority Education and Caste*, 1978).

For those who are prepared to function in the college or university environment, the omnipresent financial barriers are always looming. In most Capitalist societies, higher education is extremely expensive even at state institutions and much more so at private schools. Even at a state university, tuition, housing and living costs can approach $30,000 a year, about half of what a typical worker earns (College Board), in an environment where most people have little or no financial resources left after paying living expenses.

Sometimes financial aid is available, but in a Capitalist society the trend over time is for prices to unrelentingly go up while available financial aid dwindles. (See chapter on inflation.) Often there are restrictions on financial aid. One is not eligible until their mid 20's. Often if parents are working, they are expected to pay for the education even when this is literally impossible.

In purely Capitalist societies, government income guidelines for everything from financial aid for higher education to food and housing assistance are notoriously unrealistic, effectively barring most people in need from qualifying. Official poverty income levels in the United States, for example, are typically defined and set far below what is actually possible to live on. To use a metaphor, if sea level were defined similarly to how the "poverty line" is defined, one would have to be at least 40 feet underwater before one was officially at sea level. (See the statistical analysis at the end of this book)

Thus, higher education in Capitalist societies grows steadily more out of reach for an ever-growing segment of the population. To make things worse, as stratification accelerates, more and more college graduates find themselves only able to get sub living wage jobs (Mishel, Economic Policy Institute, 2014). Note that while there is the potential for living-wage salaries, the range starts for most majors at sub-living wages and the median is substantially less than the average which is cited in most studies (Strauss, Forbes, 2017; Carnevale, Cheah and Hanson, Georgetown CEW, 2015). That means that half of those holding a degree are earning significantly less than the average for that degree. Nearly half of those working in low-wage jobs in the U.S. in 2012 had some college education or a degree, as compared to 17% in 1968, while their wages were effectively over 20% lower. Since then the situation has grown even more extreme.

Capitalist societies have strong reinforcers and pressures on students to choose a course of study based on how it will affect their expected income in the "job market." Pursuing dreams and passions, contributing to the community or improving quality of life for people is selected against, both by economic survival pressures and prevailing social attitudes.

Most students select a course of study based on greatest income potential, even if it is something for which they have no interest, aptitude or affinity. This fosters a society in which the norm and expectation is to place wealth acquisition potential above most or all other considerations and pursue careers which hold little meaning or motivation.

A society in which most people spend the bulk of their time and energy engaged in activities that are unfulfilling for them, while neglecting more fulfilling pursuits, is a society of needless unhappiness and greatly diminished vitality, innovation, and engagement. Such a culture is a crippled, dysfunctional society that reinforces the pursuit of unhappiness in order to survive, that forces its citizens to choose between doing what they love and are good at versus survival. Such people tend to be depressed, apathetic, disconnected, alienated, unmotivated, frustrated, numb, and cynical. Most individuals are never able to make their greatest contribution to the community. Mediocrity becomes the expected and accepted norm. Both the individual and the community suffer as a result.

Productivity itself suffers because the majority of people are doing jobs they don't care about, that give them little or no sense of empowerment, purpose, accomplishment, satisfaction or meaning while being increasingly distanced from their passions in life, in work environments where they are usually treated with little respect. They know only too well that they are being pressured to produce the most possible while being paid the least possible (Sturt and Nordstrom, Forbes, 2018).

Individuals in such paradigms suffer a severely diminished or nonexistent quality of life, and the community suffers from the half-hearted grudging contributions and efforts of people who would much rather be elsewhere doing something else.

Through it all, the enforced need to constantly come up with money to pay to be allowed to live is a palpable chain that keeps the situation static, keeps the serfs and slaves of the modern feudal society playing their parts in holding up the economic pyramid. They have little time or energy left for much else.

On the surface of it, Capitalism may superficially appear to produce higher productivity than a synergistic egalitarian cooperative paradigm. This appearance is an illusion in the same way that taking amphetamines appears to render a person more productive on fewer hours of sleep with less food than does eating and sleeping enough to sustain optimal health. We all know, however, that the stimulants are doing irreparable damage to the user over time and the quality of what they produce is inferior. It is preferable to produce 10 good results in an hour than 100 botched and rushed results.

In the new paradigms, education and training in all areas at all levels will be open to all seeking it, at no cost and with no pressure. Anybody with the motivation, discipline, and ability will be able to complete their chosen courses of study and training, then find a niche or niches in which they can ply their knowledge, skills, expertise or trade and make their best possible contribution to the community in ways to which they are passionately connected.

Such a society of highly empowered, motivated, fulfilled people pursuing their true interests and passions will be populated by thriving, deeply engaged individuals putting forth their best efforts willingly, enthusiastically and happily. Individuals will enjoy a vastly higher quality of life. A community of empowered, educated, highly-trained people will enjoy high quality of life in every aspect. Everybody will benefit from a large reservoir of people with high levels of expertise and knowledge.

Quite likely the distinction between "work" and “play” or "life" will fade with time as the norm shifts from feudalistic thralldom to meaningful productivity. People will likely go eagerly to their jobs doing what they love and are good at, among peers who share their passion, working together collaborating in pursuit of excellence. The community will benefit from the higher level of vibrancy, innovation, dedication, and engagement of such citizens (Gray, Psychology Today, 2009).

Would you rather be operated on by a surgeon who loves healing people and takes strong pride in their craft, or by a surgeon who is in the field for the money, prestige and perks? Would you rather drive a car designed and built by people who are passionate about making the best car they can make, or a car designed and built by people who are underpaid, driven obsessively to meet arbitrary deadlines, micromanaged, and apathetic because they know the company only cares about profits and stock prices? Would you rather eat food prepared by someone who is passionate about the culinary arts and loves to see the smiles of enjoyment on the faces of people eating their food, or eat food prepared by overworked, poorly compensated people driven to work in a constant rush, who in response at least fantasize about spitting in the food?

Already many countries with social-democratic paradigms do offer free education at every level - Norway, Slovenia, Germany, France, Finland, Sweden and others. (Brazil does as well but its paradigm falls short because its overall infrastructure suffers from the same kind of economic stratification as the U.S., so that applicants from lower socio-economic strata are at a distinct disadvantage in the application process.) This only makes sense. A community that supports and encourages its members to follow their passions, develop their talents and abilities, and apply their knowledge and training in everyday life will reap the benefits of the best possible contributions of its citizens.

Capitalism puts major barriers in the way of prospective students and muddies the waters of opportunity for graduates to pursue the careers for which they were trained. The community suffers immeasurably when increasing segments of the population are under-educated and un-self-actualized. Likewise, the Community suffers when many who have attained high levels of training and education end up having to do poorly-paid jobs in or outside their field. In the new paradigms with no such barriers in any area of life, productivity, fulfillment, job satisfaction and quality of life will go hand in hand rather than pulling in opposite directions.

Students, relieved of the burden and constraint of having to always focus on how to be "marketable" upon graduation, will be free and able to devote themselves purely to their studies and to innovation, excellence and creativity in their chosen fields. Freed of the need to constantly come up with money to pay for living expenses while studying, they will be less stressed and more able to learn and develop in their chosen fields.

Even financial aid carries with it considerable pressure and stress. Students are aware that they are accumulating debt that will be waiting for them upon graduation. They will enter the job market already owing major amounts of money. There are scholarships, grants, work-study and other forms of financial aid that do not involve debt, but these are rarely enough on their own to cover the cost of study plus living.

Graduate and doctorate level education in Capitalist cultures generally has little or no financial aid available and is even more expensive than undergraduate study. The new paradigm will release higher education from the chains and constraints of profit motive and "market forces" to engender a highly-educated, motivated, thriving society of self-actualized people. All countries and communities that embrace the new paradigms will rise to the top of world productivity, innovation, and quality of life and be shining examples and proof of their superiority and practicality.

Chapter 24: Capitalism and Religion

Religion is a part of the human experience which expresses undeniable dimensions of the human psyche, heart and soul.

Sadly, Karl Marx observed religion using and being used by corrupt power structures to keep the vast majority of people submissive, which was why he wrote his famous statement that "Religion is the opium of the people." Soviet and related interpretations of Communism tried to end religion by criminalizing and suppressing it. Yet, in the post-Soviet reality in formerly Soviet communities, religion revived strongly after the disintegration of the Soviet Union: in Russia, the share of people identifying as Orthodox Christians rose from 37% in 1991 to 71% in 2015.

This is largely because the human psyche often responds to suppression and threat of punishment with the appearance of compliance while covertly defying suppression. This is one human trait that most despotic regimes fail to grasp: punishment does not truly create lasting, willing compliance. It actually strengthens resistance in the long run.

Reinforcement (not enforcement) of desired behaviors and absence of reinforcement for non-desired behaviors is truly effective, though never 100%, which is not a negative thing. Furthermore, attempts to suppress behaviors and attitudes that are inherent, inseparable parts of being human, will tend to fail on the large scale even if they succeed in some individuals in the short run. No amount of suppression could ever produce a population who do not eat, sleep, have sex, talk, seek entertainments or find some religious expression. Such suppression may leave many feeling guilty and conflicted about practicing forbidden behaviors, but they will persist.

Yet Marx had a valid point. Religion has often been used, and is still being used today, to keep people submissive and to otherwise manipulate populations to do things they would most likely not be inclined to do otherwise. Suppressing it, however, is not the solution to this kind of abuse of religion.

The United States Constitution (and other similar Constitutions) sets forth separation of Church and State as a fundamental principle, guaranteeing freedom of religion. This is absolutely essential for any society to bring forth fulfilled, free, empowered, fully actualized human beings constituting a fulfilled, free, fully actualized human community.

Tragically, under conditions of religious extremism, difficult questions can arise.

In the United States at the time of this writing, the concept of “religious freedom” or “religious liberty” is being systematically distorted into a justification for allowing those higher in the economic pyramid to force and enforce their religious views upon those lower in the pyramid. Where ownership confers dictatorial powers, the majority of people are forced by Capitalist dynamics to work for businesses owned by wealthy neo-Feudal Lords and to live in buildings owned by other wealthy neo-Feudal Lords. In such a setting, the concept that business owners’ and landlords’ “religious liberty” gives them the right to discriminate against employees, applicants, and clients on the basis of religious beliefs, in practice deprives the majority of people of any rights or religious freedom whatsoever. In such a paradigm, one who owns no place on the earth, has no rights in any place on the earth. Some existing religious beliefs are quite extreme, including religious beliefs against homosexuals, interracial couples or unmarried couples cohabiting, women in the workplace, women dressing as they please, use of birth control, eating certain foods, even beliefs against the very presence of members of other religions.

In the United States, the law gives employers, landlords and businesses growing room to act on their religious beliefs at the expense of the people who depend on them, and the court cases run both ways. Since *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (2014), some for-profit companies may drop contraception from their employees’ health plans on religious grounds. Religious organizations may hire and fire on the basis of religion even for jobs with no religious content (*Amos*, 1987), and courts have upheld the firing of teachers at religious schools for remarrying or for marrying a same-sex partner (*Little v. Wuerl*, 1991; *Starkey*, 2022; *Fitzgerald*, 2023; *Billard*, 2024). Wedding businesses have won the right to refuse work for same-sex weddings (*303 Creative*, 2023), and a Minnesota landlord won the right to refuse to rent to an unmarried couple (*State by Cooper v. French*, 1990). Some rulings have held the line: in 2026 a federal appeals court ruled that Catholic Relief Services

could not cut off health coverage for an employee's husband (*Doe v. Catholic Relief Services*). But that such exemptions exist at all, and that they keep widening, is the problem.

In *Hobby Lobby*, Justice Ginsburg warned where this logic leads: could a company run by Jehovah's Witnesses exclude blood transfusions from your health plan? Could a business owned by members of other faiths refuse to cover medicines derived from pigs, or vaccinations? The law does not allow these today. But things are happening now that would have been unthinkable twenty or thirty years ago. In 2025 the federal government created a task force to root out bias against Christians alone, with no counterpart for religious discrimination in general, and the Secretary of Defense began holding Christian worship services at the Pentagon. The direction is clear: the law increasingly favours the party with more economic power over the one who depends on it. In 2018 an Oregon painter sued the construction company he worked for, saying he had been let go for refusing to attend the Bible study his boss required. Outside religious organizations, forcing employees into religious activity is illegal, yet he still had to go to court to protect his own conscience. Religious liberty must protect the conscience of the employee, the tenant and the customer as much as that of the owner.

The fact that this concerted effort is being carried out under the banner of "religious freedom" or "religious liberty," is particularly insidious and pernicious, since these are very sympathetic-sounding terms. This is very much by design. Anybody who speaks up against this takeover can easily be painted as an enemy of religious freedom. Yet the reality of the intent is anything but religious liberty or freedom. The argument supporting them is that an employer's "religious liberty" is being violated if they are required to hire people to whom their religion objects, or to cover medical procedures that their religion forbids. Similarly the argument goes that landlords shouldn't have to rent to people who have traits that the landlord's religion objects to. Yet this legal effort under the heading of "religious liberty" makes no effort whatsoever to protect the "religious liberty" of the employee, the applicant, the customer, the individual. There is no effort being made to protect the rights of applicants, renters, employees, and customers to live their lives safe and free from harassment based on their own religious beliefs.

The larger context here is the consolidation of power even more firmly into the hands of those at the top of the economic Pyramid, which always disempowers those lower in the Pyramid. Remember that under Capitalist paradigms, wealth, control and ownership confer rights, access, freedom, options and respect. The lack of these negates rights, freedom, access, options and respect. The current "religious liberty" effort is aimed at giving those high in the Pyramid even greater power over the lives of those lower in the Pyramid. If the ones in power object to your religion, lifestyle, ethnicity, eating habits, mode of dress, personal relationships, or anything else at their discretion, they will be allowed to exclude you from livelihood, access to goods and services, and a place to live. Though it will not be the government per se denying you your freedom, it will nevertheless be no different from the situation under official dictatorships: live and believe as the neo-Feudal Lords dictate, or go without any rights and any way to live, knowing that the government will support the neo-Feudal Lords should you challenge them.

This is one more current example of how even though the people can achieve some gains in rights and protections through concerted, sustained efforts on a large scale, under Capitalist paradigms the pressure and control of the neo-Feudal Lords at the top of the Pyramid will always overwhelm and out-create the influence of the people in the long run.

In any post-Transition society, religious freedom must be understood and interpreted as applying to the person, to the individual, and not extending to others. Nobody and no entity will have the right or power to deny access, goods, services or anything whatsoever to another for any reason in any public setting. Religion will be no exception. Of course one will have the right to be friends with whomever one chooses, form relationships with whomever one chooses, and to have the sanctity of one's home and life be respected. But nobody will be allowed to exclude or discriminate against others.

For example, those whose religion condemns homosexuality will be protected from being pressured or coerced into homosexual relationships or expressing agreement, but will be expressly prohibited from denying goods, services or civility to homosexuals or harassing them in any way. Those whose religious beliefs prohibit eating pork or meat of any kind will be free to eat according to their beliefs but not allowed to interfere with the eating habits of those who do not share their beliefs. Those who believe that it is necessary to be legally married to live together will be free to marry before cohabiting, but will be prevented from denying goods, services, or civility to those living together unmarried. Those who believe that women must

cover themselves will be free to do so, but will not be free to interfere with, harass, or discriminate against those who do not share that belief.

One's religious liberty cannot ever be allowed to interfere with the freedom, respect, and quality of life of others. Any within a religious community who wish to exit it will find that their right to do so will be protected. Similarly, in the post-Transition communities, the concept of ownership will apply to a person's or family's own residence and items for personal use only – there will be no recognized or enforceable concept of owning land, items or facilities used by another.

Distribution and production of goods and services will no longer be under "private" control. Such endeavors will be democratically, consensually run by those involved in the processes, under supervision of the People, as a public service for the benefit of each and all. There will be no economic or command pyramid, no corporations, no neo-Feudal Lords with dictatorial powers over an enterprise.

While most religious organizations operate peacefully in good faith, doing a lot to improve the human condition, there are still too many religious organizations of every faith that distort religious teachings in order to advance personal or institutional agendas involving power, money and control over Society. These include certain fundamentalist Christian extremist groups in the United States and elsewhere, which teach that men must rule over women, send gay and lesbian young people to so-called conversion therapy (a practice major medical and psychological associations reject as ineffective and harmful; American Psychological Association), and teach followers to see non-believers as enemies; a substantial and growing number of local and regional churches; Scientology; a wide assortment of cults, ashrams and other groups in the U.S.A.; and ISIS, Boko Haram, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, and more. Some of these Christian extremist groups go further: they work to make the United States an officially "Christian nation," to impose their faith's rules on everyone, and they teach followers to treat the rest of us as the enemy. Their methods differ, and most do not use violence, but their core aim, imposing one faith's law on all, is the same aim that drives the Taliban, Boko Haram, ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Megachurches and religious broadcasters that spread this message are a far bigger concern than a small local congregation, because through television and online media they reach, and can radicalise, millions. About one in three Americans now hold or lean toward Christian nationalist views (PRRI, 2025). That share has held roughly steady since it was first measured in 2022, but the movement is hardening: support for making Christianity the official national religion has risen, and its political influence has grown, from laws requiring the Ten Commandments in public classrooms, passed in Louisiana in 2024 and Texas in 2025, to calls to declare America a Christian nation.

Some of these are driven by simple greed that exploits religion to generate a constant flow of money and power from congregants to the leaders. Some are driven by the self-aggrandizement of charismatic megalomaniacs motivated by delusions of grandeur, addiction and compulsion to exert power over others. Still others are driven by sincere fanaticism which leads adherents to believe that forcing their beliefs on others is doing God's will and benefiting those so coerced in the long run. All of these are abuses of religion that we must be ever alert to avoid reinforcing in any way.

The first kind of abuse of religion, simple greed, will be rendered largely impossible in a paradigm where money is obsolete or unnecessary. The end of Capitalism will be the end of this kind of distortion of religion.

The second and third kind of abuse and distortion are more problematic and challenging to minimize.

Though religion has been abused and used to justify abuse, it has also been the motivation for inspiring and heroic acts of altruism and love for Humanity and for one's fellow beings. We would not benefit from throwing out the baby with the bathwater so to speak.

A peer-oriented socio-economic paradigm will inherently have few or no reinforcers in place for abuse of authority, position, rank or wealth since these will have little or no existence. Plentiful reinforcers for co-operation, mutuality and synergistic symbiosis will over time cause these kinds of behaviors to predominate.

There is no guarantee that unhealthy hierarchical dynamics may not emerge among small populations - within a family or community - due to interpersonal dynamics. However, such situations will not have a chance to expand, become set in stone, institutionalized or enforced, since the prevailing social dynamics in the community will not create fertile conditions for this

to happen. The typical person will be unreceptive and resistant to such dynamics, and the society will have no mechanisms to encourage such patterns, which will be healthily and reasonably perceived as dysfunctional.

A population conditioned from birth to respond predictably to advertising and propaganda is more easily manipulated than a population raised in an atmosphere of open dialog, exploration and critical thinking. Trained from the beginning to recognize manipulative propaganda and behaviors as part of childhood education alongside language, math, and science, such educated people will be distinctly difficult to manipulate, dominate or intimidate.

Consider also that empowered, fulfilled citizens who are mostly happy with life are much less vulnerable to the appeals of extremist charismatic demagogues than disempowered, disenchanted, discouraged frustrated citizens. It seems very likely that in the more synergistic post-Transition paradigms, demagogues and cultists will find very few individuals who are susceptible to this kind of dynamic.

If this is so, then the second category of religious abuse (self-aggrandizement and power-lust) will most likely never reach proportions to become a danger to the well-being and freedom of the society as a whole. Such occurrences will for the most part be easily contained and treated therapeutically. We will need to be observant and watchful during the first years after the Transition, however, as the cultural and sociological readjustment will take time until at least one generation has a chance to grow up to adulthood in the new paradigm.

The third category of religious abuse is more problematic.

Fanaticism rooted in sincerely held faith is abusive to those outside the fanatical population; yet this is not a conscious or deliberate abuse of religion. Such zealots sincerely believe they are saving people or bringing them to the True Way. That is why it is the most difficult to address.

Sometimes the atrocities committed by such populations are conceived, carried out and perceived by the perpetrators as doing the will of God, saving the souls of those they coerce, bringing in a superior, higher morality for the greater good. The Spanish Inquisition, the Crusades, modern-day Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and Taliban, the Orthodox communities in Israel which seek to force all Israeli Jews to live an Orthodox life, and Hindu extremists in India who try to force shotgun weddings on any couple they see being affectionate in public are all examples of this. So is the case of the delusional mother who was certain that the Devil was going to take her children and so killed them in order to send them to God.

These dynamics are much more complex. Often they involve historical traditions that go back hundreds or even thousands of years, strengthened and ingrained deeper by having suffered persecution at one time or another. Often such sub-populations have a shared reality in which religion, ethnic and cultural identity, geographic location and other factors are all perceived as one and the same thing at the heart of the participants' identity as individuals and as a community.

Such groups will not hesitate to force their beliefs, customs and values on others via political and legislative processes, economic domination and even violence and force of arms. When two such groups encounter one another, open conflict, sometimes outright "holy war", often follows. Regardless of who comes out victorious, those who do not share their beliefs routinely suffer, often horribly.

Experience shows that attempts to directly suppress such dynamics will only serve to strengthen and deepen the degree of fanaticism, entrenching it more firmly and creating a sense of martyrdom. It also aids recruitment efforts as they inevitably come to be perceived by the uninformed as a persecuted minority, leading some well-meaning compassionate people to become sympathetic and even to join them.

A truly compassionate, empowering, synergistic society is incompatible with suppression as a response. Other approaches need to be researched, developed and implemented.

The new paradigm would not survive takeover by a Crusade, a Jihad or the like. On the other hand, it will not survive a purge or "cleansing" even of religious extremist groups. This will be a major challenge for the people of the new paradigm. It is unlikely that full and definitive answers will emerge in this writing, only some general guidelines and principles along which to proceed.

Strict adherence to separation of Church and State is absolutely essential for any free society to truly guarantee freedom of religion. This principle protects the integrity of both religion and the mechanisms of governance.

In the new paradigms, money will be nonexistent or of minimal or no importance, so will not act as a motive for any kind of behavior. Lawmakers, politicians, judges and other public officials will be far less susceptible to financial and most other kinds of bribes and inducements that are common under Capitalism. Such officials will be more directly accountable to the people, their activities more transparent than under the current paradigm. It will be harder for special interest groups of any kind, including religious ones, to influence these people.

With the shift away from punitive, blame-oriented cultural attitudes, opportunities for blackmail will be greatly reduced though of course not eliminated. With positive reinforcers built into the paradigm for honesty and therapeutic rather than punitive responses to violations of public trust, there will be less fear of exposure of officials who do have something to hide.

If fanatical religious extremist groups or individuals do use, or attempt to use, violence or coercion to force their ways onto non-consenting people, it will need to be addressed swiftly and appropriately. Violence (except among consenting participants as in boxing, martial arts, extreme fighting and similar sports) and coercion have no place in a healthy, synergistic society. Those who engage in such behaviors must be prevented from continuing to do so. This must be done swiftly and firmly upon discovery, but as humanely and compassionately as possible with emphasis on rehabilitation and therapy wherever practicable. Yes, in some extreme cases some kind of confinement may be necessary, probably along the lines of the Norwegian prison model where inmates are prevented from harming others but otherwise treated with respect, enjoying as positive an existence as possible. Violence or coercion on the basis of religion needs to be treated no differently than that committed for other reasons.

If such groups and communities harm, harass or coerce no one, then there is no reason to interfere with them unless they are subjecting members to duress or coercion in any way (i.e. forced marriages, mutilations, forced consumption of drugs or participation in rituals against their will, preventing them from leaving or contacting people outside their community).

Religion is a highly personal matter, even among those who share a religion, that needs to be respected. Since none of us is any more God or Goddess than the other, we must seek to create a society that engenders mutual respect among all religions (including those who are agnostics, atheists and non-religious) where each individual will feel safe and free to pursue their own personal process of exploration, discovery, and practice of their faiths.

Chapter 25: The Psychology of Status Symbols, Dress Codes and Formality - the Enforcement of Stratification

The stratification of the human community is an inevitable result of the Capitalist paradigm.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

In a society where all aspects of one's life are dependent upon one's wealth and socio-economic status, strong reinforcement exists for those high on the economic pyramid to emphasize, display and enforce their "superior" position upon those below them. Beyond that, the same reinforcers motivate all members of the society including those at the bottom to possess and display symbols that to appear to elevate them .

Remember that in such a society doors open or close, respect and access are given or withheld based on both one's perceived and actual wealth and elevation on the pyramid. If you walk into a bank, a store, or even many social settings wearing expensive clothing and jewelry, arrive in an expensive car, and look wealthy, you will be treated much differently than if you walk in wearing cheap clothes, no jewelry and driving an older or less expensive car.

This, of course, gives rise to a host of both legal and illegal parasitical industries manufacturing status-symbol items and a constant barrage of propaganda intended to instill and strengthen the sense of necessity for having them. The fashion industries capitalize on this to ensure that socio-economically mandated items bring in the highest possible price. People have little choice but to buy at least some of these products if they want to get a job and keep it. Often these products are in no way superior in comfort, quality or function to less expensive products; yet the fact that they have what amounts to a captive audience allows vendors to sell them at a premium.

If you peruse job search sites, blogs, books, articles and chat rooms or go to job placement agencies and outreach programs that train and assist job seekers to successfully find jobs, one of several endlessly repeated concepts that you will encounter is "dress for success."

In a socio-economic paradigm where those offering a paycheck are in a superior position to those offering their time, labor, and expertise, the job seeker is perceived and treated as a disposable item. Many a superiorly qualified and motivated applicant is turned away simply on the basis of their appearance: their dress, their car, their hairstyle, age, ethnicity, race, or even current employment status, all of which have no bearing whatsoever on their ability to perform the job in question.

Culturally mandated dress codes are mercilessly enforced in most employment contexts. The "acceptable" attire is almost always more expensive, and often less comfortable, than what many people would choose to wear if left to their own preferences. Employers know this very well, as "dress down days" are used as a reward or morale-booster to give the impression of largesse.

Dress codes are established and enforced by employers and businesses. Employees and/or patrons are economically coerced to purchase expensive clothes and other items. This meshes with, enforces, and reinforces cultural attitudes prevalent in Capitalist cultures, which hold that persons dressed in certain ways are more acceptable and respectable than persons not so dressed.

"Acceptable" attire in a business setting, restaurants and other establishments (such as golf courses, country clubs, many nightclubs, many cultural events and entertainments, and job interviews to name a few) is almost always expensive, acting as a filter to ensure that only those with at least a certain minimum economic status will gain entry.

Business and formal attire are almost always uncomfortable and impractical for any other use: ties for men and high heels for women are two common examples among many in the dominant Euro-American cultures. The definition of formal attire

is arbitrary and varies from culture to culture, but the patterns are similar across cultures.

This dynamic places additional financial burdens on those in the weakest financial situations, since such clothing is necessary to gain and keep employment in order to keep eternally paying for permission to go on existing.

Dress codes also have another purpose, most likely unconscious to some degree: they act as a reminder of the dominant position of the employer over the employee. They subtly express that the employer (feudal lord) has the right to tell the employee (serf or peasant) what to wear, when they may eat or go to the bathroom and for how long, and more.

Often such practices contradict common sense: demanding suits and ties even when it is the hottest weather and the employees will not be dealing with the public. Expecting high heals to be worn even though they do long-term skeletomuscular harm to wearers and pose a constant falling risk. You will sweat, suffer and be uncomfortable for no other reason than that your employer says so, if you want to keep your livelihood.

Paradoxically, the CEO in such companies often has the option of being the exception to the rule: he or she may dress as he or she pleases. They are the feudal Lord, the King, above the rules that apply to commoners. Noblesse Oblige.

In a society where "nothing is free," the employer may demand that the employee model for free. Think about it. Modeling is a paid profession; yet a typical employer may demand that the employee dress a certain way while not paying them to do so. Failure to comply will result in termination, no matter how good a worker and employee one is.

It is obviously very important to the employer that the employee comply, yet the employee is not compensated for doing so. However if an employee wants or needs a paid day off to go to their child's wedding or graduation, they must get the employer's permission. If the employer denies the request and the employee takes the day off anyway, the employee will likely have their pay docked, get written up, and possibly be terminated. Here again we see the feudal nature of the employer-employee dynamic. It is most clearly not a mutually-respectful exchange between equals.

In a Capitalist society, all but those high up in the economic pyramid live under perpetual stress and insecurity due to the constant default denial of their right to exist. Against this denial, they must constantly struggle to come up with more money to keep paying for another month of existence.

Offending an employer, failing to meet performance metrics which may be demonstrably unrealistic (such as banking sales metrics that were so unrealistic and unattainable that thousands of Wells Fargo bank employees resorted to fraud just to keep their numbers up to maintain their livelihoods), having a personality conflict with a superior, any random fluctuation in the economy or industry, changes in company organization or leadership, mergers, acquisitions, political changes, revisions to labor laws under pressure of Corporate lobbies, speaking up against unfair or unethical practices by the employer, unionizing, standing up for one's self against abuse by a superior, one's sexual orientation or political views - any of these can put one and one's family out on the street unable to survive in an instant, at any time. Many employment contracts, which must be signed in order to gain employment, require the employee to agree that they can be terminated at any time for any reason or for no reason at all.

In such a society, most individuals experience a high degree of anxiety and insecurity which is so constant and unwavering that they come to perceive it as a normal state of affairs, much as a person with a chronic condition comes to perceive it as normal life.

To make matters more inimical to the well-being of the individual and community, Capitalism gives rise to a plethora of industries that prey upon people’s insecurities by subtly, through skillful advertising (aka propaganda), rubbing salt in their psychic wounds with messages to the effect that "Do you worry that you aren't good enough? Do you worry that you are a loser? Well you should! But if you wear/drive/have/eat/drink/use our products, frequent our establishments - then you will be somebody! Then people will respect you, doors will open and you can finally feel good about yourself, at least until we come out with the next fashion."

These parasitic industries include the status-marketing side of the fashion, cosmetics, jewelry and automotive industries, exclusive nightclubs and country clubs, luxury restaurants and more. These parasitic industries consciously exploit the

insecurities generated by the denial-of-life Capitalist paradigm and deepen them for profit. This is a function that truly harms both individuals and the society as a whole. Yet under Capitalist paradigms it is accepted, encouraged, and enforced.

It is natural for humans to wear shoes and clothing, to carry purses, bags or other portable containers to hold the things they need with them and to adorn themselves as an expression of personal aesthetics. These industries, however, actually distort these natural human activities into harmful, dysfunctional parodies, chaining natural human characteristics to their addiction to profits. Authentic and practical expressions are sublimated into programmed consumption.

Status symbols are less obvious but are still insidious and tremendously damaging to both individuals and the community. Products are conceived, produced, and marketed with great skill - products that have little or no usefulness in and of themselves, other than to project the aura of wealth and high position on the economic pyramid. These items are not damaging or harmful in and of themselves but become instruments of division and contention among segments of the population.

The details of these items vary from culture to culture and time period to time period. In the United States, it is often something as simple as having items with certain brand names on them, which may or may not be superior functionally or aesthetically (a subjective concept personally and culturally) to other brands of similar products. In Japan, seasonal gift customs such as *ochūgen* and *oseibo* carry strong social expectations, and neglecting them can carry a real social cost.

Status symbols can also take the form of belonging to, or having access to, specific social institutions accessible only to people of certain economic status or higher. In Capitalist societies the word "exclusive" carries the connotation of "above and better than what most people have access to.” Logically and in practice, the concept implies and personifies the elevation of a few and the marginalization and denigration of everybody else.

Of course, secondary parasitical industries spring up that mimic primary parasitical industries capitalizing on people's insecurities: the manufacturers of so-called "knock-offs" - products that look just like status symbol items but are made by companies without permission of the primary manufacturers, using the primary's logos, that are sold for a more affordable price than the "genuine articles."

We must also keep in mind that in the manufacture of both primary and secondary status symbols, the persons performing the actual production are typically paid among the lowest wages on the pyramid in their respective societies and subjected to unsafe, unhealthy working conditions. The people who profit from this situation are not the ones doing the actual work but the ones who possess the paperwork that defines them as the owners of the enterprise.

A variation of the status symbol psycho-social dynamics is seen in the United States every year during the last two months before Christmas. Every year, a new toy or gadget is advertised, promoted, and publicized in a well-established manipulative format that generates an almost frantic sensation of need for this year’s “hot item” – most powerfully manifested among children and adolescents, and therefore enlisting the cooperation of their parents, but also among adults to no small degree. By the time these items reach the shelves of stores and malls, millions of people are on the edge of obsession to get them. The event is announced with fanfare akin to that usually reserved for returning heroes or food and supplies being delivered in the wake of a natural disaster. Stores open at midnight or in the wee hours of the morning. Long lines of people arrive hours before the event and camp out to maximize their chances of being one of the lucky few to actually get one. Neither rain, snow, wind, nor long drives can deter these people once the conditioned responses are set in motion. Manufacturers and retailers make sure that the supply is limited, driving the shoppers’ urgency to a fevered pitch. Prices, especially from resellers, are often dramatically higher than the same item would go for under any other circumstances. Once the doors open, there are often stampedes, fist fights, people trampled, and all manner of verbal nastiness as ordinarily peaceful people react as though these items were medicine in a plague epidemic. The closer it gets to Christmas, the higher the prices go. Supply stays intermittent and always insufficient to the demand, triggering people to become even more frantic. The news carries stories of people who, in desperation, paid $1,600 on eBay for a $300 item that’s really worth $25. Then the next summer, these same items can be found at garage sales for under $5. This manipulation is so well perfected that it works well year after year, even among intelligent, educated people.

Yet it is a mistake to oversimplistically identify the people who perpetrate these manipulations and "go after" them. They are simply responding to the reinforcers of the Capitalist paradigm that is functioning as designed. The problem is the game more than the players. In a game in which brutality or treachery brings success and rewards, we cannot just blame the players for how they play the game. We need to re-examine the game itself and either change it or end it and replace it with a game that does not reinforce brutality or treachery.

Status symbols also serve to reinforce the division and stratification of individuals by setting them in competition with each other to attain the appearance, if not the substance, of ascent up the economic pyramid. One who drives a new-looking Mercedes feels entitled to belittle and look down upon someone who drives a beat-up looking Kia. A person wearing gold and diamond jewelry feels entitled to belittle and look down upon someone who cannot afford such things. The person traveling with a Louis Vuitton suitcase feels entitled to look down upon and belittle someone traveling with a suitcase from Walmart. A person who lives in Beverly Hills feels entitled to look down upon and belittle someone who lives in the Bronx. It is a way of reminding everybody who has "made it" and who is "a loser."

The existence of status symbols is a symptom of a diseased, stratified, divided, conflicted and dysfunctional society. There is no place for status symbols, or for the concepts and constructs that give rise to them and give them meaning, in a truly free, democratic, symbiotic, empowered Community of free, empowered, individuals. In the post-Transition society, there will be no socio-economic or cultural framework to support the concepts of which status symbols are an expression.

In a culture where there are no haves and have-nots, no pyramid, no hierarchy, no concept of status above or below one another, there will be no such thing as status or status symbols. Clothing, shoes, adornment, transportation, social gatherings and so forth will become spontaneous authentic expressions of individual and/or shared aesthetics, tastes, interests, and preferences and will unite people rather than divide and stratify them.

In the absence of artificially-imposed pressures driving such things, people will be truly free to express, clothe and adorn themselves as individuals in a community that not only tolerates but actively appreciates the contributions and expressions of each individual. A diamond will become one among many pretty minerals to be appreciated. A car will be a car; a shirt will be a shirt; a purse will be a purse - no more, no less.

In post-Transition cultures freed of the artificially forced frenzy of overproduction/overconsumption of goods and services stratified into high quality expensive versus cheap low quality, all products and services will be the best that can be practically produced/provided and will be equally available to all who desire or need them.

There will truly be no “losers” in the new paradigm, though those who had been accustomed to being at the top of the pyramid and who suffer from the kind of deep-seated insecurity that made them feel the need to dominate and position themselves over other people will, like anyone caught in an addiction, feel that they are losing something. Yet in the new Paradigm, those of them caught in this compulsion (some former CEO’s, billionaires, power-brokers and the like) will have the same compassionate, non-judgmental treatment, rehabilitation and support open to them as anyone struggling with alcohol, gambling, video games or drugs. Addiction is not a moral failing, and getting free of it deserves support, not contempt (see Chapter 19).

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Instead of being enabled in their disability and untreated, these people will be diagnosed and have treatment available to them, which will benefit them as well as all other individuals in the Community. No reasonably compassionate person would bring drink to an alcoholic or help a junkie score from their dealer; so why should we place a money-and-power addict in a position to be at the mercy of their addiction and cheer them on in their indulgence of it? Both a junkie and a billionaire will commit criminal and harmful acts as a result of their addiction, which is ultimately self-destructive. We need not to judge people suffering from these conditions and equally not to encourage them to persist in living at the mercy and control of their condition while hurting others as a result.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Chapter 26: Parasitic Industries

Throughout this writing, there is reference to parasitic industries. For those not familiar with the term, think of the metaphor of a parasite in nature. A parasite feeds off of a host organism, contributing nothing to the host's survival or well-being, while actively damaging and draining the host, compromising its health. Parasitic industries follow the same pattern in the context of the Community and economic dynamics.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

A note on the word: “parasitic” describes what these industries do within the system, not the people who work in them. Most people in these jobs took the work that was available to support themselves and their families, and many are decent, caring people doing their best inside a structure they did not design. Nothing here is a judgment of them. In the Transition, their skills and experience will be welcome in work that serves the community directly.

Though it has been covered earlier in this writing, it is worthwhile to re-examine a prime example that is the health insurance industry in Capitalist countries lacking universal healthcare. In such societies, medical care becomes so prohibitively expensive that it is hopelessly out of reach for all but those at the top of the economic pyramid. Insurance companies capitalize on this by placing themselves between the patient and the medical professional, offering to cover part or all of the cost of medical treatments, for which they charge the patient a monthly premium.

For a family, the monthly fee for a plan can rival or even exceed the cost of rent or mortgage, which is the biggest other single expense under Capitalist paradigms: the average total premium for employer-sponsored family coverage in the U.S. reached $25,572 a year in 2024, more than $2,100 a month (KFF, 2024). Even where employers offer health insurance costing the employee much less than private insurance, the monthly patient contributions are still formidable: in 2024, workers paid an average of $6,296 a year toward family coverage, before any deductibles or co-payments (KFF, 2024). In the United States, workers’ contributions to employer-provided family coverage roughly quadrupled between 1999 and 2019, and, averaged across all covered workers, deductibles rose 162% in the decade to 2019 alone (KFF, 2019), far faster than wages, while coverage dwindled (KFF). Copays have risen too. Many plans once had no deductible at all: in the 1990s, when many workers were in HMOs, deductibles were the exception, and as recently as 2009 more than a third of covered workers had none. By 2019, more than four in five did (KFF). If Capitalism is not replaced and decommissioned, the trend will only continue.

Deductibles are often high enough to be economically crippling to the point where people frequently and routinely forego needed medical treatment because they cannot afford to pay 100% of the cost of the deductible. Even when the deductible has been met, the copays are often prohibitive for anything but the most minimal procedures.

These companies present themselves as looking after patients’ health and helping them. As with the "anybody can make it" myth, there is an element of truth to this but the big picture tells a different story. Insurance is only "necessary" because medical costs spiral out of control and people know they will never be able to afford care if it is needed. The Capitalist dynamics of “supply and demand” guarantee this.

We must keep in mind that insurance companies, like casinos, are businesses devoted to making money. As previously discussed, claims are routinely denied, regardless of the hardship or even death that denial will cause the patient. Like casinos, where some people do indeed win but the "house" always takes in much more than it ever pays out, insurance companies do pay claims when they absolutely cannot get out of it; but they reliably take in more than they pay out: even under the U.S. Affordable Care Act, insurers may keep up to 15–20% of premiums for administration and profit (KFF, 2023).

In one respect, this business model resembles a protection racket: people pay out of fear of what will happen if they don't. The difference is that the danger, ruinous medical bills, is not threatened by the insurer directly; it is created by the system the insurers belong to and profit from, in which hospital list prices are inflated to several times their costs (Linde and Egede, 2022) largely as bargaining positions in negotiations with insurers.

This creates a situation in which medical treatment is dictated not by medical professionals but by accountants and claims adjusters who are very strongly reinforced to deny treatment by default. In Capitalist paradigms, when there is a conflict between a doctor and an insurance company, the insurance company usually prevails, except for those at the top of the Pyramid to whom exorbitant medical fees are not an issue.

Thus these businesses are truly parasitic, feeding off of the resources of citizens who are forced by the Capitalist system to choose between having no access to serious medical care in case of need or else paying a large share of their meager paycheck to buy the possibility of maybe having access for self and family. Health insurance companies more often than not serve to prevent patients from getting care. This is analogous to a scenario in which a factory pollutes a town's water supply, giving rise to a parasitic water purification business that charges residents for drinkable water when otherwise they have none since the water is now undrinkable. The real solution is to shut down the polluting factory or modify it so that it doesn't pollute.

Parasitic industries contribute far less to the Community than they extract. They sap and drain the resources, quality of life, and well-being of all, including both individuals and employers. In the case of health insurance, Capitalist paradigms create an artificial need due to the unattainable cost of medical care. This industry parasitizes the populace by purporting to fill this need, which is taken as a given, a fact of life like gravity or electromagnetism, even though it isn't. This industry exacerbates the situation by ultimately driving the cost of medical care even higher, increasing the cost of living, AKA the blackmail price that every person is forced to pay constantly in order to be allowed to continue existing.

The health insurance industry is but one example. Sadly, parasitic industries abound in every sector under Capitalist paradigms. Examples include all insurance industries, billing, collections, advertising, marketing, stock brokerages, credit bureaus, corporate attorneys, lobbyists, rental companies, telemarketers, lending companies, the fashion industry, purveyors and manufacturers of status symbols, real estate brokerages, pawn shops, much of the tourist industry, even bottled water companies (which would have no market if it were not for Capitalism's reinforcing of polluting industrial practices and lifestyles), banks and more.

Yes, banks are in fact parasitic with respect to those not near the top of the economic Pyramid. Consider that when you put your money in a bank, they limit your access to it, charge you fees for accessing it, for not accessing it often enough or accessing it too often, and even for not maintaining an arbitrary minimum balance, thereby placing an extra burden on those in the weakest financial straits. They also practice predatory lending. Banks will manage investments, but if you are looking to invest a small amount, banks pay you returns that do not keep up with inflation. Meanwhile banks invest your money and make astronomical sums off of it. The only "service" a bank could be said to provide is that your money is harder to steal in a bank than under your mattress. The economic and social environment in Capitalist societies makes it extremely difficult to function in day-to-day life without bank accounts, credit cards, and the like which creates the "necessity" of having a bank account.

In addition to legal parasitic industries, illegal ones thrive as well. Examples include protection and extortion rackets, pimps, loan sharks, con artists and scammers targeting every segment of the Community with a multitude of scams, drug dealers, human traffickers, blackmailers, arms dealers, escort services, identity thieves, counterfeiters and more.

Both legal and illegal parasitic industries are an inevitable feature of any Capitalist paradigm that operates for any length of time. When one's level of freedom, options, quality of life, the respect one is afforded, and even ability of continue living are determined by one's level of wealth or lack of it, getting money takes on prime importance at the most basic level. What such paradigms reinforce is the acquisition of currency, influence, power over others, and material wealth. Such an environment is richly fertile ground for both legal and illegal parasitic industries to arise.

In the new paradigms, where currency will be irrelevant and nonexistent, there will be no reinforcers for such industries. They will wither and die for lack of nourishment and purpose. They will serve no function, have no clients or victims, and will fade into the annals of failed human paradigms belonging to dark ages, thankfully left behind.

Those currently forced by economic necessity or driven by greed into such industries will be left without jobs; but unlike the case under Capitalist systems, this will not negatively impact their survival or quality of life. For the most part, they will be able to leverage and transpose the skills that they learned in those industries into forms that are truly productive, contributory, and fulfilling.

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Those who cling to the old paradigms: the mentally ill who find gratification in intimidating, taking advantage of, or defrauding others will of course need to be prevented from expressing their disorders in harmful ways. They will be offered treatment to help them find expressions that are synergistic and not damaging to the community or its inhabitants.

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Those unwilling to accept treatment or who cannot be turned from harmful practices will have to be prevented from exercising them, but otherwise they will be treated with respect and enjoy the same quality of life as other members of the Community. These behaviors will tend towards extinction, as they will in no way be reinforced in the new Paradigms.

Since the post-Transition communities will be self-scrutinizing and crafted to grow, learn, evolve and adapt, any reinforcers for predatory behaviors that are unintentionally generated will be quickly identified and altered to reverse the pattern before it can become endemic and entrenched.

Chapter 27: Capitalism and Tourism

Few things are as destructive and disruptive to the life of a community or even a whole region than tourism in its current form.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

On the surface, tourism appears to be a benefit. It brings in tourists with money to spend and opens up niches for a range of businesses: restaurants, tours, curio and souvenir shops, shuttles and buses, taxicabs, car rentals, entertainments and shows of local culture, bars, clothing shops, and more. It also generates new jobs: retail and wholesale positions, drivers, cooks and waitpersons, cashiers, tour guides, rental agents, bellhops, maids and janitors, maintenance and customer service agents, technicians and others. At first glance it looks like a boon to the community.

Upon deeper examination, however, its effects are devastating, for a number of reasons and in a variety of ways.

Consider for example that in most cases tourism takes up a lot of space. There are exceptions of course, but in many documented cases a luxury hotel, golf course, or resort has displaced hundreds or thousands of residents of the impacted area; Garifuna communities on Honduras's Caribbean coast, for example, have faced repeated evictions to make way for tourism projects (The Ecologist, 2015). This usually happens in developing nations where those residents have no voice and no way to defend their interests. Often they are simply and literally forced to leave when bulldozers blaze a trail of destruction through their homes, fields and businesses. This is not mentioned in any travel brochures.

Similarly, the damage to the local environment and biosphere cannot be ignored. In order to create the kind of environment required to support a tourist resort, massive changes must be imposed on a large geographical area. Often much of the local biome is razed to the ground except in small, contained spaces retained to give patrons a token taste of the local environment. This affects not only the site of the devastation, but also migration routes, mating grounds, watersheds, pollen and seed distribution, micro-habitats, and a host of delicate, complex natural balances that ripples through a much wider area. The very complexity of such systems is far too great for any impact study to realistically analyze.

The impact on the local economy is also complex. One common result, after the initial displacement of the local population and destruction of the local biome, is the stratification of the local population into a rigid and oppressive caste system: a pyramid in which the lofty upper reaches are populated by the tourists who are typically wealthy beyond imagination relative to the local population. All resources and efforts are devoted to servicing and catering to them. The impact on the lives of local people is not taken into account in any meaningful way.

The deleterious effects of tourism on the native population in tourist areas are most severely felt in less developed countries but make no mistake, they affect all touristic areas. At the time of this writing, the long-time tourist city of Firenze (Florence), Italy, has passed laws banning residents from sitting down in certain high volume areas, fining them hundreds or thousands of Euros if they do. Tourism has made it so crowded that there is no room. This is clearly a case where profits are placed above even the simplest rights of human beings. Tourists bring in big money. The fact that the daily quality of life suffers is considered irrelevant. More remote tourist areas such as Machu Picchu in Peru and even the summit of Mt. Everest are frequently jammed beyond capacity with an unending line of people during the climbing season.

The local economy adjusts to operate based on what the tourist overclass wants and can afford, driving the cost of living upwards beyond reach of local residents. This effect ripples outwards to an area much larger than the vicinity of the resort itself.

Below the tourists in this pyramid, there forms a secondary overclass of locals who work directly with the tourists: a select few, local entrepreneurs who fulfill the tourists' needs and desires. This stratum of the pyramid is far below the tourists

economically and in terms of rights and the respect they are afforded, yet its occupants are able to live orders of magnitude above the economic and social status and quality of life experienced by the vast majority of their countrymen.

While constantly subservient to tourists and the owners of the resort (who themselves are usually either ultra-wealthy individuals or corporations from other places), this local over-class typically lords it over their former peers who now find themselves beneath this new over-class who with harsh enthusiasm makes sure to constantly remind all around them of their "place" in the hierarchy. Thus they distance themselves from the memory of their previous lesser status.

The vast majority of the local population becomes a permanent underclass of servants to the tourists and local over-class: maids, bellhops, chauffeurs, cooks and kitchen staff, cleaning staff, receptionists, tour bus/boat/plane/helicopter pilots and drivers, tour guides, waitpersons, booking agents, and more. Many of these workers are paid far below living wages while working long hours under oppressive conditions, all the while being constantly demeaned and reminded that they are less than, that they are inferior and as such have crushing obligations with few or no rights.

Occupations that for generations sustained the population: farming, local businesses, crafts, fishing and more, are gone. They are completely displaced, being incompatible with the dominant business interests of the resort and tourists. The economy becomes almost exclusively centered on the resort and its patrons. Those who do not or cannot find a niche in this structure are unable to remain in the area and survive.

A host of parasitical industries inevitably develops around the resort and its guests: prostitution including children, drug sales and other illegal industries as well as souvenir sales of manufactured facsimiles of local artifacts, poached animal products, clothing, knick-knacks, curios, smaller hotels, restaurants, spas, massage parlors, tours and recreations such as horse or helicopter tours, parasailing, golf courses that displace even more local people and businesses, banks, and more. All of these follow the same socio-economic pattern described above (Slavov, Scientific Review of Physical Culture, 2015).

As we can see, tourism is to a local population and economy as amphetamines are to students: it produces results that on the surface appear constructive but which upon closer examination prove to be fatally damaging. Even if the resort were to shut down at a later time, the damage is often irreversible.

Tourism as we have known it has no place in the post-Transition communities engineered lovingly and painstakingly to empower each and every member to actualize their full potential, to fulfill their dreams and aspirations.

Yet it is natural and beneficial for people to want to travel, expand their horizons, interact with diverse people and cultures, exchange ideas, customs, perspectives, skills, art-forms, languages etc. Paradoxically, tourism in most of its current forms does not truly accomplish this, since tourist resorts naturally adjust to their patrons' tastes and expectations. A luxury resort in New York is not much different from one in Tokyo, Moscow, Mumbai or Rio De Janeiro. Tourists frequenting such places only experience a very superficial, artificial, stylized, watered down abstracted facsimile of the reality of the people, culture and natural environment of the host country.

How then can we encourage and support travel and cross-cultural sharing? Some already established models already exist that work very well as a starting point.

The kibbutzim and moshavim of Israel have volunteer programs in which foreigners can come for a time in a kibbutz or moshav at no cost in exchange for working in kibbutz agriculture, industry, and services. Kibbutzim provide volunteers with a place to live, food, necessities and amenities plus a stipend. Volunteers are welcome to participate in the social and cultural life of the kibbutz, travel on days off, and experience the kibbutz way of life. To a large degree, volunteers participate in the life of the community that strives to make them comfortable without bowing or scraping to them. Their presence is for the most part mutually beneficial and does not disrupt or degrade the natural life of kibbutz or moshav residents or the surrounding towns and cities.

The Venceremos Brigades in Cuba work along similar lines.

There are also programs like the American Peace Corps, Doctors Without Borders, Vista and other similar programs which afford participants the opportunity to involve themselves in other countries and cultures in a context that is at least

theoretically intended to benefit the people of the host country rather than disrupt or profit off of them.

Tourism can be re-cast and developed into a powerful avenue of intercourse between peoples, cultures, individuals, ideas and knowledge worldwide, if re-worked in a form that fosters symbiotic, authentic real experience, participation and interaction rather than a show put on for profit.

In emerging post-Transition cultures, entire new paradigms and models for tourism will also develop. The challenges will be considerable, since any country whose people embark on this kind of transition will find themselves in the position of having to interact with other countries which still use a money economy and practice the current form of tourism.

We will need to develop socio-economic interfaces and protocols for interacting with such countries, both as a society/country and as individuals. We will not be able to change how other countries implement their tourist industries, we can expect that curiosity will ultimately motivate people from around the world to want to visit once they realize that it is safe. When they do, they will enjoy a very different experience as tourists, an experience in which they interact authentically and directly with the people and the environment. Instead of luxury and being catered to in an artificially stylized representation of the local culture amidst a host of businesses enticing them to spend their money on objects, entertainments and experiences, they will encounter sincere hospitality, dialogue, unrestricted access to all cultural and recreational events and activities, easy, open travel within the host country, a warm and welcoming reception by the people of a free, empowered, highly-self-actualized and mutually symbiotic community. In other words, they will experience the new Paradigm directly.

The most valuable souvenir that tourists will take home will be exposure to the post-transitionary society with the inevitable realization that the paradigm is not only viable, but that its citizens overall are happier, healthier, more vibrant and robust than in their own pre-Transitionary societies. Tourism in the post-Transition community will be an important organic mode of sewing the seeds for similar transitions in other countries.

In the days and months immediately after the Transition it is to be expected that the rest of the world will not know what to think or expect. Since almost every revolution that people know about has come with bloodshed, warfare and sometimes a wave of "purging" as the new regime rounds up denizens of the former regime for "justice" or revenge (justified or not). There will be understandable hesitation and uncertainty.

Some revolutions have brought about a more humane and free society; some have done the opposite. There will naturally be a massive campaign of negative propaganda from the ultra-wealthy and their corporations who will lose a lot of their income and all of their dominion, control and influence.

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They will probably experience public relations nightmares as the post-Transitionary community publishes to the world all corporations' crimes, secret dealings and abuses when formerly hidden corporate records will be made public.

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Thus, between fear of the unknown and the expected torrent of negative pro-Capitalist propaganda, people around the world will understandably not know what to think and will be tainted by some degree of apprehension.

As time passes and the new paradigm community settles in, works out its kinks and increasingly shifts from reconstruction and reorganization back to normal living, it will become increasingly apparent to the observing world that the new society is not belligerent or a threat to anybody, that it is a free, open, transparent and stable community/society.

In that context, the new modes of tourism will serve to create ambassadors of goodwill as tourists experience the reality of the new Paradigm first-hand. In time, their direct, personal experiences will put to rest all natural but unfounded fears

based on overthrows in other places and times. A tourist returning from a post-Transition community will provide abundant, factual, positive pictures and impressions of the reality of life in the new Paradigm.

Our dealings with other countries will reflect the new sets of priorities and principles. This will relieve some parties on the world stage while worrying and angering others as it becomes clear that this country will no longer be a source of profitable opportunities to be exploited and will no longer engage in exploiting other countries and peoples for profit.

Around the world, it will become clear that the Post-Transition society is a safe and sane place and that it is not dangerous to visit there. The experiences of those who do, will fuel further curiosity among their friends and families. We can therefore expect that tourism will grow and increasingly flourish as curiosity of the new and novel out-creates fear of the unknown.

One more question must be answered before moving on to other topics: How do citizens of the post-Transition society travel to other countries? As citizens of a country where all forms of currency are obsolete and discontinued in everyday life, how will we travel to and within countries that are still under various implementations of the Capitalist paradigm?

A complete solution will require careful in-depth study, observation of events as they unfold, and possibly the negotiation of new kinds of trade agreements with other countries which are mutually beneficial in new ways.

In the beginning, however, a simple expedient might be to maintain currency in greatly-altered limited-scope banks in various denominations around the country. When a citizen travels abroad, an account can be created in their name with an appropriate amount of funds for their expected travel needs, thus enabling them to pass smoothly through a Capitalist society as needed.

Of course, airlines and all other modes of travel in the post-Transition society will be open to all, though measures will have to be taken to make sure that we are not overwhelmed beyond capacity by foreign travelers who will understandably wish to avail themselves of open travel. Perhaps post-Transition international airlines may have to be accessible only to citizens and their families, or perhaps they can be open to citizens at no cost but priced at the low end of international travel industry standards for foreign nationals, with the funds so generated kept in reserve as funding in the above-mentioned limited banks for home-country travelers when they travel abroad.

In short, tourism in the post-Transitionary society will have to undergo a host of fundamental changes, yet will remain an important avenue for encouraging international and intercultural discourse, trade, cross-fertilization, goodwill, and for planting the seeds for future similar Transitions worldwide.

PART 2: TREATMENT

Glossary of Terms

Corporatocracy A dictatorial socio-politico-economic system or structure in which vast corporations, under control of a few ultra-wealthy individuals, control a country via a combination of propaganda (marketing, advertising and control of media), divide-and-conquer tactics and economic disempowerment of the vast majority of the population, and domination or subsumption of the government and its personnel through economic and other forms of manipulation, intimidation and influence.

Neo-Feudal Lords Under classic feudalism, a very few people (Kings, Queens, Emperors, Kaisers, Tzars, etc.) own and control all of the land and resources, including the people who live in the realm. Their control is enforced by an upper class of nobles and soldiers (knights) who are subservient to the rulers. These are given dominion over portions of the realm in exchange for enforcing the will of the rulers. All other residents are serfs, peasants, or a very few craftspeople who have no rights other than try to survive on what is left over of the fruits of their labor after the rulers and their agents have taken what they want, and to unquestioningly submit to their whims and decrees. The lower classes, the vast majority, have no property or rights except at the whim of the rulers and their agents. Capitalism reproduces Feudalism's core pattern, a few controlling the land and resources everyone needs, even though the titles, legal definitions, and trappings are different. Under Capitalism, increasingly over the passage of time, a handful of ultra-wealthy people control nearly all of the land and the resources on it, often through gargantuan corporations that they run. The people living in those lands have no rights in practice except to pay the owners whatever they decide to ask, for all goods and services from a place to live to medical services to education, out of whatever that same ruling sector decides to pay them for their work. It goes without saying that for a large share of modern-day serfs, artisans and peasants (more than 40 percent of U.S. households), what they are paid by the owners is less than or barely enough to cover the cost of living (United For ALICE, 2024). Therefore the elite members of this tiny controlling segment of the population are referred to as Neo-Feudal Lords.

Parasitic Industries Industries, businesses and enterprises whose function exists only because access to necessities is gated by money. In most cases, parasitic industries prey upon need brought about and imposed through the draconian dynamics of Capitalist societies. In any paradigm, value-producing industries provide needed or desired goods and services, such as food, electricity, consumer goods, communication, healthcare, maintenance, or repairs, whether for pay or organically and freely flowing. Parasitic industries, on the other hand, arise out of the artificial shortages and obstacles to access imposed on all persons under Capitalism. Insurance companies are a prime example. When the cost of healthcare, home and vehicle maintenance and repair, disaster recovery, or liability is far beyond the reach of nearly everybody, insurance companies arise who charge a monthly fee in exchange for covering the cost of such expenses should they arise. Such businesses do detailed statistical analyses of the likelihood of various covered events, and structure their plans so that they take in a steady profit while paying out the least possible amount on claims. Such businesses pay adjusters and attorneys to find any and every possible legally enforceable way to avoid or minimize paying claims. When not legally prevented from doing so, such companies withhold coverage for pre-existing conditions, such that anybody with a chronic or recurring health condition either cannot get coverage or must pay prohibitive amounts. Thus the insurance industry takes advantage of the inaccessibility of vital services imposed by Capitalism and parasitizes clients, making themselves the lesser of two evils, the greater evil being the possibility of encountering a catastrophic event without coverage. However, insured individuals often find themselves fighting long, expensive legal battles to get the coverage for which they have paid. To make matters worse, these extremely powerful and lucrative industries lobby and otherwise influence legislators in many cases to legally force people to buy insurance, as is seen most prominently in the auto insurance industry. Other legal parasitic industries include stockbrokerages, real estate agencies, all financial services industries, pawn shops, advertising and marketing agencies, collection and repossession agencies, corporate attorneys, telemarketers and more. Illegal parasitic industries also flourish in Capitalist environments, such as identity theft, illegal pyramid schemes, scams of every kind, Ponzi schemes and more. A well-known example of an illegal parasitic industry is the "protection racket" in which citizens or small business owners are threatened with harm to person or property if they don't pay "protection money" to prevent threatened vandalism or bodily harm. A note on the word: "parasitic" describes what these industries do within the system, not the people who work in them. Most people in these jobs took the work that was available to support themselves and their families, and many are

decent, caring people doing their best inside a structure they did not design. Nothing here is a judgment of them. In the Transition, their skills and experience will be welcome in work that serves the community directly.

Social Entity Social entities are not the same thing as corporate personhood. An individual is a person. A family is a social entity: two or more adults, any children they have, and other relatives or people living with them as extended family. A social club, a house of worship, a factory, a shared farm, a software development team or a distribution centre is also a social entity. Each is the shared property and the shared responsibility of all the people who run it, operate it and work in it, and it is administered on a peership basis, as a partnership of equals. Its ownership rests on that shared nature: it belongs to the people who make it up. This bears no resemblance to corporate personhood under capitalism, in which a legal fiction is treated as a person in its own right, is owned by shareholders who may never set foot in it, and is run on their behalf through a chain of command that the people working there do not control. A social entity is not a legal fiction standing apart from its members; it is its members, holding and running something together.

Reverse Strike A form of collective action that turns a traditional strike around. In a traditional strike, workers stop production to win concessions, and then return to the same system. In a reverse strike, goods and services keep being produced and delivered, but payment stops, because the aim is not concessions but leaving the money system behind. In the current approach it belongs only to the final phase, as an open, nonviolent, collective act of last resort, where democratic law has already changed or is changing. It never involves unauthorised changes to records, blocking institutions or cutting off communications.

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Reverse Strike A strategy for implementing a complete change of socio-economic paradigm in which, with specific exceptions, all persons continue to perform their jobs and functions in the community while ceasing, abstaining from participating in, and blocking all financial activity. Producers, providers, and distributors of goods and services continue their normal activities. The stoppage is in the economic end of things. Cashiers ring merchandise out for inventory purposes but price-modify everything to zero. Billing departments mark all accounts current and paid in full, and cease all billing activities. All persons cease paying for anything, from groceries to rent or mortgage to medical care. All financial institutions including banks, credit unions, the Stock Exchange, collections and repossession agencies, credit card companies, insurance companies, etc. will be shut down, cut off from power and communications, and rendered inert, preferably by will of those who work in them, but by external agency if necessary (i.e. blocking entrances with vehicles, dumpsters and other obstacles; cutting power and communications lines; jamming cellular reception, etc.). Chains of command will be ignored and forcibly resisted if necessary as employees take democratic control of all operations. Any attempts to use police, military or mercenaries to re-assert control of the chain of command will also be met with resistance and non-compliance. This is in contrast to a traditional strike, where production and distribution are disrupted by employees in order to gain concessions from employers. In the reverse strike, the goal is not concessions but a complete change in paradigm. Employers have nothing that we want or need. The ones bringing the change are the ones keeping goods and services flowing, which forces those trying to suppress it into the role of the terrorists trying to shut vital services down. With millions of cell phones and other devices streaming and recording the events, the country and the world will quickly see the real situation. The majority of people will sympathize with and support the change-bringers. The wealthy and powerful around the world will oppose. But in the long run they cannot prevail if we are resolute, united and committed to bringing the Transition."

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

The self-devouring cycle The economic pattern of forced overproduction and overconsumption necessary to keep Capitalist paradigms functioning optimally according to Capitalist metrics. This cycle is characterized by the overproduction of inferior products that are deliberately manufactured to have a short lifespan, to be non-reparable and non-upgradeable. Since products break, expire or wear out quickly, consumers must frequently replace them. This guarantees constant profits for manufacturers and vendors, at the expense of artificially and unnecessarily stressful demands on employees and constant

unnecessary economic drain on consumers, who are the same employees who work in production. This cycle also entails unnecessary depletion of natural resources, pollution, and waste. It is an economic pattern which forces employees to work under constant debilitating stress, devouring their time and life-enerty in order to produce throwaway goods in order to be able to pay to endlessly replace these same goods. The only participants in the cycle who benefit are the neo-Feudal Lords at the very top of the economic Pyramid who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the paradigm.

Transition The gradual, voluntary and democratic replacement of a money-based, hierarchical system with one in which people meet each other's needs directly. It begins with small cooperative projects that solve real problems and prove themselves, grows as those projects spread and federate, and is completed only through democratic law, once the alternative has shown that it works. It is distinguished from revolution, which has historically meant violent overthrow; the Transition rejects vengeance and violence, and changes the economic power structure, not the democratic government. See the Roadmap.

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Transition The forceful but non-violent process of shutting down a dysfunctional, destructive hierarchical paradigm such as Capitalism, undisguised or disguised dictatorship, oligarchy, monarchy, or theocracy and implementing a peer-based, synergistic paradigm in its place that is based on co-operation, symbiosis, democratic or consensus-based decision-making, and what thousands of years of experience and recent advances in psycho-social science have taught us about human behaviors, responses, and motivations and what influences them. The Transition is usually to be brought out through implementation of the reverse strike strategy in most countries. Transition is distinguished from Revolution since the latter has historically become associated with violent, often bloody overthrows of governments, often leading to atrocities committed by all sides. In contrast, Transition, while involving the overthrow of one paradigm and replacing it with a different one, emphasizes the use of non-violent force, an ethic of compassion and humanity precluding vengeance or purging of deposed former persons in power, and decentralized control and responsibility. Transition is not the overthrow of government, but of the economic power structure.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Analysis and Graphic Representations of Important Data, Principles, and Concepts

Note how clearly the economic income disparity shows in this graph. The income of the bottom 99% of the population is so dwarfed by that of the top 1% and even the top 0.01%, that it appears as a horizontal line near zero. In reality that horizontal line covers the range from $0 yearly income to roughly $380,000 for individuals and $630,000 for households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 incomes). In most graphical representations of data with such an extreme range, a logarithmic scale is used in order to visualize greater detail. Here, however, the data is presented unaltered, in order to show the true degree of disparity currently existing in the United States, a strong representation of the real-life example of an end-stage Capitalist society.

For those who are not math-minded, percentile means that if you are in the X'th Percentile, than your income is the same or greater than X% of the population. Thus the 50th percentile represents what is called the median income, which means that half the population (50%) has income greater than this amount and half has income less than this amount. In 2023, the median annual income was about $42,000 for individuals with income and $80,610 for households (U.S. Census Bureau, CPS ASEC 2024; U.S. Census Bureau, 2024).

As will become clear in Figure 2, a living wage in 2023 for an individual was approximately $31,200 and for households between about $50,400 and $67,500, depending on the number of people in the household up to 2 adults and 2 children (the 2017 MIT Living Wage Calculator figures, adjusted for inflation). The data shows that approximately 38% of individuals and 32% - 43% of households in the United States are living at sub or just barely living level.

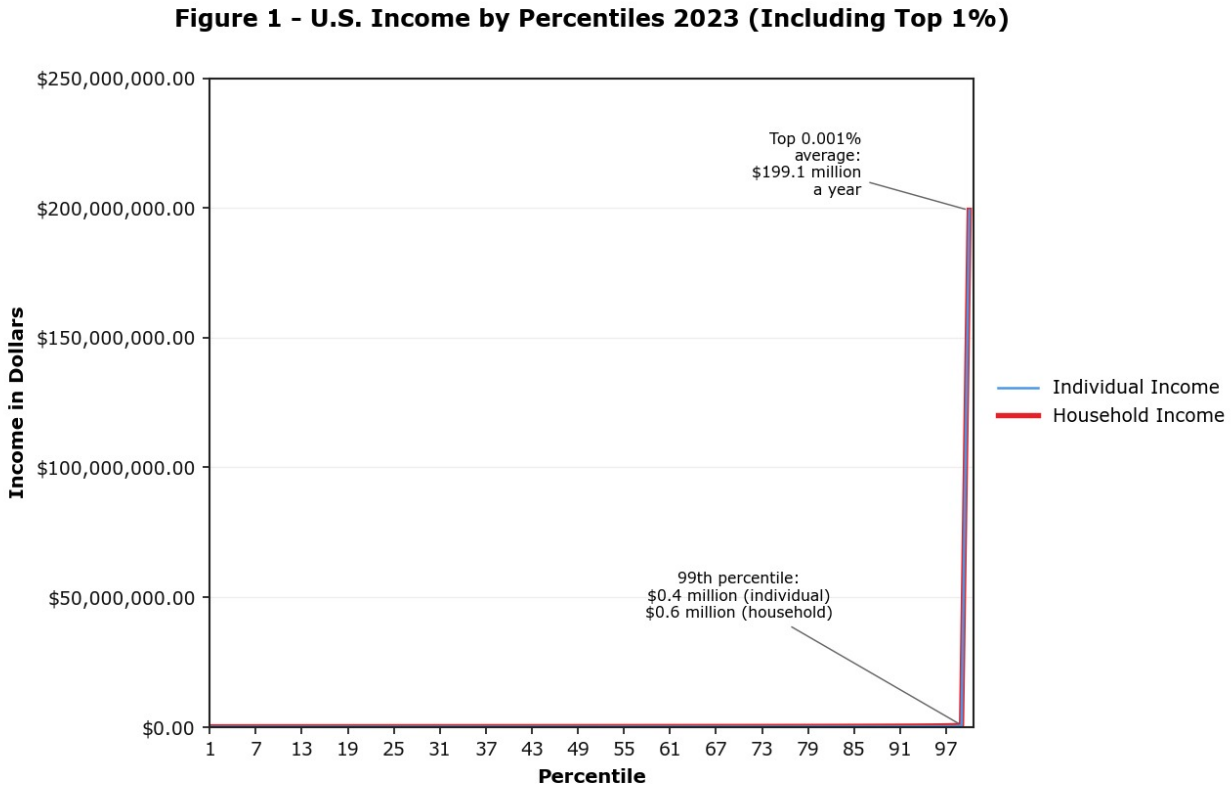
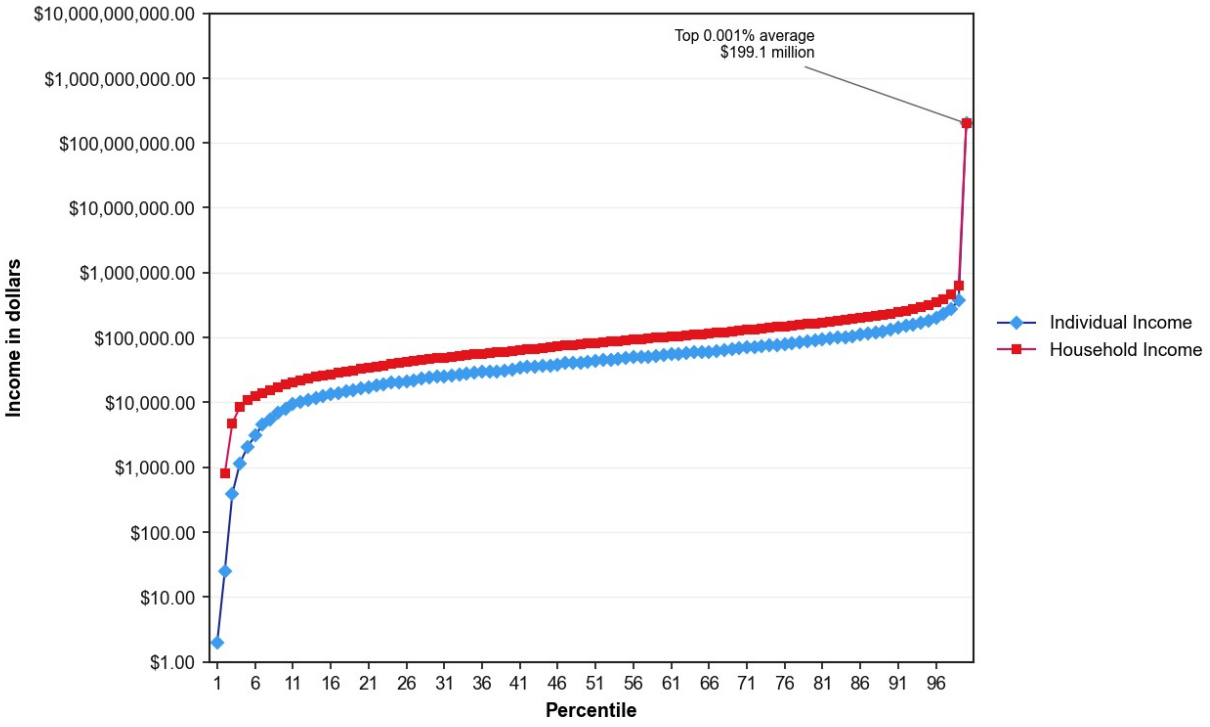


Figure 1: U.S. Income by Percentiles 2023 (Including Top 1%)

Below is a logarithmic representation of the same data as above. Note that even with the scale condensed by using orders of magnitude, the disparity is unmistakably dramatic. Even in this representation, the income of those very few at the top of the pyramid dwarfs that of all of the rest of the people.

Figure 1a - US Income Percentiles 2023 in Logarithmic Scale (Including top 1%)



Percentiles 1-99: U.S. Census Bureau, CPS ASEC 2024 public-use microdata (income in 2023): households, and persons 15+ with income. Percentiles with zero income cannot be shown on a log scale.
Point 100: average pre-tax income of the richest 0.001% of adults (about 2,600 people), $199 million in 2023 (WID.world, Piketty-Saez-Zucman series; equal-split adults).

Figure 1a: U.S. Income Percentiles 2023 in Logarithmic Scale

Note that for those capitalist feudal lords in the top 0.001 percentile, the reality is vastly different than that of the overwhelming majority of the population. If a billionaire or corporation is in danger of going out of business, then the government takes money from the rest of the population (in the form of tax money) and gives it to the lord or corporation to keep them in business. If a CEO is fired for unethical behavior or mismanagement, they are given a bonus of millions of dollars. If a serf, meaning anybody not at the top of the pyramid, experiences financial hardships, then banks charge them recurring and escalating fees, thus ensuring their demise. If such a person is found guilty of unethical behavior or incompetence, then they are fired and possibly jailed. This is a snapshot of a truly Feudal society as prevailed in Europe in the Middle Ages, not of a free and democratic society of, by, and for The People.

As seen below, leaving out the top 1% allows a more detailed view of the disparity among 99% of us, though it is still quite a steep level of disparity. The colored horizontal and vertical lines on the graph show at what percentiles these metrics fall. Note that in 2023, 11.1% of people lived below the Federally defined poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). That line is itself about $15,700 less than a living wage for an individual ($15,480 against $31,209), and $30,800 - $36,300 less than a living wage for households of two to four people, which shows how unrealistic the U.S. government is in evaluating the well-being of its inhabitants. The reason for this degree of unrealism is twofold: One reason is that those elected to work in the executive, legislative and judiciary Federal Government are generally either from or closely tied to those at the top of the economic pyramid and so are truly out of touch with the reality for the overwhelming majority of people. The other reason is because of the disproportionate degree of influence that lobbyists for mega-corporations and the ultra-wealthy exert upon those in government.

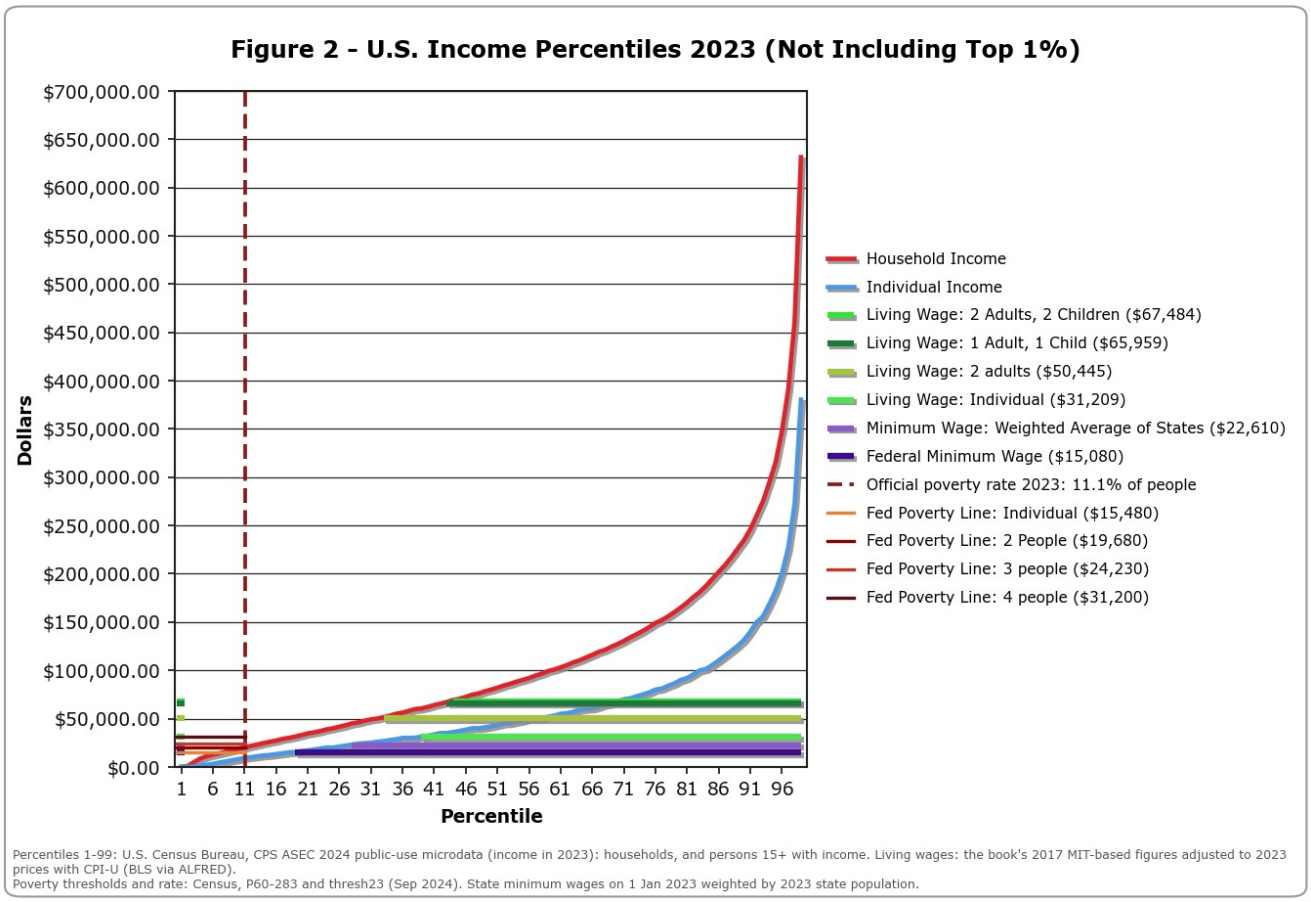
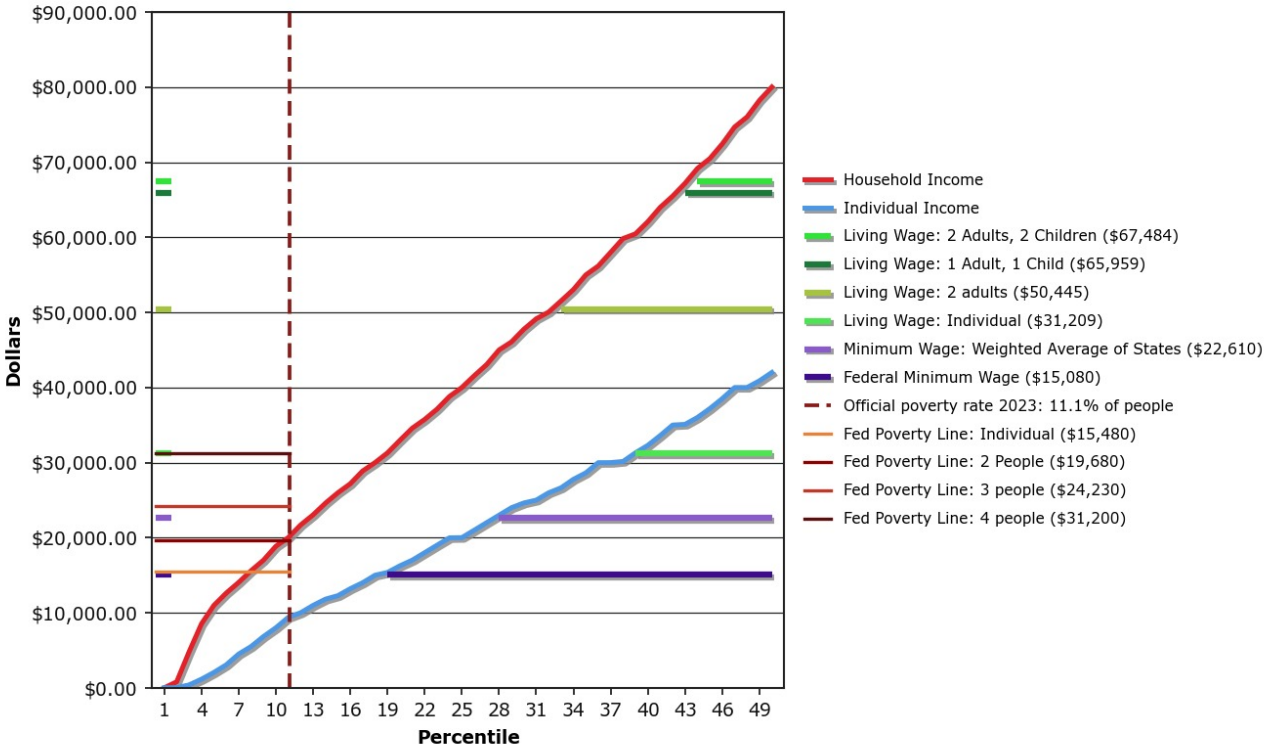


Figure 2: U.S. Income Percentiles 2023 (Not Including Top 1%)

It is worth noting that minimum wage in the United States, a kind of "safety net" originally intended to guarantee employees a living wage, falls woefully short. The Federal annual Minimum Wage is $15,080. Calculating a population-weighted average of State minimum wages (January 2023) shows a somewhat better picture of about $22,600 ($10.87 an hour) (EY Tax News, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau population estimates, 2023). Thus the federal minimum wage is about $16,100 less than a living wage for an individual, while the state minimum wage weighted average is about $8,600 short. Keep in mind that a living wage means that one's income just pays living expenses when nothing unexpected comes up. The reason for this disconnect from reality is that the pressure exerted by mega-corporations and the ultra-wealthy upon lawmakers is much stronger than that of the People. Working people put pressure on the government to guarantee a living wage; the new-feudal lords pressure to limit such protections. The result is anemic protections that fall far short of their intended purpose. This is where the pressures on government from the People and from the feudal lords and corporations find equilibrium. This is one more practical example of the fact that capitalism cannot, by its very nature, be modified or regulated into a form that works for the People.

In order to get a detailed picture of these data, we must look at only the bottom 50% of the population. Here we see clearly that tens of millions of American households are subsisting on sub or barely living income. In 2022, 54 million households, 42 percent of all households in the country, earned less than it costs to afford the basics where they live (United For ALICE, 2024). Keep in mind that "living wage" means that one's income just covers living expenses with nothing left over. If any added expense occurs, such as car repair, inflation, deductibles and copays for medical procedures, attorney fees, or even parking or traffic tickets, for example, then such income does not suffice. It also does not cover entertainment, vacations, etc. It covers a life of work and bare subsistence. In order to be able to absorb typical unexpected expenses, one must be making considerably more than a living wage. Thus, the proportion of the U.S. population that lives in constant economic stress is considerably more than half.

Figure 3: U.S. Income Pyramid 2023 (Bottom 50%)



Percentiles 1-99: U.S. Census Bureau, CPS ASEC 2024 public-use microdata (income in 2023): households, and persons 15+ with income. Living wages: the book's 2017 MIT-based figures adjusted to 2023 prices with CPI-U (BLS via ALFRED).
Poverty thresholds and rate: Census, P60-283 and thresh23 (Sep 2024). State minimum wages on 1 Jan 2023 weighted by 2023 state population.

Figure 3: U.S. Income Pyramid 2023 (Bottom 50%)

The disparity between the bottom 99% and the uppermost 1% in the economic pyramid is replicated very closely within the upper 1%.

While it is very difficult to access detailed information about the very top one percent of the pyramid, data can be found. Sadly this data is not nearly as complete or high resolution as that pertaining to the lower 99%. One reason for this is that most studies do not go beyond resolution of percents. There are not many studies breaking the data down within a percentile. Many studies content themselves with “quintiles,” each quintile representing 20% of the income distribution. Another reason is the way survey data are handled. To protect respondents’ confidentiality, surveys “top-code” high incomes, which in practice hides the top of the distribution. The “Current Population Survey” in the United States is one of the most reliable sources of up-to-date information on changes in salary. Yet they employ what is called “top-coding” of all people whose salaries are more than $2,884.61 per week (about $150,000 per year). All persons with salaries above that figure are reported as $2,884.61 per week, representing the 95th percentile. This has continued unchanged for the past twenty years (Gould, Economic Policy Institute, 2019). Tax-based studies fill the gap that surveys leave (Piketty, Saez & Zucman, 2018). Of course, those at the very top of the pyramid cannot completely avoid public exposure, due to their prominence in influencing economic policy. These neo-Feudal lords can afford to be in public view because their wealth buys them security that rivals that of heads of state. Observe how similar Figure 4, breaking down within the upper 1%, is to Figure 1, breaking down the entire population.

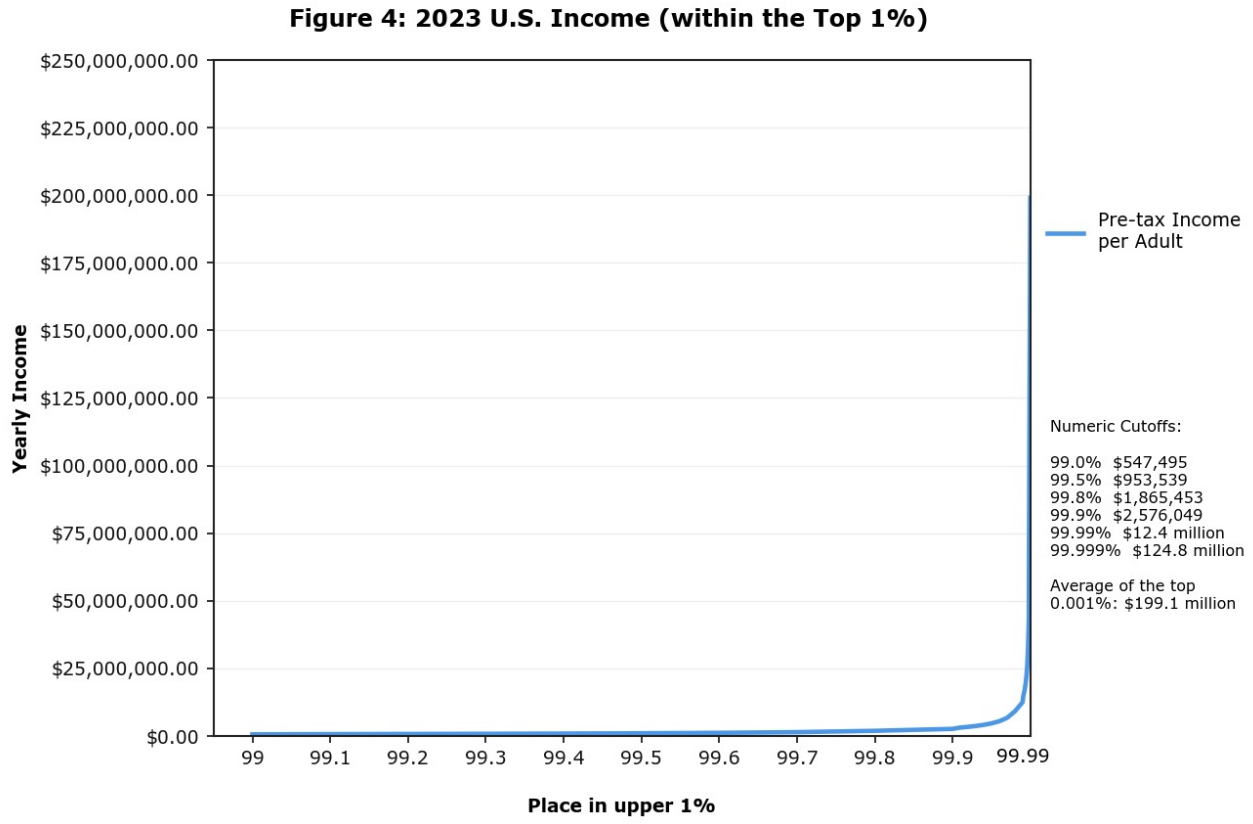


Figure 4: 2023 U.S. Income (within the Top 1%)

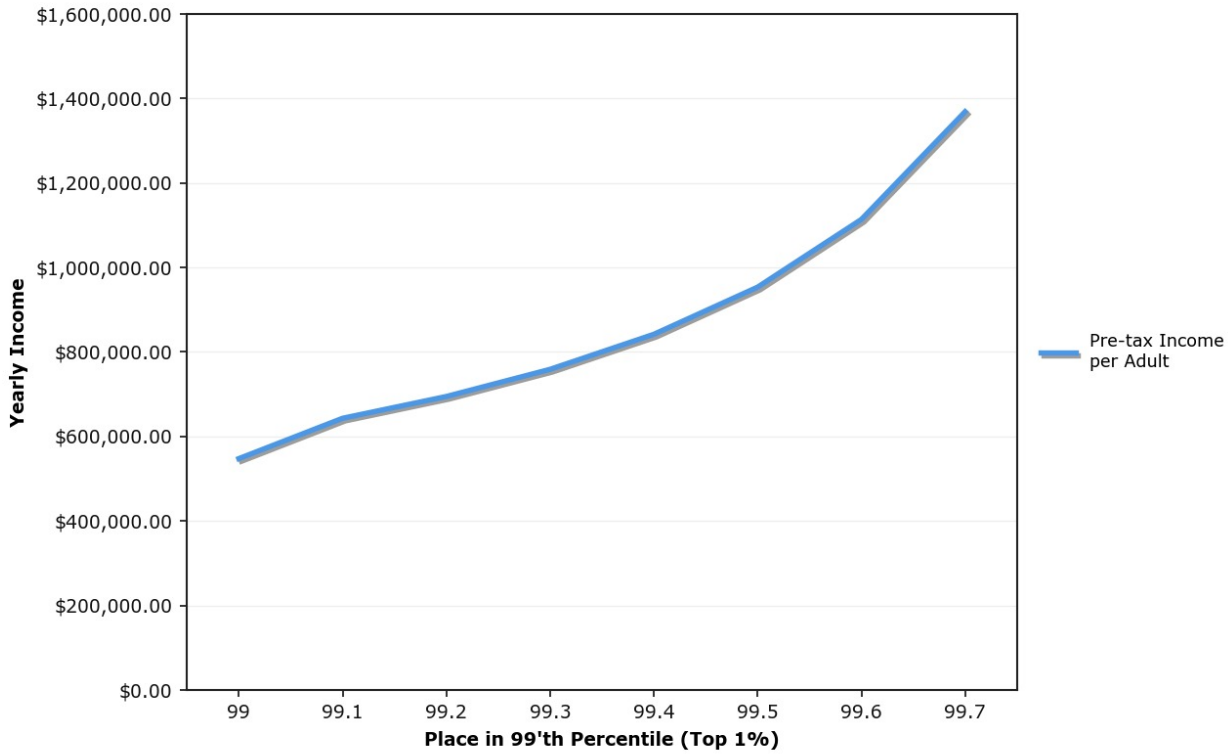
The Forbes Magazine list of the 400 wealthiest Americans represents approximately .0000012 (0.00012%) of the population, or about 1.2 out of every million people. Consider that Federal minimum wage is $15,080 per year. In contrast, as of 2018 these wealthiest 400 U.S. citizens controlled combined known wealth of approximately $2,900,000,000,000, nearly three trillion dollars, an average of $7.2 billion each (Forbes, 2018). This wealth is equivalent to the combined annual earnings of 192,307,692 people working at minimum wage, 115,537,848 individuals living at barely living wages, or 71,462,014 – 54,654,077 families of 2 to 4 people at barely living wages. A year earlier, the 400 already owned more wealth than the bottom 64 percent of the U.S. population, about 204 million people (Collins & Hoxie, Institute for Policy Studies, 2017). By 2025 their combined wealth had more than doubled, to a record $6.6 trillion (Forbes, 2025).

In 2017 the richest American's fortune grew by about $33 billion, mostly from rising share value. That gain is roughly the combined yearly earnings of 2.2 million people working full time at the federal minimum wage, more people than live in any of 15 of the 50 states. Translated into the equivalent in hourly wages for a 40-hour week, it comes to about $16 million an hour.

A recent article by Noah Kirsch in Forbes Magazine, a mainstream U.S. economic publication whose audience is those in the upper reaches of the economic Pyramid, states unapologetically that the richest three individuals in the United States control more wealth among them than the entire bottom 50% of the U.S. population combined (Kirsch, Forbes, 2017). This is a concentration that rivals that of many feudal societies (Alfani, 2021).

The only way to see any degree of detail within the top one percent is to view only 99.0% through 99.7%. Including the 99.9th percentile and above squashes the bottom ¾ of the top 1% into a nearly flat line.

Figure 5: 2023 US bottom .7 of Top 1%



Source: WID.world (Piketty, Saez & Zucman distributional national accounts), pre-tax national income per adult, income of couples split equally, 2023, converted to 2023 dollars with WID's price index. Values are the income cutoffs at each tenth of a percentile.

Figure 5: 2023 U.S. Income, Bottom 0.7 of the Top 1% (99.0th to 99.7th Percentiles)

The disparity is so extreme that the human mind struggles to process it and encompass its implications and reality. Disparities within a given corporation are typically quite staggering as well (AFL-CIO Executive Paywatch, 2019):

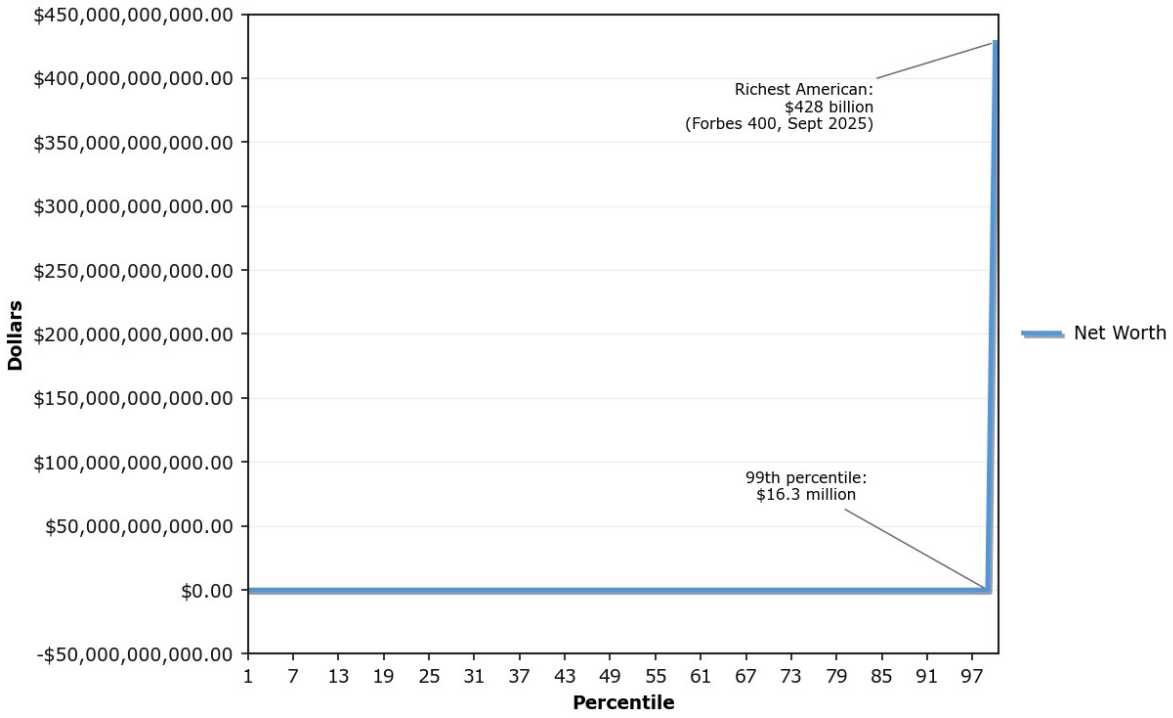
Company	CEO Total Pay	Median Employee Pay	Ratio
Marathon Petroleum	$19,799,220	$27,730	714
Whirlpool	$11,840,330	$20,485	578
Tesla	$2,284,036,884*	$56,163	40,668
Kroger	$12,032,496	$24,912	483
Walmart	$23,620,352	$21,952	1,076
Gap	about $20.8 million	$5,831	3,566
Walt Disney Co.	$65,662,896	$46,127	1,424
McDonalds	$15,872,652	$7,473	2,124
CVS	$21,956,922	$35,529	618
Target	$17,210,713	$22,439	767

*The value of a 2018 stock-option award; Elon Musk takes no traditional salary.

Figures are for 2018, as reported in the companies' 2019 filings and compiled by the AFL-CIO. Each company's "median employee" includes part-time and overseas staff: Gap's, for example, was a part-time sales associate (lovemoney, from CNN reporting).

Another way to quantify the relative financial realities of the population is in terms of "net worth." This represents the resources and assets that a person owns or controls, after their debts and expenses are subtracted. This may include currency, real estate, investments (stocks, bonds, etc), possessions, precious metals and gemstones, profitable businesses, income over and above expenses, and more. When all percentiles are taken into account, this chart very closely resembles those showing income, though the gradient is a little bit steeper at the upper end. Note, as well, the existence of negative net worth values in the graph.

Figure 6: U.S. Net Worth Pyramid 2025 – Including Top 1%



Percentiles 1-99: households ranked by net worth, Federal Reserve 2025 Survey of Consumer Finances (summary extract, 2025 dollars). The SCF leaves out the Forbes 400.
Point 100: net worth of the richest American, Elon Musk, The Forbes 400 (September 2025).

Figure 6: U.S. Net Worth Pyramid 2025 (Including Top 1%)

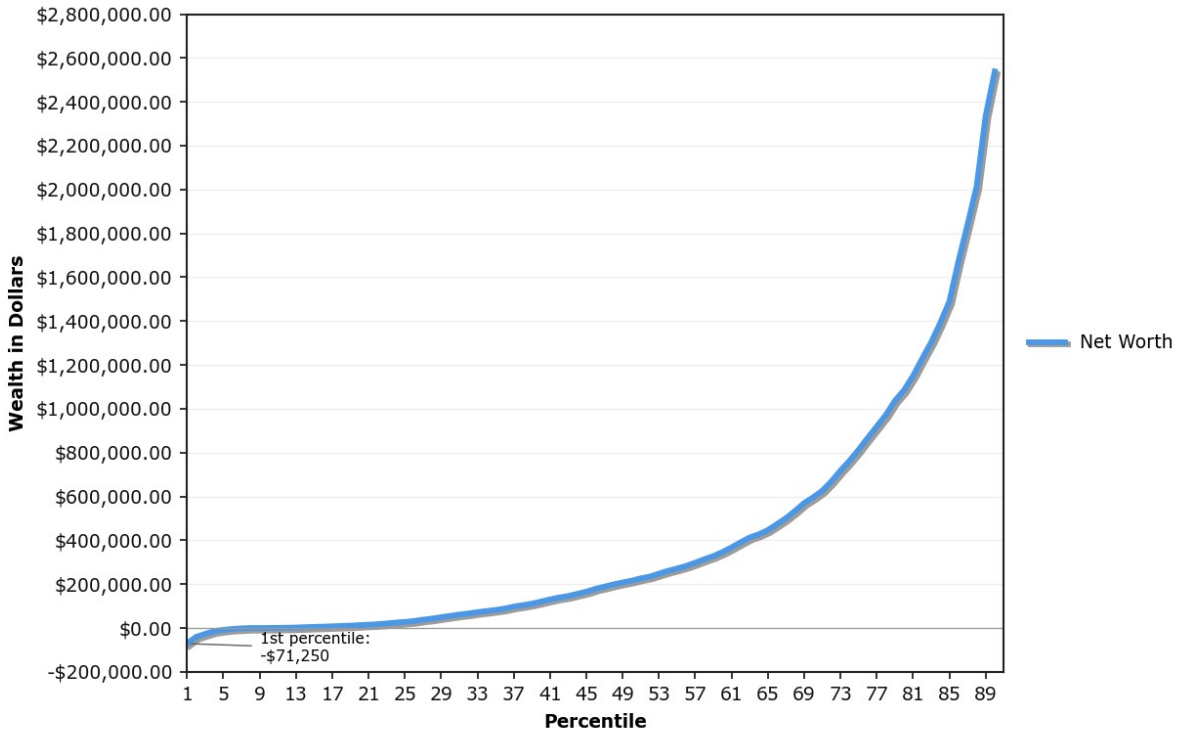
In order to see any level of detail, once again we must leave out the uppermost reaches of the Pyramid, which otherwise dwarfs the other 99% and more to a straight, horizontal line by comparison. That horizontal-appearing line spans a range from about -$71,000 at the low end to around $16,000,000 at the 99th percentile (Federal Reserve, 2025).

In order to see more detail, we can include no more than the bottom 90% of U.S. "net worth," which allows us to explore those negative numbers. The worst-off households, at the first percentile, have a net worth of about -$71,000 (Federal Reserve, 2025). This means that when all of their debts and expenses are added to their assets and resources, they are left owing about $71,000. In their economic situation, this bottom first percentile has virtually no chance of ever being able to recover. Many employers will not offer them a job, no lenders will loan to them, and their creditors will steadily increase the interest, finance fees, late fees, insufficient funds fees and other burdens upon those unfortunate enough to be in that demographic. Creditors eventually send delinquent accounts to collection agencies that relentlessly harass and terrorize debtors and eventually obtain court orders garnishing these unfortunate souls' already meager salaries, driving them even deeper into the proverbial hole, leaving them no viable recourse. Even filing bankruptcy is beyond their means. The normal

functioning of the capitalist paradigm works to deepen the plight of people in this situation, which also leads to losses on the parts of creditors.

Here we see Capitalism not just functioning as a win-loose-loose-loose-loose paradigm, but as a no-win-for-anybody paradigm. All that is accomplished is to punish the people at the very bottom of the pyramid and grind them into the ground for no constructive purpose. It is important to note that about 8% of U.S. households, nearly 11 million of them, have negative net worth (Federal Reserve, 2025), and many more have next to nothing: the household at the 10th percentile is worth about $200. The number of people in this situation is larger still, when one considers that a good portion of these households are family units with children who are also affected.

Figure 7: 2025 US Net Worth - bottom 90%



Percentiles 1-99: households ranked by net worth, Federal Reserve 2025 Survey of Consumer Finances (summary extract, 2025 dollars). The SCF leaves out the Forbes 400.

Figure 7: 2025 U.S. Net Worth (Bottom 90%)

There is no real point in attempting to graph the very upper reaches of the net worth pyramid. It resembles the income pyramid but is even steeper. The 99.9th percentile shows household net worth of about $64,000,000 (Federal Reserve, 2025), while the richest American held about $428,000,000,000 (Forbes, September 2025). Here again we see, even within the upper one percent, a sharp stratification mimicking that between the uppermost percentile and the lower 99% of the population in terms of net worth.

Needless to say, nobody below the 39th percentile has even the theoretical possibility of being able to "use money to make money." Even those at the 50th percentile, who are actually able to save some after living expenses are paid, are barely able to absorb any unexpected expenses, such as uncovered medical or dental bills, legal costs, replacing or repairing a car, roof replacement, fumigation, electrical rewiring, major plumbing work, or college tuition. Just one such event can wipe out their resources or even leave them in debt. Even if they have some investments, most likely they will need to cash them in to cover such an event.

The most basic right is the right to life, which implies the right to occupy space. If you do not have that right, your right to exist is effectively nullified. As discussed in the body of this book, owning a home is preferable to renting in Capitalist

societies, for obvious reasons. Statistics show that in 2023, about 65% of occupied U.S. homes were owner-occupied and 35% rented (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023). On the surface, this looks not too dire; yet this statistic is misleading. Of the homes counted as "owned", about 60% are still being paid off with a mortgage. Only about 40% are owned outright (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023). The picture is a lot less rosy than it would appear. Keep in mind that as long as you have a mortgage, you hold the title, but the lender holds your home in its hands: a major life change that leaves you unable to keep up the payments for long enough can cost you the home, and every month you fall behind deepens the hole (see Chapter 11). In practical terms, paying off a mortgage is far closer to renting than to secure ownership. Yet people with mortgages are counted as "homeowners", which creates a misleading impression. When one combines renters and homeowners with mortgages together in the category of those who don't in reality own their home, one arrives at a more accurate picture.

Thus we see that about 73% of people living in the U.S. (about 246 million people) live in homes paid for every month, and only about 23% (about 76 million) live in homes owned outright (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023). This roughly translates into a reality in which anybody below roughly the 73rd income and net worth percentile is probably having to ransom their life every month. In other words, if a household in 2023 was bringing in less than about $137,000 a year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 incomes), or in 2025 had a net worth of less than about $718,000 (Federal Reserve, 2025), then they were most likely hostage to a landlord or lender and could lose their place to live if their livelihood were lost or catastrophic expenses occurred. Even the majority of those who do own their homes outright are still not part of the microscopic sector of the population who control and own almost everything. They no longer must pay protection money every month to live in their home; but one has to be far, far beyond the 73rd percentile to be among the ruling elite. These non-ruling-elite true homeowners correspond roughly to those who, in the Middle Ages, were granted a higher level of privileges than peasants and serfs but still wielded little power. Both groups could fairly easily lose what they have.

Of course the correlation of full home ownership to altitude on the economic pyramid is not as clear-cut as that of income and overall wealth, since paying off a mortgage transforms a person from a de-facto renter with bank as landlord to actual owner, as does inheriting a house from a parent or other relative who passes away. Many mortgages are either 15 or 30 years. Those who complete those years without missing payments do become true homeowners, regardless of where they are on the economic pyramid. In the dynamics of contemporary American society, however, it is increasingly difficult for a family to remain in the same home for the whole course of a mortgage. Job loss, job-related and other relocations, breakups of families, unforeseen catastrophic expenses, inflation that outpaces wages, and many other factors quite often intervene. In such a case, the house is sold, a home equity line of credit, second mortgage, or reverse mortgage is taken out, or the bank forecloses on the home, depending on the circumstances. The fact remains that only about 23 percent of U.S. residents do not have to pay rent or mortgage every month to keep their home.

On a single night in January 2024, 771,480 people in the United States were homeless (HUD, 2024), while about 15.8 million homes stood vacant (FRED, from Census Bureau data): more than twenty empty homes for every homeless person. Not every empty home is habitable or in the right place, but there are dramatically more than enough living units to accommodate both the entire homeless population and a large number of refugees and/or future residents. This illustrates how reliably the primary products of Capitalism are shortage and inaccessibility. There is no actual physical housing shortage. Yet more than three quarters of a million people have no place to live because one has access to precisely nothing under Capitalist paradigms unless one comes up with money to pay for it. Many of the homeless are veterans who risked their lives to protect the country. This situation also clearly spotlights the destructive forced overproduction/overconsumption characteristic of Capitalist paradigms. New home construction continues at an undiminished pace, even though there are already more than enough living units to house all residents. Many of the vacant homes are second homes, holiday and seasonal homes that stand empty most of the year, while hundreds of thousands of people have no home at all. When some have two or more homes and others have none, and there are more than enough to go around, the situation is indefensible. The "housing shortage" is not a shortage of buildings; it is a shortage of homes that people can afford where they need them, created by how housing is priced, owned and held for profit. This is clearly unsustainable long-term, wasteful and destructive, and does not serve the well-being of any but the very wealthy neo-Feudal lords who own and control a rapidly growing, vast share of all resources including land and dwellings.

Looking in four dimensions, we see that the disparity has been steadily growing over time in home ownership along with income and overall wealth. In 1945, about 55% of homeowners were mortgage-free; by around 2010 the figure had fallen to about 34%. It has since risen toward 40%, but almost entirely because the baby-boom generation has paid off its mortgages (FiveThirtyEight). For younger Americans the picture is the opposite. Fewer than 37% of adults under 35 own a home, down from 43% in 2005 (NAHB, from Census data); millennials own homes at a rate about 8 points lower than earlier generations did at the same age (Urban Institute, 2018); and the median age of first-time buyers has risen from 29 in 1981 to a record 40 in 2025 (National Association of Realtors, via KXAN). Each generation has to wait longer, pay more, and carry its mortgage further into life. (Data from the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, statista.com among others. Data is consistent across sources.)

The following table summarizes the data on housing in the United States, specifically in 2023:

	Number of Housing Units	*Percent of total of Units*	*Number of People*	*Percent of population*
Rented	43,505,743	29.9%	98,153,273	29.31%
Owned with mortgage	51,623,068	35.5%	147,722,115	44.11%
Total Paying Monthly	***95,128,811***	***65.5%***	***245,875,388***	***73.41%***
Owned Outright	34,062,801	23.4%	76,292,024	22.78%
Occupied, no rent paid	2,140,748	1.5%	4,534,234	1.35%
Vacant	14,001,102	9.6%	0	0.00%
Homeless	0	0.0%	653,104	0.20%
Group quarters	0	0.0%	8,213,250	2.45%
Total	***145,333,462***	***100.0%***	***334,914,896***	***100.00%***

United States, 2023. Housing units and people in households: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023 1-year (tables B25002, B25003, B25008, B25081, B01003; renter and owner splits from the ACS 2023 PUMS). Homeless: HUD 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, Part 1 (one night in January 2023; people in shelters are also counted in group quarters). Group quarters: prisons, nursing homes, dormitories, shelters and similar.

U.S. Housing Distribution, 2023

While it is difficult to determine the precise amount of income and savings that a person or family in a Capitalist society such as the United States needs in order to more than barely survive paycheck to paycheck, there is a plethora of material written by “financial experts” advising those lower in the Pyramid on how to achieve “financial freedom.” General intentions and goals include preparedness for unexpected emergencies, job/income loss, and retirement. At living-wage, however, any emergency or job-loss translates into pretty much instant homelessness. Any major expense is impossible to surmount. Retirement is a myth as remote as unicorns and the ancient Greek gods.

A number of experts advise struggling wage earners to try to earn enough to save 20% - 30% of their take-home pay. Similar advice suggests to save enough money to cover 3 – 6 months of living expenses in case of job loss, plus an additional 3 – 6 months’ worth of money to cover unexpected emergencies. Finally, for retirement, many financial advisors recommend saving up a nest-egg of 22 times one’s accustomed annual living expenses.

Let’s see what this looks like for an individual or family living paycheck-to-paycheck. For an individual, a living wage in 2023 was about $31,200. At that income level, living expenses consume income with nothing owed and none left over. To make 20% - 30% more that can be saved, such an individual must make about $37,500 – $40,600, which would put them in the 46th – 49th percentile instead of the 39th. A family living on just-living wages would have to attain and sustain an income of about $60,500 - $87,700 in order to save 20% - 30%. This would require them to go from the 33rd – 44th percentiles to the 40th – 54th percentiles. All of this is assuming that one can jump 7 – 10 percentiles as a matter of course, which is obviously far from certain. Given the core structure and functioning of the Capitalist paradigm, while it is

occasionally possible individually, it is literally impossible on a large scale. No matter how hard we work, only a very few occupants of these lower percentiles will ever be able to follow this financial advice.

Using the above advice, in order to save 3 – 6 months' worth for emergencies plus another 3 – 6 months' worth to live on in case of job loss, it will take all of these individuals and families 2 ½ years to save 6 months' worth of living and emergency funds by saving 20%. It will take 5 years to save up 12 months' combined living and emergency funds by saving 20%. If they are fortunate enough to be able to save 30%, then it will take 1 2/3 years to save up a 6-month buffer or 3 1/3 years to save up 12 months worth of combined buffer funds.

As for the goal of saving 22 times their annual living expenses for retirement, that comes out to a target of about $687,000 for an individual (about the 72nd percentile of household "net worth"), and about $1,110,000 - $1,485,000 (about the 80th – 85th percentiles) for a family (ranging from two adults at the low end, to two adults plus two children at the high end). For all of these people, if they are saving 20% above living wage, it will take them 110 years to attain the goal. If they are fortunate enough to be able to save 30%, then they might just have time to reach the goal in only 73 years and 4 months. That would start counting after the 6 – 12 months' emergency and living expense money are saved, so add another 1.66 to 5 years. This is assuming that no costly emergencies occur along the way and that there are no job losses that would consume the savings. This simple calculation also leaves out investment returns and Social Security, which would shorten the time, though for many the goal would still stay out of reach.

Clearly, there are some serious obstacles to reaching these goals. Given the vicissitudes of life under Capitalist paradigms, it is likely to take longer than the theoretical time just to attain the smaller goal of saving 6 – 12 months' buffer, since more often than not there will be expensive car repairs, plumbing issues, uncovered medical expenses, attorney fees, home repairs, traffic tickets, and other unforeseeable expenses that will prolong the process. For most of us, the only way to attain such a goal in this paradigm is to work 1 ½ - 2 jobs per person for many years.

These figures and estimates are based on the assumption that people will only work, attend to errands, chores, bills and other living expenses, sleep, and save. These calculations do not figure in additional expenses such as minimal entertainment, trade school or higher education for the wage-earners or their children, vacations, hobbies, supporting children in extracurricular activities (sports, arts, and social organizations), and other "discretionary" expenses. These are not extravagances. They are activities that are common in a given culture. It is the rare individual or family that only works, does chores and errands, pays bills, and sleeps and whose children only go to school, come home and do homework, eat, and go to sleep. Thus, the figure of earning enough to save 20% - 30% of one's salary is unrealistically low.

Obviously the goal of saving 22 years' worth of living expenses for retirement is, to say the least, tenuous to completely unattainable. It is also unrealistically optimistic, since in the course of one's working life and retirement, there will be inflation in any Capitalist culture. This is enforced by the very pyramidal structure of the economic paradigm. There will never be enough room high enough on the pyramid for more than a few. Since one's rights, options, freedom, quality of life, respect afforded and access to resources are almost entirely determined by one's economic status, we see once again that Capitalism is inherently incompatible with government of, by, and for an empowered, fulfilled, fully actualized people. That is inherent in the paradigm. Such a paradigm cannot be fixed by regulating or tweaking. The only solution is to scrap this nonviable paradigm and replace it with one that works.

Let us now examine another, little-spoken-of perspective: our time is our life.

If one is working for a sub-living wage, one's most likely options are to live on the street, do without things like electricity or food, or work two or more jobs. In the industrialized world, a 40-hour work week has been an unofficial (and in some cases official) standard that is considered reasonable to work in order to pay off those who would deny us the right to continue existing.

There are 168 hours in a week. If one works 40 hours a week, then one has 128 hours left for other activities. Doctors agree pretty widely that in order to maintain optimum health, we need to sleep about 8 hours per day, which translates to 56 hours a week sleeping. If you work 8 hours a day, 5 days a week and sleep 8 hours a day every day, that leaves you with 72 hours a week for other activities. This translates to about 8 hours a day on workdays and 16 hours a day on weekend days.

That sounds like a lot; but it takes time to cook, eat, do laundry, do grocery and other shopping, do household chores, bathe, pay bills, take care of medical and other necessities and more. If one has children, then one needs to spend time with them, likewise with spouses, friends, other family and so forth. Time-use statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor and other sources show that a typical work commute is about half an hour each way or one hour a day, or about 5 hours a week (Ingraham, Washington Post, 2017). Estimates on how much time a typical person spends a week on household chores and maintenance range from 2 hours a day, translating to 14 hours a week, to 20 hours a week. Families with children spend an average of 2 hours per day in childcare, or about 14 hours a week. Grocery shopping, counting commute to and from, at 1.5 times a week, comes to 1.5 hours a week. This does not count other errands such as trips to the hardware store, government agencies, doctors, dentists, and more. Estimates and surveys show that the average American spends about 70 minutes a day eating or about 8.20 hours a week. When one figures in these unavoidable, necessary activities, one is left with approximately 41.3 or about 41 hours and 20 minutes per week of free time. This averages out to around 5.9 hours a day. This figure is generous. If one spends 20 hours a week in household chores and maintenance instead of 14, then one has 35 hours and 20 minutes a week free, or just over 5 hours a day. Note that time spent on grooming, bathing, miscellaneous errands such as doctor's appointments, trips to mechanics, talking on the phone paying, clarifying or contesting bills, working out at the gym for health, and more is not figured in.

If one is working 60 hours, equivalent to one and a half jobs, as many must, especially at the lowermost reaches of the pyramid, then one's free time per week is decreased to 41.3 – 20 = 21.3 hours a week, averaging out to just 3 hours free per day. At 80 hours a week, two jobs, one is reduced to about one hour and 20 minutes of free time a week. And let's not forget the commute time to the second job.

Some Capitalist apologists argue that typical CEO's may work 60 hours or more a week. This is a specious and meaningless assertion, even if it were accurate. A person in the lower 20th – 39th percentiles of the pyramid who works 60 hours a week has no other options. Such a person is doing so from a disadvantaged position of constant attrition in a losing struggle for survival. He or she most likely cannot take or even afford a vacation, and is typically enduring demeaning treatment most of the time. The CEO who works 60 hours a week does not actually need to work. He or she could retire at any time and live very comfortably for the rest of their life and then pass on a similar legacy to their descendants. The CEO does not need to concern him or herself with home maintenance, errands, chores and such things; they under-pay a staff of people to do all of that. Most of them don't even deal with traffic on their commute. They under-pay a chauffeur to drive, so they are free to conduct business or relax during their commute. The CEO is treated with deference and respect, and is able to take a vacation any time they choose, in any form or location that they choose. Any attempt to justify the disparity is uninformed at best and heartlessly inhumane at worst, and in either case is utterly untenable.

The chart below shows, for those living at or below a living wage, how many hours one has to work in order to afford to pay for the privilege of being permitted to continue existing.

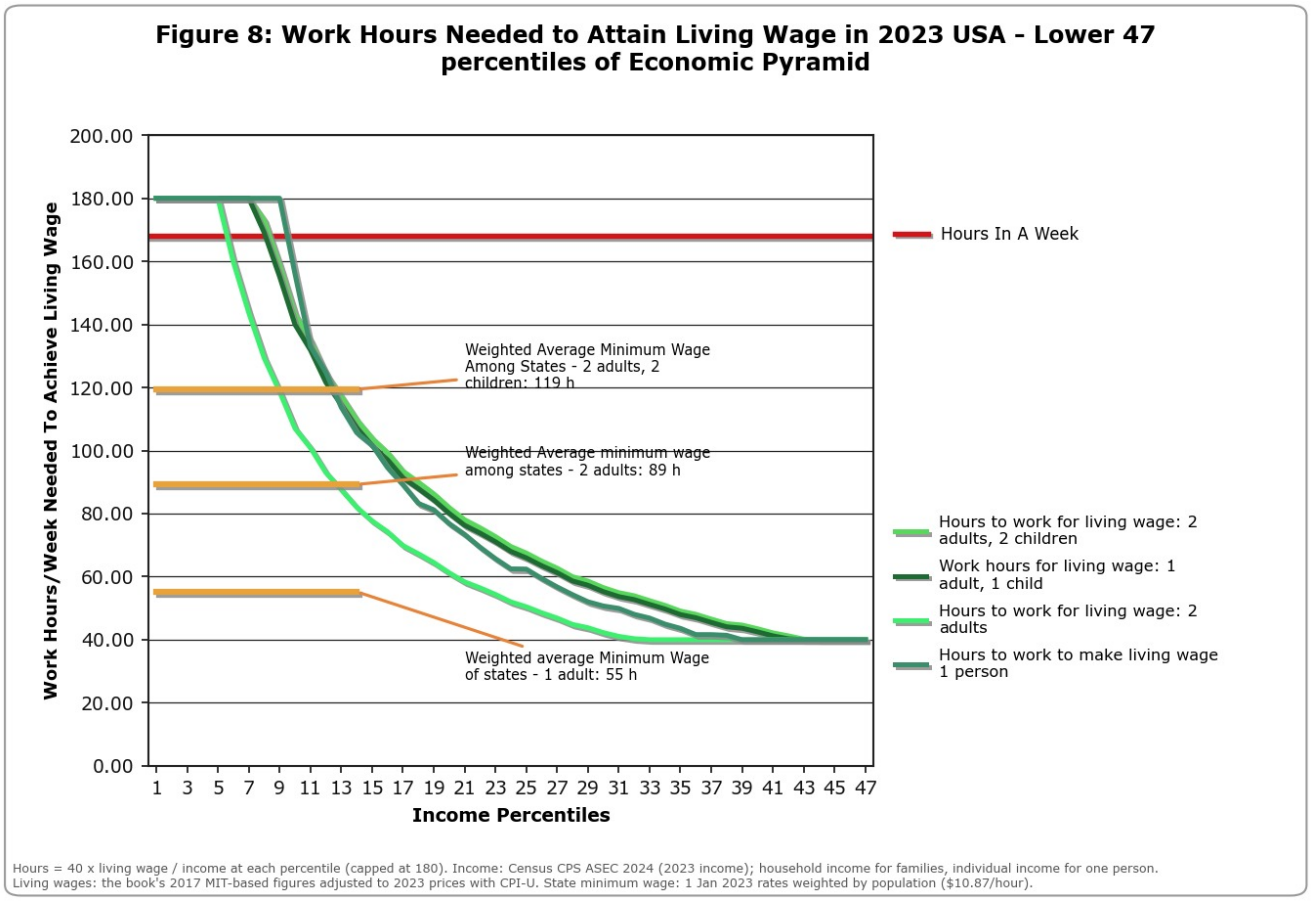


Figure 8: Work Hours Needed to Attain Living Wage in 2023 USA — Lower 47 Percentiles

Most readers will know all too well the impact of having to work 50 – 80 hours a week just to buy the privilege of being allowed to continue existing. The chronic stress, sleep deprivation, and mental, emotional and physical depletion are severely injurious to every aspect of life. It translates into less time and energy to spend with spouse and/or children, which takes a heavy toll on relationships. This has a destructive impact on growing children that is propagated, perpetuated, and magnified from generation to generation across long swaths of time. For many low-wage workers, the share of life spent paying for the right to exist rivals a medieval serf's dues. The distractions and technology are what have changed most.

From Figure 8, it is clear that for individuals below about the 20th percentile (roughly 46 million people with income) and for families of two adults and two children below about the 21st percentile of household income (roughly 26 million households), even working two jobs, 80 hours per week, still cannot meet living expenses. One can easily see the causal relationship between this reality and the negative "net worth" experienced by those lowest on the pyramid.

The data for weighted average minimum wage among states shows how many hours per week are necessary sustain the family unit at that wage for one adult, a couple, a single parent with one child, and two parents with two children respectively.

When we look at the trends over time, we can see that the economic bottom half of the population in the United States has never gained true freedom from this form of bondage. Figure 9 only goes through the 50th Percentile – the Median – in order to show the lower reaches in finer detail. When we add percentiles through the 95th, we see how the upper reaches dwarf the rest (Figure 9a). Were we to include the 99th percentile, much less the 99.999th percentile, the growth in their income over time would tower over the rest, which would be scrunched into a line barely distinguishable from the graphs of income distribution in the present time. In other words, the highest rarified reaches of the pyramid are not just accumulating and controlling a vastly disproportionate portion of wealth and resources, but the trend has been accelerating

over time. This clearly illustrates the inevitable outcome of all Capitalist paradigms – a complete reversion to a Feudal society. If current trends continue, concentration will keep rising, and nothing in the system itself stops it.

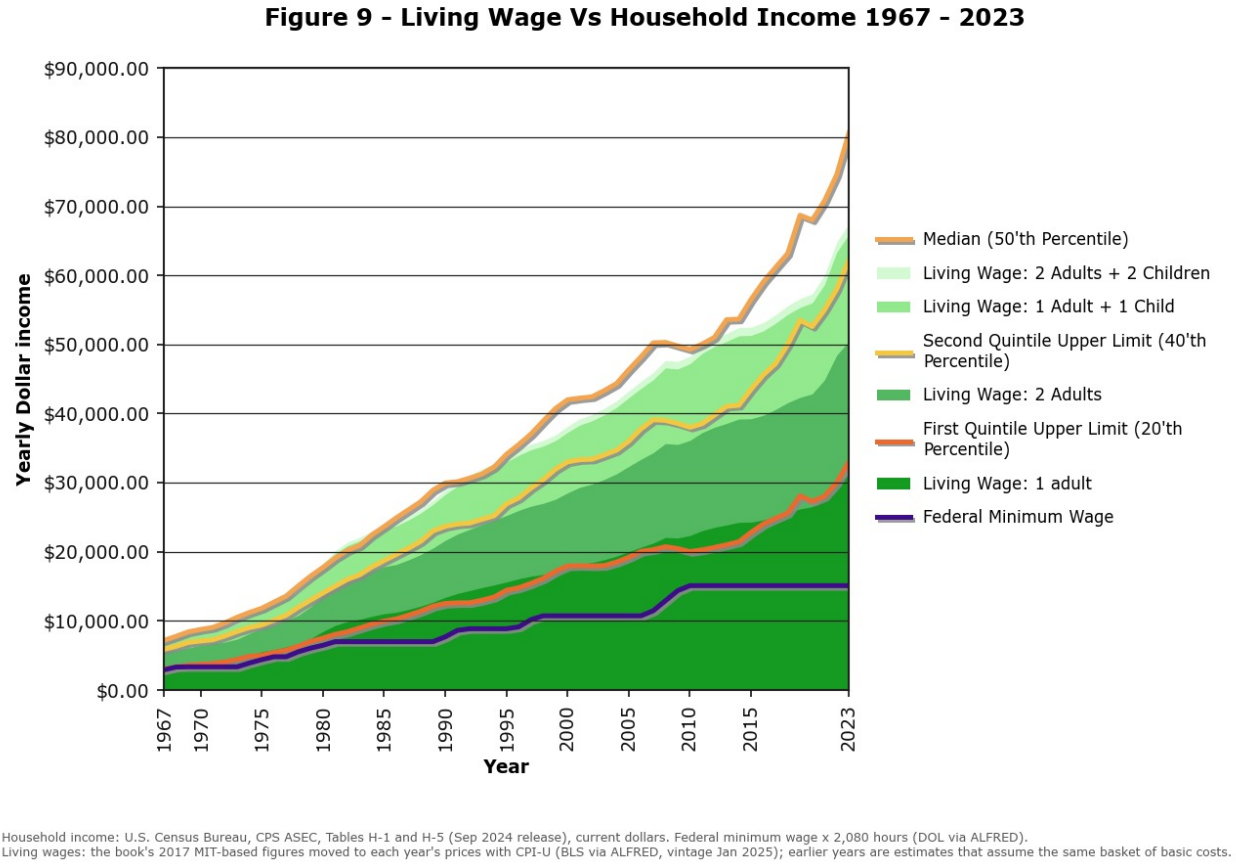


Figure 9: Living Wage vs. Household Income 1967–2023

Note above, that the Federal Minimum Wage in the U.S. has consistently fallen below even the living wage for a single individual. That gap clearly has widened dramatically since 1980. Observe that a household at the 20th percentile has an income close to a single adult's living wage. A childless couple can manage a living wage only between the 20th and 40th percentiles. A family of 1 – 2 adults and 1 – 2 children must be between the 40th percentile and the median to achieve a living wage. These relationships have held since 1967, the first year of the Census household data (U.S. Census Bureau, Table H-1, 2024).

In Figure 9a, we clearly see that the third quintile (40th through 60th percentiles) has outpaced the lower 40 percent of the population by a modest margin. The 60th through 80th percentile has outpaced those below them by about half again. The upper 95th percentile has increased their income at a dramatically accelerating rate, even dwarfing the growth of the 80th percentile, as seen over time. The rate of acceleration is itself accelerating.

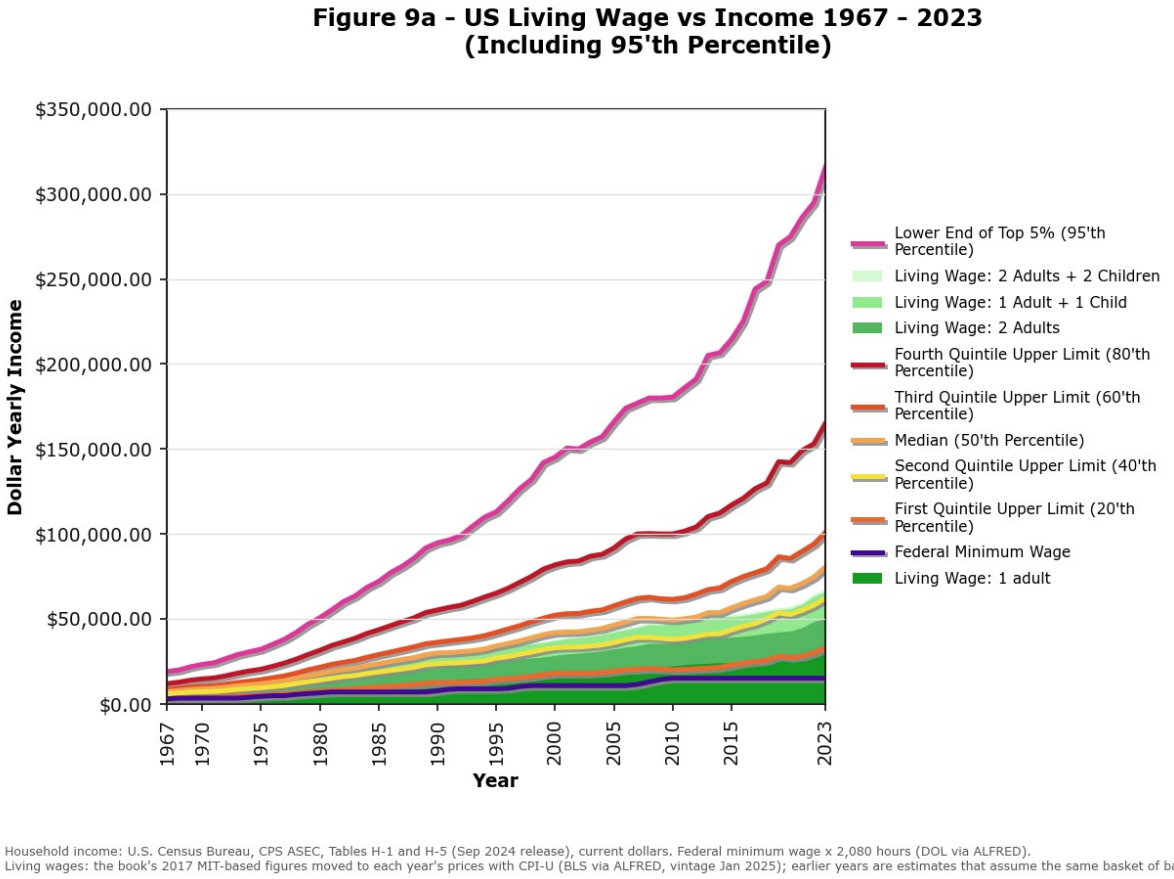


Figure 9a: U.S. Living Wage vs. Income 1967–2023 (Including 95th Percentile)

The table below, created with data from WID.world (the Piketty, Saez and Zucman series, 2026 update), shows the relative rates of change in income between 1980 and 2023 of different income percentiles (WID.world, 2026; Piketty, Saez & Zucman, methods). Remember that 1980 was when the U.S. government instituted the first implementation of "trickle-down economics," granting massive tax breaks for primarily the wealthiest Americans and corporations, justified with the claimed assumption that the gains will "trickle down" the pyramid to the benefit of all.

Percentile Group	Post-Tax Income Growth from 1980 - 2023
Bottom 20%	22%
Next 30%	57%
Middle 40%	71%
Top 10%	135%
Top 1%	239%
Top 0.1%	398%
Top 0.01%	598%
Top 0.001%	841%

Growth of average real post-tax income per adult, after inflation. Source: WID.world, Piketty-Saez-Zucman distributional national accounts (2026 update).

Post-Tax Income Growth by Percentile Group, 1980–2023

This dramatically shows that from 1980 to 2023 the incomes of the top .001% grew about 38 times as fast as those of the bottom 20% (841% against 22%; WID.world, 2026). The bottom's figure counts public health insurance and other transfers as income; before taxes and transfers, the bottom 20% gained only about 5%. These are growth rates; because the top started from far higher incomes, the gap in dollars grew even more. The disparity in wealth is even more extreme. Note that this does not include Corporate income gains. See Figure 9a1.

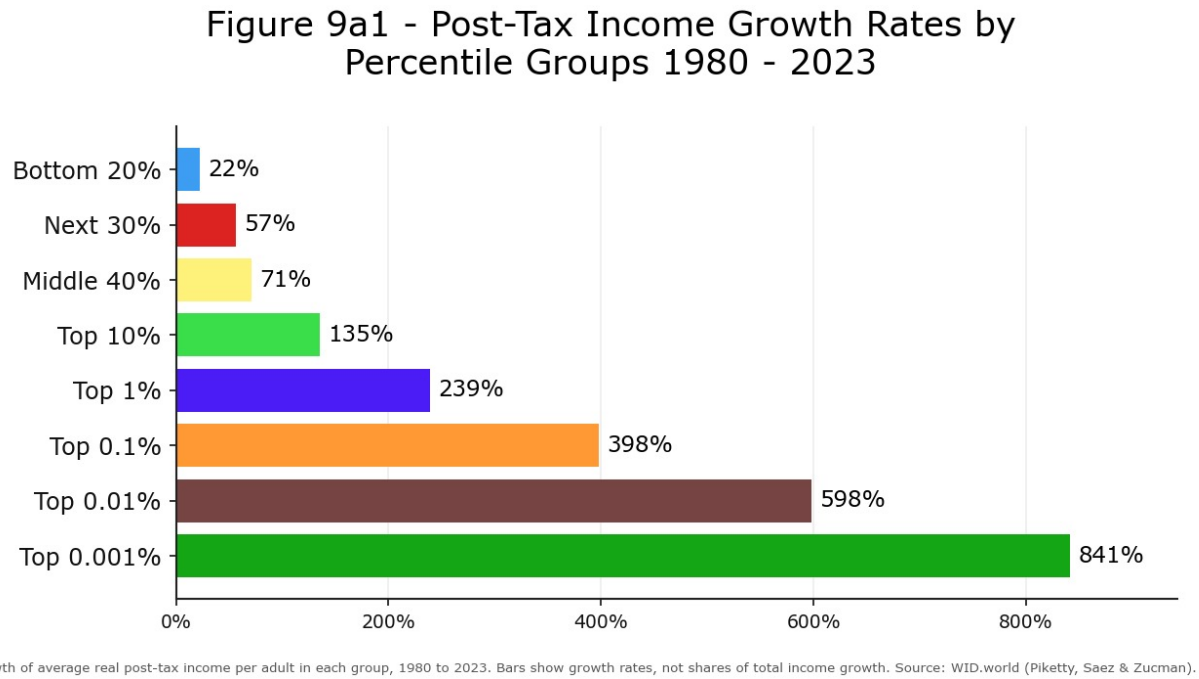


Figure 9a1: Post-Tax Income Growth Rates by Percentile Group, 1980–2023

“Trickle-down economics” is another example of the dynamics of Capitalist paradigms, in which the influence and pressure that the neo-Feudal Lords can exert upon legislators and other government officials is, and always will be, far greater than the pressure that the rest of the people can exert. This effect is magnified and exacerbated when the lower reaches of the Pyramid are divided and fighting among ethnic, religious, political, age, and other groups blaming one another for their shared disempowerment and enslavement. Those who generate Capitalist propaganda have become profoundly adept at dividing us against each other, turning the diversity that could be the source of our greatest strength into a set of fracture lines to exploit in order to weaken and keep us striving against one another. This is not because the neo-Feudal Lords are necessarily evil in and of themselves. They are responding effectively and successfully to the reinforcers driving Capitalist systems and paradigms. The paradigm itself is the problem. The human behaviors and dynamics under this paradigm are completely predictable as a result.

Many U.S. economists have bemoaned the fact that, as a subculture, the generation nicknamed “Millennials” are spending less than previous generations. They are shopping less, consuming less. As discussed in the main text of this book, Capitalism as a paradigm can only function optimally if there is steady and constantly accelerating artificially-driven overproduction and overconsumption. A Capitalist economy in which all people have all that they need of easily fixed and upgraded products that will last a long time, is a mythical beast akin to the tooth fairy. If such a society were to exist, as a Capitalist economy it would crash and burn. Thus, from a Capitalist-centric frame of reference, everybody needs to produce and consume the maximum possible amount. It is seen as almost a kind of duty. If there is a generation or sub-population that doesn’t maintain those levels of consumption, they are viewed as a problem, as a kind of “slacker” population. Some have said that the Millennials are either lazy or have poor money management skills, when in reality they are simply reacting to the economic cards that they have been dealt.

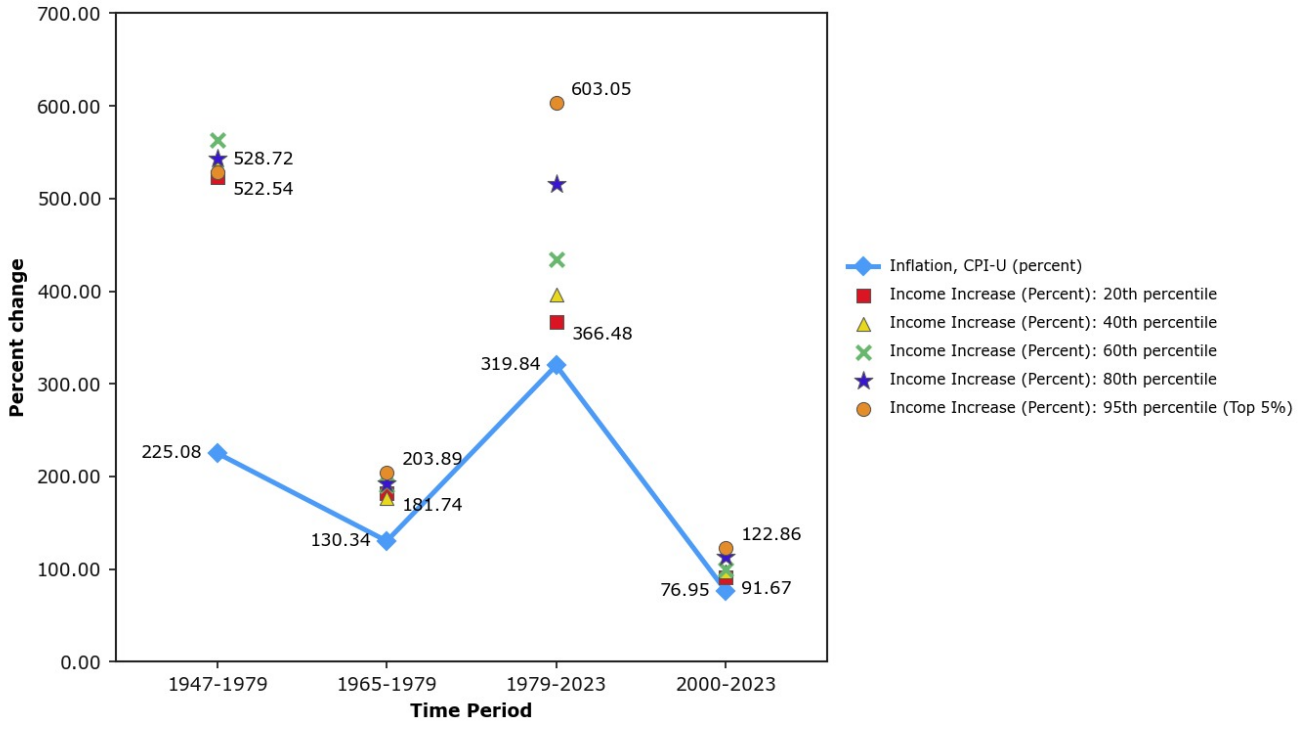
Objective facts, however, reveal the truth. A 2018 Federal Reserve staff study (Kurz, Li & Vine, "Are Millennials Different?") finds, after careful analysis of the data, that the reason why Millenials (loosely meaning people born between 1980 – 2000) aren’t consuming as much as previous generations is that they have less to spend for their hours of work than previous generations. The study finds that, at the same age, full-time workers heading households in “Generation X” (people born in the 1960’s and 1970’s) earned 12% - 18% more than Millennials, and those of the “Baby Boomer” generation (People born between the end of World War II and 1960 or so) 24% - 27% more (Deseret News, 2018). This is after adjusting for inflation, age, work status and other factors. These figures describe their situation in the mid-2010s.

Another way to look at the trends over time is to compare inflation with income across the economic spectrum. In the decades after World War II, real incomes at every level roughly doubled, and the bottom fifth of families gained as fast as anyone: that was the period of strong unions and hard-won protections (U.S. Census Bureau family income tables, checked by PolitiFact, 2011). Around 1980 that changed. Since then the pre-tax income of the bottom half of American adults has stagnated at about $16,000 a year, while average income per adult rose 60 percent (Piketty, Saez and Zucman, 2018). From 1979 to 2023, family income at the 20th percentile rose only about 11 percent faster than prices, while at the 95th percentile it rose about 68 percent faster (U.S. Census Bureau, Table F-1, 2024; CPI-U, via ALFRED). For more than four decades, pay for the bottom 40 percent has reliably done little more than keep pace with prices, while those at the top have pulled steadily away. At least half of the population of the United States has been standing still or losing ground in an economy that kept growing around them.

The chart below compares the rise in prices with the rise in family income at the 20th, 40th, 60th, 80th and 95th percentiles over four periods: 1947–1979, the postwar decades of strong unions and growing protections; 1965–1979, the years of the Civil Rights movement, when massive sustained popular activism temporarily put pressure on elected officials to protect employees' and consumers' rights; 1979–2023, the era that began with "Reaganomics"; and 2000–2023, the most recent decades.

Starting with the "Reaganomics" of the 1980's, the inexorable pressure of the neo-Feudal lords and their corporations began to overwhelm the will and influence of the People and undo the hard-won protections gained in the late 1950's through the 1970's. Since the 1980's, labor unions have been disempowered, and there has been a steady erosion of all protections for employees and consumers as opposed to reinforcements for the power of the ultra-wealthy and their corporations.

Fig. 9b - Changes in Inflation Vs. Income at Key Historical Points



Change in money income at each percentile of families, from the first year to the last year of each period, against the change in consumer prices over the same years.
Income: U.S. Census Bureau, CPS ASEC, Table F-1, income limits of each fifth of families, 1947-2023 (Sep 2024 release). Prices: CPI-U annual averages (BLS via ALFRED, vintage Jan 2025).
All income, not only wages. A point above the blue line means income at that level grew faster than prices.

Figure 9b: Changes in Inflation vs. Income at Key Historical Points

Keep in mind that this chart uses total money income as counted by the Census Bureau (wages, but also interest, dividends and government cash benefits), and that the Census survey captures very little of the investment income of those at the top.

As discussed elsewhere, investment income is only a viable and significantly productive option for those who are living far enough above a living wage to be able to invest large enough amounts to massively increase their wealth. In other words, only those in the 60th percentile and above can realistically expect to create major improvements in their financial situation through investments. Only those in the 80th percentile and above can achieve sufficient income through investment to be able to survive a prolonged loss of income due to unemployment.

You will note that in the postwar decades income at the 20th percentile grew as fast as at the 95th, but since 1979 it has grown the least of all. The 20th – 40th percentiles roughly represent the "working poor" who earn too much to qualify for any kind of assistance, but not enough to constitute a living wage.

From 1947 to 1979 every level of income grew about twice as fast as prices (real gains of 92% to 104%). Since 1979 the gap has opened: income at the 20th percentile rose 11% more than prices, at the median about 17% (households), and at the 95th percentile 68% (U.S. Census Bureau, Table F-1, 2024; Table H-5, 2024; CPI-U, via ALFRED). The top one percent and above are not included because as in the other charts, it would so far dwarf the changes in the other economic percentiles as to make it impossible to make out details in this chart.

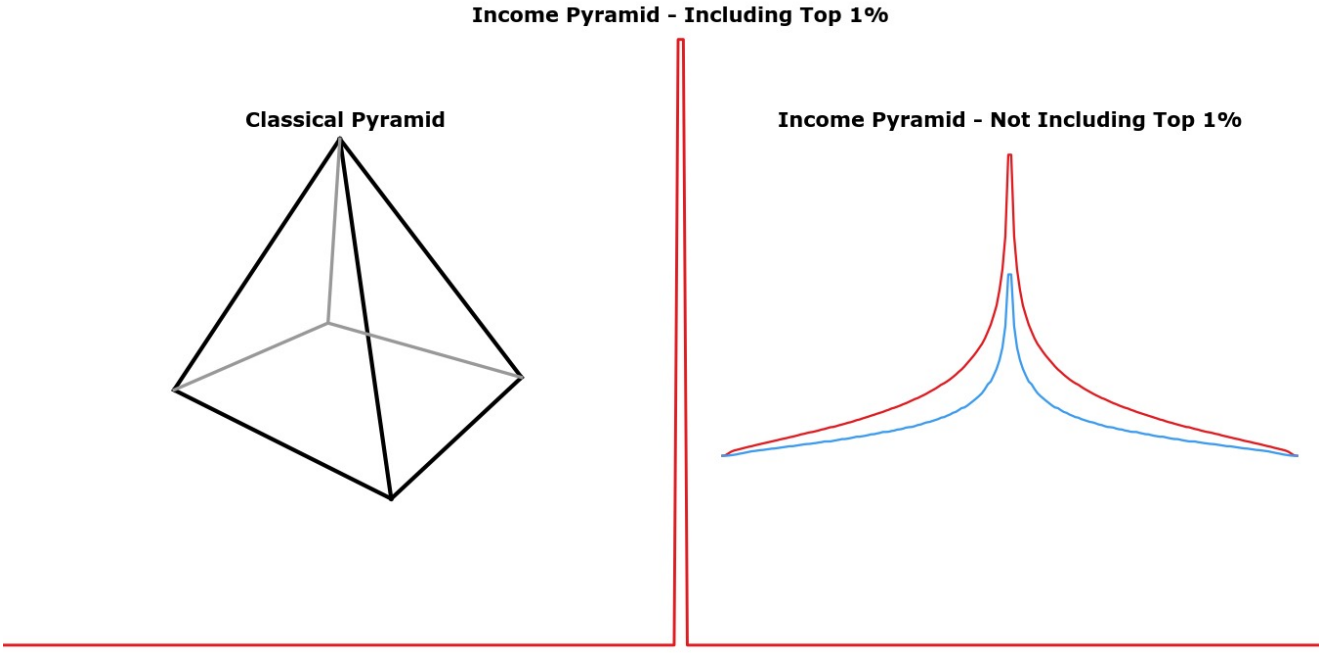
Interestingly, if one were to add change in minimum wage to this chart, one will see that it has actually outpaced inflation at some points and fallen behind at others. Yet even when minimum wage most solidly outpaced inflation, it still was so low as to be precipitously below a living wage. Since 1965, the federal minimum wage has grown only about 55 percent as much as prices: from $1.25 to $7.25 an hour (+480%), while prices rose 867% by 2023 (federal minimum wage, via ALFRED; CPI-U, via ALFRED), due to the stagnation introduced in the 1980's and beyond. During the 1920's through the 1950's, labor movements experienced a resurgence that temporarily pressured legislators to enact protections for employees, which continued through the Civil Rights Movement years. Yet in the long run, the influence of the neo-Feudal Lords always out-creates the influence of the people upon government, as surely as a winning streak in a casino does not change the fundamental economics for those who choose to play. In the Capitalist paradigm, however, "playing" is not a choice as it is in a casino; it is compulsory.

The trend is clear. If we do not carry out a Transition to the new synergistic, currency-free, non-hierarchical paradigms and bring a complete end to capitalism soon, things will only get worse. We could find ourselves under the crushing weight of a feudal paradigm more extreme than that of the Middle Ages, made the more insidious and long-lived by the degree of control and enforcement made possible by sophisticated technology that will ultimately be available only to those at the highest reaches of the Pyramid.

Throughout this writing, the assertion has been maintained and supported that Capitalist paradigms are pyramid schemes which persistently and systematically draw resources of every kind, from money to land to respect to rights to influence on government, from the vast majority of people lower down to the microscopically few at the very top of the pyramid. This is how they function according to their design. To disrupt or end this siphoning will utterly shatter the pyramidal Capitalist economic power structure and cause it to cease functioning, to the benefit of all.

The truth, however, is much more extreme than a pyramid scheme. If you look at Figure 10 below, you see the comparison between a classical pyramid, the income distribution (and even more so, the wealth distribution) curves with and without the top one percent included. Here we easily see that the existing economic stratification is far more severe, the slope far steeper, than that of a classical pyramid. There is even less room high enough in the economic hierarchy to truly be able to exercise one's Constitutional rights than there would be in a true pyramid scheme. Advance to the 50th or even the 80th percentile, and you barely gain in altitude. To ascend into the spike in this structure, you must advance high within the top one percent in income.

Figure 10 - U.S. Income Pyramid - Actual Shape Compared to Classical Pyramid



Shapes from 2023 income percentiles (Census CPS ASEC 2024) and, for the spike, the average income of the top 0.001% (WID.world).
Drawn to the same scale as the right-hand curves, the spike would be about 315 times as tall as their peak (the 99th percentile); it is cut off here.

Figure 10: U.S. Income Pyramid — Actual Shape Compared to Classical Pyramid

The data for wealth distribution in the United States in 2026 illustrates the extreme and escalating economic disparity in the aggressive flagship and promoter of Capitalist paradigms in the world. These data are available from multiple sources in government, academia and within the financial sector itself (Federal Reserve, Distributional Financial Accounts, 2026; Forbes, 2025; for the long-run trend, Wolff, NBER, 2017; Wolff, A Century of Wealth in America, 2017). As described in recent studies, the distribution of wealth (meaning permanent durable assets, including investments, real estate, savings and other resources that include but go beyond job income) is as follows:

Population Percentile	Percent of U.S. Wealth they Control	Approximate Number of Households
Forbes 400 (0.00012% of the population)	3.9%	400 people
Top 0.1%	15.0%	134,960
Top 1%	32.5%	1,349,600
Top 10%	68.9%	13,496,000
Bottom 90%	31.1%	121,464,000
Bottom 50%	2.3%	67,480,000

Each top group includes the groups above it, and the bottom 50% is part of the bottom 90%. Households ranked by net worth. Source: Federal Reserve, Distributional Financial Accounts, second quarter of 2026 (total household net worth $185.7 trillion), which adds the Forbes 400 to the Fed's survey data. Forbes 400 row: $6.6 trillion (Forbes, September 2025) against the Fed total for the third quarter of 2025; population about 340 million. Household count: 2025 Survey of Consumer Finances weights.

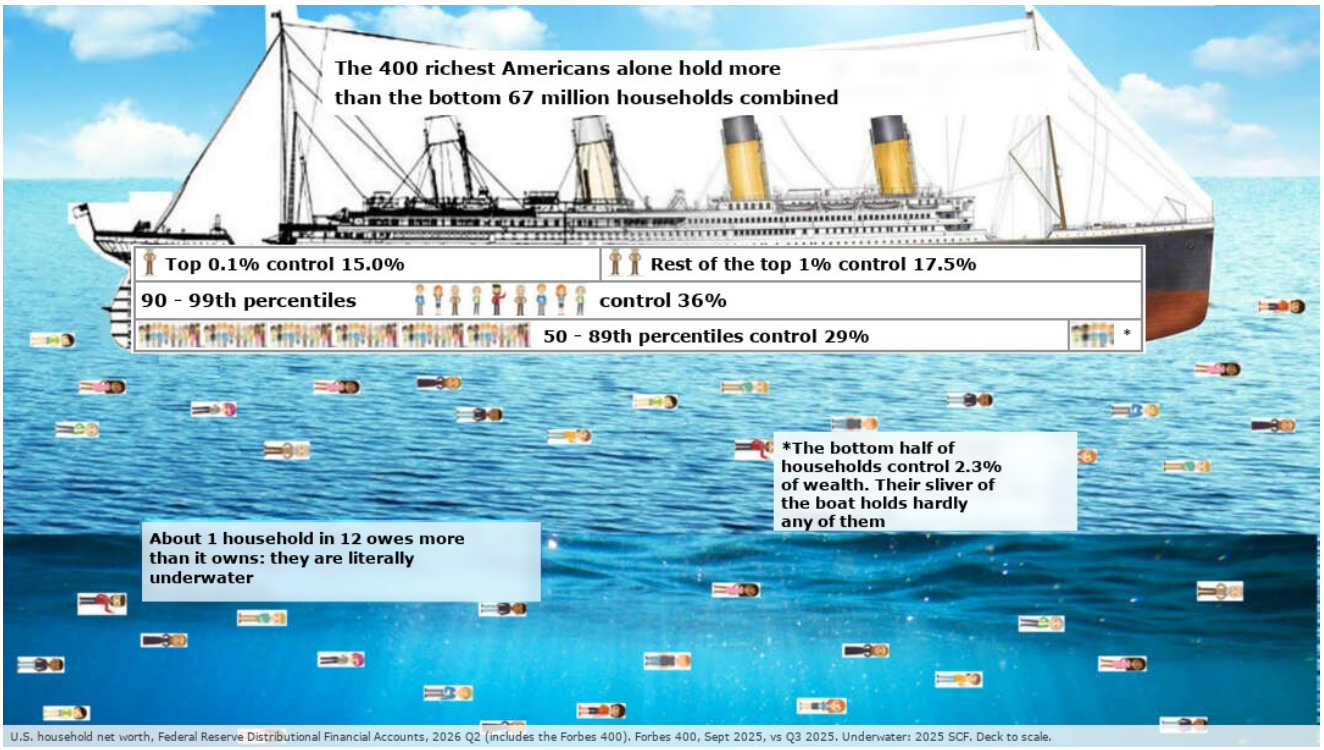
Percent of U.S. Wealth Controlled by Each Population Group, 2026

Note that the 400 richest Americans, about 0.00012% of the population, control about 3.9% of U.S. wealth, more than the entire bottom half of households, about 67 million households, control among them (2.3%). The top one percent alone control 32.5%, more than the 31.1% controlled by the whole bottom 90% of households among them. The top ten percent control nearly 69%. About 1 household in 12 owes more than it owns (Federal Reserve, Survey of Consumer Finances, 2025). Bear in mind that the situation is even more extreme when we recall the wealth distribution data that shows that the top one percent is as drastically stratified as is the population as a whole.

To translate this data into understandable terms, imagine a ship that has a certain amount of space for passengers. For this illustration, we'll use the Titanic. If we represent the 100 percentiles of the population as 100 people, and the total wealth in the United States as the total passenger capacity of the Titanic, then this wealth distribution translates into the picture below. Note that the top 1'st percentile (top 1%) has nearly a third of the space to themselves, and the top 0.1% alone has 15% of it. The 50th to 89th percentiles, forty percent of the population, control among them about 29% of the wealth. The bottom half of the population, the lowest on the Pyramid, control just 2.3% of the wealth. They are jammed into a sliver of the ship – the small compartment at the lower right in the illustration – with room for hardly any of them. Most are literally treading water in the stormy sea, and the households that owe more than they own are literally drowning underwater in this illustration.

Keep in mind that in a Capitalist paradigm, one's degree of wealth translates directly into one's access to all resources, including living space, food, medical care, lawyers, tools, goods and services of all kinds. It also translates directly into the degree of respect, freedom, and scope of options that one experiences.

The Titanic is an especially appropriate metaphorical illustration in that it was promoted as the finest ship of its day and being unsinkable, in a time of extreme and escalating wealth disparity. Its design was flawed. It also had lifeboats for only about half of the people on board (Wikipedia, "Lifeboats of the Titanic").



The Pyramid Scheme In Action: U.S. Wealth Distribution, 2026

Reviewing the graphs of income and wealth distribution in the United States, especially Figure 4, you can easily imagine that if we were to create another representation of the Titanic in which the top 1% of the economic Pyramid is broken down into hundredths, the picture would be similar, except that the lowest percentiles of the 1% would not be in the ocean or under it. They would be crammed into infinitesimally small spaces in the 1% boat, which would be impractical to represent visually.

The disparity of wealth is even more telling than the disparity of income. For those of us not in the uppermost percentiles of the pyramid, income is our primary or only resource. Our degree of freedom, access to all resources, options, quality of life and the respect we are afforded are determined and sustained or lost according to our income. Any change in income directly impacts every aspect of our lives. For those in the upper reaches of the pyramid, the role of income is secondary to the role of wealth, which becomes more and more invulnerable the higher up the pyramid one is. For those at the very top of the pyramid, wealth generates more additional wealth at an ever-accelerating rate. Income from wages or salary are insignificant and irrelevant by comparison, though still gargantuan in proportion to wages and salary of those in the mid to lower ranges of the pyramid.

As an analogy, imagine that all but those in the highest heights of the Pyramid are getting their electricity from bicycle generators that they must keep peddling constantly in order to keep the lights and refrigerator running, the water flowing, and the heat or air conditioning blowing. Any interruption of peddling shuts off the lights, fridge and the whole infrastructure. Those at the top of the pyramid power their houses from state-of-the-art power plants, and are equipped with backup generators as well as high-capacity storage batteries such that even if both power plant and backup generator were to fail, the backup batteries could sustain power for many generations to come. Yet all the while, in physical fact, there is more than enough energy for all persons to thrive.

If we aspire to live in an enlightened, free, democratic community, which is truly governed of, by and for the people, in which every one of us is empowered to thrive and make our greatest contribution, then we cannot perpetuate or even allow this paradigm to continue. Capitalism, as it now operates, behaves like a cancer or a parasite: it draws its sustenance from its host, the people and the living world, and slowly weakens and kills it in the process. Its symptoms are measurable:

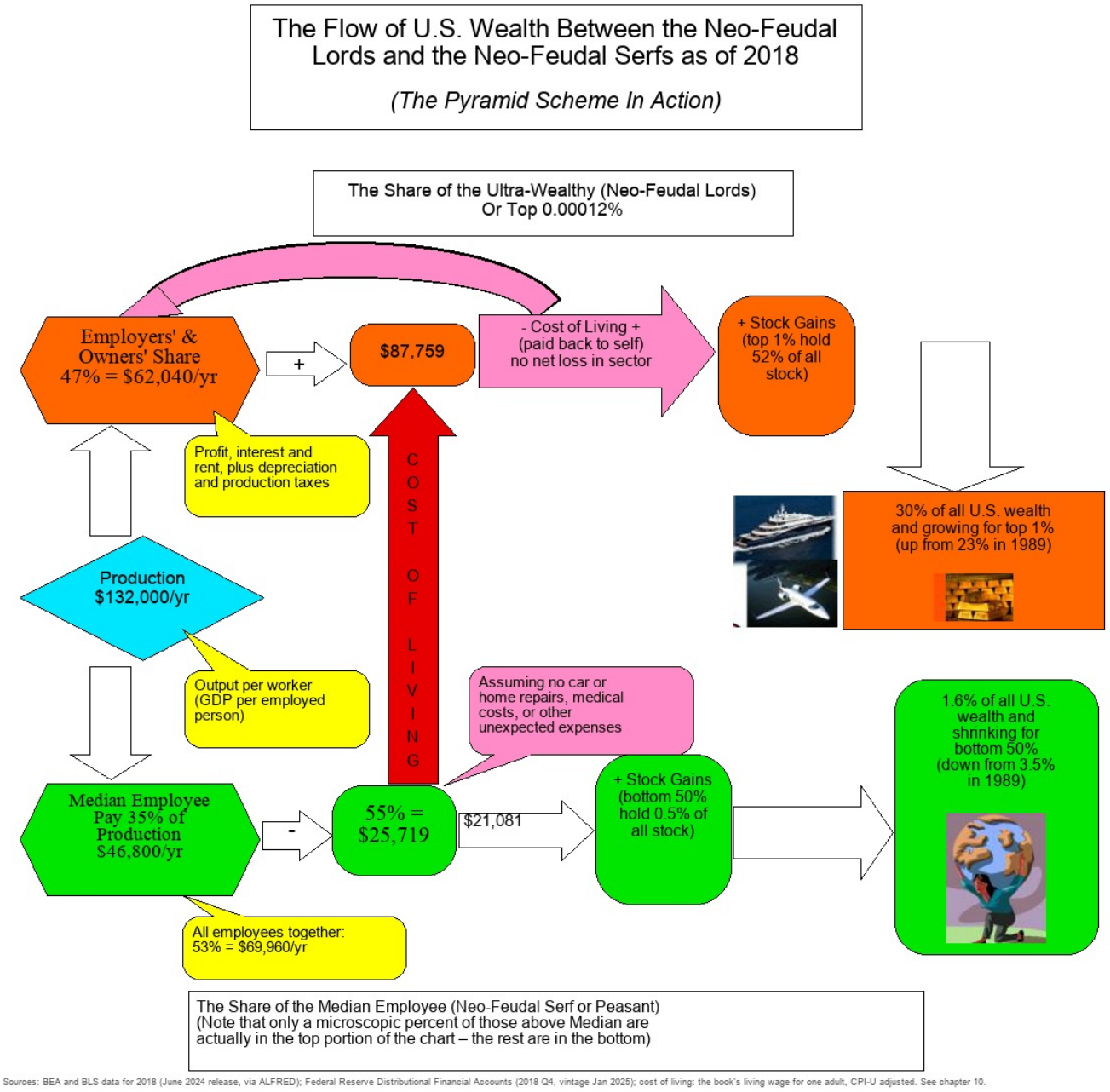
- It drives the burning of fossil fuels, though the companies that profit knew the danger decades ago and their own scientists predicted the warming accurately (Supran and colleagues, 2023).

- It leaves some 700 million people hungry, and more than two billion without reliable access to enough food, in a world that grows enough for all (FAO, 2024).
- It drove the Atlantic slave trade, and forced labour still earns its exploiters some $236 billion a year (ILO).

And like a cancer, it crowds out every alternative (see Chapter 8). Its continuing existence depends on the willing (if misinformed and misguided) participation of all of us sustaining it as it engorges itself with the energy of our blood, sweat, and struggles as we slowly decline into oblivion by working and playing according to the rules of its paradigm. It is our right and duty to change our paradigm, our ways of functioning at every level at the front lines of development, production, distribution and daily life among us who are not at the top of the pyramid. We will change the ways we do things so that we support one another rather than the weight of the Pyramid. When we do this, the Pyramid loses its grip and crumbles. Those who "fall" from the top of the Pyramid, whose lives had been organized around wealth and power in ways that work much like an addiction, may go through something like withdrawal and will fear the "fall," but their landing will not be devastating. It will not harm them: they will find a place among us, not beneath us. Unlike the reality under the Capitalist paradigms, the post-Transitional paradigm will support and find a niche for every individual.

Under Capitalist paradigms, the rate of accumulation of wealth, power and control of resources into the hands of those at the highest heights of the pyramid will always accelerate over time, despite any economic or legislative ups and downs. This expanding rate of acceleration comes at the price of a proportionally accelerating depletion of resources for those not at the top of the pyramid. Unless the entire paradigm is scrapped and replaced with one designed to support and sustain the symbiotic thriving of all, it will inevitably lead to a neo-Feudal society that exceeds the most extreme forms of Medieval totalitarianism. Such a society could last much longer than the Medieval one did, due to the high level of technology, including surveillance and weapons technology and the highly sophisticated level that propaganda has attained.

The flow chart below, based on data for per-capita productivity versus wages, illustrates the data on productivity and growth of different economic sectors of the U.S. and what it means in terms of the flow of wealth in this typical purely Capitalist paradigm. (See chapter 10: Metrics.) Keep in mind that in such a society, wealth, or the lack of it, is the biggest factor that defines and determines one's quality of life, access to resources, the respect and deference one is given, and even one's ability to survive at all.



The Flow of U.S. Wealth Between the Neo-Feudal Lords and the Neo-Feudal Serfs (2018)

It would be most instructive for a team of economists, physicists and mathematicians to do a study of the changes in the distribution of wealth, resources and control over time under Capitalist paradigms. In astrophysics, we know that in the primordial Universe, after things had cooled down enough for atoms to form out of quarks, there were vast clouds of hydrogen. Over very long periods of time, areas of these clouds that were denser than surrounding areas condensed further due to gravitation. The more densely packed regions had higher gravitational pull than the surrounding areas, which pulled even more hydrogen into the dense areas. As the mass of the densely-packed regions grew, their gravitational pull grew and extended farther, pulling more hydrogen in and increasing their mass. Eventually these regions became massive enough that their internal gravitational pull was strong enough to initiate nuclear fusion, and the first stars were born. When sufficient mass is concentrated in one place, a black hole forms whose escape velocity is the speed of light, meaning that matter and energy are pulled in but little or nothing can escape. It would not be surprising if observation and mathematical analysis of shifts in distribution and control of wealth and resources in Capitalist paradigms is found to follow identical or very similar patterns. Perhaps the same set of equations describes both.

In fact, some groundwork has already been done in this direction, comparing the distribution and movement of wealth in Capitalist paradigms to the distribution and kinetic energy of molecules in a gas, which directly ties in with the formation of stars and black holes (Modanese, Physics Letters A, 2016). Physicists have found that the incomes of most people follow the same exponential law that describes the energy of molecules in a gas, while the top few percent follow a much steeper "Pareto" power law that never settles into equilibrium (Yakovenko & Rosser, Reviews of Modern Physics, 2009). The research and mathematical prediction also show that the more people save, the smaller the disparity; and the less people save, the greater the disparity (Battersby, New Scientist, 2012). In the current stage of Capitalist dynamics in the U.S. and similar countries, the majority of people are unable to save, however much they would like to. In addition, the combination built-in obsolescence (necessitating more frequent replacement of items than is really necessary) and consumeristic conditioning from birth exploited by sophisticated advertising which drives compulsive purchasing, we see that the disparity reliably keeps widening, as the models predict.

If we are honest with ourselves and examine the evidence mathematically, historically, sociologically, psychologically, anthropologically, empirically and more, we cannot escape the conclusion that Capitalism inevitably leads to a particularly pernicious form of Feudalism. If we do not wish to experience a long dark age of iron-fisted techno-feudal thralldom ending only when the earth has been so plundered and polluted that it becomes uninhabitable or when a desperate population arises in a bloodbath fueled by desperation, we have no viable choice but to shut down this destructive paradigm and replace it with one that is consciously, deliberately designed to sustainably generate a thriving society of thriving, empowered individuals in symbiotic synergy.

Dramatizations of Key Concepts

The Story of Sam

A Brief Dramatization of a Core Principle of the Transition: Allegory: Capitalism Comes To The Human Body

The Strange Case of Samuel – a Medical Socio-Economic Parable

Samuel was born a robust child. Early on, he had to struggle against some major obstacles; but he had a good head on his shoulders, a good heart, and better health than most of his peers.

Samuel had his growing pains. He made some poor choices in his adolescence but learned from both his successes and his failures and gained in wisdom faster than most. He became a leader among his fellows and was often a positive role model. He had a side of him that was kind of a bully but he also had a conscience and compassion, which prevailed in his speech and actions most of the time.

Like any human being, dog, cat, tree or other organism, Samuel – we'll call him Sam – was made up of a community of trillions of cells. These cells in turn formed rich and varied communities within Sam's body. There were the great metropolises of Heart, Brain, Liver, Lungs, Muscles. There were the smaller communities of specialized cells: Pituitary, the Islets of Langerhans, Adrenals, and many small towns such as Hair Follicles, Inner Ear, Retina and many more.

Each cell lived a fulfilling life doing what it was created to do: lung cells found their fulfillment grabbing oxygen molecules from the air and giving them to the Red Blood Cell Truckers while offloading carbon dioxide from them and releasing it into the air. Heart cells were drummers, laborers and dancers, pumping in a powerful dance that set the rhythm to which all the cells in the body pulsed. Liver cells were very detail-oriented characters who were adept at sorting through all the chemicals in the blood, separating and selecting some for disposal, others for storage or metabolism, and still others to be used in complex enzymatic processes that kept Sam healthy and robust.

Every cell did what was its nature to do and was fulfilled in doing it. The communities of cells, the organs, reflected the nature of the cells of which they were made, contributing in turn to the community as was their nature. And all together in their diversity, they were Sam, a conscious, growing, evolving, healthy human being.

Then one day something happened that would come to mystify doctors for quite a while.

One day the Lung Cells had their regular town hall meeting to discuss issues to do with their jobs in the world of Sam. Somehow a new idea came up, which got talked around and became a topic for official discussion. Nobody knew how this idea started, but most believe it was innocent in the beginning though somehow little by little it nearly became the undoing of Sam and the multitude of cells and communities keeping him whole.

A decision was made in Lungs. The next day a Notice went out to all the cells and communities in Sam: Henceforth the lungs will require two atoms of gold for every molecule of oxygen that they pass on to the Blood Truckers, and two atoms of gold for every molecule of carbon dioxide that they offload and return to the air. “This will henceforth be called our Price. If our Price is not met, then we will withhold oxygen and will not offload any carbon dioxide.”

The reaction was immediate and strong. The rest of the organs and the cells in them thought at first that it was a joke. When Lungs got word of this, they withheld oxygen and declined to offload carbon dioxide for about a minute and a half. Brain struggled to maintain consciousness and began to shut down. Heart found it increasingly difficult to continue pumping. All of the community of organs and their cells became desperate and realized they had only seconds to act.

“Ok, we accept your terms. We will give you gold for oxygen and for carbon dioxide disposal. But give us a few days to figure out how to get it.”

Lungs agreed to give the rest of the cells and organs two days to start bringing the gold, adding that in the meantime all cells and organs will be owing gold for oxygen delivered and carbon dioxide offloaded, and that interest will be charged. Lungs assured all organs and cells that they were keeping track of how many oxygen molecules they were delivering and how many carbon dioxide molecules they were removing. “All accounts will be paid in full within a week of this notice. Any cell or organ who fails to do so will not receive oxygen nor have their carbon dioxide removed until they do. In addition, they will have to pay an extra 3 gold atoms as a late fee plus another 5 gold atoms for reactivation of service.”

All the organs and cells scrambled frantically to find a way to come up with gold. Gold was not a normal or natural part of Samuel’s biological processes. It had no function or purpose. While it was not toxic in and of itself, there was no mechanism for digesting and distributing gold atoms within Sam’s body. The cells and organs urgently put their thoughts together to come up with a solution. Brain was as stumped as the rest of the organ communities, but among them they figured out a way.

Another major change began to ripple through Sam’s body. One by one, organs and cells began to give each other notice that from now on they well require gold atoms for their services. How else would they be able to gather the gold needed to satisfy Lungs’ price?

Very soon, inflation set in. “From now on, we will require ten gold atoms for every oxygen molecule delivered and every carbon dioxide molecule offloaded. Any who fail to meet the price will be excluded from service. Please see your in-boxes for a list of prices for other services including police and military defense (immune system) services, enzyme, hormone and other substance distribution and delivery, and all other Blood Corporation goods and services.” When asked why they got so expensive so quickly, Lungs replied with a press release saying: “We need to charge this price to meet our overhead operating costs. We have to pay the Blood Truckers their gold, pay Kidneys, Heart and Liver for their services, and of course make a profit. It’s not our fault that everybody else is so greedy.”

Pretty soon no cell or organ would perform any function without receiving gold atoms in return.

This was when Sam’s behavior began to change.

Normally good-natured most of the time and blessed with a strong work ethic, devotion to family and community, Sam’s behavior began to change. He became withdrawn, moody and distracted. His whole life and priorities changed. Every waking moment was devoted to gathering and consuming gold. He came up with an ingenious method of mixing a gold suspension that he could drink in order to allow Stomach, Intestines, Bowel and Gall Bladder to process the gold in an ionic state.

Sam had no idea why this was happening. He only knew that suddenly he had an insatiable craving for gold. Nothing else seemed to matter. He just couldn't get enough gold to swallow. When he was preparing and drinking his gold suspension, he felt a sense of anticipation. As soon as he finished gulping it down, however, he felt a brief moment of well-being followed immediately by an ever greater craving for the metal. Pretty soon he only knew that he had to have more. As he consumed another glass, he was already thinking of how to get more. When he missed a dose of gold suspension, he felt sick, anxious, nervous, insecure, paranoid, grouchy.

As this process progressed, two things happened pretty much simultaneously:

One change was in Sam's complexion. With the constant ingestion of gold, Sam's skin took on a kind of golden glow. Everybody commented on how healthy and vibrant he looked, asked him what his secret was. He told them it was the gold suspension. And while his weight began to climb steadily due to gold weight, he looked thinner and thinner. For a while, he gave the impression of being in extraordinarily good health with his golden skin, thinning waistline, and apparently constant tireless energy.

The other change was that he became increasingly distant, moody, unpredictable, manic, and erratic. Valuable items began to go missing among his friends and family. At first nobody realized it was him doing it. His wedding ring disappeared, which he claimed was due to it slipping off and falling down the drain. He drained all of his resources and nobody knew where they went. He became jumpy, secretive, and devious. He began to run little cons on strangers. His stealing got out of control. He gradually became a stranger to his closest friends and family. This once highly principled, trustworthy friend and devoted family man transformed into the first one suspected whenever something went missing, phony charges appeared on someone's account, or strange scary people knocked on the door in the wee hours of the morning.

His wife Liberty summed it up one day when, after he had verbally berated her for no apparent reason, she told him she believed that Sam had another love besides her, but she just couldn't figure out who or what it was. He denied it angrily as he prepared his latest brew of gold suspension and drank it. When she cried in anguish and tried to take the glass of golden brew out of his hand, he lashed out and threw her across the room, gulped down the liquid, then dropped to the floor where Liberty watched bewildered as he began licking up all of the liquid that had spilled.

"What's wrong?" she asked him as she checked herself for broken bones and rose from the kitchen floor, holding a paper towel over the gash in her forehead to stop the bleeding.

"I don't know! I don't know! I just know I have to have gold to drink! I can't be without it, and I don't know why! Just leave me alone will you?!?!? Just leave me be!"

Meanwhile inside Sam's body, the situation was steadily escalating. At the time of the incident in the kitchen, Lungs had raised their price to 70 atoms of gold for every oxygen molecule delivered and for every molecule of carbon dioxide eliminated. They claimed that the reason was because they now needed more gold to pay for the goods and services of Heart, Brain, Kidney, Liver, Blood and other Corporations while still remaining profitable. The word "inflation" began to be heard. Lungs blamed labor costs – Blood Truckers, Muscles, and other Unions demanded higher pay. Every organ and cell took every opportunity to raise its prices to keep up with the prices imposed by other organs and cells. The escalation was self-perpetuating.

Sam's biological processes became increasingly sluggish and fraught with breakages, slowdowns and breakdowns. What had once been a seamless choreography among all of the organs and cells, now had to stop at every exchange of energy or chemistry for cells and organs to process transactions. Before this new protocol, respiration had been a graceful dance of Blood Truckers pulling up to the Alveoli stations in Lungs, gracefully tossing their carbon dioxide out to the loading docks in the same motion as oxygen was tossed into the truck, with a Hi-Five and off to make the rounds. Now, a Blood Trucker would pull up to the station, pay the loading/offloading fees, pay the Alveoli Dock Workers, pay the Lung Offloading Fee, then wait for transaction confirmation, offload the carbon dioxide, then pay the Oxygen Fee, wait for transaction confirmation, then load the Oxygen under careful supervision lest any oxygen be stolen unpaid for. The whole process that used to take a few thousandths of a second now took nearly two seconds. It was this way throughout all of the complex interactions among organs, systems and cells in Sam's body.

In addition, tumors formed in Sam's body, structures whose only purpose was to process and keep track of the gold transactions and to shut off services for delinquent accounts. Still other tumors formed which took gold from cells and organs in exchange for covering their payments in the event that they fell behind, though charging high interest in the event of an actual claim. These structures took up space, crowding Sam's real organs and consuming resources, leaving less for all of the other organs. This caused anemia and chronic fatigue, among other issues.

Whenever an uninsured cell or organ couldn't make full payment for something, that good or service was withheld until payment was received. This became a more and more common occurrence as a few organs and cells managed to control more and more of the gold while more and more organs and cells were in debt to them. Cells began to die faster than they could reproduce. Necrosis set in at multiple sites throughout Sam's body as whole neighborhoods of cells died for lack of oxygen, glucose, or more complex enzymes, hormones and processes.

In addition, since gold had no real function in Sam's body and was not part of any metabolic or other processes, there was the question of where to put all of the gold steadily accumulating. While harmless in and of itself, there was just too much of it. Lungs, Kidneys, Intestines, Liver and Anus accumulated enormous quantities of gold and had no place to put it.

Why not Heart and Brain, you may ask? Well, cells in the city of Heart were working way too hard nonstop to be able to devote themselves to accumulating gold. Brain was too vulnerable to any fluctuation in oxygen, glucose and many other chemicals. It was too easy to threaten Brain with denial of service in so many ways. Brain was pretty easy for most organs to manipulate just by withholding oxygen, refusing to remove carbon dioxide, or crashing glucose, insulin or blood pressure. In the end, even though under protest, Brain acceded to the demands of the wealthy organs, for the greater good of the Body, its cells tried to tell themselves.

Why were Lungs, Kidneys, Intestines, Liver and Anus the ones ultimately calling the shots? Many doctors have written theses and papers on the subject. Ultimately, the consensus is that there was no particular reason. They just happened to be the ones who managed to leverage themselves and their functions in Sam's body to greatest advantage for the new overarching goal of acquiring and accumulating gold atoms. In someone else's body, it might have been different organs. But all researchers agree that the results would ultimately have been the same. Ultimately it was Anus who wielded the most power, since when it shut down, all organs and cells quickly began to drown and wallow in waste.

One more problem became increasingly painful for Sam. We mentioned that the constant influx of gold really did pose a storage problem. Wealthy cells and organs began to store the gold wherever they could find space: in the spaces between cells, in the joints, in the fluid of the eyes and inner ear, in the bone marrow, in the sweat glands, tear ducts and more. In a fit of opulence, Lungs and Kidneys decided to line all the blood vessels with gold. Of course this caused blood vessels to constrict and restricted blood flow while raising blood pressure to dangerous levels. Tissues and blood vessels become stiff. Sam's blood turned a metallic red-gold that was actually quite pretty until it dried when he was cut.

He began to get infections since his white blood cells couldn't get to the site of a viral or microbial breach in time to fight off the invaders. Gold was everywhere, blocking just about everything. Yet more kept coming in. In the intricate pathways and communication networks of Brain, gold began to interfere with normal functioning. Since gold is such a good conductor, its increasing presence precipitated numerous short circuits and even seizures. The cells of Brain found it increasingly difficult to maintain normal bodily functions and perform mental or cognitive activity. The neurons tried to find ways to use gold's conductive properties in some beneficial way, but there was just too much of it. It became increasingly hard for new synapses to form, which meant that memory and cognitive functions were more and more compromised.

In the macro world, Sam began to show signs of delirium, dementia, inflammation, fever, anemia, hypoxia, and a whole long list of autoimmune maladies.

By now, few cells or organs in Sam's body remembered how to function without the ingestion and exchange of gold atoms. None of them questioned it any more. The generations of cells that had lived before the Gilded Age had mostly died out and been replaced by generations who had known nothing else. All the organs and cells blamed each other for the high prices and steadily diminishing vitality and quality of life. Even Lungs, Liver, Anus and the other wealthy organs experienced a malaise that they mistakenly assumed was due to gold deficiency, spurring them to seek ever greater quantities of the metal.

As you can easily imagine, Sam began to experience pain, at first in his joints, muscles, and other places. His muscles got increasingly stiff and slow to respond. He felt constantly stuffy in his nose and sinuses. His reflexes began to slow and became erratic. He experienced fatigue, seizures, tremors, loss of coordination, and disorientation. He continued to gain weight but became emaciated to the point where he resembled a gold statue of a starving famine refugee. His vision became blurry and clouded. His hearing became muffled and everything sounded distant. He was constantly tired, swollen but gaunt, distracted, confused, and in increasing pain in more and more places in his body. He gave off a faint smell of rotting flesh.

All of Sam's friends and family urged him to see his doctor. In spite of his golden complexion, it was painfully clear that his health and sanity were in a downward spiral. His gold addiction utterly consumed him. It drove him to prey on family and friends as well as strangers. The cellular communities and organs of Sam's body became so clogged with gold that vital systems began to shut down, even as the wealthy cells and organs proclaimed that Sam was in the peak of health, based on the volume of gold in Sam's body, almost all of which was in their control.

When Sam went in for his physical at his wife Liberty's urging, after protesting that he was in excellent health, his doctor was stumped at the changes. At first she thought it was a form of cancer, then came up with a diagnosis of "idiopathic metastatic atypical auto-immune-mediated solid malignancies of unknown origin." That's medical speak for "This poor guy is fossilizing to gold more with every breath! Pretty soon there'll be no room for anything else! I have no idea what's going on!"

Sam began to give off a smell like gangrene, as more and more cells and cell communities began to slowly die due to lack of basic needs because of insufficient gold to pay for their life needs. There was more than enough gold in Sam's body to go around. All but a very small trickle of it was controlled by the wealthy organs.

One day a collection of cells from Heart, Brain, and various Endocrine cities traced the flow of gold in the body of Sam. They discovered that even within the wealthy organs of Lungs, Liver, Anus and the others, only a handful of cells, whom they dubbed King Cells, actually controlled and had access to the gold. The other cells in those communities – recast as Corporations - were paid by the King Cells. They in turn had to pay for the vital goods and services that kept them alive. These cells even had to pay the King Cells of their own organ communities for the privilege of residence in the community.

This loose coalition of cells from various organs gathered more data. Eventually they learned that out of the trillions of cells in Sam's body, a few hundred thousands of them controlled all but a few hundredths of a percent of the gold in Sam's Body. The Gold system was set up so that each time the King Cells paid out a gold molecule to an average cell for their contribution, they received between 5 and 20 gold atoms back from that same cell over time. At the rate things were going, it was only a matter of time before all the gold in Sam's body would be controlled by those few hundred thousand cells, at which point trillions of cells would have no gold to pay, and the wealthy organs would withhold services. In this deadlocked state, all of the organ communities and cells would quickly die. The King Cells in the wealthy organs would, of course, be the last to die. But they would most surely die a lonely, horrible death encased in gold in a lifeless wasteland of dead cells beyond the horizon decomposing around them.

The Gold System, or the Gold Sickness as it came to be remembered in popular lore, was indeed a fatal autoimmune condition. It resulted in the cells in Sam's body preying upon one another while bonding to gold ions rather than to the biological molecules that they needed to live. There had to be a cure.

The intrepid handful of cells, armed with this vital information, sounded the alarm and called for all of the cells in Sam's body to recognize the emergency and give highest priority to finding a cure. These cells simply referred to themselves as "Symbiotic Cells of Sam."

The King Cells immediately responded by mobilizing the military and police - the white blood cells - telling them that Symbiotic Cells of Sam were an invading virus-mutated cancer that they should attack and neutralize before they completely destroyed Sam. They also put out chemical messages for all cells to read, praising the value and indispensability of gold, calling for all cells to stand up for the Gold System without which Sam and all cells would perish, giving a clear message that the Symbiotic Cells of Sam were out to wreak havoc in the body.

Many Symbiotic Cells were destroyed by the misdirected white cells, while many more got smart really quickly and found ways to hide. The Symbiotic Cells put out chemical messages of their own from constantly-changing places in Sam's body, exposing the truth about the role of Gold and the dynamics of the King Cells. At first a few here and a few there realized that these messages were true. As the message spread, it no longer depended on the Symbiotic Cells to keep the message and the information alive. Cells in every organ community began to copy the chemical message and pass it around, tucking it in Blood Trucks where all cells of Sam's Body would encounter them.

At first the Blood Truckers were largely skeptical but gradually more and more of them made copies and distributed them wherever they traveled in Sam's body.

Eventually a day and time were agreed upon. All but the King Cells and their bodyguards agreed – Heart will pump out a certain rhythm that will be the signal. And then it was in motion.

The Blood Truckers pulled into the Alveoli Stations directly, crashing through the payment barriers to offload their carbon dioxide to Lung cells which quickly released them to the air and tossed in the oxygen. Hi-Five and off to make the rounds. Like in the old days before the Gold Sickness. The same game-change was replicated in all interactions in Sam's body. Payment officer cells were nowhere to be seen. Manager cells ordered the truckers to stop and pay, and were ignored

When the King Cells realized what was happening, they sent their bodyguards and enforcers to assert their control. They called upon the White Blood Cell soldiers to defend them. Some did come to their side, but even more soldiers had read the truth in the ubiquitous chemical messages and realized that as defenders of Sam's body, their duty lay in ending the Gold Sickness. King Cells and those loyal to them were corralled and contained in out-of-the-way places where they could not block the normal functioning of biological processes in Sam's body.

There was still the question of what to do with all of the gold that was blocking just about everything. In an unprecedented coordinated effort of all of the cells in Sam's body, the gold was eliminated via every safe channel. For several weeks, Sam's sweat and tears were gold-laced and iridescent. He had golden sleep crusts under his eyes in the morning. He peed pretty much the same gold suspension that he had consumed. He literally pooped little gold bricks. His breath on the bathroom mirror left a golden sheen behind.

Within a few weeks, the level of gold in Sam's body was barely over normal. The parasitic tumors had been dismantled and their cells re-integrated into life-sustaining roles in his body that they were born to fulfill. Sam was mostly pain-free and full of energy. His sight was clear again, his hearing was keen, his limber muscles and joints became those of a professional dancer.

He continued to have a craving for gold, which plagued him still. He checked into a rehab facility for rare addictions and was able to overcome the cravings and the mental patterns that had formed around the addiction through cognitive and behavioral therapy.

Within Sam's body, all of the cells and organ communities began to experience life uncluttered by gold and the quest for it. Some of the cells and organs wanted to punish the King Cells and especially Lungs for starting the whole catastrophe, but wiser cells prevailed. "We still need Lungs, and they need all of us. We have been given a second chance. Let's not waste it fighting among ourselves. After all, we all share the same genes. We are all Sam, as are the King Cells. We cannot allow them to create sickness but they do have a valid contribution to make."

King Cells and the wealthy organs pouted and moped for a while, but more and more Lung cells rediscovered the fulfilling dance of offloading carbon dioxide from the Blood Trucks and dutifully but playfully tossing in the oxygen. Most of the cells and organs of the body were immediately relieved to be able to be themselves and do what they were meant to do, to fulfill their purpose. Cells and organs, which had for a while been blaming each other for the Gold Sickness as it came to be called, became once again friends and comrades in performing the cellular dance of Life in the body of a human being. And Sam was renewed as though coming home from a war. Fortunately, he was saved in time to prevent Liberty from becoming a bereaved widow, or from wearing herself out with long, draining hours of extra work to support her husband's addiction.

Cells who had grown up believing that “Gold keeps the body whole” discovered to their surprise that Gold had actually been a burden, that things functioned infinitely better in its absence. The Gold Sickness was cured.

There is yet one more outcome that must be shared. Remember that when Sam was sporting a shrinking waistline and golden complexion, he recommended his gold suspension supplement to his friends and family?

Once Sam was free of the Gold Sickness and was his true self again, he looked around him and was horrified to see that many of his friends and family were deep into the Gold Sickness that he had unwittingly lured them into. His wife Liberty knew what to do. She advised him well.

Sam’s cells brought to his consciousness a way to propagate the cure. The original chemical message that precipitated Sam’s recovery was replicated in a form that would be compatible with any human organism. One by one Sam visited those who had contracted the Gold Sickness, told them what had happened to him, showed them his own recovery, and offered them the cure openly: “Here is how I was cured, and here it is for you.” One by one, all of those in the fatal grip of the Gold Sickness were cured and restored.

What could have been an extinction-level pandemic was narrowly averted, and it has been noted that the generations since then have enjoyed an ever-increasing level of health and well-being.

A Tale of Two Towns

The Flow of Life With and Without Currency

As a mental exercise, imagine two communities: one which is hierarchical and revolves around currency and one which does not. Let’s call them Stuckton and Brightville.

Stuckton was once a town of small farmers and craftspeople who lived in a dynamic balance. The farmers, ranchers, hunters, and fishermen raised enough food for the townspeople to eat well, with enough to spare for trade with other towns. There were enough doctors, blacksmiths, mechanics, engineers, and so forth for everybody’s needs to be met. Each family owned the buildings and land they lived and worked on. The flour, paper, and steel mills produced enough for the town’s needs and also traded with other towns. There were carpenters, potters, electricians, doctors, software coders, truck drivers, welders and pretty much every profession and trade involved in the life of a town.

There was an elected Mayor and Town Council, who were people from the community who chose to run for office. For the most part, they were elected based on their perceived wisdom, fairness, and community-mindedness. Anybody in the town could express their concerns to them, and they largely strove to respond to the needs and wishes of the people who elected them.

Like in any capitalist community, they used currency in their exchanges of goods and services. At one time, people set their prices so that they could make a living. For a while it worked. Most were self-employed. People pretty much interacted as equals.

Then one year, the Thompson family farm had a calamity. Half the family members came down with something that made them sick for months. When planting time came, there were not enough hands to plant enough crops. Come harvest time, most of the sick had recovered, but there was less than half of the harvest that they needed; and the family owed the doctors quite a bit that they couldn’t pay. To make matters worse, a fungus had infected part of the crop. That part had to be burned to save the rest.

Going into winter, the Thompsons found they couldn’t afford firewood, meat, milk, warm shoes to replace the ones that had worn out, or even electricity. They had sold all of their harvest to cover their medical bills and had no bumper crop to plant in the spring. As the first frost sparkled the ground, they realized they probably wouldn’t survive the winter.

The Jensons, their neighbors, had had a particularly good year. Their fields became more fertile than their neighbors’ due to runoff of topsoil from up in the hills, which settled in the Jensons’ fields and gave them a boost. They had currency to spare

from the sale of their bountiful crop.

The Jensons offered to buy the Thompsons' farm from them, so that the Thompsons could buy supplies to survive the winter. The Thompsons saw no choice but to accept. From then on, the Thompsons worked for the Jensons, were paid by them for their work, and in turn paid rent to the Jensons. The Jensons sold the crops from both farms, paid the Thompsons the wages they had offered them, and kept the rest of the proceeds.

The same thing began to happen among residents of the town itself. The blacksmith, Evans, was injured, kicked by a horse she was shoeing and couldn't work for a while. The mechanic, Rogin, who was making lots of money with the proliferation of machinery in the town, offered to buy Evans' business in a similar arrangement. After the blacksmith recovered, she worked for Rogin, who owned both businesses and paid her a wage, out of which she paid rent to Rogin for her residence which was also her workshop. Clients for both the mechanics shop and the smithy paid Rogin directly.

Then there was the fisherman, Bellows, who saw what happened with the Jensons and Rogin and got an idea. He sneaked to the dock in the dead of night during a storm and sabotaged the boats of all the other fishermen, taking care to make it look like storm damage. During the next ten days, which was the peak of the tuna season, Bellows was the only boat in operation. By the end of the season, Bellows had bought out all but a couple of the other fishermen, and they worked for Bellows who now owned all of the boats and the houses of the other fishermen. That year the fish supply was quite short and prices extravagantly high. Bellows had an exceptionally good year. He was the only one who did.

Within a generation or so, Stuckton had changed dramatically. All of the farmland was owned and controlled by Jenson Agricultural Corporation. All of the farmers worked for Jenson Inc. The Jensons changed over the years. They were no longer the good-natured neighbors they had once been. They no longer worked the land, and the generation coming of age knew nothing of agriculture. They paid the other farmers to do the work, and always made sure to pay them just enough less than they would need to live, to ensure their continuing indebtedness to Jenson Inc. While Jenson Inc expanded to acquire farms in neighboring towns, the farmers in their employ, the descendants of the original owner-operator farmers, worked even longer hours than their grandparents had worked, yet were hungry most of the time, cold in the winter and sweltering in the summer, and turning grey at a younger age. The generation of farm workers coming of age began to work at a very young age, knowing that they would always be in debt to Jenson Corporation and would most likely never be able to leave.

In the town center, all skilled crafts including carpenters, smiths, mechanics, engineers, electricians, plumbers, and more were all under the control of, worked for, and paid rent to Rogin Enterprises, who owned almost all of the houses and workspaces in the town. Bellows Holdings controlled all fishing, fish processing, hunting, milling, and all of the homes and facilities involved.

Five families controlled everything in and around the town. They lived in unabashed opulence yet had long forgotten the skills and crafts over which they now ruled. Their lives were centered around gaining as much money and power as possible.

The quality of life of most of the residents declined in other ways as well. A couple of generations ago, craftspeople took pride in making the best products possible, built to last. But in the current generation, the manufacturers in the town realized they could make more money doing otherwise. Why make a pair of shoes that lasts a lifetime and sell one or two pairs to everybody, when you can make shoes that fall apart in a few months and keep selling everybody new ones?

A new business appeared in the center of town - a bank. With currency suddenly in short supply and many people desperate, the bank offered, for a small fee, to keep people's money safe and give them a little extra every so often. You see, the bankers had discovered that the material used for their currency would, when piled up in massively huge amounts and compressed, replicate itself out of elements in the air. It took gigantic amounts for this to work; but once everybody brought their money to the bank, the bank had more than enough to vastly multiply it. The bankers became the wealthiest controlling interests in the town, more wealthy and having even greater control than the Five Families. The bank would give people half a percent of interest on the money they left in the bank, meanwhile quadrupling the money through the replication process. They produced nothing of value or benefit to the community or its residents, yet they vastly increased their own power and influence.

The mayor and town council were still officially elected by popular vote, but they knew the dynamics very well. When a member of one of the Five Families or bankers wanted something, they nearly always got it, one way or another. Anybody who went against the interests of the Bank or one of the Families was given reasons why their requests and concerns couldn't and wouldn't be considered, if they could get an appointment to speak to their representatives at all. Usually they were told to call or come back later and make an appointment. This was the case again and again.

While there was still enough food, wood, water, and other materials and skills for everybody to live well, most people did not. The Five Families lived like fabled royalty of long-vanished generations while everybody else eked out a bare existence, regardless of their high productivity, constantly in a state of stress and depletion physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. No longer was there balance. No longer did a person's labor or expertise result in a good living or quality of life. The only ones who thrived were the ones who controlled currency, land, resources, and the lives of those who provided the brains, skills and muscle power involved in producing goods and services.

Now let's turn our attention to the town of Brightville, which took a different turn early on.

In Brightville, currency was never conceived of or used. Even barter was never formalized as a medium of exchange.

There was specialization, to be sure. There were skilled hunters, fishers, farmers, weavers, potters, electricians, carpenters, engineers, welders, plumbers, doctors, software and hardware engineers, herbalists, boatmakers, barbers, and all the others who worked at all of the crafts and skills that it took to maintain the town and the lives of its inhabitants.

There was no city council and no mayor. Whenever decisions affecting the community needed to be made, the residents would meet, discuss, argue, research, and ultimately come to a consensus. On the unusual occasions when consensus could not be reached, a vote was held. As the town grew, the logistics of the dialogue creatively adapted to accommodate the larger population. There was a lot of lively discussion, debate and argument; but there was no such thing as political corruption. There were no career politicians.

There was a powerful sense of cohesion among the diverse inhabitants of Brightville. Through a distributed database updated by everyone as necessary, the farmers knew how much wheat, potatoes, corn, squash and tomatoes were needed for everybody to get through the year with plenty to eat. Of course, a surplus was raised for both bumper crop and to cover possible unexpected shortages.

The hunters and ranchers knew how much meat was needed and made sure to provide enough for everybody plus some surplus to be smoked, dried, jerked, canned and otherwise preserved against hard winters or natural disasters.

The millers knew how much flour was needed for the bakers, who knew how much bread and pastries were needed and in turn kept the town supplied with fresh bread.

The carpenters, electricians, plumbers and other skilled construction professionals would check the database online every day. "Oh, Farmer Smith's barn burned down. Let's get out there and build them a new one." The loggers always kept an adequate supply of wood at the materials depot on the edge of town. "Ah, a new family is moving into town next month. There's a nice piece of land over by the Farnsworths' place. Let's put together a plan, meet with Sally the architect and get it done before they get here."

The doctors' offices were always open during normal hours for anybody who needed them. Patients came in, were seen, treated, and sent home or to hospital as necessary. The apothecaries, herbalists and other healthcare professionals of the town made sure that medicine was always available. The doctors were, of course, always reachable round the clock in case of emergency.

When the cell phone tower went down, the electricians and electronic engineers scrambled to get it back up and running.

The fishers knew how much fish was needed and made sure to keep enough available at all times.

In times of increased need, such as harvest time, every able person turned out to help with the harvest until it was done. Then after everybody rested up, there'd be a big celebration.

There was a farm supplies depot, a fishing supplies depot, a construction supplies depot, food depots and more. Whenever anybody needed anything, they went to the depot and picked it up. The items were duly scanned, logged and updated in the database.

Nobody kept track of who did or provided how much of what to whom. Everybody knew what was needed and did what was necessary to make sure it was provided. There was no concept of owing somebody something, unless a bet was placed or a favor was done.

True, there were lean years and calamities, times of shortage or adversity. There were the 3 years in a row when early, harsh, long winters cut the growing season short and there wasn't enough food. During those times there were long, difficult town meetings; but solutions were found. Unusual food sources were tapped, which helped everybody get through the lean time. Food was rationed in the depots, and everybody managed to have enough to survive. A couple of recipes from those years even stayed in the town's culinary lore as delicacies after the crisis passed.

Then there was the time that a flood destroyed the homes of a third of the community. The construction professionals and architects worked long hours for months, aided by anybody and everybody who could carry a hammer or use a saw. The people displaced by the disaster, were put up in the homes of friends and family in the meantime. As people's homes were completed and people moved back into them, they replenished their furniture, appliances, decorations and more from the depots. While photos and mementoes couldn't be replaced, most other things were no problem to replenish.

One year, the same scenario that impacted the Thompsons and the Jensons in Stuckton happened to the Quaigs and the Diaz family. The Quaigs all came down with the same sickness that hit the Thompsons. They were in no way going to be able to plant or harvest enough to supply even their own needs, much less keep a bumper crop and add some to the community food depot. Meanwhile the same topsoil runoff that blessed the Jensons in Stuckton, also graced the Diaz family in Brightville. When planting time came, there was no problem for the Quaigs because everybody turned out to help them plant, irrigate, fertilize, and harvest. All of the Quaigs pulled through the sickness. Every day, Diaz family members were over at the Quaigs, helping out, cooking chicken soup, doing laundry and other tasks and making sure the Quags were comfortable. With no need for currency, at least one doctor visited the Quaigs daily and maintained their care.

When Sallie the blacksmith was injured, Allie the welder took over Sallie's duties until she recovered, and one or two of the town engineers helped out too.

It was almost inevitable that representatives from the business empires of Stuckton came to Brightville looking for expansion opportunities. They asked to speak to the Mayor and City Council about potentially "lucrative business opportunities that will benefit both our towns." These representatives were thoroughly confused when they were told that there was no mayor or city council, but they were invited to speak to the townspeople at the next meeting. At the meeting, the businesspeople from Stuckton began by expressing "sympathy and dismay to see the level of poverty here in Brightville. Nobody here has any money. Frankly, we can't see how you even manage to live. But we can change that! We can make some of you very rich, and bring you democracy, teach you how to elect proper representatives to govern you."

That statement was met with uncomprehending silence. Nobody in Brightville had any idea what they were talking about. The concepts were completely foreign. They might as well have been speaking a foreign language.

Finally someone in the front row asked the Stucktonian emissaries to explain what they meant by "money," "poverty," "rich," "democracy," and "representatives." "We have no idea what you're talking about. None of us has ever heard these words before," said a Brightvillian carpenter.

"Well, money is what makes the world go round. It's what facilitates the flow of goods and services. Without money, how are you going to buy or rent a house, food, a car, appliances and other stuff? Poverty is what y'all have, because none of you seem to have any money. Rich means having a lot of money, having more than anybody else. Democracy means you elect

politicians to act as representatives who decide what laws you will live under and how much taxes you pay. That's called freedom."

After the laughter died down, one of the doctors spoke up.

"Are you sure we're speaking the same dialect? That really didn't help much. I guess by money you mean the angular momentum of the earth that keeps it spinning, though how that facilitates stuff getting done is beyond me. You say we don't have any, but we have as much of it as anybody. And how can somebody have more of the earth's angular momentum than anybody else? And for that matter, what are "politicians," "pay," "rent," "buy" and "taxes?" And what do you mean by "freedom?" In Brightville it means you can go about your life as you please as long as you aren't interfering with somebody else's doing so. Sounds like it means the opposite in Stuckton, since it involves asking someone else to tell you how to live."

At this point the Stucktonians were totally confused, frustrated and fit to be tied. "Well, how do you get food? How do you get a house? How do you get a car?"

"You are seriously asking that? Really?"

"Yes. Seriously."

"Well, for food we go to the depot next to the orange orchard by the river and stock up. Everybody here has a place to live in; but if someone new comes to town, they send word ahead. Then when they get here, they pick a spot that's not in use, sit down with an architect, and the construction crew builds the house to their specifications. Unless, of course, they bring their own crew. As for a car, ya just go down to the lot across the street from the electronics depot and pick yourself out one. Why do you want to know something as simple as that? How do you do it in Stuckton? How do you get food, a house, or a car there?"

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! How do you pay for these things? Whom do you pay? How do you get the currency?"

"What, for Pete's sake, is 'pay?' Really! And what's so important about it? And what does this have to do with the earth's angular momentum?," said a weaver.

"You gotta pay for everything! That's what the Five Families and the Bank are for. They pay you to work, then you pay them for stuff like a place to live, a car, food and so forth."

"I don't mean any disrespect, but we're truly not understanding what you're trying to say. Have you found a way to harness the earth's spin for some purpose?," asked an engineer.

Jack Jenson, CEO of Jenson Corp, reached into his pocket, pulled out his wallet, and handed some shiny pieces of currency to the engineer. "This is money."

The engineer took the pieces and passed them around. They bore the image of some unknown person on one side, a number on the other side, and writing in a dead language.

The blacksmith examined one and spoke up matter-of-factly, saying "Oh yeah, this is somnambulum. It's a pretty good conductor. We use it for a lot of things, though coronium or zerbium hold up better to heat and wear. Somnambulum's one of the best conductors though, and stands up to more cold. But are you seriously saying that this is what you mean by 'money?' Really? Seriously?"

"Of course."

Laughter rocked the auditorium for a good 10 minutes.

"Friend, no disrespect, but that's gotta be the most cockamamie thing I've heard all year! Do you mean, you folks carry these little somnambulum trinkets around in your pockets instead of using the metal for what it's good for, and you have to give them to these Five Families or Banuks or whatever you call them, to get things you need? That just plain don't make no

sense. And what a waste of good somnambulum! How do you folks manage to live? Sounds like you've got yourselves all turned around to where you don't know your hands from your feet…"

After more laughter, a baker chimed in: "So what is supposed to be the benefit to us for doing whatever it is you're suggesting we do?"

"You'll all have money. And some of you will be rich. And you'll work harder and produce more, because frankly I get the impression there's a serious lack of work ethic around here. Here it is a Tuesday night, and the whole town is here as though nobody has a job to go to in the morning!"

A blacksmith spoke up: "We do what we have to do, when it needs to be done. Why would we need to do more? Everybody has what they need and there are reserves in stock. What possible need would there be to make more than we need?"

"So you can sell them for a profit, and pay for stuff."

"Another word we don't understand. What is 'profit?' Another metal that you carry around?"

"You people really are savages, aren't you! You don't get it, do you? You have to have money to live. You can't just live wherever you want, take whatever you want, have whatever you want without paying for it. That's… Well, it's theft. It's Communism! It's dictatorship! It's against the natural order of things!"

More laughter.

"Wow! Talk about culture shock!" said a high school teacher. "Why on earth would you say that? Why shouldn't a person live wherever they want, as long as it's not unsafe or someone else isn't living there? Why shouldn't we take what we want, have what we want and need? That's why we make stuff – for people to use. And whatever you mean by 'pay,' I don't have any idea what it means; but if it means you trade those somnambulum trinkets, which are useless in your pockets, then it just sounds to me like you're making things a lot more complicated than they need to be. Either that, or you've been eating those magic mushrooms."

"Are you saying, if I wanted to live here, I could just pick a plot of land, build a house on it, and go into your store, or your store, or your store and take what I want?," asked a Stucktonian representative.

A doctor replied: "I don't see why not. Pretty basic. Of course, you'd want to send word ahead so we could put together a welcoming crew, pick out a few locations we think you might like, find out what your skills and passions are so we can help you integrate into the community, and of course have the architects and building teams geared up and ready to build your place. I don't know what a 'store' is, but if you mean a supply depot, they're always open and we all take what we need when we need it, and make what's needed when it's needed."

"That can't possibly work! Nobody could live like that! It's against human nature!," exclaimed the Jenson Senior Vice-President of Marketing.

Uproarious laughter.

A carpenter responded: "Well, now, I do think you might have a touch of heat stroke or something, because that's exactly how we've always lived. To tell the truth, it's you who seem to be making up silly things that have no reason, purpose, rhyme or sense."

A computer programmer spoke up, "Mister, I don't mean any disrespect, but your delegation does give me cause for concern. Of course y'all'd be welcome to move in here if you want, but I don't think you'd feel very at home here if you're attached to living however it is you folks live in Stuckton. Y'all seem to be set on bending us to your ways, and I can't see any good in it for us, so that won't be happening. If y'all have a problem with that, then best you let us know now."

"I'm sure we have products and services that you might want. You'd have to have money to buy them from us. And like my colleague said, some of you would become rich."

A mechanic spoke next: “I also don’t mean any disrespect, but I took the liberty of looking over that car you drove up in. And I can’t help notice your shoes and clothes. No offense, but the workmanship isn’t up to snuff compared with stuff around here, and the materials are weak and won’t hold up long. Here, let me see your phone.”

One of the Stuckton corporate representatives handed him her phone.

“Hey Lee, take a look at this,” the mechanic said, tossing the phone to one of the electronics designers. “Whaddaya think?”

Lee fiddled with it for a couple of minutes, tossed it back to the Stucktonian saying “You folks really don’t know how to build stuff, do you? This phone won’t last more than a year or two. We’d be happy to send some folks over to Stuckton to teach you better techniques, if you like.”

Insulted, the representative from Rogin Enterprises stood and declared defensively, “You don’t have to teach us anything! We know how to build better phones, cars, and clothes! Do you think we’re stupid? We don’t build them as well as we could because if we did, if they never broke down or wore out or just lasted too long, there’d be no market, the economy would tank, businesses would close, jobs would be lost, and nobody would have to buy new ones!”

Uproarious laughter, again lasting nearly ten minutes.

“I know what y’all are! Yup, for sure I got it figured out. Y’all are some kind of theater troupe! You’re here to entertain us! I haven’t laughed this much since I don’t know when! Thank you!” said a fisherwoman, rising and coming to the stage to shake their hands, clapping on the way. “This is some of the best improv I’ve ever seen! Y’all’re welcome to come entertain us anytime! Hey, maybe we can send one of our theater groups to Stuckton just to be neighborly!”

Everybody clapped, laughing, having realized the true nature of the Stucktonian’s presentation.

Except for the Stucktonians. In a fit of indignation and scalded egos, they rose from the stage, stalked down the aisle, piled into their vehicle, and drove off.

A few months later, another Stucktonian delegation arrived with a platoon of soldiers. They repeated the original business offer of the first delegation, adding that if the Brightvillians continued to be unreceptive, Stuckton would intervene and “civilize” them, “for your own good.”

This delegation was greeted with fanfare and joviality as a repeat performance. After the Stucktonian soliloquy ended, there was thunderous laughter and applause. At a word from the Jenson delegate, a couple of the soldiers fired off a few shots in the air. “We’re not kidding! We will civilize you and open up this market! Nothing must stand in the way of Business!”

That was the first moment when the citizens of Brightville realized that this was a serious threat, not satirical theatre, and responded accordingly. The delegation was sent back to Stuckton on foot naked, barefoot, and shaken but otherwise unharmed to deliver one simple message from the people of Brightville: “Grow up and leave us alone!”

When the Stucktonian military arrived in Brightville, they discovered that the Brightvillians, while good-natured and easygoing, were quite fierce guerilla warriors when attacked. While the Stucktonian soldiers were better armed, the Brightvillians were creative, focused, co-ordinated and fearless. Within less than a day, the Stucktonians hightailed it out of Brightville, again naked, barefoot, missing their technology and weaponry, and on foot. Wounded Stucktonian soldiers were treated and nursed back to health, then sent home the same way as soon as they were well enough. Stucktonian soldiers who were captured after committing war crimes upon Brightvillians, were tried and treated according to Brightvillian law.

Unbeknownst to all, however, a seed had been planted. A shift in awareness had been set in motion. Among the Stucktonian soldiers who ended up spending some time in Brightville, new ideas began to sprout. They had been terrified that they would be beaten, brutalized, tortured, even killed. That is what they would have done to Brightvillian fighters had they won the conflict. As well, they had been told by their rulers that the Brightvillians were savage, primitive, vicious people. But instead, they found that, while restrained from access to anything resembling a weapon, they were treated with dignity, humanity and respect by the Brightvillians. There was anger expressed, but also compassion and camaraderie.

They had a chance to experience life in Brightville, with no need for money, with goods and services freely flowing, with abundance and respect for everybody, even for captured enemies.

By the time the captured and wounded soldiers were ready to go home, some of them asked if they could stay in Brightville and were happily accepted. Those who went back to Stuckton were nevertheless quite impressed with their Brightville experience. The once-familiar and seemingly natural and unassailable ways of Stuckton began more and more to feel burdensome, capricious, oppressive, and unnecessary to them.

The returning wounded and captives shared their experiences of the inner workings of life in Brightville with their friends and family, who scoffed at first but gradually came to question the order of things that was all they'd known. Within a decade or more, growing numbers of Stucktonians began to question the inevitability or even the validity of currency, the 5 Families, Banks and the dual existence of privileged and disenfranchised in the same community.

A trickle of Stucktonians started to trek to Brightville and were integrated into the community. Another swelling percentage of Stucktonians were deciding that rather than move to Brightville, they would bring Brightville's way of life to Stuckton.

When the 5 Families and the Bank learned of this, they went to the media to spread propaganda to the effect that there was a nefarious dictatorial evil Communist conspiracy in Brightville to corrupt the youth of Stuckton, destroy the economy and make everybody poor, hungry and downtrodden. Of course, most of the people in Stuckton were already poor, hungry and downtrodden, but they had been brought up to believe that Stuckton was the Best Damn Place On Earth. Some of them believed the propaganda and aligned themselves with the ruling elite.

Eventually there came a day when things abruptly changed. Throughout Stuckton, everybody showed up for work and performed their jobs but stopped asking payment for goods and services, and stopped paying for anything even when some of the Old Guard tried to demand it. In the stores nobody asked for payment and nobody offered it. Craftspeople performed their jobs and did not ask for payment. The bank was barricaded, cut off from power and communications, and peacefully shut down. The Somnambulum was removed from the bank and put into a public place for use by whoever needed it. Nobody paid for anything, but they all kept working.

The 5 Families and the Bankers tried to send in the military to force the townspeople to return to the use of currency and resume payment. They discovered that many soldiers, a growing number, were committed to support and protect the strikers. Landlords knocked on doors demanding payment and were sternly told, "You don't live here. You have no business here. You don't need money any more. You have a home. Go there."

When the power elite tried to enforce their dominance, they were defended against efficiently, disarmed, restrained, and placed out of the way. Within a month, Stuckton changed fundamentally. Representatives went to Brightville asking to learn how to function without currency and hierarchy. Brightvillians came to Stuckton and shared their common sense knowledge and experience. Within a generation, Stuckton shared the vibrant well-being and good-natured thriving lifestyle of Brightville, but with their own culture, slang, recipes, musical styles and culture. The two communities then enjoyed a long era of friendship and cultural exchange.

Conclusion

We now have a clear diagnosis and understanding of our true situation and of the cliff towards which we are hurtling headlong if we continue on our current trajectory. Fortunately, we now have a clear treatment plan, a course of action which will bring us away from the edge of a bleak and hellish abyss and into a condition of robust health and well-being that will most likely be able to endure indefinitely, barring pandemics, extinction-level asteroid impacts and other natural calamities possibly beyond our control. But to the extent that we control our destiny and the conditions that we live in, we will enjoy an ever-expanding, unprecedented new Renaissance and age of thriving and fulfillment individually and collectively that will redefine much of the very concepts of the nature of the human condition. Time is short, however. The sooner we act, the better our chances of success. The time is now. It is entirely up to us, the people of all of the countries of the world. From these pages, let us arise and act boldly, unified in our glorious diversity, fearlessly, honestly, uncompromisingly and compassionately to carry these principles from conception to actuality. Let the Transition begin!

To safeguard the integrity of this work:

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Chapter 28: The Transition

The transition from the current dysfunctional, unsustainable, degenerate socio-economic paradigm to the new more humanistic, compassionate, synergistic, empowering, sustainable one is a transition from out-of-control dysfunction and unnecessary suffering to the beginnings of a truly enlightened society, consciously striving from its core to create a truly win-win-win model that will evolve into ever-more thriving symbiosis.

It is one of the most worthy possible goals. In order to be prepared to see it through, it is important to keep in mind that change and transition are almost always difficult. It will take time to adapt, learn, work out the logistics and details and settle in. That must not discourage or cause us to abandon the endeavor when difficult issues arise.

It is a mistake to think that once we do away with the old defunct paradigms and install the new ones, everything will magically be wonderful, that all human problems will disappear. There will be a lot of hard work to do and many challenges to overcome; but assuming we go through it successfully, it will prove to be a massive improvement in the quality of life on every level for all people and for the human community as a whole. In order to fulfill this goal, we must be committed to seeing it through. We must not abandon our Transition when challenges occur.

We must also be conscious that many people will be displaced in various ways. Some will embrace the changes, but others will be afraid, discouraged, confused, or even angry. Some will oppose and resist the paradigm change because of being invested in, accustomed and adapted to the old paradigm. Change does not come easily. We need to be prepared in advance to make a conscious and concerted determination to support these people and do all possible to facilitate their being integrated compassionately into the new paradigms with respect and dignity. Too many revolutions have sought to punish those clinging to old ways. Such a mentality would destroy and undo all that we set out to do with our Transition, and must be scrupulously avoided.

Since one of the primary motives and values driving the Transition will be to establish a more compassionate society that embraces and benefits from the unique contribution of each individual in it, we dare not villainize, despise or disrespect those who opposed this change. It is vital that we keep in mind that these people adapted to the environment they were living in, according to the behavioral reinforcements in place at the time. They were also programmed and propagandized with the self-serving myths of that society and knew nothing else.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

We must bring about this paradigm change regardless of their opposition, but there is no blame to be cast.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

> **Clarification of the following passage**
>
> The wording below reflects an earlier formulation that is broader than the author's present position. It must not be read as authorizing armed resistance, organized political violence, preemptive force, or physical conflict undertaken to establish or defend a Transition. The current position is that Transition is achieved and sustained through voluntary participation, institution-building, civil resistance, de-escalation, and nonviolent protection of persons.
>
> An individual may act to protect themselves or another person from an immediate physical assault when escape, de-escalation, shielding, or outside assistance cannot stop the danger — but only to the minimum extent necessary, and never as punishment or as a means of advancing Transition. Once the immediate danger has passed, all protective action must cease, and every injured person must receive prompt and compassionate care regardless of their role.

> The overnight-transition strategy described in this edition has been superseded by a gradual, community-based roadmap.
>
> Additional passages later in this chapter — comparing political opponents to impaired people, proposing "therapeutic reservations," and characterizing dissent as mental illness — have also been superseded. They are preserved with strikethrough markup and followed by clarifications.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

We may be unable to achieve the transition completely peacefully and nonviolently. We may need at some point to physically fight and defend ourselves against those violently clinging to the old paradigms and institutions.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

But the minute we have overcome them and rendered them no longer an effective threat or obstacle to creating the new paradigms, we must extend to them the hand of friendship and brotherhood. We must invite them to find a respected and prosperous place in the new paradigm.

Let us examine the difference between the aftermath of WWI and WWII. At the end of WWI the Germans as a people and a country were beaten down and punished as a scapegoat for a host of evils in the world. The result was a Germany ripe for extreme nationalism and receptive to Hitler.

After the end of WWII the Germans and Japanese were treated with respect and assisted in rebuilding with a much more positive result. Instead of being beaten down, the defeated Axis countries were helped to rebuild and prosper. Even with a far-right party winning about a fifth of the vote in 2025 (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2025), Germany's democratic institutions have so far given no would-be Hitler the traction he found in the 1930s.

Those who are attached to the old paradigm will be angry and afraid of being beaten down. We must make absolutely sure that this does not happen. There is no place for revenge or purges in the more compassionate, empowering, synergistic society that we will be putting together. This ethic needs to be in effect from the very beginning.

While we cannot allow these segments of the population to bring back the old paradigms and enforce them upon us, it is imperative that we do the utmost possible to support and assist them in finding a positive and fulfilling place in the post-Transition paradigm.

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We must deal with them with the same mixture of firmness and compassion that we would use when taking the car keys from a drunk or impaired family member or in helping a veteran with PTSD to heal and find a place in civilian life.

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We need to proactively identify who will be displaced due to the elimination of their jobs. For example, there will be no need for salespeople, advertisers, insurance agents, underwriters and adjusters, billers, bankers, investment brokers, financial advisers, Corporate attorneys, managers, boards of directors, servants, domestics, realtors, CEO’s, bounty hunters, etc. Professional athletes and entertainers will still have very much of a place and be highly appreciated, but they will no longer have celebrity status as an elite.

Yet as some things will be lost, whole new industries and endeavors will emerge and grow. At the same time as old sectors, industries and occupations will become obsolete or shrink markedly, many new ones will be created and expanded:

diversified energy technology development, construction, research and development; creation of new infrastructure for human powered and other modes of transportation; construction of new communities; new agricultural paradigms (permaculture, neighborhood level agriculture); environmental restoration (reforestation and restoration of other damaged ecosystems, cleanup and safe disposal of toxic waste etc); expansion of public transportation; manufacture of alternative transportation technologies; education; healthcare; social sciences, therapists, communications, information processing, and more. A good approach would be to sit down with people one by one, to work with them to discover where their skills, talents, interests and personalities fit best in the new paradigm and to provide them with any needed training to supplement their existing skills and experience. Training will of course be open to all, as will all levels of education.

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The new paradigms will be pluralistic. If there are people who are can truly only be happy in a more traditional paradigm of the old kind, there will be communities, therapeutic reservations that operate internally along those lines for a limited time until they are no longer needed; but they will be closely monitored and not allowed to expand or to impose their structures and paradigms on other communities and individuals.

There will of course be those who are accustomed to being in the ruling elite, who may find anything else impossible to accommodate - the incurable addicts. Such people will have no place to recreate that role, since it will no longer exist. People in that position will be offered counseling and psychological services to assist with their adjustment. This will not be forced reprogramming but the kind of support that a person would have if they lost their home to war or disaster, lost their families in a tragedy, or were displaced because new technology rendered their skill-set obsolete. If they are unable or unwilling to be helped, then like other people suffering from psychological conditions that make them dangerous to others or themselves, they will need to be restrained from causing harm, in the most respectful, compassionate way possible.

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Clarification (September 2026)

The passages above used language that conflated political disagreement with mental illness and proposed "therapeutic reservations" — a term and concept that are incompatible with the principles Transition holds. The following replaces them.

Dissent is not illness. Opposing Transition, preferring the previous economic system, wanting to live within hierarchical structures, or advocating for capitalism is political expression — not a psychological disorder, and not grounds for confinement, segregation, or mandatory treatment. Transition protects the right to think, believe, and speak freely, including in opposition to Transition itself.

Conduct is different from belief. The line is drawn at action that harms others. A person who expresses nostalgia for privilege or advocates for a different economic model exercises a protected right. A person who attempts to impose subordination on others against their will, seize control of shared resources by force, or coerce compliance — from any direction, whether to reimpose oligarchy or to exact revenge on former oligarchs — may be restrained through lawful, transparent process. That restraint is based on demonstrable harmful conduct, not beliefs, personality types, or political positions.

Persistent harmful conduct. When a person repeatedly imposes their will on others through coercion, manipulation, or abuse of position — and this pattern continues despite intervention, dialogue, and the availability of alternatives — Transition responds with graduated, proportionate measures. The first response is always support: mediation, counseling, mentoring, and community accountability. If the harmful conduct persists, the minimum

necessary restraint is applied to prevent further harm — based on documented conduct, not on diagnosis, personality assessment, or political views — and is subject to independent review and appeal.

Voluntary pluralist communities. Adults may freely create or join communities organized around any social model — hierarchical, religious, anarchist, or any other arrangement people wish to explore — provided that participation is genuinely voluntary, every person retains the practical right to leave without penalty, no one is subjected to coercion or brutalization, children are not assigned irrevocably subordinate status, and the community does not impose its model on outsiders. Research on the psychology of authority — notably Christopher Browning's study of Reserve Police Battalion 101 (*Ordinary Men*, 1992), in which ordinary middle-aged German men, not ideological extremists, gradually became willing participants in mass atrocities through incremental role adoption, obedience to authority, and conformity pressure — demonstrates that hierarchical authority structures can override individual moral judgment and make even voluntary participants unable to extract themselves. For this reason, independent external safeguards and regular, confidential check-ins must be maintained for all voluntary communities, ensuring that the right to leave remains real and not merely theoretical.

No operational planning of violence. People may hold and express any view about Transition, including the view that it should be resisted. What is not protected is direct incitement to imminent harm, conspiracy to commit violence, or operational planning of attacks — whether to reimpose the old order or to punish those who benefited from it. This applies equally in all directions.

The goal is to reach out to all sectors, populations and individuals and strive to ensure that they are valued, included and supported in the transition and able to find a niche where they can experience the best attainable quality of life, self-actualization, empowerment, and contribution to the Community.

Chapter 29: The Transition – Guiding Principles and Criteria

This writing contains a lot of what can be described as ideology. A clear ideology or set of guiding principles, priorities, and goals is important. Some form of faith is also very beneficial. Yet all too often at every scale, from vast civilizations to the inner workings of an individual human being, even the wisest, most sensible and compassionate ideology or religion can become an oppressive dogma, a mold that is forced upon people by others, by society or even by one's own self, blindly causing horrific harm. Such a mis-application defeats the intention of such an ideology or belief system. No ideology, religion or belief system is immune to that possibility.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

This is why Karl Marx wrote that "Religion is the opium of the people," and why governments that later claimed his name tried to stamp it out. He had seen religion used to keep people compliant to a long series of oppressive regimes. The same pattern is being repeated today as much as ever. Every religion has been used and abused to perpetrate and justify oppression and atrocities against human beings, animals, and the environment.

Every religion has suffered such harm from other religions. The Communism conceived by Marx and Engels was in its own turn twisted and distorted into oppressive expressions that completely negated its intention. The same is true of Democracy.

Especially during the Cold War but also since, some of the most brutal and oppressive dictatorships imaginable have been supported and even installed by force in the name of Democracy and Freedom, and also in the name of Communism and Socialism. All too often the business interests of gigantic corporations have been promoted in the name of Democracy and Free Enterprise, both at home and abroad, by riding rough-shod over the lives of whole countries, countless human beings and even the ecosystems that keep the planet habitable.

Yet without some guiding principles, we tend to degenerate into chaos, to be dominated by bullies, or both. Anarchy is not to be feared or avoided either. We must not equate anarchy with chaos. When we humans are sufficiently mature to pull it off, anarchy may well be the highest form of human society. Anarchy is what we might achieve when we as individuals and as a species are mature and evolved enough that we no longer need governments to make things run, coordinate things, or protect people from each other. Anarchy simply means the absence of any ruling body, government or institution. In its worst-case scenario, it is indeed chaos: the Wild West of legend, or the places in today's world where no legitimate authority holds and armed groups or warlords rule by force, as in parts of Yemen, Myanmar and the Afghanistan–Pakistan border region, in the Darién Gap between Panama and Colombia, and in neighbourhoods ruled by armed gangs in cities from Rio de Janeiro to Port-au-Prince. The people who live in such places are its first victims. In its best case, it is a truly enlightened thriving human Community centered on wisdom and well-being. We do have a ways to go yet before we will be ready to attempt Anarchy; but if we survive our current destructive instability, maybe eventually we will be ready for true Anarchy.

In the meantime what kinds of rules of thumb and guidelines might we use to steer ourselves in ever better directions? For that matter, how do we define "better?" A few good criteria would be:

1) to strive to implement a system designed to work for everybody in terms of quality of life, safety, well being, empowerment, etc, based on our clearest current understanding of how we as human beings naturally function and respond in different situations and scenarios. This includes actively expanding research to attain deeper understanding.

2) to strive for a system that reinforces symbiosis, synergy, and free co-operation rather than competition or predation of some upon others, between individuals or groups, and between individual and society in a peer-based, rather than hierarchical, organization.

3) to strive for sustainability with quality of life. This includes but is not limited to environmental sustainability: favoring technologies and modes of operation that minimize waste and depletion of natural resources; utterly eliminating planned obsolescence and artificially created and sustained demand for consumption of disposable goods for the sake of "economic growth;" diversification of energy sources and technologies; a shift towards widespread small scale food production and power generation and away from centralized large scale generation; products and services designed for ease of use, upgradeability, user serviceability and user satisfaction rather than maximization of sales, profits and stock prices; seeking to create a positive quality of life for each and all rather than forcing and reinforcing a culture of constant drive for the next style, gadget or status symbol.

This will involve the elimination of Capitalism and profit motive and replacing its motivations with an ethic of striving for excellence and quality of life for all. The new Paradigm will change the defining criteria, goals, reinforcers and incentives to ones that serve human happiness, well-being, empowerment, synergy, and thriving. This will also reduce workload and stress. The emphasis will be upon achieving these goals for each and for all.

For example, clothes will be made to be comfortable, strong and long-lasting. The fashion industry will be mostly replaced with raw materials available for individuals to create their own personal fashion statements. Once everybody is clothed, textile production will be able to operate at a more relaxed pace to keep up with real, not artificially stimulated, demand and need. The same will apply in every sector.

Of course technology will continue to generate new innovations. The quality of products will soar in the absence of the ethos we have today in the business world, where a company must not be content to be profitable. It must keep growing, the rate of growth must constantly increase as must profit margin, market share and stock price. This applies, even if it means deliberately manufacturing inferior products that are designed not to last, as a way to force people to keep buying more. In the new Paradigm, focus will be on utility, aesthetics, and quality of life.

We will also focus on reducing energy consumption through emphasis on lower-consumption technology such as passive solar architecture, in which the physics of materials and design tend to keep a building's ambient temperature within a selected range with little need for heating or cooling.

4) to minimize and eliminate hierarchical social structures as much as absolutely possible, in favor of peer-based synergistic, symbiotic structures. It is an established fact that humans have a tendency to abuse authority to various degrees. In any hierarchy, even if the highest-up is a truly good leader (which we can't take for granted), at some point in the chain of command there will always be persons who can't resist making the lives of people under them miserable, lording it over them, micromanaging. Openness and honesty are almost always suppressed because nobody wants to get in trouble for a mistake or even the perception of a mistake. People tend to distrust each other and act accordingly. Since we know that humans tend to "go south" in such setups, doesn't it make sense to try to minimize or eliminate hierarchical structures?

Many studies have shown that holding power over others inhibits compassion and empathy to a measurable degree. In a hierarchy, where power cascades down through many levels, nearly everyone except those at the very bottom holds some power over someone, and even a small amount is enough to have this effect. In hierarchies that face the public, such as government institutions and agencies and businesses that provide goods or services, even the people at the very bottom hold power relative to the members of the public who come to them for whatever the institution provides. In such hierarchies, the inhibition of empathy propagates all the way down, including the bottom. Hierarchical structures therefore tend to weaken the more positive parts of the range of human potential and amplify the more destructive ones. That is why hierarchy is incompatible with an optimally empowering society of thriving, empowered individuals living in harmonious relationship with one another, and why, left unchecked, it tends toward escalating social dysfunction, to the detriment of all members of the community. Capitalism is currently the most epidemic form of enforced hierarchy, but it is by no means the only example. Current and recent research increasingly shows that hierarchical social structures tend to bring out the worst in us.

Research on social rank finds that there are two paths by which a person usually comes to a position of influence and power (Cheng et al., 2013); (Keltner, 2016). One is by bullying and manipulating. The other way is by being compassionate and supportive towards one's fellows. Yes, those qualities do tend to bring a person who exhibits them profusely, into a position

of leadership and influence. The paradox is that once one is in such a situation or role, one tends to begin losing those qualities, as the brain's capacity for compassion and empathy is inhibited to a measurable degree. This has been measured directly, and it does not take much: in controlled experiments, even recalling a time when one held power over others was enough to measurably reduce people's ability to see things from others' point of view, and their brains' response to other people's actions (Hogeveen, Inzlicht & Obhi, 2014). Multiple experiments and empirical observations show that when a person of compassion, empathy and kindness finds themself in a position of power, they tend to become more self-centred, rude, insensitive and harsh, and more inclined to seek further power. There is obviously variation among individuals in their susceptibility to this phenomenon. There may be extremely rare individuals who are nearly or completely immune, and at the other end of the spectrum there are individuals who become Hitlers or Pol Pots. Most of us are probably somewhere in between. But it would appear that there are few, if any, who are immune. Whatever the individual differences, the overall effect across a hierarchy is a culture of diminished empathy and increased self-interest, harshness and indifference to others, along with the exercise of power for its own sake, which tends to become a self-reinforcing cycle.

It is not generally a case of monsters who start out as monsters. It is more often a case of good people becoming destructively distorted by being in a position of power. This does not necessarily always involve becoming a dictator or the CEO of a corporation. It can happen in a functionary at a corporate or government office, who has the power to facilitate or obstruct the needs of members of the public who come to their counters. It can affect a Private who gets promoted to Sergeant. It can emerge in a shift supervisor at a convenience store.

In other words, in order to reinforce and strengthen the qualities of empathy, compassion, solidarity, civic-mindedness and even true leadership and forge a culture of empowerment and mutually-supportive symbiosis, we must eliminate or drastically minimize the establishment of permanent and defined hierarchies. While the positive qualities mentioned above will still result in some individuals developing a high degree of influence and regard among their peers, we must be very careful to avoid codifying this dynamic by translating it into an actual hierarchy with titles and differentiated levels of rights and respect, institutionalizing it and effectively setting it in stone. If such an individual begins to lose those positive qualities after becoming influential, their level of influence will naturally decline while others with those qualities in greater degree will become more influential. Last month's high influencer who subsequently became arrogant and bossy, will experience reduced influence or "power." The inhibition of their compassion and empathy that power brought will tend to ease. They will never be put in a position where a compulsion for power can become institutionalized and turn into abuse. We can expect a healthy, naturally shifting rotation of people being natural leaders. It will also be beneficial to include this scientific knowledge in the educational curriculum, in order to empower all members of the community to be more alert to observe, identify and help remedy these dynamics in themselves and each other.

5) to maximize each person's ability to contribute to their society/community by empowering each individual to develop their talents, passions, and abilities in the context of a community that actively sustains, supports, and benefits from their development, innovation and productivity.

6) to foster a pluralistic range of socio-economic paradigms. Then the mainstream paradigm will be democratic both socially and economically; but some small-scale, limited accommodation can be made for individuals who are temperamentally incompatible with the new mainstream paradigm.

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Communities where capitalism is practiced on a small scale could thrive as long as limits are put on how big they can get and how long they can last, with protections in place to ensure that such communities do not exploit or victimize people and other communities that do not share their paradigm.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

7) to establish a constructive mechanism, culture and encouragement of ongoing conscious re-evaluation of modes of operation, in order to retain what is working while seeking alternatives to what is not working in terms of human happiness

and well-being. We will avoid reinforcement of what is not working and make changes when and where necessary. If something is working for some but not others, then we will seek something that works for all parties, or else create differing mutually symbiotic paradigms that can allow different subgroups to thrive without negatively impacting each other.

8) to redefine concepts of ownership to guarantee and safeguard the sanctity of each individual's or family's relationship to their home and the items that they personally use, while eliminating the possibility of one party owning land or other resources used by another party and restricting, blocking or otherwise controlling access. We will also define as publicly or commonly owned, all resources shared by all of the community such as roads, energy infrastructure, manufacturing facilities, distribution centers, water, communications media, hospitals and so forth. The concept of the "commons," which functioned well for a long time, will be revived in a new incarnation (Juergensmeyer and Wadley, Natural Resources Journal, 1974; Lazenby, "Remember Kinder Scout: Give Back Britain's Common Land", The Guardian, 2012). Those engaged in production and distribution of goods and services will democratically or consensually operate and run facilities, under the transparent view and direction of the people.

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As mentioned earlier, any persons who currently own more than one property will be required to choose one as their residence. The other properties will become property of such former renters or employees as live or worked in them or else become open for occupancy. People whose work or lifestyle requires frequent travel will not be negatively impacted, as all former hotels, motels and extended-stay facilities will be freely available. Former exclusive luxury facilities will be open for all members of the community to enjoy, administered similarly to how public parks are administered.

As discussed earlier in this writing, all land not currently in use will be the common property of all of the people and therefore accessible to all.

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We will create legal processes for a person or family to acquire the right to live, or a production team to acquire the right to produce, on such land, subject to reasonable limits on the size of such parcels and requirements to do no reasonably avoidable damage. There will be no cost barriers to compliance with such requirements, since the need for currency will be eliminated.

9) to guarantee the right of every human being to free and unobstructed access to a reasonable place to live, food, energy, medical care, education, transportation, tools and all other necessities and desired resources.

10) to eliminate currency as a requirement for anything at all, and as a barrier of access to anything.

11) To clearly define where and how the boundaries of the freedom of one person ends and that of another begins. Laws will need to be clarified, possibly in the form of Constitutional amendments, specifying these rights and clarifying that one's rights are absolute with respect to one's own person and life, but do not extend to others. In other words, one will be free to pursue or follow one's aesthetics, religion, and other beliefs but never to impose them on another, nor to use them as a justification for interfering with the freedom and access of another or compromising their dignity, safety or rights.

Chapter 30: Cultural and Philosophical Precedents

In approaching our Transition, it is important to focus what it is we want to create, design, build and live in that will be more productive and better for our morale, well-being, happiness, and sanity. We will want to avoid overly focusing on what we want to get away from. It would be kind of silly to initiate a Transition with absolutely no idea what we want to achieve, or to actually succeed in supplanting the economic power structure and then have no idea what to strive for, what to paint on the fresh canvas that we have given ourselves.

The results of an incompletely thought-out revolution can be seen in Iran. The Shah was an oppressive, murderous dictator, so most Iranians supported Khomeini to get rid of the Shah. Iran got yet another murdering dictator in his place. Similarly in the United States some people voted for Trump because of wanting a change from typical corrupt politicians, but in so doing quite possibly brought the United States and maybe the world to the brink of disaster and destruction because of many of the regime's actions and policies.

Good, applicable ideas can be found in diverse places, sometimes in some of the last places where one would think to look. For readers interested in direct democracy, *The Green Book* by Muammar Gaddafi (1975) is worth studying for its proposals on governance: basic people's congresses in which every adult takes part in decisions, and economic principles such as "partners, not wage-workers" and "the house belongs to the one who lives in it." Two cautions. First, the book also argues that a society's law should come from custom and religion, which this project does not share; we favour law made openly and democratically by the people it governs. Second, in Libya itself the system was never carried out as written: real power remained concentrated in Gaddafi and the revolutionary committees, and dissent was harshly suppressed. Good ideas are sometimes poorly carried out, or used as a front for something else entirely, in politics as in business and engineering, where a sound idea can be fraudulently claimed, or promised only to win support and never delivered. That does not make the idea itself wrong. It means each idea should be judged on its merits, and tested honestly.

Nor is this kind of governance Gaddafi's idea alone. Assemblies in which everyone takes part, and enterprises run by partners rather than employees, appear in many places. Some grew up naturally: the New England town meetings, held since the 1600s; Switzerland's open-air cantonal assemblies, the Landsgemeinde, still held in Glarus and Appenzell Innerrhoden; the councils of the Haudenosaunee; consensus decision-making among hunter-gatherer bands; and the assembly of ancient Athens, open to all its citizens. Others were built deliberately: worker cooperatives such as Mondragón in the Basque Country, founded in 1956; the general assembly of the kibbutz; the Paris Commune of 1871; participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where residents have helped decide the city's spending since 1989; and the rotating councils of the Zapatista communities in Chiapas. (See Documented Alternatives.)

Sources: Landsgemeinde; Participatory budgeting (Porto Alegre, 1989); Mondragon Corporation.

Karl Marx also had some excellent ideas that should not be abandoned.

There are of course many other sources to look at and learn from. While we learn from such sources, we must also activate our brains, creativity, observations and experience to come up with new ideas of our own. Whatever we come up with, we will do well to take a large, inclusive perspective and strive to avoid the trap of becoming dogmatic, inflexible and arrogant. We will be undertaking an ongoing process of discovery that hopefully will never become a box that we try to force ourselves or each other into.

The author lived for a time with a small semi-nomadic community that prefers to remain unnamed, so it is not named here. In the author's experience, theirs is one of the healthiest, most positive cultures the author has known: classless, symbiotic, run by consensus, socially sophisticated, creative, and thriving. The author saw no fixed hierarchy, no form of currency, no enforced gender or other roles, and very little possessiveness or aggression. They seemed to the author to be among the happiest and freest people anywhere, with remarkably healthy relationships. That is one person's observation, not a study, but it fits what has been documented elsewhere. The San (Ju/'hoansi) of southern Africa and the Hadza of Tanzania are egalitarian foragers who have lived for long periods without money or fixed rulers, share food widely, and actively cut down

to size anyone who boasts or tries to dominate (Woodburn 1982; Wiessner 2005). The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) governed themselves through councils that sought consensus, with clan mothers choosing chiefs and able to remove them. These and other cultures have kept such ways of life going for generations, often among aggressive, invasive, acquisitive neighbors.

The decision-making the author witnessed in that community is in many ways superior even to direct democracy. When a decision has to be made, everyone gathers together, including children. The pace is relaxed. Each person, in no particular order, speaks their ideas and perceptions. While one is speaking, nobody interrupts and all listen. They don't directly answer each other to agree or refute what each other said. Each just speaks their truth. This closely resembles the talking-circle traditions documented among many Indigenous peoples.

In the course of the process, a consensus develops. There comes a point when everybody knows they are on the same page and action is taken.

Sometimes various people add information, like "The water supply is drying up and doesn't look like it will last the summer" or "Two of our neighbors are gearing up for a fight and right now we are right in the middle. I think the sooner we're out of here the better" or "On my way back here I noticed plentiful food about 250 clicks east of here," etc...

This mode of operation is of course more straightforward for them since it is their culture, They grew up with it. For us who didn't grow up with that paradigm, it will be necessary to relearn some things in order to master it. But we humans have the ability to learn new skills, knowledge, and perspectives throughout our lives, and it is known that doing so is very healthy, and education and cognitive activity are among the factors linked to a lower risk of dementia in later life (Lancet Commission, via Alzheimer Europe, 2024).

On the subject of learning better communication skills, the Nonviolent Communication approach developed by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg is one we would benefit from studying together (Center for Nonviolent Communication).

More useful books, cultures, web sites, scientific papers, social experiments, business and social models, and other helpful information is to be found. We will have the best success if we search and keep alert for information, knowledge, techniques, examples, precedents, and other sources and generously share that knowledge in large and small scale collaboration.

We will be erecting new paradigms and pioneering their implementation in the human community on a large scale. But the “territory” is not completely unexplored. We will benefit from the wisdom, observations, successes, failures, and experiences of those who have embarked upon versions of them before us.

Chapter 31: The New Paradigm Community and the Political System - a New Kind of Relationship

It is important at every stage of this Transition to be conscious that this is about the overthrow and replacement of the dysfunctional, destructive Capitalist socio-economic paradigm with a set of Paradigms and systems that truly engender a thriving human community of thriving individuals. This is not an overthrow of governmental mechanisms or functioning. It is not a negation of the Constitution, but rather an affirmation and application of its principles in the economic sphere. These are two very different things and the difference must be kept in clear perspective.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

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As is covered later in the chapter “One Size Does Not Fit All,” there may be countries in which the overthrow and replacement of both become inevitable. That is dependent on the country, the culture, and the situation. For example, in countries like Canada, the United States, Australia, and some others, there will probably be no need or reason to overthrow the governmental structure. In countries like North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Russia and others suffering under oppressive dictatorships with no Constitutional protections for the people, overthrow of the government and its principles of operation may be absolutely necessary.

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In countries that have a Constitution or other defining set of principles intended to safeguard human rights and some viable people-driven electoral process, there should be no need to disrupt or clash with normal governmental functioning or mechanisms for the most part.

Of course reactionary or other political factions may very well attempt to suppress the Transition or those bringing it about. This may possibly take the form of passing new laws or reinterpreting existing laws specifically to illegalize the Transition, or declaring those creating the Transition to be traitors or terrorists. Should this occur, we will need to resist firmly and uncompromisingly but never to initiate violence. This aspect of the Transition should be handled similarly to how we will respond to violence on the part of corporations and the ultra-wealthy at the top of the pyramid and their supporters attempting to suppress our Transition. CEO's and other modern Feudal lords of the economic pyramid will lose their power, without exception, as their role is retired through democratically enacted law and as we change the mode of socio-economic operation from the bottom up. There will be no economic pyramid for anybody to be at the top (or bottom) of.

These economically-defined power positions and hierarchies were not established by, nor have they ever been responsible to, the People. In fact these power structures often act to disempower and parasitize the People with no appeal, channel or recourse for the People to remove or restrain them. Therefore they are rogue individuals and organizations, no different in principle from drug cartels, gangs, or warlords. Their power structures, rules, and chains of command have no validity and are in fact inimical to any Constitution.

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As such, they must be dismantled as a cancer is excised from an otherwise healthy body.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

In contrast, a government that is designed to be elected and replaced democratically and peacefully by the People, where the people have protections and the means to remove, recall, impeach, and hold elected officials responsible for their actions in office, does not need to be overthrown, even when some or all of the individuals populating it are corrupt or incompetent. Once the economic power structure is decommissioned, politicians will have to become responsive to the People if they wish to keep their jobs. There will be no ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal lords to intimidate, bribe and otherwise divert them from their intended functions.

On the other hand, when the government acts as an instrument of enforcement on behalf of the neo-Feudal lords of the Capitalist power structure, then we must peacefully, firmly and uncompromisingly disobey and ignore them, in the tradition of open, nonviolent civil disobedience. In such instances we will refuse to comply and stand firm in our resistance, rendering them irrelevant.

In such cases, the Transition must impact those in government but not seek to overthrow the government. Rather, the greatest effect of the Transition upon government and those in it will be to free government of the dictatorship, undue influence and very strong reinforcers for corruption that arise from the power politics of the ultra-wealthy. This dynamic distorts government under Capitalist paradigms and changes its essential mission from serving the well-being of the People and the Community, to serving, advancing and enforcing the interests, power and wealth of those at the top of the Pyramid at the expense of all others. The Transition will place those who serve in government in the position of being once again responsible and accountable to only the People.

To be sure, government will change dramatically after the Transition, because the environment in which it must function, and the expectations and pressures that will be placed upon it, will transform fundamentally.

First and foremost, the reinforcers that led to corruption will largely or completely disappear. Under Capitalism, one's freedom, options and quality of life as well as the respect one is afforded are all determined by one's degree of wealth and power (or lack thereof), by one's position on the pyramid. In such an environment, corruption and distortion of priorities in government are inevitable and guaranteed. It becomes accepted and expected as normal that the ultra-wealthy have disproportionate influence on those in government.

In countries such as the United States, huge mega-corporations and other ultra-wealthy parties pay lobbyists massive amounts of money to entice and pressure politicians to serve their interests and to convince them that this is in the best interest of the country. In contrast, the vast majority of the people in these countries, the ones not at the top of the economic pyramid, do not have the means to pay top lobbyists to pressure politicians and defend or promote their needs and interests.

The typical barely-surviving citizen can only sign petitions, send letters, emails and voice messages to their representatives, President or Prime Minister. This has some impact, but psychologically it is much smaller, less compelling and more abstract than the impact of a face-to-face meeting with an actual person.

Since elected officials tend to be extremely busy, it is almost impossible to get an appointment to speak with them one-on-one. There are always vastly more people wanting to speak to them than it is possible to schedule. In practice this means that the typical citizen has almost no chance of gaining direct access to their elected officials. A typical citizen's letter, voice message, email or signature on a petition gets lost and unnoticed without ever reaching the intended recipient. At best, the politician will hear a bullet point in a quick summary in a rushed briefing to the effect that a certain number of calls, letters, or emails were received supporting or opposing X, or a petition was turned in with Y (number) of signatures calling for yada-yada. The voices of most citizens are lost in the white noise of statistics.

Yet if the CEO or Executive Vice President of a multi-billion-dollar Corporation, or any billionaire or “captain of industry” at or near the top of the economic pyramid asks to meet with these same elected officials, they will almost certainly be granted one-on-one time and be heard.

This inevitably has the effect of drowning out the voices of the great majority of members of the community in statistical white noise, while those at the top of the pyramid, the modern day Feudal lords, enjoy direct access to the ears and attention of those in government. This is yet another example of how Capitalist paradigms directly undermine any Constitutional rights and processes and directly disenfranchise all but the very few at the top of the pyramid. This is yet another way that Capitalism is directly incompatible with a free and democratic community and with government of, by and for the People.

When we add to this the inevitable disconnection that those in government experience from the People whom they are charged to serve, simply because of the logistics and mechanics of government, then we see that under Capitalist paradigms it is almost impossible for government to even come close to serving the well-being, needs and will of the People. Even without the influence and interference of the economic power structure, it is a challengingly difficult task for those in government to stay in touch with the needs of the People for whom they work.

In the post-Transition socio-economic environment, this will change drastically. Politicians and other elected officials and representatives will have to adapt. In keeping with the new Paradigm principle of dismantling hierarchical social and economic structures and processes in favor of peer-based ones, those who serve in government, law enforcement and defense will need to be explicitly and constantly reminded that their jobs and roles are to serve the People, not rule over and dictate to them.

In a community where money is irrelevant, where all citizens by default have access to all that they need and are fully empowered, politicians will not nave any need of money, "perks," or other goods and services that could be used to pressure or entice them to ally themselves to special interests or lobbies. There will be no ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal lords, corporations or other large businesses. Money will be obsolete. Since there will be no economic pyramid, no socio-economic caste or power structure, there will be no lobbyists promoting the interests of nonexistent corporations or ultra-wealthy individuals.

There may still be lobbyists from other kinds of special interest groups, both destructive and constructive: religious extremists seeking to force their understanding of morality upon everybody, or legitimate lobbies seeking to call attention to real issues such as racial and ethnic intolerance, regions and states presenting their infrastructure needs and so forth. Any lobbyists, however, will have nothing to offer to entice compliance except the merit of their cases and arguments.

All inhabitants will have equal access to be heard by those in government, since there will be no socio-economic pyramid for anybody to be at the top or bottom of. None will have more direct access than others, since the new Paradigms will enjoy as close to zero disparity as is humanly possible. There will be none who will go straight to the front of the line.

We can also anticipate that the new post-Transition paradigms will tend to give rise to a populace much more empowered, aware, informed, and confident than is the case under Capitalism. Such a populace will be less easily propagandized or manipulated, much more engaged in interacting with government and with one another. Such a populace will be inclined to insist that their elected officials or representatives do their honest best to perform the functions for which they were elected. Politicians who betray the trust of the people will have short careers and reap no benefits.

Opportunities and reinforcers for corruption will be vastly reduced. Politicians will be much more rigorously held to account for their performance of their mission to serve the well-being of the people who elected them.

The post-Transition societies will not be fertile grounds for stratification or class distinctions. The President or Prime Minister will no longer be able to treat their position as one of privilege and power, but will rather be expected to treat it as one of service, innovation and responsibility, more like an orchestra conductor than an aristocrat, manager or lord. Elected officials at all levels will be very keenly aware that their job has been made much simpler. They will be responsible to the People and only the People. Should they fail to act in accordance with that basic reality, the People will not hesitate to impeach, recall, bring charges or simply vote them out depending on the situation.

Those elected will be relieved of most of the pressures, conflicts of interest, and temptations towards corruption that currently beset and surround them. The reinforcers for betraying the public trust will be vastly reduced.

Taxation as we know it will cease to exist. With no currency in use, it will no longer be an issue in post-Transition communities; shared contributions of time and materials will be decided democratically.

To be sure, there will be conflicts to deal with: how to distribute a resource that is actually, physically in limited supply when the need is actually greater than what's available. How to deal with rising sea levels. But these kinds of issues will be resolved among peers, not between an aristocracy and a disempowered populace.

We can eagerly anticipate that politics and public service will attract very different kinds of people than it does now: ones motivated by passion for improving and safeguarding the lives of their constituents. The reinforcers will be different from now, therefore the predominating behaviors will be different and more conducive to a free, synergistic and thriving national community of empowered, engaged, largely self-realized thriving individuals in a win-win symbiotic pattern.

There will always potentially be the dangers that arise when charismatic, domineering personalities, the kind our culture lionises as the "alpha" male or female, and people with psychopathic traits manage to charm, intimidate or impress enough people to produce a dysfunctional, harmful social construct. This can theoretically happen in any political or socio-economic system.

Post-Transition communities will most likely be less vulnerable to that kind of phenomenon than Capitalist societies for several reasons.

First of all, these types of personalities tend to ascend to the highest reaches of the economic pyramid. Where there is a hierarchy, these people almost always gravitate to the top. Most Capitalistic societies do not recognize the dangerous, destructive pattern of these domineering, low-empathy personalities, or of the deference of those who willingly fall under their influence, control and domination. In fact, Capitalist societies do not recognize, diagnose or treat these addictive patterns at all but rather enable, reinforce, lionize and glorify them as the epitome of the successful Capitalist that others strive to emulate (Grant, Potenza, Weinstein and Gorelick, American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 2010).

This exacerbates their pathology and entrenches it as a role model, labeling those lacking those personality traits as "losers." In addition, since Capitalist societies are inherently rigidly hierarchical, those living in them are trained and conditioned from childhood to obey and defer to those above them in the hierarchy. Those low in the pyramid are taught from birth, in school and in popular culture, to respect and even venerate the hierarchical structure to the point of feeling lost or at loose ends without it. Those at the top of the pyramid are conditioned to command and lord it over others. (See the chapter on Capitalism and Education.)

In such cultures, the concept of "respect the office" is common. The implication of this concept is that even if the person in a power position is incompetent, abusive, unfit, or otherwise harmful, people are expected to respect, obey, and not challenge them because of the position they hold. This is clearly untenable. Would any sane person fail to intervene if they were a passenger on an airplane when the flight crew were discovered to be drunk, drugged, or delusional?

In such a culture, many people are predisposed to accept and fall in line with a charismatic, domineering person. This domineering, low-empathy personality, which our culture lionises as the "alpha" male or female, is not a formal diagnosis, but it functions as a disorder: a pattern that harms others and often the person themselves. Research finds these "dark triad" traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy) over-represented among those who rise to the top of corporate hierarchies (Babiak, Neumann and Hare, 2010). In the post-Transition community, this pattern will be recognised for what it is and met with help, not admiration. Such people will not be villainised, but neither will their drive to dominate be enabled, any more than we would enable any other condition that harms the person and those around them.

Another factor that makes Capitalist societies more vulnerable to such dysfunctional dynamics is the way that citizens are conditioned by advertising and reinforced conformity to keep up with the latest fashions and have the latest status items. This conditioning leaves us vulnerable to be more easily manipulated via the same subtle psychological ploys and mechanisms that keep millions of people rushing off to spend their hard-earned cash and credit on the latest must-have fashion, gadget or toy as soon as they are announced with much fanfare, as surely as most people who enter a casino will gamble. The same techniques are also effective in selling pre-conditioned individuals on the rightness of a charismatic

manipulator. Such personality types are instinctively adept at mastering the principles of manipulation. In a Capitalist society, there is a virtual ocean of potential converts and fans, easily pulled in by a skillfully magnetic personality, for better or for worse.

Last but not least, in a society where every individual is under siege, constantly battling against the unrelenting denial of their right to exist, unceasingly having to pay for their existence, people tend to feel overwhelmed, disempowered and vulnerable. If a strong personality comes into their midst offering or promising to guide, protect and tell them what to do to improve their situation and how, there will inevitably be a lot of followers.

After the Transition, these factors will be absent. We will still need to be alert and aware of the effects of inertia in the human psyche. Old habits, reflexes and survival mechanisms will not disappear or change overnight. The crafting of more empowering ways of living and interacting will require awareness, patience, diligence, and perseverance.

Generations who are adults at the time of the Transition will still retain the habits and conditioned reflexes acquired while living under Capitalist paradigms. These habits will persist for a time to varying degrees. Such survival mechanisms, however, will no longer be necessary, reinforced or enabled.

Assuming that we make the Transition successfully, the dysfunctional old reflexes and behaviors will not only not be reinforced, but constructive, cooperative, synergistic responses will be reinforced. According to the principles of behavioral psychology, the reinforced behaviors will gain strength and the old ones, in the absence reinforcement, will fade towards extinction over time.

Yet we will do well to address this issue publicly, openly and to make one another aware of these factors so that we can all support and assist each other in making that inner Transition. Perhaps we will develop counseling modalities to help those who find it a challenge, if there is need or demand. To generations coming of age and born after the Transition, this will not be a major issue.

One may well ask, if one is living in a country with some kind of democratic and constitutional paradigm, why go through the daunting, potentially risky task of replacing the socio-economic paradigm of an entire country? Why not use the democratic mechanisms already in place to establish new safeguards and protections against abuses and corruption by corporations and the ultra-wealthy when they go too far? Why not just write our representatives, sign petitions, organize peaceful protests, strikes and demonstrations, perform acts of civil disobedience, initiate referenda and express ourselves at the ballot box?

All of these are good, positive, constructive steps to take; but their effectiveness varies from place to place and time to time. In Europe and North America in the 1960's and 1970's, and in India in the 1940's and 1950's, for example, these were effective strategies to force change in the face of abusive, unresponsive, persistent political power structures and cultural attitudes. Labor unions and strikes were effective strategies to advance workers' rights in the face of abusive, hostile and unresponsive economic power structures in North America from the late 1800's until the mid-1980's. There was sufficient social and cultural orientation towards social conscience, compassion and fairness. There was a sense of urgency about social justice actively stirring in the zeitgeist, in the mass consciousness of nations and of the world.

Even though there were oppressive, corrupt and unresponsive factions in positions of power politically and economically, there was still a free and aggressive press and media with a strong professional sense of mission to seek and report the facts, the truth, regardless of who was pressuring them to bury the story, regardless of whom it pleased or angered.

In such an environment, these kinds of tactics are effective in bringing change over time and for a time.

The effectiveness of these kinds of activism, however, depend on several factors:

1) A free, aggressive, unfettered press and unblocked, uncensored Internet to get the word, the facts, the objectively true story out to the world about the issues, who is doing what, what is really happening, how and why.

2) A national and global social environment that does not suppress discussion of controversial actions and issues, that embraces meaningful, mutually-respectful dialog and debate driven on all sides by the quest to improve and enhance the well-being and quality of life of the people and backed by honest fact-finding.

3) A populace that is sensitive to and outraged by abuses of power, by injustice, inhumanity, hypocrisy, corruption, greed, violence and bullying and that will respond to such occurrences by demanding that the wrongs be righted.

4) A governmental paradigm or system that is in one way or another significantly responsive to the voices of the People.

In contrast, when these conditions are absent, such tactics tend to be ineffective.

In Nazi Germany, in the United States at the time of McCarthyism, in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, in the Soviet Union under Stalin, in Syria under Assad, in North Korea under Kim Jong Il or Kim Jong Un, in Iran under either the Shah or Khomeini or any similar regime, these kinds of tactics are generally not effective.

The media are controlled by the dictatorship. Any kind of protest or dissent is vigorously, often lethally, suppressed. Protesters or strikers are killed, intimidated, persecuted or imprisoned. Whole towns have been demolished, their message and their story never heard by their countrymen. Nothing will be reported in the news, or else reporting will say that "terrorists" or "traitors" or "disruptive elements" or other “bad guys” were heroically foiled in their nefarious plans, and the public safety was protected by security forces.

Protesters, strikers and other activists can easily be portrayed as sinister criminal, terrorist, malcontent, or enemy elements to be feared and hated.

Even in the United States at the time of this writing, these traditional tactics for initiating change have been rendered largely ineffective for a number of reasons relatively new in history:

1) Corporations and ultra-wealthy neo-feudal lords have perfected the art of propaganda, which has been enhanced and made more subtle and effective through experience in advertising, to the point where the appearance and semblance of a free press is maintained while in actual practice the majority of mainstream media are themselves mega-corporations controlled by billionaires and even bigger corporations. Demonstrations, strikes, protests and the like are frequently downplayed, not reported at all, or portrayed as the acts of troublemakers or worse. 2) Americans have become desensitized to violence and all manner of abuse. Shootings of and by police, school shootings, violence among citizens, the justification of the erosion of human rights in the name of both security and business, escalating income inequality, corruption at every level and more, are accepted as normal by a major growing segment of the population. Such occurrences stir no deep responses.

The constant stress and sensory overload common in daily life, especially given the amount of violent programming (which experiments have linked to measurable desensitization to real-life violence (Carnagey, Anderson & Bushman, 2007)), plus frequent reporting of real world violence, corruption, disempowerment, and abuse, has gradually produced a culture of numb indifference (Ducharme, "Here’s Why You Can Shut Out the Shock of Mass Shootings", Time, 2018).

The kinds of demonstrations, strikes, and civil disobedience that were so effective during the 1960's and 1970's now fall on jaded ears, eyes, minds and hearts, if they are aired at all. The pervasive level of overwhelm makes people's own stresses and struggles feel much larger than anything seen on the news. Once our personal struggle for survival has been fought on any given day, there is little or no energy or attention left for larger concerns of the community, country, or world.

We must also keep in mind that those in power have become more sophisticated in their counter-insurgency tactics. Fifth-columnists (infiltrators) working for the new Feudal Lords blend into and mingle with peaceful demonstrators to ensure that it will become violent, incoherent, and easily sloughed off and discredited. This tactic has a long, documented history. In August 1939, SS men dressed in Polish uniforms staged an attack on a German radio station at Gleiwitz, giving Hitler his pretext to invade Poland the next day (the Gleiwitz incident). In the United States, the FBI’s COINTELPRO programme (1956–1971) planted informants in civil rights and anti-war groups, spread disinformation, and worked to discredit their leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr.

The Reichstag fire of 1933 shows the other half of the method: turning a crisis into a weapon. In February 1933 the Reichstag, Germany's parliament, was set on fire. A young Dutch drifter who called himself a communist, Marinus van der Lubbe, was arrested inside. He said he had acted alone, in protest; observers at the time described him as mentally disturbed. There is serious evidence that he did not act alone. Experts at the trial testified that the main fires were set with large quantities of chemicals and gasoline, which one man could hardly have carried in and lit so quickly. Berlin's fire chief, Walter Gempp, was dismissed after reporting that the fire brigade had been called late and held back. And a sworn statement by a former stormtrooper, found in 2019, says his unit drove van der Lubbe to the Reichstag when the building was already burning. Many historians still conclude that he acted alone, and the question remains open. But there was no Communist plot: even the Nazi-era court acquitted the four Communist leaders tried alongside him. What is beyond dispute is how Hitler used the fire. Having already cast Communists as enemies of the German people, he had the Reichstag Fire Decree issued the very next day, suspending civil liberties, and thousands of opponents were arrested. This staged incident of "terrorism" further solidified Hitler's base of support among normally apolitical Germans.

The extremely polarized dynamics of U.S. society at this time have already created a climate where every demonstration meets a counter-demonstration in a setting where emotions are so heavily charged that many in both camps are primed and ready for violence. Once one person throws a punch, a bottle or a taunt, the situation all too often degenerates into incoherence ending in a brawl. Needless to say that any message is lost in the fray. All that the public sees is chaos.

Lawmakers have moved to treat protest itself as a threat (Seipel, "Washington Republican Proposes Charging Protesters with 'Economic Terrorism'", The Hill, 2016). Since 2017, legislators in 45 U.S. states have considered nearly 400 bills restricting protest, and more than 60 have become law, including laws that raise penalties for protest near pipelines and other "critical infrastructure" (ICNL, US Protest Law Tracker). Such laws chill freedom of both speech and assembly when it opposes those in power or their operations.

There are a plethora of distractions and diversions available to take people's attention off of what is oppressing them and sapping their strength. Endless forms of entertainment, fashion, celebrity gossip, activities, consumer goods, drugs, alcohol, and other channels divert stressed-out people's attention from painful realities to pleasureful, entertaining, or distracting pursuits, thus keeping large numbers of people paying and consuming rather than bringing forth necessary fundamental changes in the way things are done. Even politics is used as a distraction. People outraged by a politician's indiscretions are not focused on the socio-economic paradigm that is disempowering and enslaving them.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

These and other changes in the culture have left us little choice but to take direct action to intervene, bring the old Capitalistic paradigm to a halt, and change the way "the game" is played. It is time to boot up an entire new set of paradigms and operating principles oriented towards the empowerment and well-being of all members of the community in a mutually-supportive framework.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

A currently poignant issue that needs addressing in the United States is the need for Constitutional strengthening to prevent authoritarian takeover when one party or faction controls all three branches of government. For better or for worse, the United States is a major power. It has a major impact and influence on the cultural, economic, and political affairs and direction of the world. Therefore, major shifts in the internal and external behavior of the United States has major importance. It is also currently the largest propagator of capitalism in the world. A Transition in the United States will be a major step forward in proving the superiority of the new Paradigms in a way that will inspire their replication widely across the world.

The Founders of the United States of America wrote the Constitution with safeguards, referred to as Checks and Balances, in place to prevent and guard against authoritarian takeover. For over 200 years the safeguards have functioned pretty much

as intended and designed, preventing any faction of any branch of the government from becoming powerful enough to supplant and overthrow the Democratic mechanisms and establish a dictatorship.

There have been some distinctly anti-democratic, tragic digressions and atrocities, such as slavery, the treatment of Native Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, apartheid in the Southern states, McCarthyism in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and the Patriot Act in the wake of 9-11. Fortunately, the existence of the checks and balances prevented these dysfunctional aberrations from becoming permanent and systemic. Until the current situation, the American people and government always responded to these humanitarian crises by passing laws and Constitutional amendments that expanded and clarified the guarantee of civil and human rights, freedoms, and protections. It is clear that the intention of the Founders was to create a free, democratic, empowered society governed of, by and for the People, free from any form of despotic rule. They did not fully succeed due to the limitations in the awareness of their times; but subsequent laws and Amendments have deepened the commitment to human rights and dignity. Slavery was abolished. Women were finally given the right to vote. Apartheid was abolished. Employees and consumers gained protections. Discrimination on many bases was made explicitly illegal. This has been the trend, until now.

At the time of this writing, these checks and balances are being systematically compromised, subverted and breached in ways that directly threaten the Constitution and the principles of government of, by and for the People intended by the Founders and fought for by both soldiers and civilians for all of these two centuries and more. Clearly, the United States is in a situation that the Founders could not and did not foresee, much less provide fail-safes against.

The two legislative houses, the executive and the judicial branches of government, are structured and designed to act as checks on one another's power to ensure that the principles of the Constitution are followed. Until the current situation, this construct has worked well for the most part. It appears, however, that the Founders were not able to foresee the current scenario in which a focused, well organized, ideologically fanatical group conspires to gain control of the executive and legislative branches of government and use that position to gain control of the judicial branch, the Supreme Court.

As long as competing factions or parties are distributed throughout the mechanisms and institutions of government, they tend to keep each other in check. In the current scenario, however, we see a coordinated takeover of all three branches of the United States government by a fanatical party driven by a compulsive pursuit of power and money. As in the Feudalistic regimes of the European Middle Ages, this faction is using religious extremism melded with personality-centered distortions of patriotism to manipulate large segments of the population. As did Hitler in Germany, they are using racial and ethnic hatred and xenophobia to direct the free-floating anxieties of much of the population against scapegoated groups painted as “the other”: immigrants, transgender, gay and lesbian people, people on the other side of the political spectrum, and journalists, branded “enemies of the people”, so that people do not focus on the regime itself.

Instead of the different governmental branches keeping each other in check, they are reinforcing and rubber-stamping each other in their internal assault on Democratic processes while maintaining the superficial appearance of democracy. This attack upon the Constitution and the American people comes from those doing the bidding of the neo-feudal lords at the top of the economic pyramid. Their mission and intent is to consolidate and absolutize their power.

This is clearly visible in a plethora of expressions and dynamics occurring in the Federal government in Washington at the time of this writing. Most importantly, with the Presidency occupied by a domineering extremist member of the same party and ideology as a majority in both Houses, these players have used tactics that they themselves only recently condemned and effectively blocked when used by the opposition, to replace vacant seats in the Supreme Court with judges strongly rooted in their same ideology in order to achieve control of the Court as well. Their adherents will constitute a majority of that highest court in the land, who will uphold and justify their agenda and encode it into law. As long as those political dynamics prevail, given this group’s strict, focused and strongly enforced culture of “party loyalty” above all, Congress and the Senate will continue to work in unison with the individual occupying the White House. When legal challenges to these laws, actions and policies arise, the Supreme Court will support and uphold the political agenda. An unprecedented degree of emphasis is being placed on “Executive Privilege” and immunity, paving the way towards de-facto dictatorship. Thus while the appearances and forms of democratic checks and balances remains intact, the substance and functioning have

been utterly repurposed and restructured to support and enforce the power of the neo-feudal lords and their corporations at the top of the Pyramid, at the expense of the rights, power, safety and well-being of the overwhelming majority of the People.

Clearly, the original checks and balances are in urgent need of reinforcement, fine-tuning, and expansion, once the current coup is stopped, which it most certainly must be. The Transition will strongly facilitate this. The end of Capitalism and the elimination of both currency and hierarchical socio-economic power structures will also eliminate the power of these parties. There will be no ultra-wealthy overlords to call the shots, to bribe or intimidate elected officials. The voices of the People will be the only ones being raised for politicians to hear.

Yet it would be over-simplistic to assume that the end of Capitalism will be the end of all potential abuses or corruptions. In countries like the United States, attention will have to be paid to the vulnerability, exposed by the current crisis, to a potential takeover of all branches of government by an extremist faction that is well organized, well-coordinated, well-disciplined, ruthless and well-planned. Constitutional checks and balances will have to be fortified, with more safeguards spelled out in clear language.

Avenues to explore might include mandating that criminal charges be brought against any elected official who is found guilty of a crime, with no exceptions, limits on presidential pardon power, mandatory re-do of any election that later shows evidence of having been hacked or otherwise compromised, and inviolable and unambiguously defined protections of parties investigating potential criminal acts on the part of elected officials. In order to strengthen checks and balances on the power attainable by any faction, it might be wise to mandate new elections in the event that one party or faction gains control of executive and both legislative branches, or perhaps to create and define new checks and balances in the form of a nonpartisan, independent and broadly empowered oversight body tasked with identifying, publicizing and taking action necessary to stop corruption and anti-democratic abuses of power. Other beneficial changes will include term limits, publicly accessible video and audio recordings of all interactions among elected and appointed officials, guaranteed free equal time in the media for all candidates, a ban on all campaign contributions, a freeze on all Supreme Court nominations at any time when one faction has disproportionate control, rigorous and enforceable standards of unbiased, Constitutionally-centered judicial orientation in nominated judges, an explicit and automatic ban on any legislation, executive order or judicial decision whose basis or motivation is demonstrably religious in nature thereby constituting an attempt to ignore separation of Church and State, and more. Until the transition, it might improve the situation to pass a citizens' referendum or new law specifying that all elected and appointed officials must live on a few percent lower than the median income of the people in their constituency, along with freezing of all of their personal, financial, and other assets for the duration of their term, with no expense account, Government car, chauffeur, private jet or other perks. Once the Transition is done, these issues will be moot.

Now that we have become aware of vulnerabilities that the Founders had no way to anticipate, it is vital that we expand the checks and balances to counter those vulnerabilities. We also would be wise to consider how to counter a scenario in which a totalitarian extremist faction stages a coup by infiltrating both dominant parties in order to gain control of the executive and legislative branches of government, regardless of which party wins, even while maintaining the appearance of balanced democracy.

In all the world it is time, indeed past time, for the Transition to take an active, determined, unyielding and nonviolent form, to set a new standard and new precedents for human socio-economic interactions and for the very undertaking of a fundamental paradigm change. To wait is to become weaker and less able to effect a Transition. The upward redistribution of wealth, power and pretty much everything to the upper reaches of the Pyramid push the vast majority of people closer and closer to a depleted condition lacking sufficient stamina or energy to embark upon a Transition. Capitalism has spread around the world like a cancer. Humanity is in the end-stage of this metastatic condition. If we do not Transition soon, we may face a new Dark Feudal Age that could last hundreds or thousands of years.

Chapter 32: Interfacing with the Capitalist World After the Transition

After the transition to the new synergistic, mutualistic paradigms, the post-Transition community will find itself in a unique situation with new challenges internally, of course, but also in the global international community, the "world stage." Careful thought, planning, observation and creative problem-solving will be essential.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

There might be temptation to isolate ourselves from the rest of the mostly-capitalist world. This would be a tragic and costly mistake. We are all members of the global human community. To cut ourselves off from that reality is both impractical and damaging to all parties. Societies that have done so have become ingrown, stunted culturally and socially, and at least somewhat repressive as enforcement of such isolation requires suppression of people's access to communication and travel. This is incompatible and inconsistent with truly free, vibrant and thriving individuals and societies.

Dialog, friendship, discourse, debate, exchange of ideas, technologies, goods and services, interaction and mutual participation individually and as communities, enriches all parties as long as no party is imposing its will on another militarily, economically or politically. Diverse cultures and individuals are enriched by the cross-fertilization of such meetings of minds and perspectives.

Yet in the beginning, the rest of the world will be worried, confused, afraid and unsure what to expect from the post-Transition society. There will be many questions and uncertainties: Will our new paradigm society or country be belligerent, aggressive, fanatical, difficult or impossible to deal with? Will foreign citizens be safe in our midst? Will we try to snatch territory from neighboring countries or otherwise cause them problems? Will we honor treaties, trade agreements, alliances, and established understandings with other countries? With whom will we ally ourselves? Will we try to use force or subterfuge to impose our new paradigm on other countries? Will our society truly be a free and thriving human community, or are these just words and propaganda concealing a brutal and repressive reality rife with human rights violations in the name of an abstraction? Will the new regime keep its word and promises?

All of these are valid, understandable questions, especially given the fact that many revolutions, and even routine changes in administration or policy, have historically resulted in unpredictable extreme changes in international relations and treatment of foreign nationals in affected countries.

The best way to assuage these natural questions and misgivings is to be open and transparent and to interact in such a way as to allow other countries, entities and individuals to experience first-hand that the new post-transition society is a reasonable and trustworthy participant in any interaction.

Remember that these paradigms have not been tried or seen before on anything approaching this scale. There will be a natural tendency to view the new society in terms of previous known paradigms, most or all of which will not apply, but which may trigger fears and misgivings based on those past experiences. Fear of the unknown and erroneous expectations based on past situations may trigger hostility and skepticism. Only time and new experience will resolve this initial misgiving, so we must resolve to be patient, persistent and completely transparent.

As a general rule, it is wise to start out honoring existing treaties, alliances, agreements and relationships, except where they conflict with the fundamental principles of the new paradigms. Exceptions would include situations in which previous arrangements involve support for repressive or oppressive regimes with demonstrated human rights violations, environmental destructiveness or exploitation (such as destruction of the Amazon rain forests, whaling, human trafficking, sweat shop industries, genocide or ethnic purging), or aggression towards other countries.

In those cases, our best course of action will be to inform affected parties of our new policies, principles and modes of operation and invite them to meet in order to reexamine and re-evaluate agreements, treaties and the like that have come into question. We will make it clear what our principles and expectations are, which are negotiable and which are not, and why. The goal will be to engage these parties in mutually respectful dialogue intended to reach a mutually acceptable agreement in which we will commit to honor our end. We will be consistent. Our position must be uncompromising on issues that involve core principles, yet calm and matter-of-fact. In time, other countries will see that it benefits them to do business with the post-Transition society, though not necessarily in the ways that they had originally had in mind.

We must realistically be prepared for the likelihood that there will be issues that will not be resolvable. There will be countries, groups, businesses, members of the ultra-wealthy at the top of other countries' economic pyramids, religious groups and others who will be angry, hostile, and belligerent towards us and what we will be building. Some will be so because of ignorance, misperceptions, and the influence of propaganda under Capitalist paradigms. Others may be hostile because they will understand only too clearly that the new paradigms are inimical to, and an existential threat to, their dominance and profits.

Because the priorities and modes of operation of post-Transition societies will be economically very different from, alien to, and at cross-purposes with those of countries and other entities still operating under Capitalist paradigms, there will be resistance and hostility from many of them. Therefore, since trade is usually beneficial to all participants, we will need to take the lead in developing ways to interface with dissimilar systems.

One possible approach might be to re-introduce forms of barter on an international scale. For example, if we have a pre-existing trade agreement with Country X in which the former regime of now-decommissioned corporations agreed to sell them tractors for a certain price and buy iron from them for a certain price, we might propose that we simply trade an equivalent value's worth of tractors for the same value of iron. In other words, tractors and iron would continue to be exchanged in the same quantities as before, but without the intermediary translation into currency.

The equivalent value could potentially be determined by the relative market value of tractors and iron on the international market, or based on the unit prices set out in the original trade agreement, or by setting an objective standard based on a logical criterion.

One such promising criterion is to exchange equivalent value in person-hours. How many person-hours does it take to make a tractor? How many person-hours does it take to make a ton of iron? Such exchanges have advantages for both parties: No tariffs or import taxes on either end. The person-hour is also an objective, logical, natural measure that is not subject to interpretation, the whim of changing exchange rates or shifts in international relations. It is a more transparent standard than precious metals or any currency. It simplifies and eliminates exchange rates. It takes the same number of hours to pick a ton of mangoes in Indonesia, Israel, Egypt, the United States, or Venezuela. It takes the same number of hours to manufacture a refrigerator in Mexico, Germany, Iceland, Zimbabwe, or Russia.

Another advantage is that the person-hour treats all human hours as equal, which is a practical expression of the principle of economic equality: a worker's hour in Indonesia will have the same value as a worker's hour in Sweden or the United States. An agricultural worker's hour will have the same value as an engineer's, a welder's, a truck driver's or a carpenter's. Thus this standard of exchange promotes equality in the international marketplace.

Spontaneous pilot "time bank" programs in the United States and elsewhere, in which people of limited financial means exchange equivalent hours of service to one another among their various professions and skill-sets (Thorpe, Forbes, 2018), have already shown that the concept works between neighbors; whether it scales to trade between countries is still untested.

Since the beginning of the 21st Century, outsourcing has caused a sharp decline in the number and proportion of well-paying jobs available in the United States.

This complex phenomenon has many impacts around the world. In the country doing the outsourcing, usually a "developed" country like the U.S., it drastically reduces the proportion of well-paying jobs such as software developers, tech and customer support agents, manufacturing and many other fields, and drives salaries and wages downwards dramatically.

Since some of these jobs can be done anywhere for various reasons, companies have been quick and enthusiastic to seize on the fact that they can improve their profit margins and stock value by paying someone in India or the Phillipines $30 per day instead of paying a local professional that much per hour (just an illustrative example).

In the country to which the outsourcing goes, usually a "developing" country, outsourcing has a more complex set of effects. For the employees who benefit from this practice, on the surface it improves their quality of life and their options in life. On the other hand, in such societies the gains go mostly to those already able to get the higher education and training these jobs require, which are often out of reach for all but the better-off. Most inhabitants of these countries see little direct benefit from outsourcing. These jobs go mostly to people already nearer the top of the economic pyramid, propelling them farther up the pyramid and in the process widening the gap between those at the top and the vast majority at the bottom of the pyramid.

In the countries supplying the outsourced skills, the result can be a widening gap between the few who gain and the many who do not.

In the post-Transition communities/societies, the harmful effects of outsourcing will vanish. Once nobody needs money to live, once every inhabitant is guaranteed the necessities and amenities of life, the loss of jobs to outsourcing will become a non-issue. Nobody will lose their livelihood, options, house, car or anything else because of it, if indeed it continues.

For inhabitants of the countries providing the outsourced skills, the situation will again be more complex. Within post-Transition countries, once money no longer has any function and conversion has been enacted by democratic law, corporations and for-profit businesses will completely cease to exist, giving way to peer-based enterprises. Yet many of the same products and services will still be relevant for the most part. Production will necessarily continue in the absence of Capitalistic dynamics. People will still use software, need technical assistance and so on.

The challenge at this point will be how to interface between a production community in the new paradigm, and those outsourced former employees across the world who still live under Capitalist paradigms which force them to constantly earn money to pay for being allowed to live. It will be a tremendous benefit to all if we address this challenge and come up with interfaces and protocols that create desirable results for both the people of the new paradigms and the old. Since our goals are the empowerment, well-being and benefit of all human beings, it is imperative that we undertake to establish such interfaces.

It is essential that the world see for themselves that the new paradigms not only work and work well but that they are not a threat to the citizens of countries under the old paradigms. Our goal to propagate the Transition must be accomplished via leading by example, by living, functioning and interacting in ways that show that the new paradigm is superior to the old ones in every way and that we respect the right of human beings and countries to live in the manner of their choosing and preference.

If we are successful, then an increasing number of people in a growing number of countries will choose of their own accord to initiate similar Transitions in their own countries. After all, who would not choose health over sickness, freedom over bondage (once one has learned for the first time exactly what freedom is), peace of mind over constant stress and worry?

The interfaces between post-Transition and Capitalist communities need to be well thought out. The solutions will emerge as development and production teams composed of members living in the new paradigms and those living in the old sit down together to work out the details.

As will become clear, doing business with new Paradigm countries will prove to have advantages that outweigh the disadvantages for companies in Capitalist paradigm countries that choose to embrace the challenge.

When the employer was previously a company based in the post-Transition country, it will be important to maintain the integrity of the new paradigm among those living there, while ensuring that the members living in the old paradigm are paid a fair wage/salary for their contribution. One possible solution might be to negotiate trade agreements with the outsourcee countries in which we provide them with goods or services in exchange for which they pay outsourced workers what they are

accustomed to be paid or more, possibly using human hours as an intermediate medium of exchange translated into going rates in that country for that job among outsource workers. The goods and services produced will of course be open to all inside the new paradigm country, and for sale at appropriate prices in the Capitalist countries.

To some degree the dynamics will adjust themselves in the almost inevitable progression of events.

On one hand, there will be no profits generated within new paradigm countries; on the other hand there will be few or no operating expenses in those same countries. Where the original parent company is in a new paradigm country where the company has been replaced by a peer-based co-operative, the former subsidiaries, facilities and offices in Capitalist countries will still function more or less as before but under direction from the peer-based organization in the new-paradigm country. Of course there will be changes that will benefit employees, who will enjoy reduced pressure as a result of the shift away from the self-devouring cycle.

Consumers in Capitalist countries who purchase products of these enterprises will come to appreciate the superiority of products produced in new-paradigm facilities, in contrast to products of Capitalist enterprises. Due to the new-paradigm design and production orientation toward producing the best possible product designed to last, to be easily user serviceable when technically practical, and to be easily upgradeable, new Paradigm products will be consistently superior in most instances to even high-end products of the old paradigms. Because new-paradigm production carries no wages, rents or profits, goods offered abroad can be priced far lower, for higher quality, than Capitalist enterprises can expect to achieve. Thus, this dynamic between new-paradigm and capitalist communities will naturally result in greater worker and consumer satisfaction.

Ironically, Capitalist enterprises strive to keep employee pay at a minimum to maximize profit margins; yet by removing currency from the equation entirely and putting control of production into the capable hands of the people doing the actual production, salaries and other forms of compensation will be eliminated as well, since these things will no longer be necessary in post-Transition paradigms.

New Paradigm products will likely out-compete those of purely Capitalist competitors based on their merits and lower prices. In effect, the post-Transition world will beat Capitalist enterprises at their own game, fair and square. This will create reinforcers on a global scale favoring the new Paradigm.

Where sweatshop labor is currently in use in facilities in outsourced countries, the new Paradigm communities will present a non-negotiable condition of doing business, that the employees in those facilities be treated with respect and dignity in every respect, including safe and reasonable working conditions, the right to organize into unions, non-discrimination, reasonable working hours, and at the very least a strongly living wage or a little more. Assistance will be offered to facilitate necessary changes in infrastructure. Alongside this requirement, affected facilities will be required to agree to visits by environmental, human and labor rights inspectors to ensure compliance. Failure to uphold these standards will result in termination of the business relationship and replacement of these facilities with ones that do observe humanistic standards. Employees in these facilities will be offered free relocation to facilities that will observe these requirements, and will receive all aid necessary to do so, up to and including acquisition of facilities for them to run as democratic peer-based enterprises.

We seek to propagate the new paradigm but absolutely never to do so by force or deceit. If our new paradigm and way of doing things is truly inherently superior to Capitalist paradigms, then it will speak for itself in Transitioned countries. If those living in them enjoy greater quality of life, empowerment and fulfillment, more thriving and supportive human community, and superior quality and availability of products, resources and services generated under the new paradigm, then it will propagate itself in the world as an example. Growing numbers of people will be inspired to bring about similar Transitions in a growing number of countries. More and more people around the world will say “I want to live like that.”

We will happily advise and encourage those engaged in such Transitions, but we will not engage in covert or overt intervention, nor violate the national sovereignty of any country or its people.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

We will, however, supply satellite phones and other devices for those embarking on their Transitions to use for streaming events to the world, when this is happening in a country where people do not have free access to communications media.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

Once any country has made their Transition, we will do well to form alliances among post-Transition countries for mutual aid and defense, as democracies may under the right of collective self-defence in Article 51 of the UN Charter, since we can anticipate ongoing threats from Capitalist countries and Corporations for quite a while to come. More on this a little later.

In the cases of international enterprises where the headquarters of the parent organization is in a Capitalist country and there are facilities, subsidiaries, offices, or operations in a post-Transition country, the dynamics will be different but can still be restructured to be mutually beneficial.

For the parent company, the advantages will be clear and immediate: their expenses will decrease dramatically as workers and employees in the post-Transition countries will not need to be paid or be given health benefits since they will have no need of money. That should allow the parent company to greatly reduce production costs and translate this into a competitive advantage. They will be able to offer their products and services to their customers for a significantly lower price than providers and manufacturers lacking that advantage.

In return the, parent company will have to agree to provide their products and services at no cost within post-Transition countries and to respect the design and workplace standards of the post-Transition country with respect to operations involving employees in these countries. For example, employees in these countries will not be compelled to put in extra hours because the parent company is engaged in overproduction to force overconsumption. Parent companies will have to agree to accept and coordinate with design, process and production ideas and decisions made by the New Paradigm teams whose autonomy will be protected by law. Employees and facilities in the Transitioned country will co-operate with, but not be under the command of, foreign Corporate command structures, and will insist on interacting with them as mutually respectful equals.

The parent companies will almost certainly object at first to this departure from their chain of command and way of doing things, but they will benefit from being able to produce superior products for a far lower price than competitors who exist and function entirely in Capitalist countries. An added long-term benefit will be that workers at the Capitalist end of such enterprises will come to realize that their counterparts in the New Paradigm end enjoy far higher quality of life, freedom, health, job satisfaction and overall well-being. This awareness will over time inspire growing numbers of employees in many countries around the world to bring about similar Transitions in their own countries. Our success and thriving will embolden them to act on those desires.

Of course among facilities in countries of the new paradigm, there will be little need for adaptive interfaces. Such international enterprises that exist and function entirely in post-Transition countries, will function as an open collaboration among colleagues with the goal of producing the best results for the citizens of both countries. There will be no need to convert to and from monetary or currency systems. In such partnerships, the main challenges will be logistical, technical, and possibly cultural when cultures are very different.

Immigration is yet another important way of interacting among countries and cultures. It is likely that once initial misgivings are overcome in the wide world about the nature of the new paradigms and a growing number of people realize the quality of life in the New Paradigm is dramatically higher than under Capitalism, many will want to immigrate to New Paradigm countries.

Care must be taken to develop a balanced approach that creates the greatest human happiness and well-being. On the one hand, it would obviously be impossible for any one country to absorb an unlimited number of immigrants without overcrowding and stretching all resources beyond practical limits. On the other hand, immigration helps sustain vibrant

cultural diversity, and it would be inhuman to close the door to people coming from war zones, oppressive regimes, famines, etc.

Post-Transition countries will also have to be mindful of a new phenomenon that will almost certainly develop over time: large-scale smuggling. For some enterprising and greedy individuals still under Capitalist paradigms, subject to the psychological reinforcers dominant in those societies, it will seem logical and irresistible to send operatives to immigrate to post-Transition countries in order to ship massive amounts of "free stuff" - especially electronics, jewelry and other small light objects that fetch high prices in Capitalist societies - home to their associates to be sold for profits unimaginable from within the confines of any Capitalist society. Easy money.

We must be prepared to counteract this before it happens. It is simply not possible for any country to produce TV's, computers, etc. for the whole world. If not checked and prevented, such activities could severely drain the resources of Post-Transition countries in very short order.

Our main thrust must be to encourage and assist all who learn to admire and desire the new Paradigms to organize and carry out their own Transitions in their own countries. Of course that will be easier in some countries than in others.

If our new ways of doing things truly lead to much greater human happiness, peace, empowerment, well-being and fulfillment, then we will see it transform the way all of humanity lives. Not by force of arms or political intrigue, but by inspiring enough people around the world to eventually effect Transitions everywhere, each country and culture in their own manner. That is a solution far superior to populating post-Transition countries until they have no more room!

One possible way to further this end is to establish training centers for any and all, from anywhere in the world, who aspire to bring about Transitions in their own countries. These will most emphatically not be indoctrination centers like the infamous "re-education" camps favored by many dictatorships to brainwash and suppress dissidents, nor will they be like terrorist training camps where angry young people are indoctrinated and trained how to commit acts of terror and mass murder.

These training centers will exist to pass on the benefit of our own experience to any and all who are serious about bringing the Transition to their own countries. We will give aspiring Transitionaries the benefit of learning from our successes and failures in the art and practice of bringing about and carrying through a Transition, responding effectively to issues and challenges that are involved, and the practical how-to of setting up the new paradigm once the Transition is made.

Training will also include the inner transition within the Transition: learning how to de-program one's self from the conditioning of a lifetime of adapting to the conditions in Capitalist paradigms, and how to function and get things done in the new Paradigm. We will teach those pioneers how to participate in the peer-based decision-making processes that will be the common mode of operation. This will be training upon request, not indoctrination or brainwashing.

Since the new paradigms will be unfamiliar to those contemplating bringing them about, it is logical for those who have experienced them to pass on their acquired knowledge and expertise to those about to begin. This is one of our strengths as humans. Part and parcel of such training will be developing and mastering effective communication and problem solving skills, plus a strong emphasis on the importance of powerful, effective nonviolence and compassionate responses even to those who were the oppressors before the Transition.

Back to the subject of the smuggling operations that will almost certainly try to establish themselves, we will need to be vigilant. Certainly simple passive tags (see the chapter on production and distribution) can be placed in products, never linked to any person, so that smuggled goods can be easily detected and respectfully confiscated at points of entry and exit. International parcels can be checked at customs, as they are in most countries today, and such items removed; letters and private correspondence are never opened. Persons found by a court, with due process, to be engaged in such activities can be returned to their countries of origin after a suitable period of community service.

Of course, smugglers are resourceful. Some will undoubtedly have ways of shielding products against detection. We cannot hope to prevent all instances, but we can strive to prevent it from going beyond the occasional gift sent home to family

overseas.

Fair-share guidelines (see the chapter on production and distribution) also make smuggling much harder. Someone who wants a new television once they already have a generous number simply brings an old one back, so no one can quietly gather dozens to ship abroad.

No solution will be 100% effective or perfect. On the other hand if such activities can be kept contained to small proportions, the damage will be small.

As covered in the chapter on tourism, new post-Transition forms of tourism will also act as a bridge to facilitate the world becoming acquainted with the realities of the new paradigm and to know what to expect from us. Direct one-on-one human contact will be our best ambassador to the world.

As a wise person once said, you can please all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time. We will have allies, sympathizers and supporters around the world. We will also have enemies. There will also be many who do not know what to think or believe.

We must strive to remain consistent with the guiding principles of our Transition and the new paradigms that we will establish. Both friend and foe will learn that we are reliable to deal with, reasonable to negotiate with, consistent and uncompromising in matters of basic principles such as human rights and freedoms, yet non-belligerent and respectful, promoting the propagation of our paradigm through demonstrating its superiority in practice in terms of human well-being, happiness and empowerment and cultural, industrial and agricultural productivity, but never through force, political intrigue or subterfuge.

The peoples of the world will also learn that while non-expansionist and non-belligerent, we are nevertheless able and ready to defend ourselves against any who think that our more humanistic ways are a sign of weakness or vulnerability. The people of the world will learn over time that the face we present to the world is our true reality. Not perfect, subject to individual personalities and variations, but as a people and as a community or country, the peoples of the world will quickly know what to expect.

By and large, many countries and economic entities will come to realize in time that our change in paradigm actually benefits them in many ways that they did not anticipate, even as it threatens their sense of invulnerability, superiority and perpetuity of power. It will be widely known that we always seek to find common ground for mutual benefit rather than to maneuver, cheat, lie, or coerce for advantage over other participants. Our Yes will mean Yes, and our No will mean No. In our freely-formed commitments, we will stand firm and reliable.

When natural and other disasters occur around the world, such as earthquakes, floods, fires, hurricanes, famines, man-made disasters such as toxic leaks or spills, or aftermaths of wars and riots, we must be ready to mobilize our support resources quickly, to be among the first on the scene to help, both at home and abroad, to the fullest of our ability and to coordinate readily with other persons and organizations involved in the same relief efforts. We might do well to form a Disaster Relief Corps who are trained, equipped and ready to mobilize on short notice in a way similar to armed forces.

This is consistent with the principles of our Transition and the new Paradigms: the priority and highest valuation of human well-being and happiness, and the maintenance and protection of the natural environment which is our only life-support system in this universe.

Of course, we must attend first and foremost to the well-being and thriving of our own people and community; but that alone is not enough in the big picture. As individuals we are members of a larger community; so as a country or society we are part of a larger community of countries, cultures, and communities of Humanity. Cultures sit on a spectrum, from highly individualistic to highly collective, and from loose to tight in how strongly they expect conformity (Gelfand and colleagues, 2011). At the individualistic extreme, a distorted and unbalanced individualism produces isolation, alienation and a sustained way of life in which individuals are alone and adrift in an intentionally predatory world, pitted against one another by an economic system denying the fundamental right to existence for each and all.

At the opposite extreme, a distorted and unbalanced form of community identity produces a conformity that suppresses individual expression and contribution. We will be creating a dynamic and balanced community of strongly developed, empowered and actualized individuals working together in a synergistic community of mutual reinforcement and benefit. This will become increasingly obvious to the rest of the world as time goes by. We will replace a win-lose-lose-lose-lose socio-economic model with a win-win-win-win-win model.

The need to be on high alert cannot be ignored, as much as we would prefer to be able to do away with the need for the military. Unfortunately, it is likely that there will be countries and huge powerful multinational corporations that will, either because of fear, ideology, resistance to change, greed (unwillingness to lose profits, influence, or power), or pre-existing unresolved issues, attempt to attack, terrorize, invade, and otherwise impose their will upon us.

We must therefore be prepared to defend ourselves effectively, as any country must. Alongside the regular armed forces, the population can be trained to take part in national defence, the approach known as total defence. Several democracies already work this way: Switzerland's militia army, built on general conscription; Finland's comprehensive security, with a large trained reserve; Sweden's total defence, in which every resident has a role if war comes; and Norway's Home Guard of some 40,000 local soldiers. The same preparedness would protect against any armed group that tried to restore the old order by force. If any attempts are made to attack or invade, the attackers and the world must see that, no different from any other country, we are prepared to defend ourselves, and that an invader would face not only an army but a whole people ready to resist. History, from the American Revolution to Afghanistan, shows how hard it is to occupy a country whose people are prepared to defend it. Sources: Swiss Armed Forces; Finland's Security Strategy for Society; Sweden: In case of crisis or war; The Norwegian Home Guard.

Chapter 33: Limiting Factors: Real vs. Arbitrary

On the one hand, we humans are almost limitless in our imaginations, creativity, ingenuity, resourcefulness, and problem-solving abilities. Scientists say we have so far barely scratched the surface of our potential. The post-Transition community will likely afford us a fertile environment in which to further explore that potential.

Yet nature does hold some limitations around which we must work. Gravity keeps the air around us so we can breathe, but limits how high we can jump, how far we can throw, and how much we can lift. We age and die. We are susceptible to diseases and injuries. We need to eat, drink, breathe, and sleep. We cannot breathe water or live in vacuum. We are limited by the speed of light and more. These are real limitations that are part of the physical structure of the world that we live in.

Using our ingenuity, we are often able to get around some of these limitations. We have devised machines to fly, to exist and function in space and underwater, to travel faster than we ourselves can move. Medical advances enable us to live longer and healthier in many ways. We can communicate across vast distances. Nature does not give us a ticket, impose a fine, or imprison us if we find ways around its limitations. We may never be able to change these things, but we are able to work around them.

Arbitrary limitations, on the other hand, are not imposed by nature but by humans upon each other. Sometimes these limitations are established for real and practical reasons, such as agreeing which side of the street to drive on. Yet man-made limitations are also often imposed for arbitrary and capricious reasons, such as laws in some places forbidding growing food in one’s yard, working on one’s own car, giving food to homeless people, restricting access and opportunity based on gender, ethnicity, or economic status, forbidding living without paying rent or mortgage, banning specified books, movies or music, specifying who is or is not allowed to marry whom, or dictating how people are to dress or eat.

For any community and the people living in it to function and thrive, there must be some agreed-upon shared realities, guidelines, principles, ground-rules and understandings. As mentioned above, to minimize traffic dangers, everybody must agree which side of the street to drive on. There need to be some protocols in place so drivers know what to expect from each other. Who goes first when two cars reach an intersection at the same time, how fast it is safe to go on what road, etc. We all enjoy a better quality of life if we agree that it is unacceptable to kill each other, attack each other, set buildings, forests or living beings on fire, bully each other, mix sewage with drinking water, and so forth.

There are, however, other classes of rules, limits and norms that not only do not enhance the quality of life for the community and the people in it, they actually create an oppressive human environment incompatible with a free or harmonious community. Communities and the people comprising them will thrive best if these classes of imposed limitations are kept to a minimum or eliminated altogether.

Some issues are inherently difficult or impossible to resolve in a clear-cut and unequivocal manner: the right to smoke vs. the right to not have to breathe smoke; one person's right to grow a garden vs. the rights of a neighbor who is allergic to plants in that garden; noise issues between one neighbor who works first shift and another neighbor who works third shift; the right of a musician to practice their craft versus the right of their neighbor to sleep at the same time. There are many such situations in which the solution depends on the individuals involved, the situation, and the personalities of involved parties. These situations have no absolute path to resolution but rather need to be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

If the participants are reasonable, then such situations can generally be worked out to mutual satisfaction. Where one or both parties are inflexible, unwilling or psychologically and emotionally unable to work out a solution, third parties may need to be engaged to seek a solution that takes all parties' needs and desires into account to the maximum possible degree.

Under Capitalist paradigms, however, there are vast arrays of completely arbitrary limitations, constraints, compulsions and restraints placed upon all but the inhabitants of the upper reaches of the economic Pyramid. These arise out of the strongly-reinforced imperatives of the paradigm: the law of artificially manipulated supply and demand, the maximization of profits, the minimization of expenses, and domination of maximum possible market share and stock prices.

Examples abound. The petroleum industry gives us some of the most severe and frequent examples of these kinds of destructive, artificially-imposed shortages and limitations in the service of profits, and of the manipulation of political processes at the expense of the quality of life of literally billions of people.

As mentioned in more detail in other places in this writing, those who control the world's oil have repeatedly held back supply to raise prices or keep them high. Some of this is done in the open: the OPEC+ alliance of oil-producing states announced a cut of 2 million barrels a day in October 2022, while prices were already high (Quantum Commodity Intelligence). But private companies have done it too, with no international crisis to explain it. In 2001 the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, investigating a Midwest gasoline price spike, found no illegal collusion, but did find firms maximizing their profits by "curtailing production, keeping available supply off the market," and one firm that deliberately limited its sales because more supply would have lowered prices (FTC, 2001). Internal Chevron and Texaco documents from the mid-1990s, made public in 2005, discussed how refiners would never see a substantial increase in their margins unless the industry reduced its refining capacity, and a Mobil memo discussed keeping a closed competitor's California refinery from reopening (Consumer Watchdog). In 2024 the FTC alleged that the former CEO of Pioneer Natural Resources, one of the largest U.S. shale producers, had exchanged hundreds of messages with OPEC and OPEC+ officials in an effort to align American output with OPEC+ cuts and keep prices up (FTC, 2024). He denied it (World Oil), and the order barring him from Exxon's board was set aside in July 2025 on the grounds that the complaint had not pleaded a violation of merger law (MyChesCo). Consumer class actions filed from 2024 onward allege that eight U.S. shale producers coordinated to restrain output and raise prices. The companies deny it, but in 2026 a federal judge ruled that the plaintiffs had plausibly alleged a conspiracy and let the case go forward (Reuters, via BOE Report).

And once prices go up, they are slow to come down. Economists call it "rockets and feathers": a classic study found that most of a rise in crude oil prices reaches the pump within about four weeks, while a fall takes about eight (Borenstein, Cameron and Gilbert, Quarterly Journal of Economics, 1997). When a 2015 explosion at a refinery in Torrance sent California prices soaring, they did not come back down. An unexplained "mystery surcharge" of about 48 cents a gallon remained for the rest of that year, and close to 30 cents in the two years after, long after the refinery was back at full production; taxes, environmental rules and the cost of cleaner fuel do not account for it (Severin Borenstein, Energy Institute at Haas). In 2026, after the war in Iran, the Dutch competition authority found that the price of crude oil had returned to its pre-war level, but pump prices had not, because refinery prices stayed high (ACM). Natural disasters, wars and political tensions are reliably followed by higher prices at the pump, and by higher profits: in 2022, the year Russia invaded Ukraine, the five largest Western oil companies made close to $200 billion between them, and ExxonMobil's $59 billion was the largest profit any Western oil company had ever reported (Offshore Technology). The system rewards all of this and does nothing to discourage it.

These same petroleum corporations have also systematically suppressed, hobbled and crippled the development of other alternative energy technology industries by both subtle and brutal means. Petroleum industry lobbyists drive politicians to support continued dependence on petroleum products and technologies, using specious and groundless arguments implying that reducing consumption of petroleum products willf eliminate jobs (livelihoods), in consciously complete and deliberate denial of the fact that the development of alternative technologies will create far more jobs than would be lost. Here we see yet another instance of how manufactured and propagated perception of shortage is used to manipulate the lives of billions of people to their detriment.

These companies have known for nearly half a century about the inevitability of catastrophic climate change that continued use of petroleum fuels would create. Instead of aggressively pursuing and promoting the development of safe alternatives, they spent vast sums of money and went to great lengths to suppress this information in order to maximize profits for as long as possible (Hall, Scientific American, 2015). Once again we see the role that a pattern resembling addiction plays in the behavior of Capitalist entities. A person caught in an addiction will keep pursuing it even when it threatens their own survival.

Yet the petroleum industry is but one very salient example among frighteningly many. It is common practice under Capitalism for businesses to create shortage in order to be able to raise prices.

Pharmaceuticals are another striking example, and here profit logic fails patients both ways. Brand-name drugs are routinely priced beyond the reach of many who need them, some of whom can afford them only by selling their homes, cars, and all other resources. Meanwhile cheap generic drugs go into shortage because making them earns too little: most medicines in shortage in 2023 cost less than $5 (STAT, reporting U.S. Pharmacopeia data, 2024).

In other industries, it is not unheard of for perfectly good food to be destroyed in order to drive prices up (Bolotova, Connor and Miller, International Journal of Industrial Organization, 2008; Lustrin, Pallett-Vasquez and Drescher, "Price Fixing in the Food Industry", National Law Review, 2018), medicines and vaccines to be withheld during disasters or epidemics, vacant houses and apartments to be left vacant when thousands of people are homeless. These and many more examples are perpetrated just to further, sustain and safeguard the obsessive imperatives of Capitalism.

Diamonds, while hardly a necessity, are highly sought after largely because of very effective propaganda over generations (Friedman, The Atlantic, 2015; Goldschein, Business Insider, 2011). In most cultures they have acquired the social perception of being symbols of one's position on the economic Pyramid. They are also almost universally regarded as the ultimate symbol of love between lovers or spouses, with the implication that if you really love your mate you will give them diamonds.

Diamonds are almost entirely controlled by one ultra-wealthy family in South Africa, who have systematically maintained them in much shorter supply than they are in reality. The entire global obsession with diamonds as symbols of love and romance was 100% created by an aggressive advertising (propaganda) campaign.

When the worldwide air travel industry adapted to post 9-11 international dynamics, it became forbidden to bring water through airport security checkpoints. The universal result of this is that prices of bottled water inside the secure areas higher than any other place, because vendors can get away with it. But make no mistake about it: these limitations, shortages and constraints are 100% artificial, arbitrary, and harmful to the quality of life for all but the modern Feudal Lords at the top of the Pyramid.

It is true that the world's supply of physical resources is limited in many ways. There is not an unlimited amount of petroleum under the ground. In a given location there is a finite amount of energy that can be derived from wind, solar, geothermal and other means. In a given year, a certain number of potatoes are grown in a given country. There are only a finite number of inhabitable square miles in a given geographical area. A river has a finite volume of water moving through it.

But these real limitations rarely if ever match the artificial shortages and limitations imposed under Capitalism. How can resources be managed in the most efficient way for the good of all human beings, when almost all resources are controlled by economic entities whose behaviors are shaped not by efficiency, nor by the greatest good, but by the ever-present reinforcers of the Capitalist paradigm: profit, control, dominance, market share and stock prices? As long as these reinforcers are present and operating, they cannot and will not be run with any significant consideration of the good of any but those at the top of the economic pyramid.

In post-Transition paradigms, these practices will cease. Resources will be managed based on actual physical and practical considerations of quantities, capacities, capabilities and needs. Avoidable waste will be designed out; what remains will be only what entropy and other practical physical factors make unavoidable.

Resources will no longer be unnecessarily depleted or overexploited by any constant ongoing runaway self-devouring cycle characteristic of Capitalist paradigms. For this reason as well, most resources will be more abundantly available to everybody. When actual shortages or inefficiencies do occur, they will be resolved among peers in the best way possible, which will be able to be facilitated in the absence of any institutionalized hierarchy that could impose an arbitrary allocation based on the rank or privilege of some over others.

The post-Transition human community will not be free of all limitations or conflicts, but those that do occur will not be arbitrary nor unjust. Their handling will generally proceed in ways leading to greater good for individuals and communities.

The process will engender a deepening and fine-tuning of our skills and understanding of how to unite in our diversity for our individual and mutual good.

Under Capitalist paradigms, our position in the economic pyramid plays the most major part in determining, defining and limiting which of our dreams and aspirations we can realistically expect to attain. Ability, determination, hard work and discipline are of course important factors; but in all too many cases these qualities are not enough to offset the disadvantages of being in the lower reaches of the pyramid. And all too often the lack of those qualities is no deterrent to those at the top of the pyramid.

Capitalist apologists believe and claim that these factors (ability, work ethic, discipline, etc.) are the deciding ones. They like to point out rags-to-riches success stories as a way to back up their claim. Typically their analysis concludes that those who do not “succeed,” do not do so because of lacks or deficiencies such as laziness, lack of initiative or intelligence, or expecting a "free ride.” These arguments are specious, circular, and do not hold up to close examination.

As discussed elsewhere in this writing, typical "rags-to-riches" stories are anecdotal. Under Capitalist paradigms they are by far the exception rather than the rule, as are similar stories about individuals who win big in casinos or the lottery. For every such success story, there are hundreds of thousands or millions of individuals possessing the same traits and behaviors in the same degree as those who "make it," but who never succeed in ascending the economic pyramid.

As you consider this, keep in mind that the Capitalist paradigm is structured as a pyramid and cannot function otherwise. There is not room for many people on the upper reaches of the pyramid.

Furthermore, we must consider the difference between an entrepreneurial person from the upper reaches of the pyramid seeking to start a business compared to a similarly inclined person from the lower reaches of the pyramid. The wealthy person has the money (capital) to either fund the undertaking on their own or to get a loan with no difficulty. The person from lower reaches of the pyramid, on the other hand, lacks the financial resources to fund their idea on their own and is unlikely to be able to get a loan or backers. If they do, it will be smaller and the terms debilitatingly harsh, lacking any safety net.

This effectively suppresses initiative for those at the bottom of the pyramid, regardless of the merits of their project or how hardworking and industrious they may be. There are just enough individual exceptions to maintain the illusion of opportunity that keep millions playing the game.

Those at the top of the pyramid are limited only by their ability, discipline and drive when they seek higher education, while those at the lower portions of the pyramid face severe, often insurmountable, limitations imposed by the cost of higher education and their own lack of resources with extremely limited financial aid available.

Consider also the difference between a child of the privileged aristocracy who needs only concern him or herself with their studies, who has strong confidence because of having grown up privileged and free of any financial stress, knowing that even if their chosen major does not lead to employment, they will not be on the street. Contrast this to someone who in addition to their studies must also work part or full time, worry about survival the whole time, knowing that they are incurring crushing loans if they do get financial aid, and do so with the doubts and insecurities that come from a lifetime of living on the margin of existence in a society that constantly forces them to pay to ransom their right to live.

Limitations on medical care are constantly applied to those not at or near the top of the economic pyramid in communities and countries living under Capitalist paradigms. In a system where money is a systematically scarcified but enforced requirement for everything, financial limitations are perceived to be as real as actual technological or physical limitations, and are treated accordingly. Injured and sick people are routinely denied the care they need because they either lack the financial resources to pay the arbitrarily exorbitant price of the medicines and procedures, or because accountants and “adjusters” (not medical professionals) of their insurance decide that the correct care is too expensive.

People die, receive inferior or no care, are sent home untreated, lose limbs that could have been saved, are kept in pain rather than healed, are misled and lied to, and are denied care because of utterly artificial and arbitrary financial limitations.

The gap shows up in how long people live. The richest 1 percent of American men live 14.6 years longer than the poorest 1 percent, and the richest women 10.1 years longer (Chetty et al., *JAMA* 2016). And the gap is widening. For American men, the difference in remaining life expectancy at age 50 between the top and bottom fifth of earners grew from 5.1 years for those born in 1930 to a projected 12.7 years for those born in 1960; for women, from 3.9 years to 13.6 (National Academies, 2015). Older adults in the bottom fifth of wealth die about nine years earlier than those in the top fifth (National Council on Aging, 2025). Deaths before age 65 rose by more than a quarter between 2012 and 2022, so a growing number of people pay into Medicare all their working lives and never live to use it (Papanicolas et al., *JAMA Health Forum* 2025). Lack of insurance plays a direct part: differences in coverage may account for 5 to 20 percent of the gap in deaths between low- and high-income Americans, and the Medicaid expansions of 2010–2022 saved some 27,400 lives (Wyse and Meyer, University of Chicago, 2025). A 2025 review of the research concludes that the evidence "now unequivocally supports the conclusion that health insurance improves health" (Levy and Buchmueller, *Annual Review of Public Health* 2025). That is not a sign that insurance is our friend. It shows how tightly survival is bound to money, because how much coverage a person has, and how good it is, depends largely on what they can afford. Insurance is a parasitic industry that exists only because medical care has been priced out of reach for most people, and it is the insurer, not the doctor, who decides what kind of treatment you get and how much of it; if you cannot pay for what they will not cover, you do not get it. Meanwhile workers pay more for less, decade after decade. The average worker's share of a family premium rose from $3,515 in 2009 to $6,015 in 2019 (KFF, 2019) and $6,850 in 2025 (KFF, 2025), while the average deductible, which must be paid before most coverage even begins, rose 162 percent from 2009 to 2019 alone and has risen another 43 percent over the last ten years (KFF, 2019; KFF, 2025). Uninsured patients with gunshot or stab wounds to the leg have nearly twice the odds of dying in hospital as privately insured patients (Gnaedinger et al., *Journal of Surgical Research* 2025). Meanwhile more than a quarter of American adults skip or postpone needed care because of the cost, and one in seven cuts back on food, clothing or other basics to pay for it (KFF, 2026). As discussed elsewhere in this writing, under Capitalist paradigms, profit and stock prices are the highest priority (above the well-being of individuals, communities and the environment). The greater the need for anything, the more scarce it is deliberately kept and the higher the cost is driven.

Consider what happens to a foot. Diabetes lies behind most amputations: 71 percent of Medicare patients who lost a limb in 2016 had it (GAO, 2024). A billionaire with diabetes will have every sore on their feet examined and treated early, and the foot will almost always be saved. A sub or barely living wage-earner often cannot get or afford that steady care, so a small sore becomes an infection, then gangrene, and the foot or leg must come off. Researchers describe most of these amputations as avoidable with early diagnosis and wound care, yet in California, people with diabetes in the poorest neighbourhoods were up to ten times more likely to lose a leg or foot than those in the wealthiest (UCLA, *Health Affairs* 2014). When states expanded Medicaid early, amputations among uninsured adults with diabetic foot ulcers fell by a third, while in states that did not expand they did not fall (Tan et al., *JAMA Network Open* 2022). And once a limb is lost, the inequality continues. Those who can pay get a microprocessor knee that adjusts to stairs and slopes, or a hand that responds to the muscles of the arm, devices costing $46,000 to $50,000 or more. Everyone else faces insurers that cap prosthetic coverage, restrict which devices they approve, and deny advanced limbs as "not medically necessary" (KFF Health News, 2025). Only 30 percent of Medicare patients who lost a limb in 2016 received a prosthesis by the end of 2019, and 61 percent were dead within four years (GAO, 2024).

I learned this from the inside. When my wife was fighting cancer, we were living in Taiwan, where our national health insurance does not pay for treatment abroad, so we faced the prices any uninsured patient faces. We searched for a clinical trial in the United States that might offer her a chance that standard treatment could not, and contacted some of the most respected cancer centers in the country. In several cases we uploaded her medical records and CT scans and completed their forms, and only well into the process did the costs appear. One center wanted $30,000 for a single remote consultation to tell us whether it had a suitable study. Another required at least ten pathology slides, at $5,000 each to examine. Another quoted $10,000 to $12,000 for each day in its hospital. Another explained that the trial would pay for the experimental drug, but not for treating its side effects or for any other costs, and another said its trial patients' expenses typically ran from $150,000 to $1 million.

There were no exceptions and no compassionate appeals. When I said that this meant my wife would go without care, and might die, because we did not have the money, the staff defended the policy. No one I spoke with treated it as a moral

question; within the system, it was simply how things are done. The only suggestion offered was international health insurance at $1,500 to $2,500 a month, out of reach on our fixed income, and with no guarantee that it would have covered much of anything. Clinical studies in the People's Republic of China presented the same wall. People who look for a clinical trial have usually exhausted standard treatment, and they accept real risks, including harm, death, or a placebo that does nothing, for a chance at help. A system that prices that chance beyond most people's reach leaves those who might have been helped to suffer and die because they cannot pay.

The barrier is not only for patients abroad. In the United States, the trial's sponsor generally pays for the experimental treatment and research tests, while the patient or their insurer pays for routine care, extra visits and treatment of side effects, and the patient pays for travel, lodging and meals (OncoLink, Penn Medicine). Patients paying their own way must first put down a deposit before they are even evaluated (MD Anderson, international patients). In a study of patients in early-phase cancer trials, nearly half were paying $1,000 or more a month out of pocket, half had travelled more than 300 miles, and fewer than a third had any of their travel costs reimbursed (Huey et al., *The Oncologist* 2021). Only 12 percent of cancer patients with household incomes below $50,000 took part in trials, against 17 percent of those with higher incomes (Unger et al., *JAMA Oncology* 2016). The treatments of tomorrow are tested mostly on those who can afford to be tested, and the poorest are shut out even of the gamble.

Within the United States, the law has improved: since 2014, most private insurance plans must cover the routine care of patients in trials for cancer and other life-threatening diseases, though not the experimental treatment itself. Yet in a survey of cancer centers, nearly two-thirds reported insurers denying those costs anyway, and centers that needed the insurer's prior approval saw three times as many denials (OncLive, 2015). Patients are told they can appeal. But a patient sick enough to be searching for a clinical trial is in no condition to fight an insurer, and the family caring for them is usually already stretched past its limits in money and time. An appeal can take many hours on the phone and knowledge that almost no one outside the hospital and insurance systems has, from staff with little inclination to explain it; appeals are thrown out for a missed deadline, or because the insurer does not accept the proof supplied. In effect, such denials are opportunistic: they rely on the fact that most people in that situation cannot realistically fight them. And they are rarely fought. In the federal insurance marketplace in 2021, consumers appealed less than two-tenths of 1 percent of denied in-network claims, and insurers upheld 59 percent of the denials that were appealed (KFF, 2023). Most patients never reach the door at all: for more than half of cancer patients no trial is available, and only about 8 percent ever enroll (Unger et al., *JNCI* 2019). And what it costs a patient to be evaluated is kept out of view. Leading centers set their deposits privately, case by case, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology has itself named the lack of transparency about these costs as a barrier to treatment (Winkfield et al., *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 2018).

In the new Paradigm, these artificial limitations will disappear. Every patient will receive the best medical care possible. All medicines and equipment will be kept in sufficient supply to ensure that no patient waits unduly for treatment.

The same principle that will end the compulsive enforced self-devouring cycle endemic under Capitalism, will also end the artificial shortages that plague medical, dental, and other high-demand areas with artificially forced underproduction and enforced scarcity, which are motivated by the maximizing of profit and stock prices as strongly reinforced under Capitalist paradigms.

With these behaviors no longer reinforced in any way whatsoever, the production and distribution of goods and services in every area will be adjusted to meet real needs. In the fields of medicine, dentistry and other related fields, reinforced ethics and behaviors will orient strongly towards both preventative care and the provision of every patient with the best care humanly and technologically possible. This pattern will become the default in every aspect of life.

If situations occur in which there are actual physical real-world shortages or limitations in spite of medical and research professionals' best efforts, then medical triage will determine how the situation is handled in the best way possible, rather than relative wealth, monetary considerations, or socio-economic factors. Medical professionals will make such determinations, not accountants, adjusters, politicians, lobbyists, CEO's or stockholders. The prime motive will be the health and well-being of human beings. Healthcare professionals will at last be free to honor their Hippocratic oath to "do no harm."

Under Capitalist paradigms, economic pressures often impose implicit limitations on getting married and starting a family. Aspiring families are frequently forced to delay marriage or domestic cohabitation, and especially childbearing, under all Capitalist paradigms. Couples cannot afford to get married or have children until their finances allow them to afford to pay all of the associated expenses. People's lives are effectively put on hold because of these considerations.

Just as painfully, governments under Capitalism tend to charge exorbitant fees for immigration and naturalization as a way of discouraging less affluent people from immigrating while allowing primarily those more well off to enter. When couples marry across national boundaries, this can cause extended periods of separation of families, purely due to lack of sufficient funds to pay the high fees forced upon them in order to be together.

In the new paradigms, where money or currency of any kind are obsolete and all sectors of the Community function with human well-being and happiness in mind, such barriers will be absent. Families will no longer be separated due to economic pressures and exigencies. Money that does not exist cannot become a barrier.

Under Capitalism, access to almost everything is gated by money by default: a place to live, food, transportation, medical care, water, communications, even birth and death. Public schooling, emergency care and food aid soften the gate at its lowest point, but beyond that bare provision people must constantly come up with arbitrary amounts of money determined by the Capitalist Feudal Lords in order to access everything from the most basic survival needs, to the fulfillment of dreams, to making their maximum contribution to the Community. If they are unsuccessful, then by default these things and all else are denied.

Capitalism is a paradigm predicated upon and predisposed to the creation of barriers and the imposition of limitations arbitrarily for the sake of the profits and whims of those at the top of the Pyramid. In the new paradigm, by default all persons will have access to everything, unless there is a real and currently unsolvable reason to the contrary. In that case, the guiding principles will be to seek solutions and make the maximum resources as attainable as possible to the most, preferably all, people. Under capitalism, one succeeds at the expense of others. One person's loss is another person's gain. In the new paradigm, one's success will enhance the success of others. One person's gain will be the gain of all, and one person's loss will be the loss of all.

Chapter 34: Production and Distribution of Goods and Services - Choreography and Logistics

Modern information technology makes possible the choreography and logistics necessary to engineer and orchestrate an optimized system that ensures that all Community members have access to all needed and desired goods and services, while ensuring that enough reserve exists to accommodate anticipated future need due to breakage, loss, wear and tear, immigration and population growth (though it is desirable to reduce population growth to near zero through voluntary reduction of the birth rate). With the elimination of artificially forced self-devouring cycle, production and distribution will adjust to actual need and then stabilize.

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Production and distribution facilities will be unified, consolidated, and reorganized to include, integrate, and unify development and production teams in order to combine best features, processes and materials of formerly competing producers and companies. For the most part, products can carry simple passive tags (never associated with individuals; see the privacy section later in this chapter) in order to balance production and actual need. Services such as electricity, gas, and other measurable goods and services can be tracked by appropriate physical metrics (meters, etc.), but nobody will be charged.

A central online customer communication portal will be created to facilitate quick and accurate coordination of need, production and distribution. This site will collect requests and suggestions from all members of the Community. People will be able to put in requests for goods, services, and innovations. For a few kinds of goods, fair-share guidelines (described later in this chapter) will keep domestic and foreign individuals and other entities from collecting large numbers of items for sale outside the Transitioned country. In other words, while all individuals, families and other social units will have open access to all goods and services, for those few goods there will be a generous, openly agreed amount that one person can hold. In order to take one beyond that, a person will return one, or simply ask if they have a real need for more.

Many members of the Community will already have most of their needed and desired goods and products acquired before the Transition.

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Services such as electricity, water, gas and communications will continue uninterrupted during the Transition and after. Only the billing will stop.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Many will prefer to keep their clothes, electronics, tools, furniture, etc. that already serve their needs and are familiar.

When people need replacements, they will be able to log into the consumer portal or call a number where an operator will assist them, so that all industries will have a real-time finger on the pulse of what the need is for all items. When a person needs or wishes a replacement for items they already have, they will bring the old one in to any distribution center and exchange it for a replacement of their choice. Persons who do not have items that they need or desire, will not be required to bring in an old item. For the few goods under fair-share guidelines, the system will record only how many items an anonymous account holds, never who you are (see the privacy section later in this chapter).

Regarding production connected with trade agreements, renegotiation of any such agreements after the Transaction will involve the community of workers participating in production as well as the appropriate government bodies and individuals. No facility, workforce or individuals shall be pressured or compelled to engage in accelerated production for the sake of export to Capitalist entities. If the workers at a production facility choose to accelerate production of their own free will, they will of course be free to do so.

As discussed elsewhere in this writing, domestic production will naturally scale back to what is required to supply all individuals with needed and desired goods, which will be designed and produced at highest quality and meant to last as long as possible, to be easily user-serviceable and upgradeable. Beyond that, some small degree of surplus production will be necessary to keep up with anticipated losses due to breakage, wear-and-tear, and population growth. The trend and intention in post-Transition Communities will be to create a balanced flow of goods and services that match actual need, not artificially inflated consumption.

The resulting reduction in demands and pressures upon workers will translate into new norms of fewer hours of labor for a higher quality of life across all industries, a massive reduction in chronic stress levels, and a generally healthier populace physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Work ethic will actually strengthen as workers will be freed from the exploitative hierarchical stresses and abuses typical in Capitalist companies and facilities. Former employees will become the co-decision-makers, co-policy-makers and co-stakeholders in their trades, with the true sense of pride in workmanship that can best be seen in a truly free, empowering, democratic environment.

Trade with countries still operating under Capitalist paradigms will introduce challenges. There will be an inherent cross-purpose between post-Transition production facilities and their Capitalist counterparts. Post-Transition facilities will be oriented towards production matching actual need, peer-driven with no hierarchical profit-oriented structure to force workers to put in long hours under dehumanizing conditions in order to keep up with artificially-inflated demand. Capitalist facilities will still be driven by those very same destructive forces. If the workers in a facility willingly agree to undertake an extra push to meet the demands of a trade agreement, then such an agreement will be possible; if not, then not.

One of our strongest bargaining points in renegotiating trade agreements will be that our products will be of the highest quality achievable under current technology and that the receiving entity will be able to charge dramatically less for these products than they could for comparable goods produced in Capitalist production facilities, since Post-Transition operations will function without the inefficiency and entropy of constant inflation characteristic of profit-driven enterprises. This scenario will have the added benefit of acting as practical proof, a kind of ambassador demonstrating the inherent superiority of the new Paradigms as compared to the old. Ironically, it will also be a kind of economic jiu-jitsu in which the inherent superiority of the new Paradigm will economically select in favor of enterprises working with production facilities of the new Paradigm.

Our aim is for people all around the world to see products from post-Transition communities matching or surpassing the quality of the highest-end products available from Capitalist economies while priced below the lowest-end products from those same Capitalist entities. Over time, we can expect that this will weaken Capitalist economies as they become increasingly unable to compete with post-Transition facilities, leading to growing pressure toward Transition in more and more places.

We can expect that some Capitalist countries may try to compensate for this by imposing taxes and tariffs on Post-Transition goods and services, deliberately jacking up prices to make them less competitive. To prevent such practices, all trade agreements will have to contain language stating that any such practices will result in immediate termination of the trade agreement. As more countries undergo their own Transitions, trade will increasingly occur between Post-Transition countries and communities, in which case trade agreements will be much more straightforward.

Public information channels will be established in all media: printed, online, and broadcast, along with mixed manned and automated call centers. These will replace Capitalist-era advertising and marketing with an easily-searchable database and guide to enable people to find what they need or want. From clothing to musical instruments to transportation to study materials and classes to doctors to electronics to food to entertainment, people will easily be able to look up what they are

seeking, find out what models or options are available in that area and where to go to get them. Specifications and user manuals in plain language, along with purely factual user ratings will be available.

In post-Transition communities and countries, currency will no longer have a function. Distribution Centers will be easily established in former retail and wholesale establishments which will be adapted to the new paradigm by eliminating all currency transactions. Inventory functions will continue mostly intact but greatly simplified. Pre-Transition shopping centers and malls will mostly become the new distribution centers. Former clothing stores will become clothing distribution centers. Former car dealerships will become vehicular distribution centers. Former electronics stores will become electronics distribution centers. Barber shops will continue to function as barber shops, auto repair shops as auto repair shops, etc. In function these facilities and mechanisms will continue as before but without the need or use of currency.

With the removal of all billing, financial and other currency/credit and transactional functionality from all sectors in production, distribution, development and design infrastructures in post-Transition communities and countries, the dramatic reduction of complexity will produce the added benefits of large increases in efficiency accompanied by similarly reduced prevalence of glitches and delays at all levels and in every aspect of the society.

Banks, credit unions, credit bureaus, investment brokerages, real-estate offices, collections agencies, lending agencies, insurance companies, stock exchanges, financial planning agencies and the like will cease to function. They will have no purpose in the new Paradigms. Some highly modified functionality of some of these may be necessary solely as interfaces between New Paradigm countries and facilities and their counterparts in Capitalist communities and countries. Obviously their function and principles of operation will be radically changed from what they are now.

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On the first day of Transition, all such institutions and facilities will be locked, cut off from power and connectivity, physically blocked from entry, and otherwise forcefully but non-violently taken out of operation.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

Wherever practical, one principle that will be applied in every area and industry will be a shift from large-scale centralized production to widely-distributed small-scale production. This is actually not an entirely new concept. For centuries some towns in Europe and elsewhere ran mills, granaries, ovens and commons that were owned and run in common by the community. Many mills, though, belonged to lords who forced peasants to grind their grain there and pay for the privilege (Wikipedia, Banalité), which is a lesson in itself. Where facilities were truly shared, they show that small-scale common ownership can work. There will of course be a relatively small number of exceptions for practical reasons. No principle, concept or ideology should be enforced or imposed where it degrades or compromises the quality of life, well-being, dignity, and freedom of the members of the community.

In each country undertaking Transition, the departments and agencies in the government which are tasked with managing natural resources and energy production, will make a detailed study of the natural energy resources of each region, with emphasis on identifying solar, geothermal, wind, tidal, small-scale hydroelectric and other renewable, non-polluting, non-destructive energy potentials. These bodies will work closely with engineers and other energy professionals to put together a plan to transition the energy grid as much as practical away from mammoth central fossil-fuel, nuclear, and hydroelectric facilities and towards a widely distributed network of diverse small-scale generation facilities at the city, neighborhood, block, and individual dwelling or building level.

In areas with abundant solar energy, solar arrays will be installed as much as practical on roofs, in parks and vacant spaces. In areas enjoying sufficient wind, windmills and wind turbines will be installed in yards, parks, open spaces, roofs, parking lots and wherever else is practical with minimum disruption of people's lives and of the natural flora and fauna. Multiple small-scale hydroelectric generators will be installed in rivers, with emphasis on smaller facilities that do not obstruct the river but rather harness its flow in less disruptive ways (i.e. think of water wheels, not dams). In areas with abundant

geothermal or tidal potential, small-scale generators will be installed. The goal will be a distributed, diverse grid of mostly small to mid-sized facilities, primarily maintained by people in their homes and neighborhoods but with a professional support team ensuring ongoing smooth functioning, maintenance and repair when it is beyond the skills of lay people.

We will undertake research on how to harness and store electrical energy derived from solar storms and lightning. Existing infrastructure should be preserved as much as practical but modified increasingly to accommodate the new emphasis on distributed small-scale diverse energy generation technologies.

Almost as important will be to undertake large-scale reclamation, recovery and restoration projects. There are massive resources to be reclaimed from landfills, dump sites, abandoned factories and foundaries and the like. There are extensive areas of former forest that have been stripped and deforested. There are ravaged, polluted and mangled landscapes left by various logging, mining, drilling, and manufacturing operations. We will focus considerable efforts on recovering useful materials from landfills and other dump sites, breaking down toxic materials into non-toxic ones, replanting forests and other destroyed ecosystems, re-introducing species to areas from which they have been driven by human activities, cleaning and clearing toxic waste from dump and storage sites, restoring devastated landscapes and abandoned buildings. We will partner with other willing countries to clean up the massive thousands of square miles of plastic and other waste that are dramatically degrading the integrity of our oceans.

Free and unrestricted access to telecommunications including broadcast media, cable, printed media, Internet, wired and wireless telephony, text and all other modes of communication and information sharing is a right shared by all members of the Community. All networks and equipment that pass from former Capitalist corporations into common stewardship, through democratically enacted law, will be integrated into unified networks combining the best features and functionality of the formerly competing entities. All members of the community will be guaranteed both coverage and the devices necessary to tap into all networks. The network will be maintained in such a way as to maintain compatibility with all of the various technologies of formerly competing entities, until over time those devices will all be traded in for newer, superior quality devices utilizing the combined best state of the art technology, designed with longevity, serviceability and upgradeability in mind.

A universally-accessible distributed database will be developed, initially interfacing with existing Corporate and Government databases to monitor actual need, demand and production of goods and services, to be used as a guideline to set target production levels. As time goes on, a unified set of interfaces and application programming interfaces will be developed.

Individuals and communities will access the database to update levels of need and production that can be monitored by all. Production levels will adjust to actual need in real time. Predictive algorithms will evolve over time to anticipate likely variations.

Safeguards will also be needed to prevent false needs data from being entered to generate a surplus for black marketeers to sell in countries still run on money.

Once everyone can get what they need at a distribution centre, most things will need no limits at all. Someone who wants fifteen pairs of well-made shoes will not keep anyone else from having shoes, and will add little to anyone's workload. For the great majority of goods, people will simply take what they need and bring back what they no longer use.

A few kinds of goods are different. Some take a great deal of work and materials to make, such as cars and electronics. Others would be worth a lot to resell in countries that still run on money. If a few people took far more of these than they could use, others would go without, the people making them would be pushed back into long hours, and smuggling operations would have a supply to feed on. For these goods, communities will agree on fair-share guidelines: a generous ordinary amount, beyond which you bring an old one back to take a new one.

These guidelines are not fixed numbers handed down from above. They are set, published and reviewed openly by the people who use the goods and the people who make them, in the way communities that manage shared resources well have long done (Ostrom, 2009). They follow one test: does having more get in the way of others having enough, or of the wellbeing of the people who make it? And they leave room for real needs. A musician may need several instruments.

Someone whose work takes them between two places may need a home in each. A large family needs more of nearly everything. Needs like these are met by asking, not by proving yourself to an official, and there is always a way to be heard if an answer seems unfair.

Some things are not personal needs at all. No one needs a private jet, a yacht, or a home in three countries. Aircraft and boats can be held in common, available to anyone with a real use for them, and ready for rescue and disaster relief. Homes are for living in. A second home that stands empty most of the year is housing someone else could be living in, and if millions of people each claimed a summer home and a winter home just because, there would not be enough for everyone.

Anyone who has used a public library already knows how this works. You can borrow as much as you reasonably need. Beyond a generous limit, you bring something back first, or you ask. And good libraries protect your privacy, keeping records of what you borrowed only as long as they are actually needed (American Library Association).

Privacy is built in from the start. Products carry simple passive tags, like the inventory tags already used in shops and warehouses. They are read only at distribution centres and border crossings, and are never used to follow anyone around. The system records only that an anonymous account holds a certain number of items of a given kind: not who you are, where you live, or where the item goes. Established cryptographic methods let a system confirm that each account belongs to one real person without revealing which person (Chaum, 1985). The software is open for anyone to inspect and independently audited, and linking it to anyone's identity is forbidden, with serious consequences for anyone who tries. If a system like this were ever used to watch people, it would betray the very reason it exists.

Scientific research will be encouraged in both pure and applied, theoretical and practical modalities. Technological innovations leading to new or improved products and services will of course be encouraged and welcomed. Unlike under Capitalist paradigms, the pure scientific quest for knowledge will be equally supported and encouraged, whether it leads directly to new goods and services or not.

The results of all research will be made easily available to any who are interested, in both scientific language and simplified language intended for non-scientists. This will likely often send ripples of inspiration and innovation through the populace, as the dawn of aviation and later of space exploration did when they occurred. In post-Transition Communities, advances in one aspect of human endeavor will enhance the thriving of all aspects of the Community and its members, just as any improvement to the health of one aspect of a person's body enhances the health of the body as a whole.

We may wish to introduce into the media some new kinds of reporting. For example, individuals and teams who achieve scientific, technological or artistic breakthroughs or groundbreaking innovations and/or discoveries can be touted and praised in the media for their achievements and contributions. This kind of public acknowledgement, honoring such innovators with a period of celebrity of sorts, may be a good practice to initiate. Such a practice, if done in a balanced way, will help create reinforcers for innovation and creativity that may, for some who miss the prospect of financial rewards, provide a positively functional alternative to monetary reinforcers. And of course, since there will be no corporations to usurp rights and credit from the persons actually deserving them.

All persons will have direct access to higher education, solely based upon their ability to master the material, their academic abilities and discipline. Primary through secondary education will be augmented to the highest reasonably achievable level in all neighborhoods, since budget and financial considerations will no longer play a part in the allocation of resources. In the absence of pressure to prepare economic survival strategies, students will be able, and encouraged, to pursue their interests and passions.

Many legal definitions will need to be re-examined and redefined or modified. For example, the concept of Intellectual Property will need to be redefined so that only the person or persons who developed, created, invented or conceived a work can claim ownership or authorship. No person or entity will under any circumstances be allowed to pressure or coerce an inventor or author to sign over rights of their creations to another. Through democratically enacted law, with due process for every party, all such usurpations that were enacted under the former Capitalist paradigms will be declared null and void. Ownership will revert to the actual creator. If more than one party independently did so at the same time, then both will share credit.

There will be no financial implications, though international copyright and patent law will be respected except where it goes against the principles of the new Paradigm.

The nature of civil lawsuits will change, since money/currency will no longer exist. In such proceedings, new forms of compensation will need to be conceived, such as performing services or undoing damage instead of financial compensation.

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Similarly, definitions of ownership will need to be modified so that, for example, no person or entity may own land or other resources that they do not directly personally or professionally use, nor charge fees or otherwise obstruct others from the use of or access to them. Former tenants and people paying mortgages will be recognized as the legal owners of their residences. In more complex situations such as roommates or people who had been renting out rooms in their house to survive before the Transition, clear and fair guidelines will need to be established. For householders with former renters living in their home, ownership will remain with the original householder while the former tenants will be easily able to find their own homes. Where one party is house sitting for another, ownership should go to the original owner(s) if it is their actual residence. For roommates, the processes will be more complex.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Legal processes will be developed for acquiring rights or ownership of land and/or structures, with limits established to the size of claims to prevent individuals, families or other social units from claiming and monopolizing disproportionate tracts of land. These limits will be established with the intent of ensuring that each individual, family or other social unit has sufficient space to pursue their life unobstructed.

To protect all parties involved, protocols and laws will need to be developed to optimally guide and resolve potential conflicts over occupation of formerly unoccupied buildings and building on formerly unoccupied lands. Such laws will also need to protect national parks and other natural treasures that are best left unsettled and undeveloped. Building materials, courses in construction technique, and the services of professional construction crews will be available to all. A guiding principle will be the guarantee that each member of the community and each family or other social unit shall have the right to a safe and reasonable place to live. In some countries, a Constitutional amendment may be advisable.

While large-scale farming may have to continue to a degree, increasing emphasis will be placed on community gardening and the revival of the "victory garden" or "truck garden" at the community, neighborhood, and individual dwelling level. Classes, seminars and trainings will be offered in Community Centers, schools, and other easily accessible venues. Seed stock, gardening and farming supplies and equipment will be made easily available. Zoning laws currently in place restricting food-growing and animal husbandry in residential areas to maintain real estate property values, will need to be stricken from the books. Some zoning laws such as those designed to separate noisy or otherwise intrusive industrial processes from residential areas should most likely be kept in place.

These changes will need to start as soon as the new Paradigms are being established; however the re-tooling, re-purposing, and reorganization of production processes will best be done steadily but not precipitously. Workforces trained and accustomed to the old Paradigms will need time to learn, master and familiarize themselves with the new ways of doing things. Such sweeping, all-encompassing changes need to be well planned-out and executed, not hastily rushed under pressure from above. The goal will be for the continuing Transition to proceed, grow, expand and transform the lives of the Community and its members while keeping the lights on, food on the tables, hospitals and schools open, communications operational, defense forces in readiness, and so forth.

If there are disruptions due to sabotage on the part of former Corporate Feudal Lords in attempts to re-establish their rule, it will be our job to counteract those efforts firmly, by lawful and nonviolent means, to maintain/restore normal goods and services as quickly as possible, to document events as they occur, and to stream and broadcast the events as widely in the world as possible. There will be no going back to their rule.

When the Transition has fully transformed the way goods and services are developed, produced and distributed, we can expect that the overall quality of life of the Community and its members will have improved dramatically: fewer work hours; reduced work stress and alienation; vastly increased job satisfaction and workplace relations; higher quality goods and services for all; greater efficiency in every area; reduced vulnerability to natural disaster, terrorism or acts of war; better health; improved education; greater freedom, actualization and empowerment of individuals; more harmonious interaction and discourse among individuals and sectors of the population; reduced waste and improved resource management; reduced pollution; elimination of homelessness and poverty; a cultural, artistic and scientific Renaissance and a high level of harmony, synergy, prosperity and vitality in every sector and segment of the population.

Chapter 35: The Journey from Childhood to Fully Empowered and Engaged Adult Member of the Community

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Under Capitalist paradigms, the journey from childhood to adulthood is a daunting obstacle course of trying to learn survival strategies amidst the constant hovering impending threat of denial of one's right to exist. At the age of legal adulthood, that threat becomes actual, immediate and unrelenting, unless the new adult is fortunate enough to have a family high enough on the economic pyramid and supportive enough to provide a safety net.

For the majority, this is not the case. In order to maximize the chances of being able to thrive economically and pay for their life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, a growing child must begin early to compete for academic grades, try to plot a career or trade path, and strive to develop economic survival skills and strategies in a largely hostile and life-denying environment.

A child optimally grows up through natural developmental stages: being a child, then an adolescent and finally an adult. In a healthy society, a growing child is afforded the chance to experience what those stages naturally entail such as playing and being curious as a child; exploring, experimenting and stretching their wings as adolescents while discovering their hopes, dreams, and talents, and then evolving naturally from that starting point into a fully actualized, empowered and engaged adult. Under Capitalism, such a child would most likely reach adulthood at a distinct disadvantage with regards to economic survival.

Most teachers, academic advisors, counselors, social workers, job search agencies, trade school representatives, family members, clergy and even friends would mock such aspirations on the part of the young adult, reminding them that such ideas are the purview of the wealthy, that they should "face the cold hard facts of life" and seek a way to pay for their existence, to forget about dreams, meaningful life, fulfillment, community involvement, doing what they love, or freedom of choice. There are exceptions of course but that is the dominant cultural norm and prevailing attitude in Capitalist societies.

To further understand the damaging impact of growing up in a Capitalistic society, we must also look at peripheral factors. The lower down the economic pyramid one is, the more likely it is that parents do not have much time or energy to devote to their children. They are most likely working long hours, constantly stressed with very little energy left once they have attended to basic survival issues as best they can. It is more likely that such children will have poorer nutrition and medical care, under-funded schools, and a predatory environment often dominated by gangs which themselves are an outgrowth of Capitalism. Gangs are in fact businesses, even though illegal ones, which offer young people the prospect of quick money, a sense of belonging and a kind of illusion of a support system.

Another less dramatic but still impactful factor is the psycho-sociological phenomenon of bullying that is exacerbated by social stratification and the mutual resentments and hatreds among socio-economic, ethnic, racial, and cultural subgroups.

When attempting to enter adulthood and become self-sustaining in a culture that makes every person an island in a stormy economic sea, a young adult typically encounters a disempowering, caustic environment in which closed door after closed door gives a message of "Who do you think you are, you little worthless piece of nothing? Why should we hire you instead of any one of a thousand other applicants? Prove to us that there is some reason why we should pay you so you can pay for the privilege of being allowed to exist." Even a month with no money is a month of hunger and homelessness if staying with family or friends is not an option.

The longer this pattern continues, the steeper the road becomes, the less likely the applicant is to be hired. "You've been out of work for that long? There must be something wrong with you. If nobody else wants to hire you, then we won't either."

Remember that under Capitalism, there are more reasons not to hire you than to hire you. Yet without money, survival is not possible, no matter how contributory a member of the community may be. Denial of income makes your right to exist conditional, declaring you unfit to live without going so far as to blatantly take your life, and for millions that condition is hard to meet. The unspoken message is: go die unseen and unheard, someplace else. This message is devastating to a young person trying to launch their adult existence and find a place in the world as a human island. Many are buoyed up by published success stories and cultural myths that anybody can "make it." When they don't "make it" they blame themselves and consider themselves "losers" and "failures." For the overwhelming majority, "financial independence" is forever in the future.

One feature of Capitalist paradigms and systems is that they support only those at or very near the top of the Pyramid, at the expense of those farther down the Pyramid, who are judged, economically shackled, punished and their obstacles multiplied for being in that position. No wonder there are so many school shootings and other forms of violence! No wonder suicide has become one of the leading causes of death among young Americans (Miron and colleagues, *JAMA*, 2019)! Between 2009 and 2020, the suicide rate among U.S. males aged 10 to 24 rose by nearly 4% a year, the highest of 52 countries studied, while rates fell in most of Europe (Bertuccio and colleagues, *eClinicalMedicine*, 2024), and the share of U.S. high-school students reporting persistent sadness or hopelessness rose from 28% to 42% between 2011 and 2021 (JED Foundation, 2024). That young Americans fare so much worse than their peers in countries with stronger social safety nets says something about the society they are growing up in.

Each individual is expected to find a niche, any niche, in which to survive. Actualization, empowerment, fulfillment of dreams, connection to a greater community, engagement of talents and abilities in ways that are mutually beneficial to self and community, these play little or no part in the process as Capitalism inexorably accelerates its transformation into neo-feudalism.

To reinforce this point of view, there are abundant scams in such societies that fraudulently advertise themselves as offering the chance to make an easy living doing what you love or with little effort. Encountering these scams further reinforces the perception that the only reality is to be downtrodden, exploited, and to accept that it is one's lot to be a modern-day serf. Anything to the contrary, from experience, must be a scam.

Capitalist cultures are characterized by alienation, disaffection, confrontationism, cynicism, isolation, lack of empathy, materialism, depression, anxiety, stress, exploitation, nihilism, mental and emotional stagnation, lack of dreams or frontiers, and exaggerated superficial enthusiasm over distractions and trivialities (sports teams, the lives of celebrities, the latest consumer products and services, fashion, etc.). Alongside this is a (sometimes aggressive) lack of interest or belief in improving the overall situation in society. This is especially so since such societies condition their members to perceive themselves as helpless to change the status quo. This belief is programmed into them as the natural, inevitable, and even best possible way of things. If you aren't ascending high up the Pyramid, it must be because of a lack or defect of your own, because the Pyramid is the best possible system and must not be challenged.

Even if one becomes one of those anecdotal rags-to-riches stories, the culture reinforces keeping it to one's self, not propagating it to a greater community or even particularly caring about the situation of one's fellows.

Of course, other important factors also profoundly influence and impact the growth and development of a child into an adult: genetics, physiology, neurochemistry, individual experiences both positive and negative that cannot be foreseen nor controlled, family dynamics, even chance conversations, books read or movies seen that have profound effects. This will be the case in any system, culture or paradigm. Under Capitalism, however, the prevailing level of alienation, stress, and forced preoccupation with making money to pay for one's existence, all combine to place a strain and stress on family dynamics that cannot be ignored or minimized. In such an environment, there is no question that the level of dysfunctionality in families is dramatically higher than it would be under a more synergistic, dynamic, empowering and supportive paradigm.

In post-Transition communities and countries, this journey from womb to world will change dramatically for the better. Children will be free to be children, adolescents to be adolescents who will grow into balanced, actualized, empowered, deeply engaged contributing adult members of their Communities. In place of pressure to develop a survival strategy to

make money to purchase the right to exist in a world that denies it, children will be encouraged to both play and learn, to explore in depth their talents and interests, their passions and questions in both play and practical applications, blurring the line between "work" and "play" to the point where work becomes a fulfilling play-like activity and play is a natural part of life.

Schools will still of course teach math, language arts, history, science and so forth, but they will also teach effective communication, collective decision-making, conflict resolution, collaborative skills, critical thinking, philosophy, scientific method, and other "soft" skills.

There will be a subtle change in the mandate of educators. Teachers will no longer be expected to train students to develop skills necessary to survive by finding their place as wage-slaves at the lower reaches of the economic pyramid. Teachers will no longer be expected to process students as products for the labor and consumer markets. Instead, they will be tasked with teaching both knowledge and skills, fostering the development of conscious, self-actualized, collaborative, contributory, empowered human beings by supporting the discovery, exploration and development of their interests, talents and passions. As students ease into adulthood through adolescence, they will naturally merge into the flow of the life functioning of their communities, which will naturally open to accommodate them as valued members.

Though there will still be classrooms, study, homework and the like, there will be a higher degree of accommodation, adaptation to and support for individualized courses of study as students at every level seek to pursue chosen areas of inquiry. The greater community will become more involved in the educational process.

Imagine a student who is interested in and shows aptitude for automechanics. If the school has facilities to accommodate this, the student will be able to avail him or herself of them. If not, then arrangements will be made for the student to be mentored, either at the post-Transition version of a trade-school part-time, or at an automechanics shop nearby as part of their curriculum.

Similarly, if a student shows interest or aptitude for medicine, then their curriculum will adapt to accommodate their taking classes part-time at a nearby medical school, or work-studying part-time at a nearby hospital or medical practice as a trainee or apprentice. Thus when a student graduates from high school or the equivalent, they will already be partially or completely trained and experienced in their field(s) of choice.

If a student changes their focus one or more times before settling on specific areas of study or skill, this will be accommodated as well. This process of discovery is a natural aspect of human development and experience. It does not need to be suppressed. Along the way students will gain valuable experience and knowledge that will make them more well-rounded, informed individuals and community members.

Apprenticeship and mentorship models of education will become more common in the new Paradigm, thus further engaging different generations and sectors of the Community with one another, increasing the sense of connectedness and community, and reducing the alienation and isolation among individuals and subgroups. This practice will result in individuals in every field with both knowledge and practical experience, in contrast to the Capitalist model where college graduates typically enter the workforce with little or no practical experience in an environment where both a degree and experience are expected.

Trade schools typically suffer less from these defects than colleges and universities; but trade schools will become more balanced, organic and nurturing, less like mills churning out human products to sell on the job market.

The for-profit schools that now proliferate through Capitalist societies like a pernicious infection will either disappear or completely reorient themselves to become full participants of the open educational infrastructure of the Community.

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Otherwise their facilities will be taken over by those who will do so after the former owners inevitably move on to other pursuits.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

With no restrictions or barriers to any level of education or training in any field, other than those of ability and discipline, we will see a drastic rise in the level of education, skill, awareness, competence, integrity, and quality of work and contribution in every field and area of endeavor. Job satisfaction will rise dramatically. Alienation, stress, antagonism, apathy, and incompetence will sharply decline.

As mentioned elsewhere in this writing, once equilibrium has been reached between actual demand and supply of goods and services, the demands on individuals and facilities will likely stabilize at around 20-30 hours a week for most industries, with a concurrent reduction of the level of pressure and stress both individually and at the community level. Since money will be irrelevant and obsolete with all necessities of life guaranteed, we can expect this reduction in work hours to benefit individuals and communities greatly. The evidence so far points the same way: in a 2022 UK trial of a four-day week, 56 of the 61 participating organizations chose to continue it, and 71% of staff reported less burnout (University of Cambridge, 2023).

Another beneficial effect of post-Transition cultures will come from the shift from hierarchical to peer-based organizational models. Modern data-sharing, analyzing and collecting technology will allow this model to scale well to larger entities and organizations such as school districts, which in high population areas can be quite large and unwieldy. It is not practical to assemble 35,000 teachers and school staff into a single space for a meeting to vote on policy or practice.

It is, however, practical to create a distributed interface, accessible from every classroom, in which educators, staff, even students and parents when appropriate, can communicate, collaborate, and coordinate in open dialog. This will form a collaborative model in which those directly involved in the educational process will share data, discuss, learn from one another and develop educational processes in much the same way as the international Linux/Open Source development community (discussed elsewhere in this writing) develops Open Source software and operating systems. In fact, in the early days of the Transition, we will benefit greatly if we study how these models operate.

This mode of operation will result in constant evolution, adaptation, and improvement in the educational process, the perpetuation of modalities that work and discontinuation of those that don't. A school system is presented as an example of a larger scenario, chosen here because we are looking at growing up in the new paradigms. This model, however, will find wide application in every field in post-Transition Communities, industries, and undertakings, as it has proven in practice to be a vibrantly effective model on a large scale in any field.

This will be in sharp contrast to the situation in hierarchical organizational models, common in both Capitalist paradigms and government institutions under Capitalist and other dictatorial models, in which decisions, policies and methods are decided at the top and imposed upon those down the chain of command. There is little or no opportunity for input from those at the bottom, who are generally the ones tasked with implementing and being directly affected by these decisions.

Hierarchical school districts are rife with stories about educational methods, standards, metrics, policies and rules that were decided upon by a Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools or other ranking officials and imposed upon teachers and students with disastrous, absurd, or meaningless results, until the next new methodology is pressed upon them from above.

Hierarchical, top-down organizational models reliably suffer from this and other serious flaws, whether it takes the form of a committee in Moscow in the Soviet Union telling farmers in Ukraine how many potatoes to grow and how to grow them, a corporate headquarters in Nebraska telling employees in a plant in Puerto Rico how many widgets they have to make and how to make them, a board of education telling teachers how to teach, or a health insurance company in New Jersey telling doctors what procedures to perform or not perform on a patient in Alaska. In such cases the results are routinely poor and avoidable by effecting a change of paradigm.

Educators typically know from the beginning that such schemes and methods will not work, because of their experience and knowledge gained from front-line classroom experience. Yet in typical school districts, teacher, staff, student, or parent

input is not taken seriously into account where it conflicts with policy or directives handed down from above. This is yet another way in which the quality of education will vastly improve at all levels in post-Transition communities. Education will truly more closely accomplish the goal of arming growing citizens with knowledge, skills, awareness, and development that will empower them to take their places as actualized, highly-motivated, fully-engaged members of thriving communities.

Post-Transition Communities will experience a Renaissance at every level that will likely rival and exceed any previous Renaissance anywhere in the world.

Chapter 36: Strategies and Tactics

> **Important context for this chapter**
>
> This chapter describes the earlier "overnight transition" model — a coordinated, near-simultaneous changeover. That approach has been superseded. The current Transition strategy is gradual, voluntary, cumulative, and community-based, beginning with local problem-solving and building outward as trust and capacity grow. See the current Transition Roadmap.
>
> Several passages below reference physical resistance, armed defense, and specific weapons. These do not represent the current position. Transition's commitment to nonviolence is absolute: it does not initiate, organize, or employ violence to achieve social change. An individual retains the right to protect themselves or another person from an immediate physical assault using only the minimum necessary action, ceasing when the danger ends, with prompt compassionate care for every injured person afterward.
>
> The chapter is preserved with annotations so the evolution of the thinking remains transparent.

In a traditional strike, employees close down the workplace by refusing to perform their functions as they picket in front of the facility carrying signs and otherwise publicizing their issues while negotiating with employers for improvements in salary, working conditions and more. Strikers shut down production as a way of forcing employers to take them seriously and generating public awareness of their struggle and plight.

The traditional strike entails a serious sacrifice and risk for strikers, who will have to live without pay for the duration of the strike. Union strike funds are usually insufficient for a prolonged confrontation. In many cases strikers may be subjected to violence, harassment and intimidation from the company against which they are striking.

The traditional strike has been an effective way of gaining improved wages, rights, and safer working conditions in the past, since shutting down the company's production and/or distribution operations halts the flow of profits. It is a battle of attrition. When successful, a strike wins gains for employees when the employer reaches a point where loss of revenues and stock prices due to non-production and public boycotts becomes severe enough for the Feudal Lords of the company to begrudgingly make concessions in order to minimize losses.

Employers usually try to bring in replacement (non-union) workers past strikers' picket lines to continue production, and picket lines have sometimes turned into physical confrontations. The public, being overwhelmingly made up of employees living on inadequate pay, have traditionally been largely supportive of strikers because of their widely shared economic reality. Strikes are generally accompanied by large-scale boycotting of the employer's goods and/or services, which puts further economic pressure on the company to seek a compromise in order to get production and distribution up and running. Unions traditionally maintain a Strike Fund, paid into from Union dues, for the purpose of assisting workers in surviving during the wageless period of a strike.

The traditional strike has been an effective means of forcing change and improving living and working conditions for employees in the specific industry or company where the strike occurs. The prevalence of strikes has resulted in the overall improvement of working conditions, pay and other compensation, treatment and rights of employees overall in the Community. Over time, this has even resulted in the passing of laws protecting these rights.

Sadly, at this point in time, in a growing number of Capitalist societies and countries, the traditional strike has been rendered much less effective by a combination of factors:

1) Powerful corporate lobbies have driven governments to generate effective propaganda portraying unions and strikers as disruptive elements, unsavory, criminal, even labeling them as "economic terrorists." Corporations pay large sums of money

to disseminate propaganda and disinformation, often misrepresented as government-generated or as coming from a source whose mission is to stand up for the good of employees.

If one encounters a statement on a website, in a magazine or on TV, purporting to come from "Citizens for a Safer Workplace" or "Workers' Alliance" or "Citizens for Freedom," most people will tend to trust that the source is oriented towards protection of employees' rights and well-being. We will tend to be pre-disposed to accept what is written there. If the language is carefully crafted, it can and often does lead many readers to believe that unions (not employers) are the exploiters of employees, that higher wages, safer working conditions or better healthcare insurance will lead to layoffs and job loss, and are therefore bad for employees. It is the real-world manifestation of the "doublespeak" made famous in George Orwell's book "1984."

This creates a serious rift within the ranks of the employees and the general public while fostering an endemic attitude of indifference or even hostility toward unions and strikers. Even the constantly-rising cost of living is blamed on labor costs by those whose policies toward employees place them in the position of needing to demand higher pay in order to survive in the first place.

Under pressure of the psychological reinforcers inherent in Capitalist paradigms, all parties are reinforced to maximize the accumulation of money, which is kept scarce ("the central bank tends to keep the money supply relatively scarce," as a standard finance reference puts it: Investopedia, 2026) and always comes to one at the expense of the other.

2) The media are increasingly driven by Corporate and other big-money interests' agendas. Reporting has largely ceased to be about seeking the truth with no preconceptions. It has become a matter of making sure the story is told as the reporter's bosses want it to be told. If a Network's Feudal Lords do not want a strike reported, want it downplayed, or want it portrayed as the work of subversives, malcontents, criminals, terrorists, hooligans or disruptive elements, then that is how it will be portrayed. With few exceptions, the populace sees what the Feudal Lords want them to see.

The mechanisms differ from country to country. In China, North Korea, Russia and Iran the state censors the news directly; in the United States, concentrated corporate ownership narrows what gets covered, a real if different problem. Reporters Without Borders ranks the United States 64th of 180 countries for press freedom, against 172nd to 179th for those four (RSF, World Press Freedom Index 2026). In either environment, a strike gets drowned out and downplayed to the point of going virtually unnoticed, and vilified when it is noticed.

3) Many unions themselves have become complacent, corrupt, and disconnected from their real purpose and mission. In many unions, leadership has been seduced by the lure of money to become susceptible to clandestine influence by, and cooperation with, management, to the detriment of workers in the union.

A dramatic example of this in the United States was when the Teamster's Union was used by growers to intimidate and suppress farm workers in the American Southwest when they were first organizing the United Farmworkers' Union: growers signed contracts with the Teamsters instead (Wikipedia, Salad Bowl strike; Garcia, Gastronomica, 2007). Sadly, employees can no longer fully trust or count on Union leadership to defend and protect their interests.

4) Because of the history of gains made in the past by Labor Unions and labor movements in general, people have come to perceive themselves as having arrived at a better, more equitable situation than employees in the past. While this was true for a fairly long period of time, resting on that assumption has led to complacency, apathy, and a false sense of well-being and safety in the workplace and labor market.

5) An increasing number of companies have taken to hiring people as "contractors" instead of employees. Contractors do not legally have the same rights as employees, which saves companies a lot of money and relieves them of having to follow many of the laws that protect employees.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

The tactics of the Transition will have to be innovative, aggressive, nonviolent, and immune to the vulnerabilities of the traditional strike. Think of a "reverse strike" - more on this soon.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

The General Strike has been used effectively in many European countries to force change in economic policies, practices and laws. In a General Strike, the entire population or a significant portion of it refuses to go to work in all sectors, effectively shutting down the economy.

The general strike is even more effective if strikers, hopefully most or all of the population, also refrain from making purchases or conducting any economic activity whatsoever during the strike. It has the advantage of being nonviolent and less vulnerable to the use of targeted intimidation or scab labor than a traditional strike.

This is more effective than strikes aimed at specific employers, industries or facilities, when the goal is to bring about systemic change in economic policies, laws, and practices across all industries and sectors of a country or Community.

Personal risk is less than in a traditional strike since there is no concentration of strikers in a place where they can be targeted for intimidation or arrest on whatever pretext. There is no concentration of angry frustrated people that can easily degenerate into a purging of anger and frustration rather than a concerted action focused on a mission or goal to achieve clearly-defined changes. The use of the general strike will likely be more effective than the traditional strike in forcing economic change, and it most definitely has its place in the strategy and tactics leading up to the Transition depending on conditions in a specific country or community. Vital services such as hospitals and firefighters need not be shut down as long as the economy as a whole is brought to a standstill.

The main limitation of the general strike for the purpose of bringing about a complete and smooth shutdown of the pyramidal Capitalistic economic system and quickly, smoothly replacing it with the new Paradigms, is that once the General Strike's goals have been met, the Capitalist economy resumes operation. Whether the issue in question is wage parity for women or minorities, safe working conditions, the end of specific practices by banks or manufacturers, or the holding to account of specific corrupt officials or other persons, once these goals are met, the overall Capitalist economic mechanisms come back online, unchanged in its core structure and principles of operation. The gains thus made will in time be reversed by the intrinsic power and influence of the neo-Feudal lords in the such societies.

It is highly unlikely that a General Strike alone would be an effective strategy to bring legislators to enact, and Corporate boards of directors to accept, the complete deconstruction of the economic power structure and the handing of control to the workers under supervision of the People, much less the abandonment of money altogether.

A new strategy is needed if we are to achieve a true end to Capitalist paradigms and mechanisms, if we are to create a paradigm based on principles that, when translated into actions, policies, and reinforcers, lead to a functioning mode of operation that brings about an empowered, thriving, synergistic, symbiotic population of empowered, fulfilled individuals working together to fulfill the dreams, aspirations and well-being of each and all. Measures aimed at "fixing" and regulating Capitalism to curtail abuses and excesses will never bring about a fundamental change any more than cough syrup will cure lung cancer or the rules of chivalry could make war any less savage.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

This is where the "reverse strike" comes in.

The "reverse strike" works like this:

On an agreed-upon day, everybody will come to work as usual and do their jobs almost as usual, with a few important differences:

1) Functionally, work will go on almost entirely as usual. Assembly lines will continue to assemble, power plants will continue to supply electricity, hospitals will continue to treat patients, crops will continue to be tended, trucks and trains will continue to roll, ships will continue to sail, planes will continue to fly, schools will hold classes and so forth.

2) Behind the scenes there will be massive changes in procedures. Workers in finance and billing departments will have a new mission: to ensure that all clients/subscribers receive their goods and services, period. Billing will stop. Instead, all accounts will be marked paid in full and current in order to ensure the unobstructed, uninterrupted flow of goods and services. Even past-due accounts will be marked paid in full.

Software developers will go to work rewriting business software to eliminate billing, collections, and related functions altogether. Ideally this will have largely been done prior to the Transition so that on the day of Transition, the existing software will be patched to eliminate all billing, collections, and termination-of-service functionality. But the necessity of the element of surprise may make it impractical to modify the software before the Transition.

Pharmacists will give patients their prescriptions without billing or charging, likewise doctors, dentists and other providers will render their services without charge. On the day of Transition, people will cease paying rent or mortgage. Insurance, billing, banks, collections, stock exchanges and finance companies will find themselves locked, closed, cut off from all power and communication, their entrances physically blocked, as their functions will no longer be needed.

Stores will be open and cashiers will be ringing customers out but not charging them. The ringing of transactions will be purely for the purpose of inventory tracking and resource management. Gas stations will set prices to zero, effectively not charging. Simultaneously, the workers at provider and distributor locations will cease to charge the public, and the public will cease to pay. If payment is offered, it will be refused. If payment is demanded, it will not be given.

3) Managers, especially upper management, Board members and CEO's, will be the last to realize that something has changed without their involvement. When they or their representatives go on-site to factories, stores, farms, etc. they will find workers running things smoothly while not responding to their orders.

When the now-dethroned upper echelons of the defunct Pyramid attempt to assert their authority, they will be met with polite but unwavering resistance and refusal to comply. Workers will inform their former managers and those above them that they are no longer in control and that their accustomed function is no longer needed.

Some of these former executives and officers will attempt to use physical force to enforce compliance. They will be met with firm, calm but effective verbal and physical resistance, up to and including being bodily removed from the facility, but not harmed in any way nor spoken to disrespectfully.

When those formerly in charge realize that they have lost control of the operation, some of them will attempt to use the legal system and law enforcement to enforce their will, which will entail forcing the workers to shut down operations. However, at least a significant percentage of police and the military will have realized that the Transition is in the true spirit of the oaths that they have sworn to protect the peace and the people. In the United States for example, they will have sworn an oath to defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. Since Capitalism is a direct domestic threat to the Constitution and the Transition is restoring governance to the People, many of them will refuse to follow the orders of the former Feudal Lords, and will in fact apply themselves to preventing violence against the people in Transition. In instances where the government attempts to force restoration of the power of the neo-Feudal Lords, we must refuse to comply, stand firm and fast and resist, only using physical force in self defense if physical force is used against us. We will not seek to overthrow the Constitutional government; however, we will not comply with nor accept its mis-application as instrument of enforcement for the anti-democratic Capitalist power structure.

4) There will be some at every level who did not get the word about the Transition. Some will attempt to resist or sabotage the Transition, either out of fear, resistance to change, or a sense of loyalty to the old Paradigm. If the overthrow is carried out well, then those engaged in initiating the Transition will contain and restrain these people in ways similar to those used to contain individuals who become violent or combative due to dementia, mental illness or drugs. All workers will be prevented from performing functions of billing, disconnecting, invalidating, denying service or otherwise enforcing the patterns of the deposed Capitalist paradigm. Such people must be prevented from doing damage but be treated with respect and not harmed in the process.

5) The media may or may not cover the overthrow and the Transition objectively, factually, or at all. We must keep in mind that the workers involved in media, the reporters, camerapeople, grips, drivers, editors, etc. will largely be part of the Transition, but not all of them will be.

Even if the media are prevented from carrying the story, millions of cell phones and other devices will stream the story to the world via the Internet. The people of the country in Transition and of the world will see the truth of the situation: the change-bringers will be in fact the reasonable, level-headed party, bent on keeping the normal functions of life continuing undisrupted. It is essential that the people of the world see this for themselves. The CEO's, billionaires and other dethroned former Feudal Lords will be forced to show themselves as violent, unreasonable, power-addicted thugs bent on preventing life from going on, shutting off the lights, and preventing food from reaching people's tables. The respective roles of the people of the Transition and of the Capitalist Feudal Lords and their loyalists will be obvious for all to see and understand. With every human being acting as a live reporter, it will not be possible to suppress the reality of the Transition.

This will also differ from traditional strikes in that there will be no negotiation, no offer and counter-offer, no return to the way things were. Work and production will not be disrupted. What will be shut down will be the Capitalist economy itself, the parasitic, predatory functionalities. That side of things will be shut down permanently.

If and when the denizens of the old paradigm attempt to use violence and coercion to enforce their will, they will be dealt with in the same way that a community responds to anybody attempting to disturb the peace, intimidate or assault other people, commit vandalism or otherwise do harm. Transitionaries will strive to avoid the use of violence and disrespectful language and behavior, except to use such physical force as is needed to defend ourselves and each other while keeping normal production, distribution and delivery of goods and services running normally.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

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6) Concurrently while the Transition is happening, statements will be released in all media: television, radio, printed media, the Internet and individual to individual by email, text, social media and Instant Messaging. These statements will announce, explain and state succinctly in clear, balanced terms what is occurring, why it is occurring, and the basic principles, tenets and goals of the Transition and new Paradigms. These messages and statements will not be demands, nor will they decry or denounce individuals or groups, not even those modern day Feudal Lords who are at the top of the Pyramid.

The messages will state that the previous socio-economic paradigm has become nonviable and unworkable, and that the People are effecting a change, a Transition, to a paradigm that will result in a vastly higher level of human happiness, well-being and relationships after replacing the epidemically adversarial, mutually predatory win-lose-lose socio-economic dynamics of the economic Pyramid. We will explain that the new paradigms will be a synergistic, cooperative win-win-win paradigm, a democratic economy to more faithfully realize the principle of government of, by and for the People. It will emphasize that there can be no democracy, no government of, by, and for the People, without economy of, by, and for the People.

When the Transition comes to the United States of America, it would be a good starting point for this mission statement to quote the Declaration of Independence citing the following excerpt: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. - That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, - That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The statement can then proceed to explain how the pyramidal economic power structure has devolved into a form that is irreconcilably inimical and destructive to the core Constitutional principles, that therefore the People are exerting their right and duty to alter and abolish the economic power structure.

In the United States the message should include a call to all who swore an oath to "defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic" to recognize that their oath compels them to support, defend, and participate in the Transition.

The statement must include strong expressions specifying that the goal is a nonviolent Transition through changing the principles of economic organization and operation, while seamlessly and smoothly maintaining the processes involved in daily living. It must be absolutely clear that nobody, not even those deposed and dethroned by the Transition will be vilified, lynched, humiliated, disrespected or harmed, though they will no longer be in control of anything but their own lives.

The Statement will include a declaration that henceforth no person or organization shall charge money for goods or services, that no one shall be required to pay for anything, that all dwellings are henceforth the property of those living in them and all unoccupied lands and buildings are legal for persons to occupy and that violence or coercion by anybody will not be permitted.

In each country the Statement will be adapted to the culture, institutions, issues, fundamental principles and defining documents of the specific country. This statement will be put forth in all media, passed from person to person by text, email, Instant Messaging and Social Media, and delivered in multiple media to the embassies and consulates of all countries in the country in Transition.

A similar message will be presented to the world as a whole. The content will be mostly the same as the domestic message, but with additional language expressing that the Transition is carried out by reasonable people who intend wherever possible to honor existing treaties, alliances and contracts, with the provision that all production and distribution facilities in the Transitioning country are henceforth owned and operated by the People who work them, and that all corporations are henceforth null and void. The message will assure the world that new trade agreements will be made which respect all participants' interests, and that the post Transition country will respect the sovereignty and the will of the people of all other countries, but will not conduct business nor perpetuate contracts or agreements with parties engaging in human rights violations nor environmentally destructive practices.

Assurances will be made that the nationals of all countries are guaranteed safety during and after the Transition. All parties will be encouraged to continue their activities as usual. Exceptions will be advising all people to refrain from charging or paying one another and the fact that the former occupants of the upper portion of the Pyramid are no longer in control and are not to be heeded, obeyed, harmed or harassed.

This way of initiating the Transition will ideally result in little no disruption of the lives of the overwhelming majority of residents in the involved Community. In less-than-ideal scenarios, the disruption will be far shorter-lived and less severe than in traditional methods of overthrow and overhaul.

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It will take some time for all of the aspects of the Transition to come up to full function. Designers and engineers will redesign products and technologies. Factories will retool. Some stores will reorient and combine into distribution centers while others will be re-purposed due to redundancy.

People who formerly worked in obsolete parasitic industries, such as insurance, sales, marketing, banking, stock trading, etc. (it is the industries that become obsolete, not the people) will need to be assisted to find fulfilling niches in the new Paradigm that utilize their skills and areas of expertise in new ways. A large-scale project will be mounted to encourage,

train and support individuals and communities to develop new small-scale infrastructures for energy generation and food production, among other things. This will lead to the decommissioning of a growing number of large-scale generation plants, factory farms, and other antiquated and obsolete facilities. During this phase of the Transition, workers in all sectors of the community will work together to keep goods and services flowing as efficiently as possible while shifting emphasis, methodology, and logistics. If this is done properly, the typical citizen will experience only minimal disruption of their lives, probably less than they were accustomed to under Capitalism due to other causes.

We can anticipate that among those accustomed to wielding wealth and power that will no longer exist, there will be some who will seek to suppress the Transition by violent means. If our Transition is to be a vehicle for truly lasting fundamental change that will result in a golden age of well-being, prosperity and harmony unparalleled in human history, then we cannot and must not initiate violence, nor escalate it whenever not absolutely unnecessary.

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Yet it would be foolish to not be equipped to defend ourselves.

If we encounter attempts at violent suppression and intimidation, it is best to offer the minimum armed resistance necessary to defend ourselves and others, but never to continue violence beyond that point. If the power-and-money addicts do put us in that position, emphasis must be on non-lethal, non-maiming defensive measures such as tasers, tear gas, rubber bullets and the like. Lethal measures must only be used if diplomacy, nonviolent tactics and resistance, and all other means of defense have failed, and only to the minimum extent absolutely necessary to end the threat.

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Whenever anyone is hurt in any confrontation, it will be the task of every person participating in the Transition to care for the wounded and render assistance to all injured parties, regardless of which side of the conflict they are on. Anyone who has had to be restrained to stop an immediate assault is to be prevented from doing further harm, given the same level of treatment and respect that is given to our own people, and released unharmed, or handed to lawful authorities, as soon as the danger has passed. This ethic must be adhered to rigorously and religiously for the sake of the kind of community we seek to establish. This will also make it clear to uninformed people of the country in Transition who are unsure what to expect, and to the watching people of the rest of the world as well, that this Transition is being carried out in full accordance with published intentions and philosophy. Our actions will and must show that the people generating the Transition are reasonable, humane, compassionate people of conscience, not terrorists, power-hungry mercenaries or brutal extremists.

Government will not be intentionally disrupted though it will be impacted by this Transition to the new Paradigm. Those in government will have to adapt to the new social dynamics in order to perform their functions. Elected officials will discover that they no longer enjoy a status above that of the typical citizen. Some may quit over this change and will be replaced, through special elections as the law provides, by whichever candidates the voters choose; we can expect many of them to be able and willing to work with the new Paradigm to serve the well-being of the people.

This is not just a Transition to a new socio-economic Paradigm. It is also a new way of supplanting a failed paradigm and carrying through a fundamental paradigm shift, decisively, nonviolently and democratically, in such a way as to avoid a blood bath and commission of atrocities in the name of vengeance disguised as justice. No Transition or Revolution whose first act is to purge, kill, beat, drag through the streets, humiliate or demean any person or group, can realistically hope to establish a new Paradigm leading to a truly free, safe, thriving community of highly empowered, thriving, symbiotic individuals embodying unity in diversity, e pluribus unum.

Once one country has successfully implemented its Transition, the world will know that it is not only possible, but practical, viable, and superior to Capitalism and other forms of institutionalized hierarchy in every way. Once the viability, superiority and practicality of the new Paradigms is established, people of other countries will be inspired and empowered to embark on their own Transitions, just as once the first airplane was built and flown, a vast profusion of different kinds of flying

machines followed soon after. Once a new paradigm and set of principles are implemented and proven in practice, then if they are clearly viable, workable and superior to what was before, they will inevitably spread and propagate far and wide at an ever increasing rate until it becomes the new norm. So it will be with the Transition to the new socio-economic paradigms.

Chapter 37: More on Strategy and Tactics

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

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The Transition date should ideally be set for some time in early to mid Spring, in order to minimize the potential impact on the Community of any disruptions that may occur in spite of our best efforts to prevent them. Such disruptions would likely come in the form of attempts on the part of members of the former (now deposed) ruling elite to suppress the Transition and re-assert their power structure. This timing gives the maximum window of time to stabilize vital services before winter cold creates dangers, while also allowing a few months before summer heat creates potential hazards, especially for the elderly, infirm, and very young.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

As pioneers of the Transition, we must be watchful for at-risk individuals and communities around us and make it our personal mission to care for and protect them to the best of our ability.

Meanwhile, in the time between now and the Transition, we will become stronger if each person, to the best of their ability and circumstances, forms committed support groups with others upon whom we can count and entrust our lives. These support groups will work best of they go beyond just moral and emotional support. To be truly effective, they will need to extend to the point where each support group commits to ensure that nobody in the group falls by the wayside alone in the event of loss of livelihood or other calamity. This mutual inter-reliance and support will be in a spirit similar to that which exists among members of mountain-rescue teams, firefighting crews and other close-knit teams who trust one another with their lives.

Among members of these support groups, resources can be shared and efforts pooled. This goes contrary to the prevailing social pattern common in Capitalist paradigms, which enforce, condition and encourage each individual and family to struggle individually for survival, effectively dividing us and keeping us conquered and disempowered.

To some extent, we can also begin developing the distributed power and food production that will become the norm in the new Paradigm. We do not have to wait for the Transition to begin this process.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

When we have chosen and agreed upon a day to initiate the Transition in any given country, we must be strongly focused on the goal of Transition. We must not be distracted by personal or side issues, our own anger and frustration, or the efforts of those who will try to stop us by drawing us into unnecessary conflict and bloodshed.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Those seeking to protect and preserve their power, wealth, and influence will be quite willing to resort to violence, blackmail, and slander. They will do their best to use the media to portray our Transition as criminal acts of terrorism, disruption and vandalism perpetrated by hooligans, terrorists and ruffians. We must make sure to be true to the principles that guide us in our Transition and in the establishment of the new Paradigms, both for its own sake and in order not to give our opponents any real public-relations ammunition. Letting our emotions drive us to violence, overreaction, disrespectful behavior,

vandalism, or revenge-seeking even in the face of violent attempts to suppress our Transition, would give our opponents just such ammunition.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

We may likely have to defend ourselves, physically and in other ways. We must be scrupulous and painstaking to employ the absolute minimum level of violence necessary to neutralize real threats, seeking to temporarily disable those trying to stop us without killing or maiming them. We will be the ones working hard to keep vital goods and services running during the Transition. Those exerting to stop us will necessarily be forced into the role of trying to disrupt the flow of goods and services. The Feudal Lords of Capitalism will reveal themselves as the hooligans, terrorists and bullies that they are.

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We must be prepared to extensively use video streaming, social and news media, and every other lawful means to make sure that the world sees events in real time and understands the true nature of the Transition.

As previously mentioned, in a classical strike, workers stop the flow of goods and services to force employers to make concessions in pay, benefits, working conditions, etc. In the current socio-economic climate, employers often use the media to portray strikers as economic terrorists bent on disrupting the public good, and present themselves as the champions of the People.

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In contrast, we who carry out the Transition will in fact be the ones demonstrably working to keep things running smoothly, forcing our opponents into the role of disruptors of the public good. We will in essence be "striking" on the economic side of things by abstaining from, and blocking, payment and charging. People will not pay for goods and services, and those on the front lines of delivering and producing them will not ask for payment. Financial institutions will be completely shut down.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Goods and services are real. Currency is an artificial construct. It coordinates exchange, but it does so by limiting and blocking access, and better tools for coordination now exist.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Whereas in a traditional strike both sides have something the other wants or needs; negotiations proceed with the goal of resuming normal functioning in the Capitalist paradigm with just a few changes when it is resolved. In contrast, in the Transition the supporters of Capitalism will have nothing that we want or need. There will be no return to Capitalist norms when it is done. We will not be conceding anything. We, the real players on the field, will be changing the way the game is played, the way life is lived, and there will be no going back to the old ways.

Those removed from power when the entire economic power structure is dismantled, will be rendered powerless to reassert their dominance. We must then treat them with the same respect and firmness as someone who is violent or hostile due to mental illness, trauma, or fever. Our goal and purpose is to create a new kind of community dedicated to empowering all members to live in fullness, dignity, freedom, and respect.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Those who seek to stop the Transition will attempt to draw us into traditional modes of conflict. Our response must be guided by different principles. While we act to reverse, without compromise, their capture of our governments, laws and resources and their power over other people's lives, we do not seek to place ourselves in power in their place or to avenge ourselves upon them. We must endeavor to craft a Community that provides a niche for our former oppressors to thrive in while not enabling the compulsions that drove them.

In the meantime, the more we detach from dependence on the Capitalist infrastructure, the better. As much as possible, this entails growing food crops, capturing rain water for home use (and, where local municipalities or state governments restrict it, working openly to change those rules, as Colorado did in 2016 (Colorado HB16-1005)), setting up small-scale electrical generation (solar, wind, very small-scale hydroelectric and other), practicing carpooling, learning first-aid and basic field medicine, and more.

We will also improve our situation if we make a point to teach ourselves to consciously tune out, ignore, and disregard the constant bombardment of advertising and other propaganda to which we are exposed, and to de-program ourselves out of the conditioned reflexes that have been programmed into us that lead us to perceive and experience a feeling of need to buy, replace, and consume ever more material possessions. Placing conscious attention on the psychological mechanisms of manipulation will be a good starting point.

In explaining, sharing, and spreading the principles behind the Transition and the new Paradigms to come, it is important to focus primarily on principles of operation, goals, quality of human life, factual information, what-works-and-what-doesn't, how and why. Of course it is important to foster unity in our diversity and to deepen commitment to the Transition. We must appeal to the heart as well as the intellect.

It is vital, however, to avoid us-vs-them rhetoric or thinking. Instead of calling for the overthrow of the CEO's, power-brokers, billionaires and other Capitalist Feudal Lords, we must think, intend, and express in terms of the overthrow of the Capitalist paradigm. Capitalism has enabled and reinforced the destructive, oppressive behavior of these people when we would have done better to recognize the compulsive, addiction-like pattern driving it and offer them help to get free of it. We have all unwittingly played a part in enabling their behavior by living life according to Capitalist principles and imperatives.

In order for the widest possible range of people to be able to hear the message and concepts, and for them to listen long enough to consider, research, and discuss them, it is absolutely essential to avoid wording and terminology that have strong negative emotional content or associations for cultural, religious, ethnic, political or other reasons. We must strive to avoid triggering conditioned-response psychological and emotional rejection mechanisms.

For example, we will do well to avoid terms such as "bourgeoisie," "proletariat," "lackey," "purity," “liberal,” “conservative,” and the like. Specific emotionally and/or culturally-charged words and phrases will vary from country to country, culture to culture, community to community. Our goal is to create an inclusive, empowering societal paradigm and vocabulary that honors and fosters the fulfillment, well-being and happiness of every member, in all of our diversity.

As we prepare to lay the foundations for this, we must avoid rhetoric or thinking that divides the Community into "Us" and "Them," the "good guys" and the "bad guys." We must find ways to express the truths and messages of the Transition using fresh, factually based, sympathetically resonant terms that do not trigger the unconscious landmines of our fellows' psyches.

The goal is not to manipulate and never to mislead, but rather to clarify, educate, motivate, empower, inform, stimulate inquiry and lively honest dialogue, demonstrate the need for change, introduce the likely modes of achieving the change, identify the kinds of changes needed and why.

The truths behind our operating principles, both in terms of identifying the underlying the dysfunctional dynamics and realities of Capitalist paradigms and of elucidating those of the Transition, are truths of human dynamics, motivations, and

conscious self-determination. The issue is the game, not the identities of the players. The players are playing the game as it is set out. If the results are harmful and unsatisfactory, then the game itself must be re-examined, redefined, changed and, yes, all of the players must adapt.

We dare not go after the players personally for playing brutally when the game demands and reinforces brutality. We need to redefine the goals and rules of the game. Indeed there will be players who will resist and object, sometimes violently. We may need to physically stand up to and contain these players. To the extent that this happens, it must be based on their behavior, not on their role in the game that is being phased out.

If a human being harms, or attempts to harm or bully, another human being, then the behavior must be compassionately but firmly contained and stopped with minimal harm to any and all. This is the same, whether it is a former CEO and his or her loyalists trying to reassert their dominance, or whether it is an overzealous pioneer of the Transition who loses touch with the principles of the new Paradigms and tries to beat down a former CEO or slumlord.

This will not only be a new set of paradigms and operating principles for human beings and their Communities. It will also be a whole new set of principles and paradigms defining the People-driven, nonviolent and unyielding transition from a dysfunctional, established, enforced paradigm to a new pattern. A Transition more than a Revolution.

Both strategically and in keeping with the peer-based orientation of post-Transition paradigms and the deliberate, by-design shift away from hierarchical social structures, it is vital that we implement these principles even before the Transition as much as possible. We must make a conscious choice to avoid establishment of institutionalized leadership of an individual, individuals or groups.

In some ways, strong leadership and hierarchy streamlines processes. Yet it also suffers from fundamental flaws, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. Central leadership focused on individuals or a cadre of individuals, institutionalizes and magnifies the limitations, biases, dysfunctions and weaknesses of the leaders and propagates it outward throughout the Community even if it also magnifies the positive traits of leaders.

We know only too well the corrupting effect of power on human beings. As time goes on, any hierarchical structure takes on a life of its own, indiscriminately enforcing the will and points of view of the leaders upon the members of the Community, be they beneficial and wise or harmful, capricious and ill-advised.

In addition, the habituation of members of a community to rely upon leaders to guide, solve, plan, envision, and fix, in the long run disempowers most members of the Community and reinforces their living and functioning far below their maximum capacity as individuals and citizens. Think of a controlling parent who does everything for their children as they pass into adolescence and young adulthood, without teaching them life skills. More often than not this leads to offspring entering the world ill-prepared as young adults.

The very concept of leaders as parent-like figures and the rest of the population as child-like, personifies the problem. Even where the leaders may be wise, compassionate, caring, and motivated to prioritize the well-being of the Community and its members, the model's flaws out-create its advantages.

Strategically speaking, having strong and identifiable leaders is a serious vulnerability in another way. Those who will inevitably try to block, thwart, suppress, or undo the Transition and the New Paradigms, could destabilize, demoralize, confuse and diffuse any Transition or Revolution by attacking the leaders and removing them, whether by assassination, imprisonment, bullying, violence or through propaganda carefully crafted to discredit the leaders in the eyes and minds of the members of the Community.

Of course assassination, violence, bullying and imprisonment of the leaders of a Movement do have the effect of elevating them to the status of martyrs, which can strengthen and galvanize resistance; but the focus then shifts from the principles and goals of the Transition to those of loyalty to and defending the leaders. This also generates a strong righteous indignation while it promotes revenge and payback emotional reactions, which undermine the core principles of our Transition.

If the assassination, harassment, or imprisonment of leaders is accompanied by swift and brutal attacks upon rank-and-file members of a movement, a predictable percentage of them will be discouraged and, out of fear, cease their Transitionary activities.

A more intelligent, sophisticated cadre of our opponents and adversaries would favor the tactic of discrediting our leaders, if we had them, in our own eyes. If we encounter convincing evidence that our leaders are planning to become dictators, are in league with harmful interests, are guilty of atrocities, betrayals, gross avarice, corruption or of betraying our goals and principles, then we will be less inclined to follow them. Thus we see that if we were to have leader figures, their capture, murder, imprisonment, forced capitulation, or orchestrated discrediting could demoralize us and put us into disarray, making us more easily re-conquered and subdued. In addition, we have already established that hierarchical social structures reinforce some of our most destructive traits while suppressing many of our most constructive ones. Leaders of any stripe can and usually do become distorted, despotic and corrupt. If such a leader has become synonymous with the Transition in people's perceptions, then their failure or discrediting could trigger widespread abandonment of the Transition itself.

Such discrediting propaganda would not come to us through the media outlets of our opponents. It would be carefully staged. There would be documents, audio and video recordings, photos, and other "evidence," skillfully faked, then seeded or planted where it would be internally discovered by people in our own ranks. Alternatively such "evidence" could be contrived so it seems to come via our own information and communication networks.

If we remain strongly peer-based, each of us assuming a cooperative and synergistic co-leadership role, and form an organic whole with no head that can be cut off, we will be virtually unstoppable.

Our opponents, on the other hand, will be vulnerable to these same tactics. We can exploit this to further weaken the power of the current neo-Feudal Lords but only by uncovering and publicizing true abuses, betrayals of public trust, hypocrisies, excesses, and corruption that can be verified as factual. We must never plant or fake such evidence.

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On the other hand, we must not hesitate to hack, infiltrate, engage in espionage, and otherwise use any effective nonviolent tactics to gain possession of such information, regardless of laws in place to defend the Feudal Lords of Capitalism from any accountability to the People. The source of their power is also their vulnerability.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

The Transition gathers such evidence openly and lawfully: through public records and freedom-of-information requests, investigative journalism, court proceedings and legislative inquiries, and through whistleblowers using the protected channels the law provides. We do not hack, spy, or mislead anyone, opponents included. A movement that breaks into systems and deceives people loses the very trust that gives its evidence weight, and becomes a mirror of what it opposes.

In rare cases, a researcher, engineer or employee may conclude that their conscience will not allow them to keep silent while something that could save lives, or that the public has a right to know, is being suppressed. History offers examples of people who chose to make such knowledge public openly, under their own name, knowing they might face legal consequences. This is a personal decision that no one should be urged to make, and the protected routes (whistleblower channels, regulators, and legal advice) should always come first. But where someone does take this step, its power lies in complete openness: saying publicly what they are releasing and why, speaking to the press, and protecting the privacy of any individuals named in the material. Everything that follows should be documented in public, including any legal action taken against them, so that people can judge for themselves who tried to keep the truth hidden, and who tried to share it. When Daniel Ellsberg released the Pentagon Papers in 1971, he surrendered publicly; in 1973 the charges against him were dismissed after the government's own misconduct in pursuing him came to light.

We must always keep very much in mind that our goal is not to avenge ourselves upon the neo-Feudal Lords, to vent our frustration and righteous indignation upon them, or to "make them pay." Our goal is to dismantle and decommission hierarchical, pyramidal socio-economic systems that reinforce and enforce destructive paradigms, that enable these abuses to occur and give these people power over the rest of us.

The fact that they will fight to thwart our efforts is the only reason why we must oppose them at all, and we will oppose them firmly, but only by nonviolent, open and democratic means. Let us never forget that the goal is the end of a dysfunctional paradigm and the establishment of a better one. Part of that is to take responsibility for the fact that we have all, unaware and in our ignorance, helped to create and perpetuate the destructive paradigms by living, working, and playing by their rules and dictates. The dynamics are similar to the family of an alcoholic who enable the disease by covering for them and buying them whiskey or wine, instead of performing an intervention to help them heal and end the danger and dysfunction.

Before, during, and after the Transition, we must, individually and as Communities, never pass up or shirk an opportunity to support and uplift one another, especially the most painfully struggling and afflicted among us. Let this be established as a fundamental core behavior that we reinforce in ourselves and in each other from the beginning and every day thereafter. We are each and all imperfect. Yet we must establish norms, attitudes, and cultural practices that favor going the extra mile for one another while not abusing those who are going the extra mile for us. Let this be our reality, and let the people of the world see this for themselves.

Under Soviet communism, the central government served to regulate and drive production and consumption by imposition. Corporate command structures work in a similar top-down way under Capitalism. In the new paradigms, the central function will be to gather and coordinate data, display it and make it available in easily understandable forms so that people and facilities around the country will adjust their operations accordingly of their own free will. The central function will be more like the conductor of an orchestra then like the CEO of a company, a commissar, or a corporate headquarters.

The new post-Transitional Paradigms will function as an organic whole, in which each person, facility, and function supports the others in a symbiotic, synergistic manner. Organization will be peer based rather than hierarchical in nature. Producers and providers will be able to access the central database to see how much of what is needed or is available and adjust their activities accordingly, updating the database as they do.

Consumers and recipients of goods and services will be able to update the database to reflect their needs. Services such as electricity and water will be metered, monitored, and automatically update the database. Goods will have passive RFID (Radio Frequency Identification chips) which will automatically update the database when taken out of Distribution Centers or returned to them. The tags record the movement of goods, never who took them (see the chapter on production and distribution). This mechanism will help to coordinate production and consumption processes in real-time, and also act as a forum for dialog, discussion, and sharing of ideas, technology, information, and culture.

Chapter 38: More on Infrastructure in Post-Transition Communities

In order for the new post-Transition paradigms to function optimally, certain basic infrastructures will need to be expanded and adapted to provide access to all members of the Community.

Establishing what exactly is needed for living is to some degree subjective and certainly variable from various perspectives, time-periods and cultures. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors needed bows, arrows, spears, nets, vessels to put water and other things in, fire, and similar items. They had no use for cars, TV's, computers, cell phones, cable, electricity, or Internet access. We, on the other hand, have no practical use for a spear, much less any idea how to use one.

The necessities also differ to some degree between city, rural, and outback living; between tropical, desert, arctic, rain forest, and temperate climates; between different stages of the human life-cycle (childhood, adolescence, adulthood, parenthood, old age, and varying states of health and/or disability); between cultures; and from individual to individual, family to family, neighborhood to neighborhood, tribe to tribe, etc.

Beyond air, water, food, shelter, and a safe place to sleep, it may be impossible to arrive at an absolute definition of what constitute the necessities of life. Certainly it is obvious that a private jet, servants, multiple real-estate properties, private clubs, and a large beach reserved for one's self are most definitely not necessities for anybody.

Given that this writing is occurring in the first quarter of the 21st Century in what could be termed a fairly typical modern “western" environment, we will use this a starting point. It is by no means an absolute. What we can say for sure is that for a community in the new Paradigms to function optimally for the happiness and well-being of each and all, certain infrastructures must be extended and made available to all members of the community.

This does not mean that anyone should be pressured to avail themselves of these goods and services. For example, a person who prefers to live in a tent instead of a house or apartment, shall be free to do so; but any and all persons, families, and other social units who desire a house or apartment to live in, shall have open access.

These necessities should logically include life, liberty, freedom, a safe place to live in reasonable comfort, healthy food, potable water, bathroom and bathing facilities, education from kindergarten through doctorate and beyond, communications media services and devices, healthcare (preventive and curative; physical, psychological, dental and other), transportation, preferred post-mortem arrangements, safety (including emergency response services of all kinds), entertainment and recreation (the arts, sports, etc.), scientific knowledge and facilities, tools, and more.

Current information technology will make information and resource sharing, collaboration and coordination possible on a scale never before imaginable. If used wisely and effectively, this electronic forum can be developed into a distributed network that will function as the central nervous system in the greater community. As the central nervous system balances, coordinates and facilitates the optimal flow of oxygen, nutrients, enzymes, hormones, waste, maintains balance, coordinates motion, processes and analyzes sensory data and synthesizes courses of action to ensure survival and thriving of the organism, so we can design and implement a distributed system that monitors and analyzes real need and consumption of goods and services, informing producers of how much is needed, becoming increasingly predictive as more data is gained and analyzed.

This same network will be a forum for sharing practical and philosophical ideas, inventions, discoveries, theories and hypotheses, observations, questions to be answered, artforms, and suggestions from all who have them to offer. Active dialog, discourse and interplay between lay people, scientists, engineers, developers and more will be facilitated. This will link and further engage what now are different sectors of society that usually do not interact much. Feedback will be given by any and all as to what is working, what is not, and how things might be improved.

This network can become a forum for lawmakers, legislators, producers, designers, planners, builders, engineers and so forth to use as a barometer and compass in guiding the ongoing evolution of the post-transition paradigms into constantly-improving, adaptive implementations. Thus post-Transition cultures will be adaptive and responsive to the real needs, desires and experiences of the people. They will be predisposed not to become rigid, dogmatic or set in stone as happens all too often as initially revolutionary, compassionately intended beginnings become institutionalized, corrupt and dehumanizing over time.

It would be a mistake, however, to be so dependent upon this technology that we would be crippled if it were to go down due to equipment failure, ion storms, natural disasters, acts of war or sabotage. It is therefore important that the distributed technology have multiple backups, along with a more low-tech system with similar functionality to be maintained and updated as a stand-in should the primary system fail for any reason.

Infrastructure software will need to be streamlined and redesigned in many ways. While inventory management, logistics, medical databases, etc. will largely remain in place in the new Paradigms, some fundamental design changes will need to be made. All banking, financial, credit-related, insurance-related, collections-related, payroll, billing, and advertising programs, for example, will be retired, with their records archived as the law requires. They will be obsolete and have no function, except in limited international trade applications. Related functionality will have to be removed from merchandising, inventory management, shipping & receiving and related programs. Marketing programs will be modified and repurposed into public service, education, and motivational channels.

We can anticipate that more trade schools and institutions of higher learning will be needed as more people will have access to them. Some can be built upon the infrastructure of current for-profit schools that will become defunct once profit motive has been eliminated. Others will have to be created.

Modifications to the energy grid and transportation infrastructure are discussed elsewhere in this writing. Essentially there will be a shift from mammoth central generating plants to distributed diversified small to mid-size facilities. A road and trail network for bikes and other human powered vehicles, footpaths, and horse and donkey paths will be constructed along with appropriately-spaced rest areas, restrooms, food stops, first-aid stations, emergency telephones, supply depots and hostels. Public transportation will be expanded and diversified, both within and between population centers and regions.

We will undertake large-scale projects to reforest, replant and otherwise reclaim and restore areas that have been ravaged by defunct industrialization, mining, logging, landfills, and the dumping and disposal of toxic waste. Much human-waste sewage will be converted into fertilizer as citizens will be encouraged to convert their bathroom facilities into self-composting designs in each unit or building.

Clinics, mobile facilities and small hospitals will be built to service areas and neighborhoods that are currently underserved or far from medical facilities.

Existing manufacturing facilities currently operated by competing corporations will be blended into unified networks, optimized to best serve the needs of the people. Malls, stores, outlets and shopping centers built under Capitalist paradigms will be repurposed into distribution centers for the same kinds of goods and services as they previously sold. Additional distribution centers will be opened in areas not convenient to existing ones.

In areas where there is too much redundancy, some former malls, stores and shopping centers will be recast to serve different purposes. For example, a former department store across the street from a larger former competing department store, might be retooled into a sports center, a theater, an inn, a school, light manufacturing, or another function.

Where infrastructure is deteriorating due to age and lack of maintenance, upgrades will be given priority. Housing projects, neighborhoods and public buildings that are currently substandard, will be upgraded through efforts of a collaboration of residents and construction professionals, with needed materials freely made available for the purpose.

As the new paradigms evolve and stabilize, new infrastructure will develop and respond to new and changing situations and needs. In the absence of the barriers placed by Capitalist paradigms, new technologies and other innovations will be able to

develop quickly into implementations that enhance the lives of all of the people, not just a few.

Tools, musical instruments, scientific equipment and the like will be made readily accessible in every neighborhood and community. There will be an increase in public parks, theaters and other performance and sports venues.

Freed from the stresses, distractions and tyranny of Capitalist consumerism and the constant pressure to acquire ransom money, the spirits and imaginations of the People may well turn once again to creative pursuits and the exploration of the unknown. It is to be hoped that this will lead once again to vigorous, aggressive, and practical space and deep-sea exploration programs, pure scientific research, and artistic expression in a true and lasting Renaissance of the modern era.

Chapter 39: How Will Life Stay the Same and How Will It Change In The New Paradigm?

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Some things in life are pretty much universal. These will be similar under any paradigm. People will always grow and eat food, build homes to live in, travel, make friends, fall in love, have children, create and enjoy art and other entertainment, have personality conflicts, have accidents and illnesses, experience successes and failures, exhibit wisdom and stupidity, die, etc. Other things are almost completely culturally defined and determined.

While the new paradigms will eliminate vast amounts of avoidable and unnecessary suffering, strife, stress and destruction, it would be a mistake to assume that life will be free from problems and difficulties.

It is natural for us to unconsciously form high, often unrealistic, expectations, when embarking on a new undertaking, whether it is a new relationship, job, location, religion, technology, or a new and improved socio-economic paradigm. We will be wise to be aware of such expectations and strive to avoid falling into the trap of thinking that the Transition will solve all human or personal problems.

Such thinking and expectations are unrealistic. They carry the danger that when the new paradigm does not match them, we may be more likely to give up rather than to persevere. Similarly, a new romantic relationship may enrich one's life immeasurably, but expecting life to be problem-free in the relationship is virtually dooming it to fail. So it is with the formation of a new kind of human society.

Every undertaking, every relationship and life itself requires perseverance, readiness to constantly learn, adapt, and do the hard work and troubleshooting needed to make it work and succeed. Even the most successful friendship or marriage has its challenges and issues to work through. It is even more so when embarking on something as complex as a new socio-economic paradigm.

Post-Transition societies will be very different from Capitalist societies in many important ways that can be anticipated and many which are impossible to foresee.

Many occupations and whole industries will disappear as they will no longer be needed. There will be no such functions as advertising, marketing, sales, billing, collections, corporate law, stock trading, real estate, insurance, management, supervision, loans, credit, banking, dealerships, retail, wholesale, evictions, landlord-tenant attorneys, assessment, employment agencies, financial aid, welfare, taxation agencies, prostitution, identity theft and theft in general, fraud, CEO's, CFO's, lobbyists, and many more.

Other occupations will remain but change in fundamental ways.

Accountants, for example, will still be needed to help track and balance the flow of goods and services; but they will need to learn how to do so without money being a factor. They will track how many tractors, tons of oranges, guitars, pairs of shoes and so forth have been manufactured, are needed, and are in storage; how many Kilowatt hours of electricity are needed in each area and how many can be produced, load balancing, also tracking person hours and barter arrangements involved in international trade agreements with Capitalist countries.

Engineers and designers will need to focus on designing and producing the best reasonably achievable products that meet the needs and desires of the people, rather than finding new ways to make short-lived products look impressive and be incompatible with other products.

Medical professionals from doctors to physician's assistants to nurses and orderlies will find themselves re-focused on serving the health and well-being of patients rather than serving the bottom line. They will be freed from having to obey the dictates of health insurance companies, hospital administrators and their ilk. Practitioners of the healing professions will at long last be free to devote themselves to the fullest health and well-being of their patients.

Former advertisers and marketers will be able to adapt their skills to education, public information, technical and other writing, and possibly performing arts.

The legal professions will change a lot in many ways. Entire specialties (such as corporate law, landlord-tenant law, the monetary aspects of civil and family law, and more) will be obsolete or fundamentally changed. Other aspects of law will change little or not at all. Murder will still be murder; assault will still be assault; drunk driving will still be drunk driving. Yet some aspects of criminal law will change. Fines and other kinds of monetary penalties will no longer apply. Alternatives will have to be devised, probably largely in the form of community service, treatment or rehabilitation where applicable, and imprisonment where necessary. Theft will have to be substantially redefined. Many behaviors that are currently defined as crimes will no longer apply. The overall number of criminals will likely decline. Some new crimes may have to be defined or redefined.

As covered in other chapters, many goods and services currently concentrated in mammoth central facilities, such as power generation, fuel and food production and more will experience a shift. They will be diversified and decentralized in favor of widely, more or less evenly distributed networks of smaller, citizen-run facilities such as single building, block and neighborhood power generation, farming, composting, fuel production (especially natural gas) and more.

National defence will be strengthened as the existing military is supplemented by a population trained in civil defence and national defence in case of invasion or siege, on the total-defence model of Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Norway. The right to bear arms is important to a free community, at least until humanity has matured beyond the need for self defense. However, citizens must be trained and drilled in their use just as they must be to drive a vehicle; and steps need to be taken to prevent firearms from finding their way into the hands of mentally unstable and criminal individuals.

The quality of goods and services will vastly improve because of the shift away from forced overproduction of throwaway goods driven by artificially overinflated demand, and towards maintenance production levels of goods and services designed to fulfill people's needs, last a long time, and be easily serviceable and upgradeable. Waste, resource depletion, pollution and the accumulation of trash will decline dramatically.

People living in the new paradigm will experience a significant reduction in the number of work hours needed to maintain and advance normal life. There may be an initial period of high production volume to replace current inferior products of Capitalism with superior products of the new paradigm. This will only last until all inhabitants have their needs met and there is a small surplus to offset breakage and such. At that point the typical work week will scale down to significantly fewer hours to sustain a higher quality of life than is possible under Capitalist paradigms. People will enjoy more free time and less stress. Their time more meaningfully spent, for other reasons as well.

No time will be spent paying bills, figuring out budgets to survive on too little, dealing with corporate bureaucracies, sorting out scams from legitimate offers, dealing with banks, cutting coupons, doing taxes, and dealing with all the stress associated with these activities. Even in little ways, time will be better spent, more efficiently and on more meaningful activities.

Examples abound in matters big and small. For example, under capitalist paradigms, stores frequently rearrange all their merchandise to force customers to spend more time in the store looking for things, because they know that statistically customers will end up buying more that way. Popular items are not placed in the most accessible locations, but rather in more inconvenient places so customers will have to walk by more merchandise and most likely buy more. This wastes a lot of customers' time and requires staff to perform meaningless long hours of drudgery for the sake of corporate profits while being paid sub-living wages. All of this waste of time and energy, this pointless oppression of spirit will end once and for all. The arrangement of items in supply depots will be determined by what is most efficient and convenient for the public and staff.

More time will be spent in activities like gardening and maintaining local infrastructure, which will tend to bring with it a greater sense of ownership, empowerment and community connectedness which will create a greater sense of well-being and lessen the isolation and alienation that are increasingly common in Capitalist societies.

Transportation technology will become more diverse in post-Transition communities. Dependence on fossil fuels will decline rapidly to a fraction of what it is now.

Diverse technologies already exist but have been effectively suppressed and marginalized by the petroleum, automotive and related industries through manipulation of government, economics, patents and propaganda. Transportation-related industries will be freed of profit motive and "market forces." Research, development and production of diversified technologies, and the infrastructure to support them, will rapidly expand and diversify. We can already envision the proliferation of electric, hybrid, multi-fuel (a technology that was already mature in the 1930's and 1940's), artificial muscle, maglev, mechano-chemical, human-powered and other new and novel types of vehicles and even increased use of horses, camels, donkeys, etc.

The design and manufacturing standards that will emerge will lead to vehicles designed with highly interchangeable parts for easy servicing and upgrading. Different types of engines, brakes and transmissions will be easily interchangeable in the same vehicle bodies. There will also be an increase in public transportation nationwide, and the proliferation of extensive bike, walking and horse trails with supporting infrastructure that will render these modes of transportation safe, practical, viable and more attractive then they are now. More comfortable, ergonomic bikes and other conveyances that under Capitalism are only affordable to few people pretty far up the economic pyramid, will be freely accessible to all who want them.

Air and water quality will steadily improve as use of fossil fuels decreases and profit motives no longer drive industries to engage in destructive practices such as fracking, toxic waste dumping, unnecessary drilling and strip-mining.

With the extinction of Capitalistic runaway production/consumption imperatives, hierarchical socio-economic structures, and constant relentless pressure to come up with money to ransom one’s existence, without living in a reality where one's peers are competitors for extremely limited resources and opportunities, the overall stress level will ease dramatically. This will lead to equally dramatic improvements in the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of individuals and families.

Of course these improvements will not prevent dysfunctional relationships from being dysfunctional, abusers from being abusive, bullies from bullying, nor make all physical, mental and emotional illnesses magically disappear. But the overall level of well-being will dramatically improve for all.

Those suffering from dire physical, emotional and mental disorders will all have access to the best healthcare available, free from the deleterious effects of financial and related stresses. Nobody will be denied or have to choose not to get treatment because of financial limitations.

People will no longer be forced by "economic necessity" to pursue occupations that are meaningless or abhorrent to them. We will therefore be free and unrestrained to find the occupations that give us the greatest work satisfaction. Thus empowered, we will be much more able to make our greatest contribution to the Community.

Regarding jobs that nobody wants to do, the Community will have to ask itself whether the job is truly necessary, or could be done differently. For example, there might be no need for street sweepers in a culture where people routinely clean the area in front of their own dwelling and workplace. If nobody wants to do garbage collection, which clearly needs to be done, then aspects of it can be automated as much as possible, and all citizens physically capable can take turns doing this job for a day or two now and then, in a way akin to jury duty. Nobody will be permanently relegated to doing a necessary job that nobody wants to do.

The level of constant sensory bombardment and overload that is prevalent in all media at this time in history will fall off dramatically. All media (TV, radio, printed media, the Internet, mailboxes both electronic and physical, streetscapes and

landscapes) will be free from commercials, ads, junk mail, spam, come-ons and other valueless wasteful multimedia pollution without which a Capitalist society cannot function.

Media will instead be filled with real authentic artistic programming and whatever public service and informational announcements may be necessary. There will be no need for the cacophony of advertising in the media and physical surroundings, pop-ups on Web browsers and embedded in everything from cell phones to operating systems to magazines to movies. There will be no more junk mail. This will help rehabilitate depleted forests as the demand for paper used in advertising will disappear. Our sensory environment will become a lot less cluttered and chaotic, which will likely even further reduce the level of stress for all inhabitants and engender a more balanced pace of life. Our activities and priorities will be driven by true necessity and desire, rather than by insatiable consumerism driven to insanely unhealthy levels by Capitalist compulsions and imperatives.

All media will become more responsive to the people who watch, listen to, or read them rather than to sponsors, corporate policies, or the caprices and attitudes of a CEO. News reporters in all media will have little choice but to focus once again on reporting what actually happens instead of what their "masters" want to see and hear, for ratings' sake.

Artists, inventors and researchers will no longer need to devote most of their time and energy to a "Day Job" to keep up with constant financial demands to pay legal "protection" money while pursuing their art "on the side" whenever they can manage to fit it in. In the new Paradigm they will be free to devote themselves to perfecting their craft and practicing it to the fullest of their passion and ability. This will likely result in a dramatic increase in the number and proportion of professional level performers among the population, and a vigorous up-tick in technical innovation.

Since the media will no longer be under pressure from sponsors, corporate whims and profitability imperatives, they will have little choice but to become responsive to the public. Because artists will no longer be stratified into stars on the one hand and "star-ving artists" on the other, we will see the emergence onto larger stages of many world-class artists who under Capitalist paradigms would languish in economic disempowerment. This will be the end of the "star" mystique and of the elevation of some artists to privileged celebrity status over others.

The media will most likely become a lot more accessible to the typical talented, dedicated artist than under Capitalist paradigms. Artists and scientists in particular, and the Community in general, will experience a cultural renaissance unlike anything seen in modern times.

Freed of the pressure to be "marketable," artists will be empowered to pursue their authentic expression. The arts and sciences in general will once again attract those pursuing their passion rather than those seeking fame and fortune.

Live venues – clubs, theaters and the like - will experience a rebirth and revitalization.

At the time of this writing, it is common for many clubs to function on a "pay to play" basis with no concern for the talent or quality of entertainment. Most venues do not even audition prospective performers. They simply say "you are responsible to bring in $xxxx. Anything you bring in over that you can keep. If you bring in less than that, you make up the difference." Artists are not allowed to bring their own videographers or live recording setups. If they wish to videotape or record their performances, they must pay large sums for the venue's crew to do it. Such practices will completely disappear. Venues will rediscover the importance of providing the best entertainment possible rather than bringing in the most money possible. The common practice in such venues of turning up the heat to make customers thirstier so they will buy more drinks will of course disappear.

Those performers who, under the old Capitalist paradigms, were stars and celebrities held above others and lionized will still continue to be appreciated. They will still be held in high regard if their fame was truly based on their excellence as entertainers; but they will no longer enjoy the status of virtual nobles, venerated above the average citizen. They will, however, have the company of many equally excellent entertainers who would never have a chance to be seen or heard under Capitalistic pyramidal economics.

Those stars and celebrities whose success was due more to marketing and packaging than to commitment and excellence, will either develop their own excellence or have to find other forms of expression, since not many will want to watch or listen to them.

Under Capitalist paradigms, the arts and sciences are dominated and largely controlled by corporations, wealthy investors, venture capitalists, producers and the rest of the parasitic financial structure. Huge amounts of money are generated. Yet those who receive the smallest portion of that wealth are the artists themselves, who often receive only about an eighth of the money they generate: a 2018 Citigroup study found that in 2017 artists captured just 12% of the revenue of a U.S. music industry worth $43 billion (Citi GPS, 2018). This is true even of many so-called stars.

Performers themselves are often expected to pay travel expenses and crew salaries out of their portion of the profits. In Capitalist countries, this attitude has gone so far that the arts are usually referred to as businesses or industries, not as arts at all: The Music Business or Industry, the Movie Business or Industry, etc. This reflects attitudes and perceptions that have become common and widely accepted without challenge or question.

Any idealistic artists who question or challenge this paradigm are looked down upon as unrealistic and not to be taken seriously, no matter how talented they may be. Any artist who declines direction given for profitability's sake is shut out. Art and entertainment, which are the essence of creativity and spontaneous human expression, have been reduced to products to be mass-produced like garbage disposals and paper clips.

Scientific research is forced to justify itself in terms of expected marketable outcomes and projected profitability. All too often the scientists and/or engineers involved in new discoveries and inventions suffer the same treatment as artists and more. Employment agreements dictate that all innovations developed by the scientist/engineer are the intellectual property of the employer.

Pure research is usually curtailed or cut in favor of research likely to generate marketable products. At this time in history, even space is being treated as something to exploit for profit, a thrill-seeking or exclusive kind of luxury tourism accessible to only those at the very top of the pyramid. This is an archetypal example of how Capitalism favors the ultra-wealthy at the expense of all others.

Art is the authentic expression of the human heart and psyche. It is fundamental to who and what we are as human beings. Art entails a deep primal connection between the artist and other artists, between artists and the audience, and among members of the audience which is the Community. It is a healing, uniting, liberating force originating deep in the human essence. Science is the sincere quest for knowledge and understanding of ourselves and of the universe that we live in. That quest generates technologies and products along the way that enhance and improve the quality of human life. For too long art, science and for that matter human beings themselves, have been subordinated, chained to the service of Capitalist profit motive and the modern ruling neo-Feudal elite.

Along with the emerging prevalence of community, block, neighborhood and workplace-based activities such as community gardens and energy generation, locally-based cycles of production and consumption, and shortening of commutes, we will experience an increase in participatory cultural and social activities such as community and street theater, amateur and professional level sports, and resource sharing. We will enjoy a shift from the current fragmented lifestyle with no real connection between home, work, shopping or entertainment venues, gymnasia, etc. to an integrated lifestyle with a high degree of overlap, connection and integration among one's home, workplace, provisioning venues, entertainment, etc.

We can anticipate that population will decentralize to some degree, reducing the crowding and overstretching of resources in cities and other population centers. Once most unoccupied land is open to settlement under democratically enacted land law, many living in overcrowded city centers will form communities on the outskirts, near enough to the population center to have access to large-scale facilities, resources and events but far enough away to experience less overcrowding and decaying conditions. People currently living in "the projects" and other caustic, inhospitable urban environments will no longer be trapped there by the chains of Capitalist economic constraints.

Under the new land and housing laws, with due process for any present owner, nothing will prevent a person or family from finding an abandoned house, building, or spot of uninhabited land to homestead. Building materials, tools and equipment will be readily available to all, as will the services of skilled builders, carpenters, electricians, architects, etc.

Of course we will need strict laws to prevent people from bullying their way into a home where someone else is already living, and to settle conflicting claims on a building or parcel of land. Some of those who have lived in "projects" and slums will want "the good life" formerly available only to the affluent.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

They will be free to occupy abandoned and/or otherwise unoccupied homes (of which there are millions), or to build their own in places where no one is living. But they will not be free to eject people out of homes that are already inhabited. Former landlords will not have the ability or authority to evict or harass former tenants.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Those who feel most at home in the "projects" where they were born and raised will of course be free to do so. This prospect will change radically in the new Paradigms, since the economic pressures that made these places fertile ground for violent and predatory lifestyles and businesses (human trafficking, drug and weapons trades, protection rackets, etc.) will be absent. We can expect such patterns to gradually dissipate over time in the total absence of reinforcement. Some, however, will not readily give up what is familiar to them; so some vigilance will be necessary to curb violence and coercive patterns. Freed of slumlords and bureaucratic barriers, residents will also have all that they need to repair and upgrade former “projects” to make them places to thrive.

Education will still include math, history, language skills, physical education and other familiar subjects, but the overall atmosphere will change considerably. The abundance or insufficiency of funding will no longer determine the quality of education given to the inhabitants of neighborhoods and communities. Gone will be the omnipresent specter of needing to prepare and strategize, at an ever earlier age, ways to find or create an economic niche to survive and attempt to escape economic slavery. The emphasis in education will be mentoring and the imparting of knowledge, skills, wisdom, and understanding to each generation with an eye to empowering them to fulfill their interests, aspirations, dreams and goals and in the process make their best contribution to the Community in a dynamic of symbiosis with mutual support.

At every level, from kindergarten through doctorate and post-doctorate level, education will empower rather than constrain, and breed free exploration from a strong foundation of knowledge and understanding.

Some people will still aspire to a career or endeavor for which they are not well suited. An aspiring physician, for example, who lacks the discipline or kind of mind necessary to gain the requisite knowledge and skills or who gets violently ill at the sight of blood, an aspiring gymnast with uncontrollable vertigo, an aspiring therapist who discovers that they lack the patience to hear people's struggles for hours on end, would all discover that they are in the wrong field. Any person will be completely free and unimpeded if they decide to change direction. People will no longer enter a profession "for the money," prestige or privilege. No longer will people possessing the necessary abilities and attitudes to pursue a given area of study be denied the chance due to financial insufficiency.

Graduates will enter the work world without the burden and stress of student loans to repay. The concept of debt will disappear entirely. One cannot draw water that isn’t there, as one can do with the concept of currency. One's senior year of high school or college will not be fraught with the stress of looking for a job in an environment where one's lack of experience is a handicap while rent, utilities, food and more still have to be paid for, with loans that must paid back whether one has a job that affords it or not.

Class-work will still be class-work. There will probably still be tests, projects, labs, lectures and long nights of study. There may be the competition among those striving to be the best in their field. But these things will not carry the weight of

impacting one's quality of life or survival.

Expectations on educators will change dramatically. Emphasis will shift from training for the job market to training for a combination of student interest and real needs in the Community. Freed of the demands of having to constantly concern themselves with financial survival, both educators and students will be able to devote their energy, time and attention to the educational process, and certainly be more productive than is possible for any but the wealthy under capitalist paradigms.

At the college and post-graduate level, we can expect to see an increase of innovation, ground-breaking research and creativity. At the primary and secondary level, education will no longer be at the mercy of funding, so the quality of education will vastly improve. No longer will arts, sports and science programs be dropped because there isn't enough money to sustain them. Private colleges that primarily exist for profit will disappear or else redefine their mission.

Quality and availability of food will also be beneficially affected in the post-Transition community. Under Capitalism, the most affordable foods tend to be less healthy. Healthier foods are almost always significantly more expensive. This fact is reflected in statistics showing that poorer sectors of the population are more prone to many diseases and conditions arising out of poor nutrition than more affluent sectors (Darmon and Drewnowski, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2008).

Proponents of capitalism have often cited these same statistics in an attempt to promote a point of view that the poor are less healthy because they choose to eat unhealthy foods and that their poverty is the result of their own bad choices to be lazy, unproductive and so forth. This is the same kind of logic that slave-owners used to justify owning other human beings and that medieval feudal lords used to justify their dictatorship.

When one is working full time or more for sub, barely, or barely over living income, paying $25/lb for meat or fish is not an option when there is cheap hamburger available for $2.50/lb; a $1.99 liter of reconstituted orange juice is an option while a $6.00 liter of fresh squeezed organic pesticide free orange juice is not. In addition, as covered elsewhere, the health and organic food industries have discovered the same capitalist principle that medical, dental and legal practitioners have exploited: when people know or believe that their health or life is at stake, they are willing to go to great lengths to get what they believe that they need.

According to classic capitalist "Supply and Demand" logic and imperatives, producers can keep supplies limited in order to charge a much higher price. This is at the heart of all capitalist paradigms.

Capitalism also generates a lot of wasted food. Grocery stores and restaurants often throw away perfectly good food because it has blemishes or is otherwise not deemed presentable for sale, or because packaging came open, or because it was prepared but unsold at closing time or ordered but not picked up, among other reasons. If employees, whose wages in the food industry are among the lowest in the economy and who are often treated poorly, take the unused food home or give it to others, many risk being fired. If members if the public try to take it, even from dumpsters, they are chased away or even taken away by police. Under capitalism it is more acceptable to throw good food away, even when people are struggling to survive, than for someone to eat it without paying for it.

In the post-Transition Community, this will change completely for many reasons. Of course food will be available, open to everyone at no cost. There will be no reason to throw good food away. More food will be grown in the home community where it will be eaten, so food will be fresher, with less loss due to damage from being shipped hundreds or thousands of miles.

Overall quality will improve. Even in the case of imported or prepared/processed foods, the emphasis will be on producing the best products possible for all, rather than a range of quality from substandard to luxurious with money being the determining factor. In this way, food production will enjoy the same kind of improved quality and availability, as will be the norm across all goods and services.

A lot of laws that restrict and discourage home food production, usually in the guise of health codes and regulations, will be stricken from the books or modified, since the real underlying reason behind most such laws is actually economic; vegetable gardens, chicken coops, bass ponds, goats and other livestock tend to bring property values down in an urban or suburban

setting. In addition, huge corporate factory farms of all kinds would lose major profits if it became common and accepted for people and neighborhoods to grow a large portion of their own food. This will change forever with the end of capitalist paradigms. People will be free, unrestricted and in fact encouraged to grow and raise food, engage in energy production in environmentally sound ways, stage cultural events, invent transportation devices, and more.

While not everybody will be inclined to garden or tinker with energy systems, those who are will likely be happy to share their expertise and skill with those who aren't. We can expect the emergence of a much greater level of community involvement and connection among neighbors, workmates, friends and family members. This will most definitely not be forced upon people but will come about because it will naturally develop and result in a greater quality of life for the participants.

Aging is an inevitable part of an individual's life and of every human community. Some more traditional cultures have venerated and cared for their elder members, valuing the wisdom that can only come from longer life experience. In the currently dominant capitalist cultures, however, the aged have come to be widely perceived as a burden and an inconvenience. Consequently these cultures are especially inhospitable places in which to grow old.

In a culture where a person's rights, freedom, quality of life and the level of respect afforded them is mostly determined by their place in the economic pyramid, the only elderly members of the community who can afford to buy the right to a peaceful life as respected members of the community are those at or near the top. The vast majority of the aged, increasingly unable work for money and lacking significant savings because of a lifetime of hard work for inadequate income, are mostly relegated to the barest minimal existence and not included in the life of the community.

Of course each family responds differently to their senior members. Many families who can, will do their best to care for their elderly loved ones, despite the financial stresses. Some do the best they can but lack the resources to give them anything more than moral support. Some are estranged from their elder family members or don't care. Some senior citizens have no family to care for them when they cannot care for themselves. The isolation and alienation common in capitalist societies is especially harsh on the elderly. Even among families who can and do care for their elders, the stresses are often devastating to all family members and to the family as a whole.

Most capitalist societies are disproportionately oriented towards youth, especially so since younger members of the society are at the beginning of their wage earning years. There is a lot more profit to be made off of them, especially young families with children, than off of the community's older members.

Each family is essentially an island, alone and isolated in their efforts to care for their older and infirm members. When their families cannot care for them, the elderly all too often end up in for-profit facilities where they are cared for by under-trained, underpaid, and overworked caregivers. Most such facilities charge the highest prices the market will bear while spending the least possible on both employees and residents in order to keep profits as high as possible. When private-equity firms bought U.S. nursing homes, for example, patient deaths during the stay and the following 90 days ran about 10% higher, while frontline caregiver hours fell (Gupta et al., NBER, 2021). Naturally, this leads to poor morale among caregivers who are doing physically and emotionally grueling work for minimal pay, often with resentment and a cynical attitude. The elderly who need such care are easily neglected and abused because they are often physically and mentally depleted, and easily dismissed as demented. Almost universally, the quality of care and life experienced by our older citizens is determined by their financial resources, their position on the economic pyramid.

In the post-Transition community, this will change dramatically for a number of reasons. Money or the lack of it will no longer determine the quality of care and support that one receives. There will be one high standard of care for all elderly people who desire or require it: the best care humanly possible. If there are not enough facilities and trained people to accommodate the number of elderly citizens, then more will be built and more caregivers will be trained to care for them. The only limitations will be objective physical ones, not artificially-imposed economic ones.

In the new paradigm, keep in mind that the criteria for pursuing courses of action and establishing policies will be different from those used under capitalist paradigms. The well-being and empowerment of human beings and of the community will be at the top of the prioritizing process.

One might ask whether or not there will be enough people wishing to devote themselves wholly or partially to care for the elderly. After all, it is a demanding task physically, emotionally, mentally and in other ways. Not everybody has the temperament and interest for this important task. But we must also keep in mind that under capitalism, these jobs typically pay sub-living wages. The people doing them are most often treated with a profound lack of respect. This greatly decreases the motivation of many who might be drawn to this field.

Freed from the constant pressure of paying for their very existence, many who are natural caregivers who could literally not afford to go into this kind of work under capitalism will likely gravitate there according to their natural inclinations. Those who entered that field because they just needed a job, any job, but their heart was not in it, who resented it, will most likely leave to pursue whatever their passions or interests may be. Thus, the quality of care for the typical senior citizen needing help, will likely improve markedly.

Elderly people who are capable of looking after themselves but who under capitalism were forced by "economic necessity" to move to "senior housing," will be able to find or build their own places - something they could have never afforded or been permitted to do without massive amounts of money under the old outmoded capitalist paradigms.

Those families who were willing to take care of their elderly or infirm members but were unable to do so under capitalism, will be able to do so and most certainly will. Adding on an extra room or even a "mother-in-law apartment" nearby will no longer be impractical due to the expense. Having trained helpers come in will also no longer be out of financial reach. Thus, the number of elderly people who will need outside, non-familial care will be a lot smaller than it is under capitalism. In addition, the socio-cultural shift from isolated nuclear family units towards more extended family communities will naturally reduce the isolation, neglect and alienation of our older citizens.

With the new sets of reinforcers in the new paradigm, there will be motivation to assure that senior community members who have none to care for them, are cared for with dignity and compassion. Any of us could one day find ourselves in that situation. The greater degree of community interpersonal connectedness in the new paradigm will also contribute to all sectors of the community being included in its interactions and processes. No one will be coerced; but the psychological reinforcers that will be in place will heighten our natural instincts as a social species to care for one another and work together for mutual and shared benefit.

The new paradigms will not turn back the biological clock, restore declining mental faculties or failing body systems, or inspire estranged family members to magically reconnect. They will, however, remove overriding economic forces that under capitalism isolate individuals and nuclear family units within the extended family and in the greater Community, disempowering them from being able to support one another. We can expect that the elderly members of our community will enjoy a much more fulfilling life with much less stress and far fewer living tragedies. Dignity will be progressively restored to all members of the community. The elderly will no longer be cast aside as economic burdens to society and/or their families.

The treatment of youth will also undergo major changes. They will no longer be targeted by relentless marketing and advertising campaigns designed to program them into being compulsive consumers driven by an unending drive to have the latest gadgets, fashions and more. In the absence of such conditioning, young people will be more likely to develop spontaneously and authentically as unique, creative, critically thinking, empowered individuals.

The decline of pre-packaged diversions, activities, and products will be plant the seeds for a resurgence of creative, spontaneous play, activities, and interests.

Sadly, many educators have noted that the current generation of students appear to have short attention spans and exhibit few aspirations or dreams beyond a desire to have the latest consumer goods and lots of money. There is little creativity, passion about anything or curiosity about life. Relationships appear more superficial than in earlier generations: by 2017, American teenagers spent far less time with friends in person than teenagers of earlier decades, and reported sharply more loneliness (Twenge, Spitzberg & Campbell, 2019). This is not an indictment of a generation, but indication of a tragedy. Much of this can be attributed to the shift towards digital, rather than face-to-face, interaction. Yet there is a bigger dynamic in play.

Much of this is likely due to the relentless, constant sensory bombardment of advertising propaganda in which they are immersed through their formative years, that very effectively programs and predisposes them to be compulsive consumers with insatiable material appetites while failing to nurture or reinforce the development of critical thinking, creativity, or human connection. Acquiring "stuff" is reinforced; critical thinking is not. Neither is creativity reinforced, except where it involves conjuring up ways to make money and get "stuff."

With the best loving intentions, most parents try to the best of their ability to give their children what they want. This is a natural and healthy instinct. Unfortunately in this context it intensifies the conditioning of young people to be consumers above almost all else. Here we see the manipulative skill that advertisers and marketers have developed over generations. They turn and subsume natural, healthy instincts into vulnerabilities to be exploited to feed the by-design insatiable profit-growth appetite of large Corporations that manufacture products and services targeting youth and their parents.

The "collateral damage" to the development of young people's minds and psyches is actually an asset for profitability, from manufacturers' point of view. Both Hitler and the advertisers of the 1960's and 1970's would have killed to have the sophistication and skill with which twenty-first century advertisers deliver their propaganda into the eyes, hands, ears, and brains of every man, woman, and child, all the more effectively with the aid of diverse advanced technologies.

Before the advent of cell phones and the Internet, advertising was primarily via TV, radio, print and billboards. One was not constantly inundated with it. With the Internet and even more with cell phones, both being tremendous advancements with enormous positive potential, we are all more or less constantly immersed in advertisements, wherever we go, whatever we do.

Another facet of being a young person in a capitalist culture is the looming, lurking specter of the wolves waiting to beat a path to your door when you reach adulthood, sometimes before. In the United States, for example, in the second decade of the twenty-first Century, children became aware that they must begin planning their economic survival strategy by the time they reach middle school. Parents are faced with trying to assist their children to get the best preparation possible. Sadly, they are often unable to do so because of the progressive decline in public education. This is in large part due to the withdrawal of funding in favor of charter and other kinds of private schools, which have been shown to fall short academically while remaining out of reach of most (Lubienski and Lubienski, University of Chicago Press, 2013; Dyer, Innovation Ohio, 2013).

The quality of education that children receive is mostly determined by their place on the economic pyramid. As the pyramid grows ever more starkly stratified, everybody knows that more and more parents will be unable to assist their children economically much past legal adulthood. In the aggressive laissez-faire capitalist culture of the United States and other countries operating under capitalism, a child must begin early on developing their economic strategy for adulthood. They do so knowing that some 44% of U.S. workers, 53 million people, earn low hourly wages (Brookings, 2019), and that the few jobs that pay enough to live with quality of life are hard to come by. Competition is fierce, because there just aren't that many such jobs. The pyramid is much narrower that far up.

Thus grade-school children must already begin thinking of what field to try to go into that has a chance of paying well, then plot a course through school that will give them the best chance of being able to compete for such jobs, knowing that most will not attain them. The pressure is enormous and debilitating, crushing the spirit out of many young people at an early age.

A young person growing up in a capitalist country knows that once they become a legal adult, they will immediately have to start coming up with enough money to pay to be allowed to eat, get from place to place, get medical care, occupy space, dress themselves, etc. Yet young people, even college graduates, face a different set of barriers than senior citizens. Their lack of experience is used against them. You have to have experience to get the job, but having a job in the field is the only way to get experience. That becomes an excuse to justify paying sub-living wages. A job-seeker must convince a cynical hiring manager to hire them rather than dozens or hundreds of other applicants in an environment where employees are "a dime a dozen," a disposable, easily replaceable commodity of little value, readily discarded.

To some youth in the most economically disempowered neighborhoods, drug dealing, prostitution, stealing, fraud and other criminal and gang-centered careers appear to be worth considering when the alternatives are retail, food service, and

hospitality jobs that pay minimum wage with poor treatment and no healthcare or other benefits.

In reality, people in organized crime and gangs view their activities as "just business." When one looks closely, one is hard-put to determine how exactly gang drug trade, gun running, extortion rackets and robbery differ from the legal analogs of these same activities. Both are profit-motivated in response to the reinforcers present in the socio-economic environment. Both will in one way or another attack, eliminate, and/or intimidate any who do not "play ball" by their rules. For a teen approaching adulthood in a capitalist society, the prospects are often bleak. Immediate gratification of conditioned consumeristic urges is the most immediate release. In this manner the humanity of a generation is eroded and neutralized.

In the new paradigm, youth will not be immersed in a sea of advertising that conditions them to crave the latest consumer goods. Youth will likewise be free from the crushing pressure to plan an economic survival strategy from an unnaturally early age. They will be free, empowered and supported to do what is natural at their age: to experience and explore their emergence as conscious, thinking, feeling, curious beings discovering who they are, awakening to their talents and interests, forming dreams and pursuing them. Young people from childhood to emerging adulthood will be unfettered and able to do just that.

There will be no "economic realities" or "economic necessities" to discourage or prevent them from pursuing their dreams, developing their talents, forming meaningful relationships among peers and older generations alike. Nor will they be deprived of useful and/or desired goods and services. On the contrary, they will have open access to anything that draws their interest.

If a young (or any other) person wants to learn to play saxophone, they will be able pick one out at the nearest musical distribution center, find a teacher and start learning. They will not be told regretfully by parents that they can't afford it now but maybe in a few years, while the public school they attend has no music program due to budget cuts. If a student wants to play a sport, they will be able to try out for the team of their choice and not worry about cost of uniforms, transportation, team membership fees etc. If a teenager is curious about astronomy, they will be able to obtain or access a telescope with no financial inhibitions.

In the absence of artificially-conditioned consumeristic reflexes and cravings, young people will be able to hear their own inner "voices," interests, passions and pursue them, once the pounding all-pervasive voices and images of advertising are silent.

We can expect that the life of a young person will typically be one of discovery and optimism, within the limitations of the human condition and the challenges of puberty.

The destructive kind of competition among youthful peers that comes with capitalistic ranking of people by economic status will gradually fade into the memories of a bygone dark age. The inevitable healthy kinds of competition that seem to be part and parcel of youth - the drive to excel at a sport, an activity, a skill, etc. - will take its place. Freed of financial stress and hierarchical command structures fraught with entrenched and institutionalized abusive patterns, parents will enjoy a dramatic reduction in stress, leaving them with more emotional energy to spend sharing with their children and spouses.

As covered elsewhere, work will demand dramatically less of people's time and energy, leaving people much more free to spend meaningful time together as families and communities. Children and young people will grow up and live in a world where they are valued members of an interconnected family and community that will support and encourage their happiness, safety, and well-being.

Growing up in post-Transition communities will be a much more fulfilling experience than under capitalist societies. Young people will tend to reach adulthood much more empowered, developed and able to make a meaningful contribution to their communities while authentically fulfilling their true nature than is generally possible under any form of capitalism.

Of course, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it would be a mistake to assume that all problems of youth or old age will magically disappear in the new paradigms.

Puberty is a challenge for teens and parents alike in any culture or paradigm. There will always be frustrations, some degree of peer pressure, the joy and pain of teenage crushes requited and unrequited, some degree of generational gap (especially between the first generations born in the new paradigm and their parents' generation), tension between the need for boundaries and the need for freedom to explore, better and worse parents, fewer but still probably some abusive family situations, grudges, teenage acne and so on.

Aging will still be subject to the physical processes built into our biological makeup: varying degrees of hearing and vision loss, slowing down and wearing out of bodily systems, the loss of lifelong friends and family members as one ages and so forth.

But young and old alike, and those in between, will not be burdened unnecessarily by artificially imposed stresses that exacerbate the challenges of human existence while degrading health, happiness, quality of life, motivation, curiosity, and the quality of relationships of all kinds. We could say that, while youth and old age will not become free of ups, downs, challenges and difficulties, they will no longer be stages set for slow tragedies to unfold upon. We will begin to meaningfully explore the positive end of the spectrum of potential human experience.

Generational interactions will most likely revitalize in the post-Transition community. Under capitalist paradigms, the constant unrelenting pressures and demands of individual and nuclear family survival have caused the fragmentation of the extended family, community, and society. Once these disruptive forces have been removed, we can expect to see a restoration of cohesiveness and healthy interconnectedness, including interactions among different generations.

Perspectives, fashions, issues, and perceptions naturally tend to change from generation to generation simply due to different shared realities and experiences. Historically in the Western world, there was a vast difference between the experiences of people reaching adulthood in each of the decades of the 20'th Century. Those who reached adulthood in the 1900's experienced a relatively stable world with changes in technology slowly generating a sense of optimism and expectation. Those reaching adulthood in the 19-teens were impacted in various ways by WWI. The generation growing up during the "roaring '20's" had a distinctly different experience, an era of contrast between footloose and fancy-free upper classes with grinding poverty elsewhere. The children of the Great Depression and WWII had very different experiences molding their perceptions. Those coming of age in the 1950's, 60's and '70's each had distinct experiences and issues impacting their perceptions and views. Yet through most of the 20th Century, with the exception of the Depression, each generation experienced an improved quality of life relative to previous generations.

This is natural. There is inevitably some stress caused by this dynamic. By the second decade of the 21st century, however, the level of alienation and isolation has reached unprecedented proportions. Children growing up at the time of this writing are aware that they will have to work harder than their parents for a diminished quality of life. Only about half of Americans born in the 1980s earn more than their parents did at the same age, against about 90% of those born in 1940 (Chetty et al., *Science*, 2017). They grow up knowing that for the most part they are on their own.

There will be a dramatic difference between the life experiences of three generations specifically: the last generation growing up under the capitalist paradigm, those coming of age at the time of the Transition, and those growing up after the Transition.

All individuals and sectors of the community will be free from the constant pressure to continually come up with money in a system designed to prevent them from doing so. The default number of weekly work hours will decrease dramatically. There will be a much higher degree of community involvement and mutual support among people. Because of these new realities, the level of alienation and isolation will drop drastically. The level of connectedness and involvement for all individuals and sectors will increase proportionately along with the quality of every aspect of life.

Rather than being potential competitors for, or obstacles to, artificially scarcified resources and opportunities, one's fellow citizens will be potential friends, partners and support team members. In such an environment, our natural instincts to form communities and work together for shared and mutual benefit and enjoyment will reassert themselves, increasingly so as new generations are born in the new paradigm. Those who grew up in the old capitalistic paradigms will learn, adapt to and thrive in the conditions and reinforcers of the new Paradigm. Subsequent generations will redefine what it means to thrive.

We can expect, therefore, that generations will be less disconnected from each other. All will benefit from the interaction and dialog among young, old and those in between. The quality of life for all generations will improve dramatically. The community will benefit from the ongoing synthesis forged out of this dialog and interaction among different perspectives, experiences, points of view, generations, ethnicities and so forth.

There will most likely always be some degree of dynamic tension between generations; but this can be a productive dialog between the wisdom acquired through longer life experience and the questing, questioning, and challenging of fresh youthful perspectives. When all participants respect and listen to each other, then that dialog leads to greater wisdom and innovation than any one generation could ever achieve alone.

Similarly, ethnic and racial tensions will likely lessen and weaken over time.

Economics has long been used as a tool for to seed and enforce arbitrary stratifications in any feudal and capitalistic society. The caste society of India (in which members of lower castes are denied access to well-paying jobs), racial discrimination in the United States and previously in South Africa (where people of color were and still are discriminated against in hiring, housing, and services to varying degrees), and the treatment of Jews in Czarist Russia and Poland (where Jews were forbidden to own land or engage in a variety of professions) are examples. Members of targeted groups are denied employment, rentals, housing, service in restaurants and other businesses, simply on the basis of their belonging to these groups.

In a society where people are forced to constantly come up with money to ransom their existence, denying access to ways of making money is an effective way to deny targeted groups the ability to survive or thrive. Where structured and enforced scarcity of vital resources, respect, and freedom are epidemic, mutual resentment between groups and among individuals is almost inevitable. Native born and immigrant, different religions, different races, different age groups, and other mutually-identifiable groups tend to blame and resent one another for the ongoing insufficiency.

This division serves the Feudal Lords at the top of the economic pyramid whether or not anyone plans it, and some of them actively encourage and exploit it to keep the populace divided against one another and prevent united, concerted action to disrupt and deconstruct the economic pyramid.

When economics are no longer a factor and money no longer a necessity, no one will be in a position to deny another the ability to occupy space, eat, move about, access resources, survive, exist, or thrive. Nobody will be in a position to hold another's life hostage. No paradigm can eradicate all ethnic, racial, religious or other hatreds and stereotypes, just as no paradigm can guarantee that conflicting personalities will get along harmoniously. We will see, however, that where personalities do conflict, none will be the other's boss, landlord or superior in a chain of command in a position to abuse that position to the other's detriment. No racial, ethnic, religious or other group has authority or power to grant or deny another's access to resources.

Such hatreds and prejudices will not have economics or socio-economic hierarchies to abuse in order to enforce their attitudes upon those they look down upon and seek to exclude. If you refuse to work with me because you don't like me or my race, you will speak only for yourself. You will not be able to prevent me from finding someone else who will work with me. You will not have the power to prevent me from living someplace or working, nor will I have that power with respect to you. If one of us tries to physically block or intimidate the other, that will be by definition a crime or misdemeanor and the perpetrator will be treated accordingly.

Science and technology will also undergo major changes in priorities, emphasis and directions of innovation. Under capitalist paradigms, as mentioned elsewhere in this work, science and technological innovation are primarily driven and dictated by profitability. Pure scientific research is almost always forced to yield or orient itself to results that will make large companies a lot of money. Under capitalism, technologies are routinely suppressed or simply go un-funded because they are not sufficiently profitable.

The dismantled public transportation system in Los Angeles, California, in the mid-twentieth century, mentioned earlier in this writing, is a sad example. That coordinated undermining resulted in devastating degradation in the quality of life for all

future generations in that metropolis, causing countless wasted hours of commuting time in some of the worst traffic congestion in the world. No one has calculated the number of lost and devastated lives due to traffic accidents in the extreme congestion of that city, as a result of the dismantling of what was developing into a first-rate public transportation system.

Similarly, though a wide variety of energy technologies are mature and viable including solar, wind, geothermal, and others, the petroleum industry has effectively hog-tied government to prevent these technologies from being developed and mainstreamed because they would massively reduce their profits. Devastatingly destructive practices such as fracking, ever-expanding drilling everywhere possible with attendant pipelines and other infrastructures, continued use of coal as a fuel, and other destructive practices continue to proliferate worldwide as China entered the ranks of industrialized nations in the early 2010s in a choking cloud of smog so massive that its edge reached the west coast of the United States (China has since cut its fine-particle pollution by about 41% (EPIC, University of Chicago)). In the U.S., fracking, coal and drilling operations degrade ever-expanding regions of land and sea. Spills and leaks cause epic devastation on land and at sea, and yet the behaviors continue unchanged. Damage from such disasters is almost always expressed in dollars, not in its impact on the environment and human beings.

Capitalism is a blind mechanism that devours, exploits, flattens and consumes all before it in order to generate profits for mega-Corporations run, all too often, by people caught in a compulsion to accumulate power and money, who have been enabled by billions of people worldwide living life according to the game rules dictated by them. Technology and scientific inquiry, like the arts, are forcibly enslaved to this blind compulsion.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Once capitalism has been dismantled, and the aforementioned addicts divested of their drug of choice and ushered into compassionate treatment, the new paradigm will radically alter the orientation and reinforcers for scientific research and technological development.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Freed of the choking restrictions and compulsions of profit motive, scientific research and technological development will be free to evolve naturally in service of knowledge and the well-being of human beings and the world we call home.

By its very nature, science is a quest for knowledge and understanding. The most significant scientific discoveries have always come when science was free to develop spontaneously. Examples include Einstein's Relativity, Van Leeuwenhoek's discovery of microbes with microscopes he built himself, the development of acupuncture and herbal medicine, Mendel's and Darwin's genetic experiments and observations, the invention of the first airplanes and more.

Pure research yields knowledge, which almost always leads to technological innovation. But it cannot be predicted, channeled, and harnessed the way capitalist paradigms demand. Discovering the true age of the Universe, the forces that govern it, and its likely future trillions of years from now may not immediately translate into marketable technology; but it will likely eventually spawn useful or entertaining innovations to enhance and enrich everyday life. Beyond the tangible, such knowledge inspires people, engenders the evolution of cultural and artistic creativity as well as social attitudes.

When Europe believed that the earth sat motionless at the centre of a small universe, with the sun circling it, the culture was stilted and bleak. Greater understanding of the true proportions, age, and magnificence of the Universe has been accompanied by expanded and more vibrant cultural attitudes.

It is said that being in space has a positive life-changing effect on astronauts and cosmonauts. This cannot be quantified into projected profits. Even if it could, to proceed along those lines would be a crime against humanity. The expansion of knowledge for the sake of greater understanding will inevitably lead also to practical applications for improving quality of life. Curiosity and the desire for better quality of life will naturally drive innovation. Pride of discovery and workmanship will be further stimulants.

Additionally, when human well-being and environmental sustainability are prime considerations, very different decisions will be made as to which technologies to prioritize and which not. A technology which generates electricity at the expense of destroying natural beauty will yield to a competing technology which does not. A technology which pollutes will never be pursued when there are alternatives which are non-polluting. A technology whose manufacture is hazardous or otherwise damaging to human beings or animals will be set aside in favor of one which is not.

Capitalist apologists would say that removing capitalist "Market Forces" would lead to scientific and technological stagnation. The opposite is actually the case. Like any system or organism, Capitalist paradigms, and the compulsive drive for money and power that they produce and enable, will always fight to perpetuate themselves.

Profit steers research toward what sells. Basic science, neglected diseases and long-term public goods are reliably under-funded wherever profit decides.

A current example in the United States is the systematic suppression of all discussion or consideration of climate change by a regime deeply driven by, and tied to, the profit-motive of global petroleum and other energy industries to the point of withdrawing the United States from the Paris Climate Accords. This withdrawal was done under the cover of propaganda claiming that taking climate change seriously and acting upon it would eliminate jobs and thus be bad for the U.S. economy. In reality, however, the scientific evidence is incontrovertible that climate change is a real and dangerous phenomenon caused by human activity on a global scale. The new industries involving development and production of alternative technologies would actually create multiples of the number of jobs that would be lost in petroleum and related industries. This is a matter that affects the survival of the species and indeed of life on earth, and yet the very discussion of it is suppressed in the service of immediate profits for the Feudal Lords of Capitalism. This follows the familiar pattern of addiction, in which people caught in it will put their own and others' lives in peril in order to feed it. It is a condition that calls for understanding and help, not enablement, as we will see.

This has been frequently alluded to in this writing and it is important to understand Capitalist psycho-social dynamics and the actors involved, in this perspective. This behavior can seem irrational, but it is best understood in the context of the dynamics of addiction. In animal studies, rats with electrodes implanted in their brains to stimulate their pleasure centers will compulsively press a lever activating the pleasure center, even to the point of starving to death. In humans, the spread of the drug Krokodil in Russia in the early 2010s personifies this same principle as well (Haskin, Kim and Aguh, JAAD Case Reports, 2016). People caught in that addiction continue to inject the extremely addictive opiate even as it rots the flesh off of their bones and shortens their life expectancy to one or two years. In that context we can see clearly how the drive of some of those at the top of the pyramid, among the ultra-wealthy billionaires of the new Feudal aristocracy, has the hallmarks of a behavioural addiction, like gambling, left unrecognized and unaddressed, whose object is the wealth, privilege, opulence and power over others which their place on the economic pyramid confers on them in Capitalist societies. This is not true of every wealthy person, and it is not a verdict on anyone's worth; like anyone caught in a compulsion, they deserve understanding and the chance to get free of it (see Chapter 19).

Even the spirit of competition, freed from being shackled to "market share," becomes a stimulus for innovation as researchers and developers vie to be the first to accomplish a daunting or impossible-seeming feat, rather than to grab the greatest "market share" and profits. Whereas under capitalism, scientists, developers and engineers are frequently forbidden to collaborate and share findings due to corporate "intellectual property" laws, in the new paradigms there will be unrestricted collaboration. In short, we can envision that, freed of the limitations and constraints imposed arbitrarily under capitalism, scientific research and technological development will experience a "stimulus" above and beyond anything possible under capitalism. The world will benefit tremendously as a result.

Typical advocates of laissez-faire capitalism almost universally oppose taxation of mega corporations and the ultra-wealthy. They strenuously object as well to the use of tax money for social programs such as assistance for those in the weakest economic situations, victims of natural and man-made disasters and unforeseeable medical and situational catastrophes, refugees, public education, public healthcare, public transportation and more. They often make the argument that giving jobless or poor people assistance (be it welfare, food or medical assistance, affordable housing, need-based educational scholarships, grants, loan-forgiveness, etc.) conditions and habituates them to develop survival mechanisms based on

tapping into that assistance, ultimately passing this pattern on to their children from generation to generation, while failing to reinforce self-sustaining behaviors such as finding jobs or starting businesses. This is the origin of the “welfare queen” myth and of exaggerated claims about “generational welfare”.

Another reason why these same capitalist proponents almost universally begrudge paying anything towards assisting those in dire or non-viable economic straits is because they consider them to be a burden. These privileged neo-Feudal aristocrats insist that poor people are in that situation because they are inherently lazy, stupid, unmotivated or otherwise defective or unworthy of respect, dignity and life. Some lawmakers have said as much almost in so many words. In 2017, defending a bill that would let insurers charge more to people with pre-existing conditions, a U.S. congressman said this would lower costs for “people who lead good lives”, as if illness were a moral failing; only when pressed did he concede that many people have such conditions through no fault of their own (Salon, 2017). The logic is that those who cannot afford care don’t deserve it, which in practice means they don’t deserve to live.

These misinformed people become deeply upset about the amount of their taxes spent on social programs, when in fact the U.S. federal government spends about $181 billion a year on aid to businesses alone (Cato Institute, 2025), more than ten times the roughly $16.5 billion a year it spends on cash assistance to poor families (CBPP), and that is before counting the tax breaks handed out to mega-corporations. Social Security and Medicare are a different matter: workers pay into them directly, through dedicated payroll contributions, throughout their working lives, and they return that money as earned benefits, whatever a person’s need. Calling them “entitlements”, as if they were handouts, obscures the fact that people have paid for them. The fair comparison is between need-based help for people in hardship and the aid, bailouts and tax breaks given to businesses, both of which are paid for out of general tax revenue: money the government is supposed to use for purposes that benefit the country and its people. This attitude is strongly reinforced and conditioned in the capitalist paradigm, so it is not surprising to encounter it. The fact that we don't often see it explicitly expressed more widely is a kind of proof that this conditioning goes against our most fundamental instincts as a primarily social, interdependent co-operative species.

If our stone-age ancestors had operated under the principles of capitalism, the species would have died out long ago. The strongest, fastest, and most aggressive would have deprived the weaker, less aggressive members of their tribes of the means to survive and ultimately would have warred amongst themselves eventually into extinction.

But the issue of what social assistance programs do or do not reinforce is a legitimate question that deserves serious consideration and meaningful answers. In addition, we must ask ourselves what will likely happen to/in the "generational welfare" segment of the community in the new Paradigm, to the extent that such a sector exists.

The intention of social services and programs like welfare, food, housing and energy assistance, need-based grants and scholarships is to enable people to survive while in a disempowered economic situation so they can become strong enough to eventually support themselves again. There is an element of truth in the argument that this can and sometimes ends up reinforcing an ongoing pattern of relying on those services.

It is true that if people in a Capitalist society are offered, in effect, money when they are not working, it can in some cases reinforce continuing to not work. But this is not the whole picture, just as the half-truth that "anybody can make it" is not the whole picture. It is important to look at this dynamic in the context of the socio-economic environment in which it occurs.

In practice, long-term dependence is the exception. Most people who turn to the safety net use it to get through a hard period, and then leave: the founding research on welfare spells, by Harvard economists Bane and Ellwood, found that most spells were short, and only a minority lasted beyond two years. Needing help for a while is a normal part of American life. Research following Americans over four decades finds that roughly 45 percent will use a safety-net programme by age 60, and about two-thirds will at some point between 20 and 65 live in a household that receives such help. Since 1996, federal cash assistance has had a five-year lifetime limit. Children of families who received aid are more likely to need it themselves. Much of this reflects inherited poverty, though a careful Norwegian study found some real passing-on as well: when a parent was granted disability benefits, the chance that an adult child would also receive them rose by 12 percentage points over ten

years (Dahl, Kostøl & Mogstad, NBER, 2013). This is a far cry from claims from those at the top of the pyramid that there are hordes of “generational” welfare queens sapping the life-blood of taxpayers, and confirms that overall, the programs are working as intended and benefiting the vast majority of Americans.

The minority of recipients who remain on public assistance for long periods include many who are actually working but whose pay is not enough to live on. Knowing that the capitalist economic paradigm is a pyramid, we can see that no matter how hard they work, no matter what they study (if they can find the time, money and energy to study long and consistently enough to attain a degree) or what degrees they earn, the paradigm enforces an economic pattern in which a very large share of jobs pay barely or sub living wages. There is not enough room for very many people in the levels of the Pyramid where pay is sufficient to enjoy leisure, savings, investment opportunities, and freedom from constant struggle.

Capitalism would completely break down if somehow all or most people were making what the upper quarter of the pyramid affords. As detailed previously, in Capitalist paradigms communities, like individuals, have access to resources and support in proportion to their place in the economic pyramid. Most of the alleged "generational welfare" population are born and raised in neighborhoods with inferior schools and infrastructure, living in the poorest conditions in every respect. While there are notable, well-publicized individuals who manage to ascend the pyramid from those beginnings, such examples only serve to highlight the fact that there is no possibility that the vast majority of their peers will be able to do the same, any more than one's friend or neighbor winning at the casino increases the likelihood of one's self winning.

Contrary to popular belief, capitalism itself actually produces strong reinforcers for not working. Alongside the reinforcer of "money for not working", there is another reinforcer just as strong: the fact that almost every job typically accessible to people in that situation is a job where pay is sub-living for demanding work while being demeaned, treated poorly or even abused. This is just as strong a reinforcer for not working as is receipt of public assistance.

If a typical "generational welfare" person were presented with a situation where working offered them a significant improvement in quality of life (including freedom, options, respect, safety, sense of empowerment and purpose) in every way over receiving welfare, then the reinforcers would support going to work.

It is due to the dysfunction of the capitalist paradigm that there are people in economic situations where they need assistance in the first place. The paradigm makes it inevitable. It is actually capitalism itself that creates this situation in which a measurable segment of the population needs such assistance. People are not reinforced to get jobs when doing so entails a decline in quality of life over receiving welfare. When the only jobs within reach pay poorly and treat people badly, and the schools never prepared them for anything better, even joining a gang can look like a better option than a fast-food counter. That is an indictment of the system, not of the people trapped in it.

Our instinct to support one another for greater survival is what creates whatever forms of public assistance that do exist in capitalist countries. The fact that in some cases public assistance reinforces dependency simply hides the fact that it is capitalism that generates the conditions in which the issue arises in the first place. If a society wishes to reinforce the behavior of working, then they should logically set the stage for working to generate a satisfying quality of life in every way.

In the new paradigm, we can realistically anticipate this pattern changing at an ever-accelerating rate, especially among generations born during or after the Transition. With money no longer needed to live, nobody will need the kind of assistance that is necessary in a Capitalistic society. Those people currently in patterns of dependence on welfare will lose both welfare and the need for it. In the new paradigm, this segment of the population will not in any way be a "burden" upon any other segment of the population. They will be free and empowered to re-engage in pursuing their passions and rediscovering their abilities.

A young person who aspires to be a doctor, architect, carpenter or any other profession will no longer be at a severe disadvantage due to lack of academic preparation due to inferior education in poorer neighborhoods. Public schools everywhere will flourish without the constraints put upon them by financial limitations imposed under Capitalism. Lack of funds, accessibility to or awareness of financial aid resources will no longer create a barrier. The tyranny of Capitalist economics will no longer effectively bar people in such neighborhoods from studying or training in their fields of choice.

These segments of the population will, for the first time, begin to perceive and access resources and opportunities long inaccessible under capitalism and will respond by availing themselves. While issues of ethnic and racial prejudice and discrimination will be more problematic to resolve and will likely take longer to transform, in the post Transition synergistic society and economics, there will be no employers or landlords with the power to discriminate as to who can live here or work there. The degree to which discriminatory attitudes could to lead to abuse of authority and position will be reduced dramatically.

People's personal issues and struggles will still exist, and those who are born into the "generational welfare" population will be no exceptions. Those who struggle with drug or alcohol addiction will still have their conditions to contend with, which is a separate issue and challenge to resolve. Those who are in that segment of the population due to mental illness or physical disability will have free and unobstructed access to the treatment and the real support that they need in order to become as engaged, fulfilled, empowered and self-propelling as they are capable of being. Those few who are actually uninterested in engaging in the life of the community, who really only wish to watch TV, play video games and so forth, will not be numerous and will not be a burden to anybody. They will not be a bother to anybody. They will be taking nothing from anybody. Within a few generations, we can predict that the "generational welfare" phenomenon will nearly or completely disappear, along with the conditions which gave rise to and sustained it. A fire extinguishes itself in the absence of fuel or oxygen.

In the freedom of the new paradigm, we can expect to see the emergence of more kibbutz-like and other non-traditional, experimental lifestyles and models. Since the new paradigm will be designed to be self-examining with strong reinforcers for open dialog, introspection, and cooperative innovation, an ever-increasing quality and fulfillment of human life and symbiotic, synergistic relationships among individuals, groups, communities and sectors of the population will emerge. These diversifying lifestyles will be a valuable laboratory contributing to the betterment of ourselves as human beings, as individuals and communities. Such communities will be encouraged to document and publish their operating principles and the practical results in daily living over time for all to read and learn from.

That which works and that which does not, will equally contribute to our understanding in the human community of how to structure and design operating principles that maximize the quality of human life for all while minimizing strife, exploitation, bullying and other destructive behaviors.

In the absence of rigid, feudalistic concepts and principles of property, without capitalistic interpretations and applications of the concept of ownership, many legal, administrative and financial restrictions that currently limit or prevent the development of alternative lifestyles will go into extinction. The field will be wide open for such experiments. For example, there are zoning laws under capitalistic paradigms that limit the development of alternative-model communities by drastically limiting the number of non-blood-related people who can live on a given plot of land. Such laws will be stricken from the books.

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Lands which under capitalistic paradigms are owned by corporations (which will cease to exist) and the ultra-wealthy capitalistic neo-Feudal Lords will become free and available for use by individuals, families and communities.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Of course, new laws and guidelines will have to be established and fine-tuned to encourage harmonious implementation of this new openness. Universal accessibility is not to be interpreted as a Wild-West style "anything goes" paradigm with no laws or guidelines. We will need to develop ways of settling disputes in which more than one party wishes to use the same land at the same time. As previously mentioned, new reasonable limits will have to be implemented to the size of a plot of land that can be claimed by an individual, family or other social unit. Such laws and guidelines will have to base themselves on heuristics other than monetary ones.

Similarly, some degree of zoning will probably be beneficial, guided by real needs and realities. In the new Paradigms for example, we will certainly not want to have dwellings right next door to a rock quarry or a noisy factory.

We also need to anticipate the possibility that some of these experimental communities may lead to dysfunctional or destructive patterns that may require intervention or assistance to resolve. A community may develop a pattern in which a domineering personality, group or community is bullying, intimidating, victimizing or abusing its individuals or another community. A community may form that practices some kind of slavery or other systematic abuse. For such cases we will need mechanisms for stepping in to end the dysfunction and heal all involved parties. This necessary action would not be taken in a punitive or coercive manner, but in the same compassionate but firm way as one would employ to intervene to prevent a person from driving when they are in an impaired condition.

Fashion aesthetics under capitalist paradigms are heavily manipulated, subordinated and harnessed to the demands of corporate profit imperatives. It is likely that people will always seek to adorn themselves with jewelry, clothing, markings, hairstyles, and other personal artistic expressions. Reasons, taste and motivations vary widely from person to person; but it is undeniable that as human beings we have an artistic and aesthetic aspect that expresses itself in music, art, architecture, theater, film, and self-adornment among other forms.

Under Capitalism, however, this human expression is exploited by skillful propaganda (advertising, marketing), channeled and subverted into a programmed demand for products for sale at high prices. This corporate hijacking of the human penchant for self-adornment has the side-effect of squelching authentic spontaneous expression in wide segments of the population. Instead of each person discovering and developing their own personal style and expression, millions of people are trained, conditioned and programmed to seek the latest designer fashion as presented by the corporations and elite of the fashion industry.

The more expensive the dress, purse, shoes, hat, hairstyle, jewelry, suit, etc., the more the possessor or wearer is respected, the more doors are opened to them. In such hierarchical cultures of artificially-manufactured and perpetuated scarcity, in these denial-of-life societies where the individual is constantly subjected to messages denying their worth or worthiness, those lacking the means to acquire high-end designer items and status symbols are subliminally trained and conditioned to feel bad about themselves unless they can acquire these items.

Once again we see those conditioned into a compulsive pursuit of profit feeding that compulsion at the expense of the well-being of those at the lower reaches of the economic pyramid.

In the new post-Transition paradigms, advertising and marketing will be supplanted by factual and artistic information dissemination. In such affirmation-of-life cultures, we can look forward to seeing fashion evolve into much more authentic, unique, spontaneous individual artistic expressions. In the absence of marketing and advertising molding people's tastes and aesthetics to serve corporate profit motives reinforced by pyramidal socio-economic dynamics, people's individual aesthetic expressions will likely develop spontaneously, resulting in a much wider range of individual expression.

We can expect to see a major diversification and individuation of expression in the area of personal adornment. Fashion designers will of course still have a role to play and will find expression; but that expression will, as in all of the arts and sciences, be an honest and authentic artistic expression rather than a heavily-marketed product molded by corporate profit motive.

As in all of the arts, there will be an ongoing creative social dialog between the artist/designer and the public, to the enrichment of both. Pure aesthetics will predominate, freed from the arbitrary obsessive compulsions that drive fashion under capitalism. There will be no socio-economic pyramid, no concept of status or class, and therefore no artificially-conditioned consumption for those reasons.

It is likely that there will be wider variety of style and expression with less conformity or uniformity than we see under capitalism. It will not be surprising if user/wearer-customizable accessories become more widely available as many individuals will prefer to devise their own fashion expressions rather than consume designer products.

In the absence of restrictive capitalistic intellectual property laws, individuals will likely improvise their own versions and interpretations of what professional designers create. Designers will in turn be inspired and influenced by individual expressions that they see out and about on the streets of the community. This authentic creative existential dialog will enrich all participants.

Designers need not fear losing their niche. Not all people are seamstresses and many will still prefer to wear designer products rather than make their own. In the field of fashion and personal adornment, as in all of the arts and sciences, we can look forward to an artistic, cultural and scientific Renaissance on a scale heretofore unprecedented.

In all areas of endeavor, let us look at how decision-making processes will change in the post-Transition Paradigms. Under capitalist paradigms, virtually all decision-making processes are hierarchically driven. In all production, distribution, service and other workplace environments, living environments, and many social environments, the pyramidal socio-economic structure is replicated. Those at the apex of the pyramid make decisions that are passed down the pyramidal command structure and obeyed under penalty of termination, which means loss of livelihood and threat to survival, compounded by negative references to further impair one's ability to find new employment.

This is a profoundly flawed paradigm that nevertheless gives the appearance of efficiency because decisions can be carried out and implemented very quickly when discussion is restricted to the giving of orders and to their acknowledgement and execution. This apparent efficiency can be compared to the appearance of increased productivity that can be achieved individually through the use of central nervous system stimulants. A person on stimulants (amphetamines, cocaine, etc.) appears to have more energy, at least in the short term, and to be able to get more done, more quickly, while requiring less food and sleep. Experience shows, however, that this increased energy and productivity is short-lived. The damage and detriments far outweigh the benefits.

Hierarchical paradigms do appear in the short term to yield faster response time and greater efficiency, especially when all participants are lifetime-conditioned to function in this paradigm. Here as well, however, the detriments and damage far outweigh the benefits.

As discussed elsewhere in this writing, the flaws are many. One major flaw is that humans have consistently demonstrated that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Humans in hierarchical structures are heavily prone to corruption and abuse of power at every level, from the CEO or commander down to the petty bureaucrat or functionary with power over one or two people.

While not all people will exhibit these behaviors, the reinforcers are there that strengthen them, while there are no significant reinforcers to the contrary. The result is that corruption and abuse of power to varying degrees are common, endemic, and entrenched. The hierarchical paradigm effectively enforces and institutionalizes the abuses of power that occur within it, since rank and position take on a life of their own.

Every pyramidal structure carries with it an imperative that "the chain of command must be respected." In practice, this means that in the event of abuse or corruption, the pyramidal structure will reinforce and support the abuser while suppressing or penalizing any who challenge or disobey them. Hierarchical social structures have proven themselves to be incompatible with human psychological response patterns. To continue attempting to operate in that paradigm in the assumption that it will produce a better result is unrealistic and counterproductive. Such social structures strongly reinforce, institutionalize, and perpetuate abuse of power, suppression of initiative and cooperation while creating an environment of fragmentation, distrust, backstabbing and hostility.

In the new Paradigms, peer-based decision-making will predominate in the absence of hierarchical command structures. We can anticipate that there will be an initial adjustment period, a learning curve as citizens conditioned and adapted to functioning in hierarchical paradigms learn to re-orient, make decisions and interact in a peer-based framework. Many may become discouraged at first as they struggle to master the skills and responses necessary to function optimally in the new Paradigm. As with all new beginnings, this is expected. We need to be patient with ourselves and with each other as we learn to make decisions and function as equals with no command structure.

These skills are learnable and can be mastered. The benefits of doing so include vastly increased job satisfaction, empowerment of individuals, fostering of a strong sense of teamship and mutual support, greatly increased efficiency and productivity as pride of workmanship and sense of community replace fear and intimidation as motivators.

All of us will need to learn effective communication skills. We will need to learn how to listen to each other with sincere intention to truly understand each other's input. We will need to learn how to work in concert to weave points of view together into the best attainable tapestry that integrates the optimal synthesis of the wisdom and perceptions of all participants. We will need to learn to develop a collaborative rather than adversarial approach in which we are not vying for whose idea comes out on top, who is right. Instead we will learn to work together to arrive at the best outcome.

In such paradigms, each member of the community or team is empowered to make their fullest contribution in every sense. We will all benefit from learning to listen to one another, and to speak up freely knowing that we will be listened to.

Such paradigms have been shown to work at least as well as the hierarchical models that are dominant at this point in history: studies of worker cooperatives find them at least as productive as conventional firms, and likely better at preserving jobs (Pérotin, 2015). There will be no "boss" or "chief" to impose their ideas on all. Where there are two or more well-supported points of view about how to accomplish a goal, or about which goals to strive for, we may see the emergence of a modus operandi in which both approaches or ideas are tried in parallel and the results are evaluated by all participants with appropriate conclusions drawn. This will lead to increased innovation since lines of inquiry will not be suppressed arbitrarily.

Hierarchical paradigms rely almost exclusively on the perceptions, mental, and creative processes of the few at the top, while suppressing the creative and practical perceptions and contributions of all other participants. Suppression occurs in ever-increasing degrees as one descends to the lower reaches of the pyramid. All but those at the top are routinely discouraged or suppressed from contributing their ideas or innovations. They are customarily overridden by the decrees from those at the top of the pyramid. This results in stilted, severely limited, lopsided implementations of ideas that have not been sufficiently examined or challenged.

In the new Paradigm, every voice will be truly free to express itself and be heard to a much greater degree than is possible under capitalism. No one will be able to be threatened with loss of livelihood or living space for failing to fall in line by a petulant or bullying superior.

Hierarchical socio-economic social structures in the workplace and elsewhere are fundamentally inimical to and incompatible with a truly free, democratic community governed and operated by, of, and for the People for their universal benefit and well-being. Nowhere and at no time has this been more apparent than right now in the United States, where in most states an employer can already fire employees for engaging in completely legal and harmless activities, even for their most intimate relationships pursued in private life unrelated to the workplace, simply because the CEO of the company disapproves or disagrees with it. Only a few states, such as California, Colorado, New York and North Dakota, broadly protect lawful off-duty activities (National Law Review, 2025). Dictatorship is dictatorship. Tyranny is tyranny, regardless of whether it originates in a seat of government, the military, a religious authority, or the ultra-wealthy and heads of mega-corporations via their disproportionate influence on government.

In the new paradigms, after the initial learning curve, we will achieve a much closer approach to a free and democratic community and society than has yet been attained.

Universal open access to Internet and other telecommunications will be a natural development of the post-Transition community. All persons will have free, unrestricted access to wireless and wired telephone communication, the Internet, TV, radio, printed media, and any future communications channels. As discussed elsewhere in this writing, there will be no commercials or advertisements in any media content generated from inside post-Transition countries.

Of course, content originating in capitalist countries and societies will still have advertisements, but most likely these will rapidly cease to target audiences inside of post-Transition countries since a currency-free population who have open access

to all goods and services will have little or no interest in buying goods and services for money. We will be a civilization where money will be obsolete.

In lieu of commercials, all members of the post-Transition community will be able to locate goods and services that they need via an easily accessible and navigable interface on the Internet, broadcast media and in print as well. Ground-breaking or paradigm-changing new developments, such as recalls, new technologies (as when transistors replaced vacuum tubes, the development of portable communications technology, the emergence of microwave ovens and personal computers, new medicines and more) will be posted on public service and information channels and sites along with weather alerts, news, and the like.

Post-Transition citizens will likely have little patience for commercial-infested content when they can access high-quality commercial-free content at will. Universal access to all communications media can be expected to stimulate an increase in public dialogue, artistic and philosophical expression, scientific and technological collaboration and innovation, quite possibly catalyzing a sustained Renaissance.

We do need to be aware, however, of the challenges and issues that these technologies introduce, regardless of which paradigm we live under. TV, video game and social media addiction, for example, are widespread issues in the modern technological world. These phenomena are likely to continue to be issues in the new paradigms. Likewise the trend among younger members of the community to allow their devices to replace, rather than supplement, real human contact, creativity, activity, and involvement in the physical world around them will likely remain an issue.

The solutions are neither simple nor easy to derive. We can anticipate however that the dramatically increased empowerment, mutual involvement, opportunities, vitality and interconnectedness of the life-affirming post-Transition culture will exert a stronger pull to re-engage than does the capitalistic culture with its default denial-of-life pattern of isolating, disempowering and dehumanizing its inhabitants. There will be no skillful advertising to induce young people to feel a “need” for more and more devices. The new Paradigms will not reinforce cynicism, the need to escape or withdraw, or feelings of hopelessness. This will most likely reduce the incidence and severity of these technologically-originating issues; but we will be remiss if we assume that the healthier paradigm will automatically erase all human problems and challenges.

Accounting, load balancing, inventory and resource management will shift from currency-based to reality-based, i.e. tracking quantities (how many KWh of electricity, gallons of water, tons of apples, etc.) that are present at any moment, how many are needed and where, where production needs to increase, where it can be dialed back, what can be stored as reserve, and how to manage instances of shortage in the most fair, practical and compassionate way.

For greatest efficiency and access for all, it would be wise for the common distributed information network to actively track need, consumption, distribution and production of everything from food to automobiles to computers to dental and medical supplies to shoes to electricity and water, in order to ensure that production is able to adapt to and anticipate real need and demand. As time goes on, more data will be collected and patterns will be identified. The longer this setup runs, the more efficient it will become as it learns from a growing data set.

This will also ensure that production is not driven to unnecessary levels far beyond actual need. As much as possible, it would be a good idea to maintain to-be-determined levels of stock, an optimized balance on hand, so that access is smooth and easy when needed, but not excessive. Once the population has been supplied with the goods they want and need, production will scale back to a low level needed to accommodate (hopefully modest or slow) population growth, children reaching age of independence, breakage, malfunction, immigration, etc.

Services will be tracked as well so that providers of services (doctors, carpenters, plumbers, technicians, etc.) and those needing those services will be able to find each other and coordinate. The aim here is not central dictatorial control as was practiced in the Soviet Union and is practiced now in corporations, but coordination, logistics and choreography among the various sectors of a complex national, regional and local Community in order to assure the greatest quality of life for all.

When actual practical or physical shortages do occur, they will be resolved collaboratively in the way that best serves the well-being of the community and the individuals comprising it, as analyzed and decided by the people themselves.

As mentioned elsewhere, we can predict that the work-week will be significantly shortened for virtually all inhabitants. There will be drastically less waste, once built-in obsolescence and hyper-inflated overproduction/overconsumption have ceased and products are made with longevity, serviceability, and upgradeability in mind.

Air and water quality will improve as destructive, polluting technologies are progressively replaced with more sustainable and healthy technologies. Landscapes will enjoy a dramatic decline in debris, trash, and litter.

Once arbitrary economic constraints are removed, we can also expect to see a return to the exploration of pure knowledge and probing of frontiers, including manned expeditions into space to explore the solar system and beyond, expeditions to the ocean depths, and the probing of the nature of the Universe and our own nature as human beings. No project will be quashed because it lacks profitable applications or is too expensive. This will generate unforeseeable technological and medical advances, as well as fire the human imagination and inspire/infuse the human spirit with a sense of optimism, excitement, and anticipation of the expansion of frontiers and discovery of wonders.

Under capitalism, the era of space and other scientific exploration for the sake of Humanity and the pursuit of knowledge was ended, subsumed into the stagnant and anemic development of marketable commodities: communications satellites, GPS, extremely limited space habitats. Unsurprisingly, inhabitants of capitalist societies have largely ceased to dream of new frontiers as they become increasingly driven by the programmed pursuit of the latest fashions and consumer goods, to the detriment of human relationships and the quality of life. The effects of the new Paradigms will be a breath of fresh air for that in the human organism and community that yearns to stretch metaphorical wings and soar across the Universe.

Chapter 40: Challenges and Potential Pitfalls in the New Paradigms: What to Watch for in Ourselves and How to Encounter Them

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Challenge:

We grew up and matured in dysfunctional hierarchical command structures where decisions were made at the top and passed down to be implemented and obeyed by those down the chain of command.

Though this model is flawed and deeply dysfunctional, we have and will unconsciously carry forward the habit and subconscious expectation of something similar. Most of us also have little or no training or experience with collective, collaborative decision-making in a peer based process in the absence of a hierarchical command structure.

We will have to learn from environments in which such models have been proven, such as kibbutzim, experimental and tribal societies that practice this form of social functioning. The process will be similar to the way in which predictive weather models that have been tried and proven in different places at different times, are used to develop new algorithms and guidelines to be practiced and improved upon as needed. We will start with what is already known, and then improve upon that knowledge through experience and self-analysis.

Where different points of view on practical matters persist and do not resolve into a single agreement, we will benefit if we allow both ideas to move forward experimentally, then reconvene after enough time has passed for both models to evolve and succeed, fail, or both, and then reexamine both points of view in the light of practical experience and results.

For some time, we may retain the habit of expecting someone higher up a chain of command or hierarchy to decide and resolve things. This will no longer apply. We will have to keep reminding ourselves, and each other, lovingly and supportively, that it is up to us and only us to decide, resolve, plan, and logisticate.

As we learn and perfect the skills and perceptions necessary to function optimally in the new Paradigms, we will be able to integrate this new knowledge into the educational system to be taught as part of mainstream education, thus strengthening the culture of peer-based community.

Challenge:

As we embark on our Transition, we will succeed best if we know our human responses and anticipate both those that will strengthen the process, and those that could weaken it, and prepare accordingly.

Though sometimes necessary and always inevitable, change rarely comes easily to most humans and societies. We need to be aware that there is an aspect of our makeup that will resist change, which will pull us towards returning to the familiar. This is all too often the case, even when the familiar is dysfunctional or even fundamentally toxic. We observe this in individuals who remain in abusive relationships and even resist attempts to provide support and safe exit strategies for them. It is observed in child soldiers who react violently to being rescued from their horrendous life of daily atrocities.

Fortunately we also have an aspect of our nature that welcomes and embraces change.

Both sets of responses have evolved to serve our survival and well-being under different kinds of circumstances. Change takes more energy and work than maintaining a status quo, and introduces a lot more uncertainty. When a way of doing things is serving the happiness, fulfillment and well-being of the people involved, then some degree of resistance to change

serves us well. It motivates us to sustain that which works. It also helps us to keep working at healthy relationships and endeavors instead of abandoning them when there are difficult issues to work through.

On the other hand, the aspects of our nature that embrace and seek change serve us well when a situation or way of doing things is dysfunctional, toxic or damaging to us. In such situations, seeking, initiating and embracing change supports and protects our happiness and well-being. That aspect of our nature motivates us to fix what is broken, to seek better ways or improvement of that which isn't working or is even causing harm, to leave toxic relationships, and to improve our quality of life when it is unsatisfactory.

We humans are currently perpetuating patterns of behavior that are increasingly destructive to our happiness, well-being and even to our very survival as individuals and as a species. This is a situation that calls for us to reinforce our change-friendly responses and not reinforce, even to consciously override, our change-resistant responses. When we find ourselves thinking or feeling doubtful about our Transition, when we feel a pull to return to the familiar dynamics of Capitalistic and other hierarchical paradigms, we must be ready to remind ourselves and each other of the realities and the stakes that led us this far. We must be strong and firm in our commitment to see this process through and emerge on the other side into a way of life that will actively engage and reinforce our empowerment and well-being.

Challenge:

We have lived for generations in societies largely divided into competing, opposing subgroups (Black vs. White vs. Latino vs. Asian; religion vs. religion; rich vs. poor vs. middle class; native born vs. immigrant; ethnicity vs. ethnicity; liberal vs. conservative etc.). Such subgroups are encouraged to blame one another for the stresses, inequities, injustices, and unnecessary struggles that the vast majority of us have endured. There will be some tendency for these resentments to persist. There may even be temptation towards catharsis through violence between such groups.

In almost every such situation, all involved groups will have experienced violence, discrimination, oppression, denigration or other wrongs at one another's hands at various times and to various degrees. That is a major aspect of how the people have been disempowered by the emerging Feudal Lords of the Corporatocracy. We have been kept at each other's throats, and we have cooperated with this by blaming and attacking one another for our sufferings and struggles. The socio-economic environment has been carefully structured so that the gains of one inevitably come at the expense of the other.

In the post-Transition community, it is vital that we strive consciously to resist and overcome these emotions and responses, both as individuals and as groups. If we give in to these impulses to any major degree, then we will have destroyed all for which we have fought and struggled: a socio-economic paradigm which empowers all of its members, fosters win-win co-operative synergistic symbiotic norms of functioning and interacting, developing and nurturing unity in diversity. All subgroups will thrive in such a Paradigm.

We must remind ourselves, and each other, that the resentments, the wrongs both real and imagined, and the blame that we may feel among groups are a vestige of the sociological and psychological chains and manipulation that were used to disempower and control us. Those resentments have been fed and exploited, by media business models and by politicians, far more than they have been resolved. We must not yield to these impulses. If we absolutely must direct blame or resentment towards someone or something, we can direct it towards the destructive paradigm that we are leaving behind.

Similarly, the overwhelming majority of us have struggled, suffered, been negated and denigrated under the capitalist pyramidal paradigm. We will feel a natural urge to vent our hurt, anger, rage, righteous indignation and resentment against members of the ruling elite whose power the Transition will end - the billionaires, multi-millionaires, Corporate CEO's and those who enforced their will. Nearly all of us will experience some desire to "make them pay," to punish, humiliate, and hurt them.

We absolutely must resist these impulses. We must lovingly and firmly restrain those among us who move to act on those emotions against anyone, using only the minimum restraint necessary, if we are to build a truly new paradigm of community that empowers all of its members. We must safeguard and respect the humanity and dignity of former Feudal Lords, CEO's,

and billionaires as human beings with the same rigor and devotion as we apply to our dearest loved ones, even as we firmly and uncompromisingly deny the former neo-Feudal Lords any power over others.

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They are addicts. They will probably react badly to losing the object of their addiction. We will respond to them exactly as we would to a gambling or video game addict.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

This does not imply that we condone or support what these people did under capitalist paradigms. Yet once the Transition is accomplished, these people will no longer have the power to exploit, victimize, or oppress anybody. They will no longer be a threat to our individual or collective well-being in any way. In building the new Paradigm society, we must never enact blood baths, purges, riots, lynchings, acts of revenge or any other violence, disenfranchisement, or humiliation against any group or individual, even in cases where their own violent conduct may give us no choice but to stand up to, defend ourselves against, or restrain them, using only the minimum force necessary.

Challenge:

Change and transition are never easy and are always challenging. As expressed elsewhere in this writing, the initial enthusiasm and optimism generated while bringing about the Transition may tend to give many of us a feeling that once the Transition is done and the new Paradigm is set in motion, everything will resolve and be glorious in an almost magical way.

We need to be mindful that this natural human reaction is nevertheless unrealistic. Realistically we can expect that the new Paradigm will bring a drastically improved quality of life, level of civility and harmony among individuals and sectors of the community, general well-being, enhanced long-term survival and thriving. We must keep in mind, however, that this will necessitate a lot of mental, emotional, and physical work, effort, problem-solving, learning curves, self-examination, dialogue, and patience on all of our parts. It may be a while before the daily functioning of the new Paradigm becomes second-nature to us.

The plan and strategy of the Transition are intended and designed to keep normal life, goods, and services running with minimal or no disruption through and after the Transition. Realistically, however, it is likely that implementing the Transition and the new Paradigms will take most of us out of our comfort zones in many ways and to varying degrees. This is not a negative thing. It is akin to the kinds of challenges a new family takes on when they decide to have children, that pioneers take on when they decide to homestead or build a new town, or that explorers take on when they set out into the unknown.

We simply need to be mentally and emotionally prepared. We need to go into this endeavor oriented to expect this feeling of strangeness and embrace it as a necessary part of crafting a new set of paradigms and operating principles. We must strengthen ourselves by always keeping in mind that what we are doing will give us major improvements in human well-being, fulfillment, empowerment, harmony and thriving. It is an investment in our present and future. We will encounter challenges. Sometimes initial efforts to implement new ideas need to be re-evaluated and modified. When this happens, rather than give up or become discouraged, we will do well to redouble and renew our determination to learn how to enact the new Paradigms so that they work optimally. It will be a never-ending learning and discovery process that will become second-nature as we live into it.

To paraphrase a popular saying about life, nobody can promise us that the Transition and restructuring of our social and economic paradigms will be easy, but we can be sure that it will be worth it.

Challenge:

Once the transition is accomplished, we will begin the extended process of restructuring, reorienting, and repurposing our infrastructure according to new guiding principles. Energy generation, transportation, food production, and many other aspects of the functioning of a national community will transition increasingly away from large centralized facilities and towards distributed small-scale ones at the community, neighborhood, block, individual building and home level. Community participation in the process will be important.

Facilities that for practical reasons function better as centralized large-scale operations, such as factories, foundries, mines, pharmaceutical and other scientific research laboratories and the like that were formerly controlled by competing corporations and companies will be merged into unified teams and facilities. These will operate democratically or by consensus, directed by the developers, researchers, engineers, designers, machine operators, programmers and other producers directly involved in producing their goods and services. Development and production processes will be fully and easily transparent to public observation and interaction in an ongoing dialog.

Such teams and facilities will need to learn to function according to very different guidelines, criteria and priorities than were required under Capitalist paradigms. All developers will need, and be encouraged, to share all of their data, designs, plans and expertise that they were formerly blocked from sharing by intellectual property laws and nondisclosure agreements. Their mandate will be to create products that combine the best features, designs, materials, and production methods of their formerly competing products into a range of best-possible products and services covering the range of actual user needs and demand. Environmental impact and sustainability will be come a major factor in operational decisions.

The public will be encouraged and facilitated to give their feedback, suggestions and input, and to communicate their needs and desires regarding products as diverse as cars, bicycles, electronics, communications services, entertainment, clothing, musical instruments etc. Designers will strive to fill those needs and requirements in the best way possible with the highest quality according to the state of the art.

The sheer number of brands, models and variations of products will shrink, but the models that will replace them will be designed specifically to meet real expressed user needs and desires. Products will be designed to be backwards-compatible with pre-Transition products that people already have, so there will be no pressure on people to change unless or until they choose.

New designs will be required to be as easily upgradeable, repairable, and mutually compatible as the technology permits. Production and inventory software will be modified to eliminate billing, collections, and all financial functionality while maintaining and enhancing inventory management and tracking functionality.

Levels of production will be geared to fulfill actual needs plus a little more to act as a reserve to cover unexpected demand due to breakage and population increase. Former retail establishments will be re-purposed as distribution centers in keeping with their former retail areas: clothing stores will become clothing distribution centers, former grocery stores will become food distribution centers, department stores will become generalized distribution centers, etc.

Government will need to be brought up to speed from the ground up, in order to facilitate their understanding of their new mandate: to serve the people who elected them in the absence of Corporate lobbies in the new currency-free environment. Lawmakers will have a lot of work ahead of them to redefine many legal definitions, strike many laws and craft new ones in support of the new democratized socio-economic Paradigms.

People working in some sectors will be displaced from their former jobs, especially in industries such as insurance, financial institutions, real estate, some legal professions, marketing, advertising, and tourism to name a few. Fortunately, under the new Paradigms, affected members of the community will not experience any deprivation or loss of livelihood, security or quality of life as a result. Many may experience anxiety, disorientation, depression or confusion regarding where they fit into the new Paradigm. Part of most human beings' sense of self and well-being does come from their sense of where they fit, what is their involvement, connection and contribution with and to their community. When this is profoundly changed, it can create some difficult challenges, as many retired people can attest. We will need to ramp up support services in the form of counseling, awareness programs, outreaches and proactive information campaigns to keep affected persons aware that

their situation is known, seen, and understood and that they are important, valued members of the community. Such services will make them aware of opportunities and niches in the new Paradigm that might be a good fit for their expertise, background, talents and interests. Education and training will be open to all and easily accessible for those wishing to retrain in a new occupation.

All of these new outreach efforts must be embarked upon immediately after the Transition. They can be expected to take time to complete, with unique challenges in each area or industry. The goal will be to make the transition as quickly as is possible without being forced, rushed or unnecessarily stress-producing. We must make the commitment that no member of the community will be left out or behind.

The optimal pace of this reworking will vary from industry to industry.

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Those in each sector who resist the new Paradigms must be met with a compassionate response while not being permitted to prevent the necessary changes.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

We must be alert to avoid being insensitively and unrealistically gung-ho. We must seek a balance. We must neither create a forced-march atmosphere on the one hand, nor unnecessarily delay the transition and reworking out of fear, uncertainty, inertia or clinging to old familiar ways of doing things on the other hand.

Challenge:

The central database and Web forum that will serve as a public venue for coordinating supply and need of goods and services, fostering public discourse and discussion, sharing information of all kinds, and many other functions will naturally build upon and incorporate much of the already-existing digital infrastructure. We will, however, need to encourage software, database and Web developers, designers, engineers and programmers to create new, very large scale, expansions of digital infrastructure in order for it to truly serve its necessary function as a kind of central nervous system of the new national and global community.

It will need to be designed to be individually adaptive and user-friendly enough for the least technical among us, yet powerful enough to be useful for the most technically sophisticated. It will be a massive project; but using the Open Source development model and precedent, as it evolves and matures, it wall be easily applicable to other countries that embark on their own Transitions.

Naturally this network will be implemented along distributed, redundant design principles rather than on centralized server farms and facilities. We will need multiple backups of all data and all functionality so that malfunction, sabotage, or damage to any portion of it will not result in catastrophic failure. All nodes should be ‘hardened’ to be resistant to electromagnetic pulse, radiation and other potential disruptions. You who know what this means are invited to begin working on this right away. You who find it to be unintelligible technobabble need not worry about it. We each have our talents and contributions to make to the well-being and health of our communities.

It would be wise to create parallel lower-tech backup systems that can be activated in the event that a massive solar coronal mass ejection, large meteor strike, or other global disruption of the primary network occurs.

Challenge:

Dialog, trade, international relations, and all aspects of our interaction with the international community will be a major challenge. Other countries will likely be wary, cautious and distrustful in the early days after the Transition. Treaties, trade

agreements, alliances and the like will need to be re-examined and in some cases renegotiated with the utmost of wisdom and delicacy.

We do well to stand firm in our principles (i.e., no corporations or other large businesses operating in the post-Transition country, non-participation in any arrangements involving exploitation or abuse of human beings or animals or destruction of the environment, transitioning away from use of and dependence on fossil fuels, zero-tolerance for doing business with regimes or businesses which violate human rights, etc.) but be non-confrontational in our approach.

We will need to develop new interfaces for application in trade agreements, especially, in order to benefit both the post-Transition participant(s) and the Capitalist participant(s), while respecting the internal operating principles of both.

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Countries, corporations and other businesses formerly controlling facilities now liberated from their control in the new Paradigm will not be compensated in currency. No apologies, compromises or exceptions will be made regarding the liberated facilities.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

Arrangements will be proposed and negotiated, however, that will allow the capitalist end and the liberated end of such operations to continue in the new situation to the benefit of all parties. The Transition does not need to imply the end of coordinated operations between operations inside and outside of the Transitioned country.

The post-Transition country will need to quickly make its intentions and principles clearly known in the international community. It will be crucial that we demonstrate our stability, reasonableness, and integrity as a negotiating partner and show by action that we are good for our word and seek equitable mutual benefit in all situations.

As mentioned elsewhere in this writing, the defense forces of the Transitioning and post-Transition country will need to be on high alert. Most countries have enemies who will likely perceive the Transition as a vulnerability to be exploited. Indeed the Transition and the period immediately after will be a vulnerable time. Thus, the necessity of defense must be anticipated. Defense forces must not be distracted by the Transition itself.

Once the Transition is complete and the new Paradigm stabilized and evolving steadily, the military can train the population in civil defence and national defence, as Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Norway do. Any potential invader would face not a docile, easily intimidated or controlled population, but a whole country ready to resist. A further advantage of this is that, in a population where all are trained in self-defense, bullies will find it more difficult to intimidate potential victims.

Potential Pitfall:

Overall motivation and engagement can be expected to increase in the post-Transition community. Yet there will be some who will experience decreased motivation in the absence of the prospect of advancing up an economic pyramid that will no longer exist. This is because of an archetypical myth, endemic in Capitalist paradigms, that keeps people supporting and sustaining the Pyramid. This myth carries the implied promise that sufficiently long-suffering hard work and dedication will advance one up the Pyramid. This is a false premise to be sure. Yet those conditioned to believe in it will tend to feel no reason to bother to work hard, or work at all, if there is no way to move up a pyramid and ascend above others.

This is moot in post-Transition communities, because all persons will enjoy greatly improved quality of life, standard of living, peace of mind, empowerment, safety and sense of connection and purpose. Most will see and understand this very quickly.

Some of those who cling to the old Paradigms, however, will likely become depressed, discouraged, disconnected and unmotivated. New therapeutic modalities will have to be developed, offered to those who want them and never imposed, to

support and assist such individuals through adjustment to the changed paradigm. This must never become a "re-education" program similar to those employed by dictatorships of various kinds to brainwash dissidents, critics, resistors and opponents.

The difficulty such people will experience must not be marginalized or judged. It must be addressed with compassion and wisdom. Such people must not be disparaged, condescended to or left to languish as dinosaurs left over from the defunct old paradigm. We must strive to find real, viable substitutes that can realistically replace the illusionary “rewards” that they believed in under Capitalism. Therapeutic avenues of exploration that might be applicable include modalities applied to individuals recovering from coercive control, cults, abusive relationships, PTSD, human trafficking, child soldiering, and similar traumas.

We need not fear that the reduced participation and motivation of these sectors of the population will cripple our productivity. Many or most will quickly adapt and thrive as they experience the benefits of the new Paradigm. Along with all members of the community, such people will experience greatly diminished workloads in the absence of artificially enforced overproduction. Pressure, stress, and labor/expertise demands will be lower than under Capitalism.

It is important to foster a culture of enthusiastic acknowledgement of individual and group contribution. Those who have struggled and suffered severely due to not being well adapted to capitalist paradigms have traditionally been ruthlessly marginalized, ridiculed, demonized, and disenfranchised under those paradigms. Every paradigm will find some individuals who have difficulties and anxiety adjusting to it. Post-Transition communities must set a high standard of inclusiveness and compassion towards all members of the community. Those who find it more difficult adjusting to the new Paradigm must be addressed with compassion, understanding, and sensitivity. They must be helped, coached and supported to find ways to thrive in the new paradigm, knowing that their contribution is acknowledged and appreciated.

Potential Pitfall:

Hierarchical social structures often respond more quickly to some situations than peer-based ones for simple reasons. The individual or small group in command makes a unilateral decision which is quickly obeyed all the way down the chain of command, whereas in peer-based social structures, decision-making and implementation can be more time-consuming due to the dialogue involved, whether by vote or consensus, among a larger group of more diverse people.

This only becomes a problem in some emergency or time-critical situations.

In the new paradigms, there will be no artificially, arbitrarily enforced pseudo-urgency generated by overproduction. It will not be critical whether the next innovations in automobiles or televisions happen in a week, a month, or a year. There will be no competing for-profit entities rushing to get products to market ahead of each other.

However, under specific kinds of circumstances: emergency responders, defense forces, and very few other situations, there is often not time for discussion, voting or consensus. In such situations there are several options.

One is for all members of these teams to become proficient in all aspects of operations. Such units should drill and practice to the point where they (an ambulance team, emergency room crew, platoon, squadron, hazmat team, fire company, etc.) reach the degree of team unity and organic efficiency where the need for a strong command structure is minimized or nonexistent. All members know what to do in a crisis. They develop among them a high level of organic coordination and synergy that becomes second nature.

This is a demonstrably attainable goal, as is seen time and time again, from domestic partners who can finish each other's sentences, to long-running musical groups and production companies, Special Forces teams, sports teams and more in which the members develop a rapport that results in optimum efficiency and efficacy with little or no command structure, discussion or process needed.

This demands a higher level of training, practice and mastery than is needed under hierarchical structures. If it becomes apparent that some situations truly function better with a hierarchical structure, it will have to be monitored very closely and maintained with a deliberate mindfulness that the hierarchy is for functional purposes only, having no "life of its own.”

Roles will be frequently rotated so that no individuals are maintained in a permanent position in the hierarchy, which will be dissolved as soon as it has fulfilled its specific purpose.

Potential Pitfall:

In the shift in energy production towards distributed small-scale facilities, and with the accompanying increase in community and individual involvement in the process, we must keep in mind that not all members of the community are technically inclined or knowledgeable. This could potentially lead to situations in which some installations are poorly maintained, not maintained at all, or incur injuries to persons or damage to equipment. We cannot expect all persons to become electricians or technicians at a professional level. We should not pressure people to participate in jobs for which they are not inclined or talented.

Training, however, can be provided at a community, neighborhood, or block level by proficient professionals in order to prepare and equip willing, able members of the community to maintain, repair, upgrade and expand facilities both in and outside of their own communities.

Help desks and call centers will be established to support community infrastructure participants. On-call teams of field technicians will come on-site to respond to situations as needed. It is reasonable to anticipate that in any community, there will be enough people with ability and interest to service the needs of the new infrastructure, which will not normally require a lot of maintenance or repair.

This same approach can be applied to all processes undergoing a shift toward small-scale local production. Programs can be explored similar to the Barefoot Doctors program in China, in which more people are trained in enough specialties: healthcare, emergency and field medicine, firefighting, auto-mechanics, roofing, electrical and plumbing applications, etc. to enable them to respond to the majority of situations that typically occur in their local area.

Challenge:

In any new system or paradigm shift, there are aspects of the human psyche that can eventually lead to the emergence of dogmatism, inertia, arrogance, apathy, complacency, rigidity, substitution of form for substance and meaning, substitution of the letter of the law for the spirit of the law, and the entrenchment of inflexibility in social and institutional stone.

In the non-hierarchical synergistic post-Transition paradigms, there will be less reinforcement of this phenomenon than in most other paradigms, since individuals will be actively empowered, educated, and living at a high level of awareness. But it would be a dangerous mistake to assume that "it can't happen here."

If the new Paradigm ever becomes a repressive, institutionalized, inflexible straitjacket that stifles rather than heightens the well-being, empowerment, safety and happiness of its citizens, then it will be incumbent upon those citizens to challenge such a status quo, while not going to an opposite extreme of rejecting the principles of the Paradigm. Citizens in such a situation must insist that those Paradigms be faithfully honored in word, deed, and spirit in daily life, challenging not the paradigm, but the distortion of or departure from it in practice.

No institution or structure should ever be above re-examination, re-evaluation and challenge in the spirit of serving the happiness and well-being of all members of the community.

Chapter 41: One Does Not Fit All

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

In the human world, there are a wide variety of paradigms in operation.

Some countries are in urgent need of Transition. Some may not be.

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And some may be in need of both Transition and Revolution to overthrow both the economic and the political systems.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

People around the world will do well to examine their socio-economic and political environment to decide what is needed. In countries such as the United States and others dominated by laissez-faire Capitalist economic systems coexisting with democratically-founded constitutional political systems, the kind of Transition described in this writing is absolutely necessary in order to break the pattern of feudalization that inevitably emerges out of Capitalism.

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It is best and wisest to respect he political and Constitutional mechanisms and entities; though to the extent that they are dominated and controlled by Capitalist Feudal Lords, they must be defied, resisted, and ignored. But only the social-economic power structure needs actually be overthrown and transformed.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Once Capitalism is replaced with the new synergistic Paradigms, elected governmental personnel and their institutions will have no choice but to work within the parameters of the new Paradigms. The current reinforcers for corruption will be absent. There will be no corporate or other wealthy lobbyists to influence government, because there will be no corporations and no ultra-wealthy neo-feudal lords to drive such dynamics. The loudest, most audible voices that politicians, representatives, legislators and others will hear will be the authentic voices of the People. These voices will not always agree. Difficult decisions and compromises will have to be made many times; but the context will be an honest, pertinent public dialog based on authentic human issues and principles. The domination of political institutions, mechanisms and actors by the power structure and interests of a feudalistic economic Pyramid will be over. The pyramid will be dismantled. In democratically socialistic countries such as Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and others, no Transition may be necessary. Countries implementing such paradigms tend to be strong in principles similar to those of the Transition. According to current and ongoing research, members of such Communities tend to have a high quality of life, freedom, access to necessities and resources, respect, health, and happiness (Helliwell, Huang and Wang, World Happiness Report, 2019). Such countries may require occasional adjustment and problem-solving to stay in keeping with the greatest good and well-being of their people. In such paradigms, reinforcement of abusive or predatory behavior is low, and the voices of the People are much more clearly heard and expressed than in other existing paradigms. Necessary changes and adjustments can generally be made within the existing mechanisms of the system. In countries such as Vietnam and the People's Republic of China, we see the language of Communism alongside the practice of state-directed capitalism, with sharp inequality and one-party rule, in which political and economic power are deeply intertwined. As in the European Middle Ages, when the Church and the feudal lords were part of the same power structure rather than checking each other, so in China today the

business elite and the institutions of government are fused. And just as the language of equality and a “classless society” serves China’s rulers, the language of freedom and “anybody can make it” serves the powerful in the United States, though Americans still have free elections, courts and a free press with which to push back.

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In China and similar countries, unlike in the United States on the one hand and the socialist democracies on the other, both the socio-economic and the political power structures will have to be overthrown, transformed and re-cast. Where there is a Constitution or similar defining document along Marxist lines, it would be wise to preserve and implement its basic principles to the extent that they serve the happiness, well-being, empowerment and dignity of the people and amplify those principles. Of course, some changes may need to be made in order to establish freedom of religion, strengthen the guarantee of democratic government of, by and for the People, and undo any portions that enact totalitarian paradigms or mechanisms. Best results can of course be expected if the same kinds of tactics used in the economic Transition are also applied to the overthrow and ouster of the governmental authorities and structures. A blood-bath will not lead to a free, democratic, empowered and compassionate society.

In countries such as Syria, Saudi Arabia, Russia and many others, we see a ruthless oppressive political or military dictatorship, which makes no pretense of responsiveness to the People, interwoven with a Capitalist paradigm lacking any regulation. In such countries, the only option for moving towards a thriving, free, democratic, empowered, compassionate community is the complete overthrow and scrapping of both the political and the economic power structures and in many cases the military. Foundational, Constitutional documents will need to be drafted and enacted. This is perhaps one of the two most perilous situations for those engaged in the Transition and the most difficult scenario for maintaining the principle of non-violent or minimally violent action, strategy, and tactics. Such paradigms have no Constitutional foundation upon which to build the new Paradigm. Each country will require its own unique strategy and tactics. Post-Transition, democratic socialist and other similar paradigm countries can assist by putting pressure on the governments of those countries via blockades, trade embargoes and other economic sanctions, isolating them on the world stage.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

We simply will not do any business with such countries. We will form no alliances with their power structures. While post-Transition countries and communities will not engage in covert or overt invasions or interference with internal affairs of other countries, we will openly support those seeking to free themselves and enact their own Transitions.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Important factors will be secrecy, the element of surprise, and high bandwidth streaming of events to the world at large. Post-Transition communities can help support this by covertly supplying satellite phones, micro-SD data storage and other devices to people struggling under these dictatorships, which generally block access to the Internet and the outside world. This is practical now with the small size and power of such devices.

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While individual countries of the Transition will not interfere directly, once such a scenario of peaceful but determined people striving to free themselves of oppressive regimes becomes an internationally recognized humanitarian crisis, it may be possible for the United Nations, through its own procedures, to send humanitarian missions and, where it authorises them, peacekeeping forces, alongside humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent and Doctors Without Borders. The international community will likely unite to send humanitarian aid to the people initiating the Transition, and to isolate and pressure the dictatorship: refusing to recognize or cooperate with it, applying diplomatic

pressure, and acting to prevent atrocities against the people. For this to work, it is vital that the people of the Transition maintain an unwavering commitment to nonviolence; force is used only in self-defence against immediate physical assault, and only the minimum necessary. We must always strive sincerely to act with a high level of integrity and compassion. Countries with theocratic dictatorships are perhaps the most challenging of all. Any Transition worthy of undertaking will respect the basic core religious and cultural identity of the people. The paradox is that when religious or cultural parameters are injurious to and incompatible with a free and empowered community of free and empowered individuals, there will have to be changes, made through the community's own law and led as far as possible by voices from within, ideally drawing upon an available basis in other aspects of the local religious or cultural context. For example, in cultures which practice female genital mutilation or forbid women from studying or expressing themselves, those patterns will have to change, with no exceptions. There are cultures which practice ritual cruelty to animals, cremation of the living wife on her husband's funeral pyre, forced arranged child marriages, "honor" killings, various forms of slavery and forced servitude and more. Such practices will need to be stopped, but not in a manner that fundamentally negates or disrespects the faith and cultural identity of the people of the affected community. As a case in point, nothing in the Quran mandates female genital mutilation; most Islamic scholars hold that the few hadiths cited in its favour are weak, and Egypt's highest religious authority, Al-Azhar's Supreme Council for Islamic Research, has declared it harmful and without basis in Islamic law (Asmani and Abdi, Population Council / USAID, 2008; Al Jazeera, 2007). It is practised in some thirty countries, mostly in parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia, by Muslim, Christian and other communities alike, and many of them mistakenly associate it with their religion (WHO). In fact it is a brutal cultural practice that none of these faiths teaches. In ending it among Muslim communities, it would be optimal to base the change on Quranic scriptures that prohibit or discourage cruelty, abuse, oppression, and mutilation of human beings. Religious persecution is not the failing of any one faith. Across history and around the world, followers of nearly every religion and ideology have both persecuted others and been persecuted themselves: Hindus and Muslims in South Asia, Christians and Muslims in many regions, rival Christian denominations and rival Muslim sects, Buddhist majorities and minorities in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, and secular regimes against believers of every kind. Wherever it happens, the most effective challenge comes from within the tradition itself. Where Christians use their faith to justify persecuting gay people or people of other faiths, the challenge can be based on Biblical teachings of non-judgment, forgiveness, and judgment belonging to God alone. Where Muslim and Christian communities are persecuting each other, it can draw on Quranic verses directing Muslims to respect 'the people of the Book', and on Biblical teachings instructing Christians to love their neighbors and even their enemies and treat all with respect. Where Hindus and Muslims are set against each other, each tradition has its own teachings of compassion and respect to draw on. The way Japanese culture was treated after the end of World War II is instructive. Though the Emperor had led Japan in an aggressive and brutal war, the occupying forces largely treated the Emperor, the Japanese people and their culture with respect (though they also censored the press), while introducing improvements to many aspects of Japanese life. The result was a thriving, more democratic, humane Japan that has still retained its cultural identity and dignity.

Negating or invalidating a people's cultural or religious identity is both oppressive and ineffective. It engenders covert resistance and a backlash that does more harm than good.

Whenever practices harmful to human well-being and happiness are present, they must be stopped in ways that respect and honor the overall identity of the people. Every culture and religion has its unique mix of beneficial and harmful expressions. When post-transition communities are supporting and advising those working to bring Transition in other communities, care must be taken to study and learn their culture and religion in depth so that necessary changes can be introduced in ways that strengthen and reinforce the uniqueness of the people. It would be contrary to the very nature and purpose of the Transition for any country, ethnicity, religion or culture to attempt to impose its aesthetics upon another.

As we work to bring about Transition within our own respective cultures, it will most likely result in greater human happiness and thriving if we neither throw out our entire cultural identity in favor of that of another culture, nor blindly perpetuate all aspects of features of our own culture.

The core principles of the new Paradigms include respect for all people, the importance of government and economics of by and for the People, reinforcement of mutual effort for mutual good, equality, the right of open access to all resources for all,

peer-based social structures, distributed rather than centralized production and distribution, and more. Yet the strength of our unity at every level will be in the embracing and choreographing of our diversity in the human community.

Chapter 42: The Transition from Capitalism to the New Paradigm: More Thoughts

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

On Business

In Capitalist societies, “Business” is often used to justify decisions, actions, policies, practices and attitudes that hurt or destroy the quality of human life, or even destroy human life itself and the environment in which it unfolds. "It's just business, nothing personal," is all too often given as the reason and justification for actions that deprive people or even whole communities, countries or towns of livelihood, reduce or eliminate safeguards and needed support or benefits for employees and consumers, impose arbitrary rules that restrict or hamper people, make life more difficult for employees and customers, damage the environment, freeze or lower wages, raise prices, and all other manner of harm.

In Capitalist societies, "Business" is accepted as a legitimate reason for causing harm, even as religion is accepted as a legitimate reason to cause harm in theocratic societies. That is a measure of just how deeply these attitudes are ingrained in cultures dominated by Capitalist paradigms. One has to ask: if “it’s just business” can excuse degrading, disempowering, suppressing, oppressing, attacking, enslaving, abusing and otherwise damaging human lives, then the problem is the rules of the game that make such harm profitable, and those rules must be replaced as quickly as possible. If the word “heroin” or “cocaine” were substituted for “business,” most people anywhere would instantly see the contradiction.

To make an analogy, if there were a form of entertainment that routinely involved the mutilation and death of most participants and spectators and the destruction of homes or neighborhoods, the public uproar would be deafening and the practice would be banned. Imagine the running of the bulls in Pamplona, Spain replaced with a high-speed army-tank race through the city center at rush hour. Thus is the effect of Capitalism upon the human and natural world.

On Strikes

To review: strikes are no longer as effective as they once were because of a number of factors.

1) One factor is the fact that many labor unions have devolved into establishments whose existence has taken on a life of its own, separate and detached from their original mission to safeguard and advance the well-being and fair treatment of workers and employees. Many unions have lost touch with their purpose and become corrupt and self-serving, leading to disillusionment and cynicism among rank and file members.

Such corruption has even gone so far that labor unions have been engaged to suppress other emerging labor unions. A well-known instance of this was when the Teamsters were used by big growers to intimidate the United Farm Workers when they were in the initial stages of organizing.

2) Many large employers have found legal ways to circumvent unions, such as hiring workers at just under the number of hours per week than would entitle them to Union membership, hiring workers as "contractors," which makes them legally not employees and so not entitled to Union representation, employee benefits or unemployment. Mega-corporations and the neo-Feudal lords at their helm relentlessly lobby legislators in government to pass laws that weaken labor unions, deny the right to strike by defining it as a crime, and pass so-called “at-will employment” laws. The mainstream media are often used to portray unions as exploiters of workers while painting employers as looking after workers' interests in the face of bad unions.

Nowadays strikers are commonly painted as hooligans trying to disrupt normal life, while employers are portrayed as the beleaguered heroes striving to keep things running. This lopsided and carefully staged propaganda, when skillfully applied,

creates a public attitude hostile to employees and labor unions.

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Forceful, peaceful employee takeover as outlined in Transition strategy is the most viable mode of effecting redesign and repair of the broken and deeply flawed Capitalist paradigm in all of its variations.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

On Corporations

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After the Transition, corporations will cease to exist; but it is likely that those running them and those who serve them will resist being disbanded. It will be important to seize Corporate offices, headquarters, and other business centers, assets and resources immediately, in an orderly, forceful but nonviolent way and open all of their records for public scrutiny.

Those defending corporations and neo-Feudal lords will have to be overpowered but not harmed if at all possible. While they may give us no choice but to fight them, their humanity must not be violated or disrespected.

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In many cases, corporations will be found to have engaged in price gouging, suppression of scientific studies potentially damaging to their profits, dumping toxic waste and otherwise destroying the environment, knowingly doing business with entities using sweatshop and other exploitative labor practices or engaging in these practices themselves, abusing employees, clients, customers or business partners, manipulating resources, production, and economics to enhance corporate or personal profits, stock value, or other interests and agendas in ways harmful to human beings and/or the environment. In such cases, the individuals responsible will be held accountable just as with any other criminals against humanity.

Depending on whether the harmful effects are only within their one country, or extend beyond its borders, they will stand trial for their actions either nationally or in The Hague. All details of their abuses and crimes will be made public. This will help to dispel and deconstruct Capitalist myths depicting corporations as benevolent and worthy of respect. The humanity and equanimity which perpetrators will be tried and treated will show the true benevolent nature of the post-Transitionary community.

Where their trial is national, emphasis should be not on revenge or making them suffer, but rather on exposing their crimes and abuses, holding them responsible, ensuring that they will never again be in a position to perpetrate similar actions, and making sure they give back to those who were harmed by their decisions and actions. This is more about healing than about punishment.

The Norwegian prison system might be a good model for housing and containing such criminals and indeed all criminals. They should be offered therapy and rehabilitation during their quarantine and incarceration.

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Inventions, technologies and innovations that were suppressed or withheld will of course be made fully available to all.

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Corporate and billionaire moneys in foreign and offshore accounts will be seized and converted into resources to benefit the People.

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Domestic bank accounts will be irrelevant because currency will be obsolete and serve no function. Nobody will need to take the former Feudal Lord's money from them. They will be free to take it from the bank to fill their garages or paper their walls, since it will have no more value than Monopoly money or pieces of newspaper. Cash would probably make decent insulation. It is, however, poor fuel since the ink is toxic when burned.

On Family

Under Capitalist paradigms, with the constant, unrelenting, pervasive reinforcers for making money and the threat of absolute negation of one's existence if one fails, it is no surprise that many people take finances into account in selecting their mates. All too many will choose to marry someone who offers a better financial situation and standard of living, rather than someone they love and have a better relationship with who is likely to remain poor. Some even select a mate solely or primarily for their wealth or the power and level of respect or deference that comes with it in such societies.

It is also not surprising that financial stresses are one of the biggest causes of failed domestic partnerships, friendships and other relationships. When both or all partners are putting forth their best efforts yet continue to be poor and running short, they can easily begin over time to feel inadequate or blame each other. The Capitalist system benefits from this situation because it keeps the people fragmented, divided, conquered, and unlikely to unite to fight against the real source of the problem, which is the capitalist paradigm itself.

After the Transition, there will be no financial stress whatsoever, no motivations or reinforcers to marry for money. Of course, human beings being as complex as we are, many other factors also contribute to the long-term success or breakdown of a domestic partnership or friendship. However, with the removal of financial factors and all that goes with them, we can realistically expect to see a significant rise in the success rate of domestic partnerships and other relationships as measured both statistically and subjectively in terms of human happiness and the quality and longevity of relationships in the home and community.

On Choreography and Logistics

In order to maximize efficiency and avoid overproduction or underproduction, we will create a universal network that uses a distributed computer database and tracking system to adjust production to need. The concept has been covered elsewhere but it bears reiterating.

Passive RFID chips embedded in products can be used to track consumption and inform production facilities how much of goods or services are needed and where, based on to-be-determined Target Inventory Levels and Balances On Hand, geographically coordinated and taking trends into account over time. As time goes on, forecasting will become increasingly accurate as larger data sets are collected and analyzed.

This function will not be one of control or management in which production facilities are ordered to produce arbitrary quotas. It will function more like an orchestra conductor or bandleader cueing different instruments when to come in. Also, in order to maintain the sanctity of individual privacy, RFID chips will not be used in such a way as to be able to track which product is associated with which individual.

On “Commission Work”

Commission work, a euphemism for voluntary virtual slave labor, is a common ploy used to lure potential salespeople into working essentially for free using the prospect of big bonuses and commissions, and "performance-based" pay structures. The myth and hype are very different from the reality.

A typical commission-based position offers sub-living or no pay as "base-pay" with "incentives" in the form of commissions based on sales, business volume or other metrics. The unfortunate employees lured into these jobs find themselves in a position where the only way to survive is to make as many sales as possible, by any means necessary. This results in a hard-sell culture in which clients/customers can expect to be victimized by misrepresentations, falsehoods, and promises that will never be kept.

A recent case study in the United States is Wells Fargo bank, whose unrealistic sales quotas created an economic sword hanging over employees' heads, leading to the false creation of thousands of fraudulent accounts due to fear of being fired for failing to meet performance metrics (Smith and Reiners, Duke FinReg Blog, 2017; Tayan, Stanford Closer Look Series, 2019).

Other notoriously “commission based” setups include home-improvement and closet-design firms where "representatives," "consultants" or "associates" spend considerable time commuting to the homes of prospective clients, spending hours with them drafting drawings of proposed solutions and installations, calculating cost estimates often multiple times. For all their efforts, they are only paid if and when there is a sale, which carries the risk of "charge-backs" if the customer changes their mind.

Multi-Level Marketing (MLM’s) and Network Marketing businesses are yet another form of commission-based work. In these business models, people are recruited with the appeal of “being your own boss” and told true stories of individuals who have made huge incomes in the business. In such businesses, one must constantly bring both new customers and new recruits into the business in order to make any income. One is only paid when they sign someone up or make a sale, or when one of their sign-ups signs someone up or makes a sale; and one has to contend with the same “charge-backs” if someone they signed up changes their mind at any time.

Waitpeople in restaurants are yet another example of “commission” work. Workers are paid sub-minimum wage on presumption of tips, which some owners take for themselves and portion out as they see fit, even though federal law has forbidden employers to keep employees’ tips since 2018 (Jackson Lewis, 2018).

The psychological reinforcers of making the sale at any cost, lead to a culture among sales professions of dishonesty, misrepresentation, hard-selling, cutthroat competition, and desperation. This kind of exploitation will cease to exist forever with the end of Capitalism.

A Better Way Of Life Versus Payback And Revenge

This Transition is not and must not be focused upon the CEOs, billionaires, corporations and other players who perpetrate and perpetuate the economic pyramid. If we are to be successful, we must rather be focused upon halting the paradigm in which all of us have been operating, the behaviors that it reinforces, and the results in terms of enhancing or detracting from human happiness, well-being, thriving, and a sustainable environment for us to live in. We must focus not on the players, but on the game, the nature of the game, what it reinforces, and on what are the likely and inevitable results of the paradigm. If we are to create a truly new, more empowering, compassionate, vibrant and functional Community paradigm, then we must not be distracted by us-and-them thinking.

This transition must happen very soon if we are to avoid a very long dark age, the likes of which humanity has never seen; but it must not be yet another bloodbath, another change of power from one group of corrupt dictators to another, no matter how well-intended.

On Taxation

Government, under Capitalism, is limited and controlled by money as a barrier, as much as individuals are. Countless times, worthy, beneficial projects languish and are suppressed due to lack of funding. Government is forced to prey upon its

already struggling citizens through taxation in order to gain funding.

In the new paradigms, government will be free to build bridges, improve roads, provide disaster relief, build hospitals and schools, encourage scientific research and send exploratory spacecraft out into the universe without such constraints. There will of course always be some kinds of constraints. The laws of physics and chemistry, for example, or the availability of real resources, rather than arbitrary constructs, will determine what can and cannot be achieved. No capricious constraints will hobble human ingenuity.

On Initialization

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Regarding the initialization strategy for the Transition, a day must be decided upon and widely communicated both within the affected country and globally. It will be most effective if all individuals consciously involved in staging the Transition act at once across all of the country.

The Declaration should be released and transmitted across all media at around mid-day, after the Transition is underway. This should be timed to come at around the point in time when those unaware of what is going on will be confused and anxious. The Declaration will clarify and instruct, while hopefully easing fears of violence.

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On the Perceptions of Life, Work, and How They Fit Together

Capitalism and similar systems have created an artificial, destructive, demoralizing fragmentation and alienation, dividing life into work, home life, and play. This inevitably results in a drag on, and negation of, our natural engagement in the processes of life and in our social community interactions. Work becomes something oppressive that is forced upon us, leading to a desire to not work, to be free of work, and to have time for what we really care about, which is usually not work. In most work environments, employees are keenly aware that the employer does not care about their well-being or happiness as much as it cares about profits, stock value, and market share.

Yet the distinction between "work" and "life/play" is artificial. Children typically express a desire to join in adult activities, including "chores" like cleaning, doing dishes, gardening, and work activities if they are exposed to them. They do not distinguish between "work" and "play." In hunter-gatherer, pre and non-Capitalist cultures, hunters do not experience hunting as a yoke upon their shoulders, craftspeople do not feel that their crafts drain their spirit, and farmers do not experience farming as an imposed burden or economic shackle. There is pride of workmanship and a positive relationship between an individual and the job they do in the community.

The distinction arises for complex reasons, but major among them is that "work" gradually takes on an association with being pressured, belittled, taken advantage of, bullied, put down and disempowered while performing tasks that hold little interest, fulfillment, motivation, satisfaction or sense of purpose. The ever-present threat of the "wolf at the door" becomes increasingly real and onerous as the child transitions through adolescence into adulthood.

In many non-capitalist societies, taking on the activities and responsibilities of adulthood is an empowering, positive experience of being mentored into a position of becoming a valued contributor to their community. This is living proof that we humans are not predisposed or doomed by our "nature" to suffer the ravages of capitalist neo-Feudalism.

How we interact, organize, and carry out our social interactions as a community, including performance of necessary activities for living typically defined as "work," is largely up to us. Long observation and experience show that certain paradigms, such as monarchy, traditional Feudalism and modern capitalism, actually work contrary to our best interest and happiness as a species and as individuals by reinforcing and emphasizing behaviors that create a preponderance of dysfunction, unhappiness, conflict, destructiveness, and suppression of our best attributes.

Under the new paradigms, this artificial distinction will fade. Our contribution to the community will become an increasingly authentic expression of our interest, passions, strengths and abilities, and our instinctive engagement in the processes of life as a social species

On the Evolution of Systems

Our transition from hunter-gatherers to modern, global technological human communities started out slowly and haphazardly. The major discoveries that changed our ways of life, often for the better, sometimes not, came about spontaneously and more or less randomly.

When our ancestors discovered and learned to appreciate, develop, and consciously apply our problem solving, observational, innovative abilities and how to share information from person to person, community to community, and generation to generation, our rate of change and development accelerated until at this time in history it has possibly outpaced our ability to assimilate the changes in lifestyle and technology that we ourselves have brought about.

We have mastered the arts of engineering solutions to physical world challenges, goals and problems. Yet we have not applied those same abilities to ourselves as individuals or as communities to nearly the same degree. There have been some efforts in that area: democracy, communism, and socialism are some familiar examples.

Yet in the area of social systems we are still functioning at the level that our bronze-age or possibly medieval ancestors functioned with respect to the physical world. It is time for us to observe what we have learned about ourselves as individuals, as communities and social constructs/systems and reexamine how we function well and how we function poorly. We will truly begin to thrive when we start to apply the same creative problem-solving skills to those areas as we do to technical challenges, being guided and directed by the goal of creating social systems that consciously, consistently evolve in the direction of fostering the greatest empowerment, fulfillment, well being and happiness of all human beings as individuals and as communities.

In some ways, the new Paradigm may superficially appear to be a form of Socialism, and indeed it does have some common elements. There are important differences, however. One of the most salient ones is that while in Socialism, the government or State owns or controls resources and administers them in as equitable a way as they are able. In the new Paradigms, however, most resources will be owned and/or controlled by the individuals or social entities using them. The role of government will be more to prevent excesses and abuses by individuals or groups and to facilitate and coordinate the flow of information to enable productive dialogue between producers and consumers to ensure real needs are met while minimizing waste. Some resources, such as major infrastructure, national defense, space exploration, national parks, etc., will be administered by the government transparently to, and responsible to, the People. The role of government will be more like an orchestra conductor and at times a referee, than like a ruler or dictator. The concept of the “commons” will be revived and updated as needed on a large scale.

On Compulsive, Obsessive Growth

The current mode of operation dominating large-scale Capitalist corporations and other enterprises includes the constant compulsion, in order to continue to survive as a business, to constantly increase profits and stock prices, and to accelerate the rate of increase, usually the through artificially-imposed and forced self-devouring cycle.

Logically, this model is unstable and impossible to sustain indefinitely. Picture a process that starts out consuming a pint of water a day, producing an ounce of product a day, and generating a pint of waste a day and has to keep scaling up to stay in operation. Let’s say facilities are built to supply the global need and profit off of it at $10 per ounce. Let us suppose that after a month, this process consumes a gallon of water a day, produces eight ounces of product a day, and generates a gallon of waste a day. Imagine if eight billion people each purchase the aforementioned ounce of product a day, every day. After a month, that would be eight billion gallons of water consumed every day, eight billion ounces of product produced in that day, and eight billion gallons of waste that needs to be disposed of that day. And that is only the beginning.

Now remember that this needs to keep increasing indefinitely with no upper limit. It is easy to see how at some point, the demands of this process would overwhelm the global water supply, fill the oceans with waste in the place of water, and bury the population in products whose weight would crush them. That is exactly what is happening as long as capitalist paradigms operate unregulated and unchecked on a global, or even national level. If it is not deliberately phased out, it will ultimately break down anyway due to its non-sustainability and cause untold human suffering in the process. If not curtailed, it may well reach the proportions of an extinction-level event (Tollefson, Nature, 2019; Woodward, "18 Signs We're in the Middle of a 6th Mass Extinction", Business Insider, 2019). Current research already finds seven of the nine "planetary boundaries" that keep the Earth safe for humanity crossed (Planetary Health Check, 2025).

The Danger of "It Can't Happen Here" Thinking

To think "it can't happen here" regarding totalitarianism, religious fanaticism, genocide, environmental collapse and other worst-case scenarios is as unwise as driving while watching TV because one is sure that one is familiar with the road. These kinds of abuses and tragedies are not exclusive to one party, ethnicity, religion, philosophy, ideology, country, place, or time. They are behaviors carried out by human beings in diverse times and places. As such, we must always be alert - not hyper-vigilant or paranoid - but aware to notice symptoms of these phenomena if they do arise and take action to prevent their proliferation. We are not that way by nature; but those attitudes and behaviors are sadly within the darker end of the spectrum of human behaviors.

Tragically, it can happen anywhere, when the conditions and human dynamics are fertile for it to arise. To deny the possibility is to blind ourselves and convert it into an active danger. If we simply remain conscious and observant, then we will see and identify such phenomena and be able to contain and de-escalate them before they can become institutionalized and turn into a crisis.

It is equally dangerous and self-defeating to apply "it can't happen here" thinking to the positive end of the range of human potential.

In heavily capitalist countries like the United States, many people are aware that their society is severely broken; yet when one brings up the possibility of improvements and solutions that they are aware are working very successfully, such as free higher education and healthcare for all as is practiced in places like Norway, Sweden, Denmark and elsewhere, many immediately react by saying, "That could never work here, this is America and we're capitalist." Similar reactions are encountered when any kind of cooperative models are discussed.

This is equivalent to an individual who is sick with cancer but says "Oh no, that won't work for me, I'm too sickly" when a treatment with a high success rate is brought to their attention. This mindset often reflects psychological processes and dynamics strongly akin to the effects of trauma, and to the trauma bonding seen in abusive relationships, in which people who have been harmed come to identify with those who harmed them, as well as what social psychologists call system justification, the tendency to defend and justify the existing system even at one's own expense (Jost and Banaji, British Journal of Social Psychology, 1994). We will do well to study and learn the effective approaches to healing from trauma, apply them to ourselves and each other, and offer them to anyone held back by such patterns of thought who wishes to work through them.

Happily, best-case scenario paradigms can happen anywhere. These are all matters of choice, completely within our ability to attain in either or both directions.

Chapter 43: More Food for Thought

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

1) Over and over again through uncounted generations, humans have shown that hierarchical social and economic paradigms result in oppressive societies that are not conducive to human happiness and well-being or environmental sustainability. Dysfunction and abuse of power and position become institutionalized and set in stone. Such models are therefore contrary to the positive aspects of human nature. As a result, we do well to abandon such paradigms altogether in favor of peer-based ones.

We are also capable of symbiosis. Every human being has a contribution to make by being their unique self and doing their best, just as the organs of an organism or diverse species interact in nature. By God, evolution or any other route, it is logical to postulate that the diversity of human beings is constructed in such a way that we can fit ourselves together as pieces of a puzzle to form a symbiotic, mutually complementary whole greater than the sum of the parts, and in which each individual is uplifted and supported by their fellows.

2) The use of the terms "free enterprise" and "private enterprise" is misleading, invoking the false image of individuals freely pursuing their lives. In reality, in the 21st Century, it refers for the most part to the business endeavors of ultra-wealthy individuals, large businesses and mega-corporations, which is in fact inimical to the ability of individuals to pursue their lives freely.

This is especially evident where the pernicious, insidious concept of "corporate personhood" is accepted and applied. In such contexts, the concept of "free enterprise" or "private enterprise" come to represent the enforcement of the "rights" of the employer, especially when the employer is a powerful corporation, over the rights of individuals, employees and those who seek to pursue their life, liberty and happiness outside and independent of the capitalist system.

The misperception of these terms as representing the rights of individuals is key in maintaining a docile and compliant populace. This is clearly demonstrated by the current trend of the regime in power in the United States to uphold, enforce and “protect” the "rights" and "religious freedom" of employers to withhold healthcare from employees, discriminate in pay and in hiring, and terminate employees based on the religious beliefs or ideology of the employer. Similar laws under the same banner are being enacted to protect the "religious freedom" of lenders, businesses and landlords by allowing them to similarly discriminate against customers and applicants. Yet there is absolutely no corresponding legislation or interpretation upholding and supporting the religious freedom and rights of the employee or applicant, the individual member of the community.

In this way, the laws and Constitutional protections of individuals against discrimination are circumvented through legalistic sophistry and the conscious, deliberate distortion, abuse and misinterpretation of those protections to distort them into protecting corporations and the neo-Feudal Lords at the expense of the human individual.

This entire movement in the name of “religious freedom” is, quite simply, a move to consolidate the power of the ruling elite over the People, and its effects are demonstrable: in 2014 the Supreme Court ruled, in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, that for-profit corporations can claim religious freedom to refuse their employees contraceptive coverage. Employers, landlords and lenders gain power over the people who depend on them, all skillfully concealed behind relatable slogans that resonate deeply with certain segments of the population, especially those who believe it is their duty to impose their beliefs on society as a whole.

It is important to research and question all legislation and other measures made in the name of appealing archetypal values and expressed in terms like "religious freedom," "free enterprise," "national security," "make our country great again," “defending Western civilization,” "Manifest Destiny," "family values," "at-will employment," “pro-life,” and many others.

Many people hold the values behind these words sincerely; that is exactly why the words are so useful as cover. Who would want to oppose "religious freedom?" The very thought goes against the deepest instincts of anyone brought up to believe in freedom and democracy. So look past the label to what each law actually does, and to whom.

Yet those very terms are cleverly and skillfully used by expert propagandists to cover draconian totalitarian agendas by making them feel palatable and sympathetic. We must look past humanistic sounding buzzwords and see the real actions and intentions underneath, what is actually being done. Among those of us dedicated to the Transition, we might do well to resist the use of these terms and refer to them in more realistically descriptive terms such as the "power of employers to discriminate."

3) One definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results. Yet we humans have an aspect of our nature that resists abandoning the familiar, even when it is causing us harm or not working.

Capitalist paradigms have consistently proven themselves to be dysfunctional and harmful over time. Attempting to adjust or repair them by legislating limits and constraints upon these paradigms produces only incomplete, temporary improvements that sooner or later yield to the will of the emerging new neo-Feudal ruling elite as their control and power inevitably consolidates. It is an unproductive, dangerous waste of time and effort to attempt to make these paradigms serve the well-being of the People. The only true remedy is to abandon these paradigms and systems altogether, to create new ones designed to foster a thriving community of symbiotic, empowered, thriving individuals.

4) Under Capitalist paradigms, fewer and fewer people over time come to control more and more land and resources, including the necessities of life, prices, wages and salaries. Ultimately the same tiny segment of the population controls what people are paid and what they must pay.

In these paradigms, the emerging neo-Feudal lords - the ultra wealthy and the heads of corporations - are not in any way answerable or accountable to the People. At the same time, they come to exert a massively disproportionate amount of influence over those in government who theoretically are answerable to the People.

Caprice and greed run unchecked and rampant. There is nothing under Capitalist paradigms to prevent it. In fact these behaviors are strongly reinforced.

We need not look hard to find numerous examples. Recently there was the previously mentioned case of notorious pharmaceutical company CEO Martin Shkreli of Turing Pharmaceuticals who arbitrarily jacked up the price of Daraprim by nearly 6,000 percent as soon as he got control of the rights. Even more recently, Nirmal Mulye, CEO of yet another pharmaceutical corporation, Nostrum Laboratories raised the price of a bottle of nitrofurantoin, an essential antibiotic medication (which has been around since 1954) from the already exorbitant price of $475 to nearly $2,500 and subsequently stated in Financial Times that he is perfectly within his rights to raise his prices as high as possible to maximize profits. He stated that he has a “moral imperative” to reward his shareholders, and justified the behavior of Shkreli. Sadly, Capitalism actively reinforces this behavior. Though these men are in fact terrorists and criminals against humanity, their actions are not considered a crime or even immoral under Capitalism, though Shkreli is currently in prison for other crimes that are defined as crimes under Capitalism.

We also see examples in which those who control a vital resource cut supply and raise prices to punish their customers over a political dispute. In 1973, the Arab oil-producing states embargoed oil to the United States over its support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War; the price of oil nearly quadrupled, and it stayed high after the embargo was lifted (Federal Reserve History).When a small group of people control the vast majority of vital resources and command most of the workforce, those serving in government find in practice that they must cooperate with the pressures and demands of that ruling group if they want to get anything done. This small group of people are not answerable to the People or their representatives. They control vital resources as their “private property” and thus exert a power of influence that cannot be ignored or defied. This is so even for an elected government that is theoretically answerable to the People.

In practical terms, those in control of the economic pyramid have the power to blackmail both the people and those in government, since they can effectively paralyze, block, and render ineffective, any move that government attempts to make

which displeases them. All they have to do is signal an intention to withhold production, close or relocate facilities to another country, or raise prices enough to cause a crisis. At the other end of this dynamic are massive campaign contributions and support of candidates via lobbyists, and other forms of enticement extended to politicians by the ultra-wealthy and their corporations (Ungar, "The Corporate Blackmailing of America Is Now All The Rage", Forbes; Montpetit, "Big Oil Hits New Low With Financial 'Blackmail' of Government", HuffPost Canada, 2016).

Of course, in Capitalist paradigms where one's rights, freedoms, options, respect, and quality of life depend mostly upon one's financial status, the Feudal Lords of the Corporatocracy rarely need to resort to blackmail and coercion. Most politicians willingly comply with the demands and agendas of those with the most money and power, which by the nature of the paradigm comes at the expense of the rest of the population.

In practice, a Capitalistic paradigm inevitably generates a neo-Feudal power structure, an economic pyramid which effectively erodes and undermines the power and rights of the People, no matter how clearly they are written into the Constitution or other foundational documents of the country. Capitalist paradigms are fundamentally and functionally incompatible with, and inimical to, a free, democratic, empowered, symbiotic thriving society of empowered, free, thriving individuals.

5) Under the stresses of the world as it is today, with most individuals are forced into a life of unrelenting, slowly-losing struggle for survival. Resentments, anger, even rage are endemic and epidemic at high levels in most of the population. Humans have a tendency to seek an object or target upon whom to focus these emotions, potentially to defend themselves against a threat, to avenge themselves over wrongs suffered, or simply to vent and purge upon.

The neo-Feudal lords of the Corporatocracy have learned over generations to be very skillful advertisers, manipulators, and propagandists. They are keenly adept at using advertising to generate a strong emotional sense of need for manufactured products. As previously mentioned, we have seen this dynamic lead to long lines of people assembling at stores and outlets in the middle of the night to fight one another over this year's latest hottest item, especially around the time of gift-giving holidays.

These same propaganda techniques are also employed to keep sectors of the population focusing their blame, resentment, anger, and rage over the injustice and inequity of the economic struggle for survival, upon one another across every possible line of demarcation. Black, white, brown, Asian, all blame and focus their rage and distrust upon each other. Turks and Armenians. Native born and immigrants. Religion versus religion versus secular. Conservative versus liberal. Young versus middle aged versus elderly. Educated versus less-educated. If it can be turned into a basis for "us vs. them" emotions and ideation, then it most certainly has been fanned into a fever pitch ready to boil over at the slightest provocation.

A divided population is a disempowered, easily-controlled population. Dictators and despots throughout history have known that their draconian modes of governing will inevitably give rise to resentment and rage among the population. Such power elites fear nothing more than they fear a united, informed, freely-thinking empowered populace. One time-honored solution for the despot who wishes to stay in power has always been to present the populace with a manufactured enemy image upon whom to focus that rage, anger, and resentment. Dictators will then present themselves as the ones who will protect the population against "them." Hitler used the Jews. Saddam Hussein used the Kurds and "insurgents." The McCarthyists of the Cold War used "Communists" and "Communist sympathizers." The list is as long as history itself and is getting longer every day.

We who seek to create a truly free, compassionate, empowering, thriving, symbiotic win-win culture and paradigm must steadfastly, impermeably resist all such urges to turn upon each other. We will only thrive if we discipline ourselves to work in concert to end, decisively, nonviolently and democratically, the paradigm and systems that are the true cause of our stress and oppression and then replace them with paradigms and systems intended and designed to promote the thriving, empowerment, and symbiosis among all individuals and sub-groups. We must school ourselves to do this with mutual respect.

The native born and the immigrant, the ones like us and the ones different from us, all races and religions, conservative and liberal, will only have a chance at a future as free individuals in a free and democratic community if we override and cast

aside all such motives as blame, revenge, payback, or purging. That black, white, Latino, Asian, native, immigrant, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Shi'a, Sunni, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, college grad, high school dropout, man, woman, young, middle aged, old person standing with you in line at the supermarket is your potential ally, comrade, backup, friend. Most of them will come through most of the time. Let us treat each other accordingly! When we fight and struggle against one another, we are freely giving away our lives and power to those who seek to control us to satisfy their obsessive power and wealth compulsions and other dysfunctionalities.

6) Many of us have been taught from birth to believe that anybody can "make it" under capitalist paradigms with enough hard work and discipline. By the time many people reach the age of legal adulthood and are thrust into the financial battlefield, they have internalized this belief. It becomes as much a given to them as gravitation, electromagnetism, birth and death. That belief is a vital component in the propaganda construct that keeps almost all members of the community compliant with and struggling within the "game" according to the rules imposed by the neo-Feudal lords of the Corporatocracy.

We believe that if we just play the game a little longer, work a little harder, maybe come up with the next entrepreneurial breakthrough, the "big score," we will achieve "financial freedom" AKA the ability to buy our freedom, life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness with little concern of having it taken away from us anytime soon.

As previously covered, this is in fact as much an illusion or con as is the belief that anybody can win big in a casino. Yet it bears reiterating since it goes against long-held misconceptions of "reality." In both contexts there are copious examples of people who did "win big" or "make it." Yet in practice, there is not room high enough on the pyramid for more than a very few to "make it," just as odds are very poor for any given player "winning big" in a casino. Some members of the Community will resist committing to the Transition because of the belief that if they just play the game by the rules a little longer, they'll be in a good enough position that it won't matter.

Alongside that, since the days of the Cold War, another propaganda thread has left many in capitalist countries with the unquestioned belief that anything that isn't capitalism, (which is unquestioningly equated with freedom and democracy) must be communism which is equated with totalitarianism and dictatorship. Yet most people have never been informed of what any of these words actually mean in theory or in practice. They have only been conditioned to respond to them in certain ways.

In reality, capitalism is a construct that creates, promotes and protects wolves in sheep's clothing, a sinister Wizard of Oz scenario. However, as in the Wizard of Oz story in which Dorothy only needs click her heels together to return home once she knows the truth, the People can bring an end to the feudalistic capitalist pyramid by changing the way "the game" is played from the bottom up.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

To reclaim power over our own lives, we need simply do our jobs while eliminating and rendering obsolete the chain of command and those in its higher echelons, ignoring them and excising the entropic sludge of currency along with the need for it. We must be resolute and prepared to do this while refusing to be intimidated, coerced or seduced into returning to capitalist ways of doing things.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

We must be diligent inside ourselves and among us, to keep the realities clearly in sight while consciously rejecting and tuning out the myths that have kept us compliant in supporting the pyramid and our own exploitation for generations. We must become and remain conscious of this dynamic in ourselves as humans.

Many of us may well encounter inner processes similar to those of victims in abusive relationships who have a notoriously difficult time rising up to escape, resist, or otherwise end such relationships. Victims often choose to stay in a dysfunctional

relationship rather than confront the unknown, the prospect of change, and also due to fear instilled by their abusers as to what will happen to them if they were to leave.

This dynamic is similar to the Biblical story of the ancient Israelis who, enduring the hardships of wandering in Sinai after escaping slavery in Egypt, in a weak moment yearned and begged to return to bondage in Egypt rather than face the arduous and daunting journey ahead of them. In all of these examples, the wisest course is to stay the course, keep moving forward into the new Paradigm even when it is most daunting.

We also do well to anticipate that those former Feudal Lords of the Corporatocracy will most certainly attempt to seduce us former serfs and vassals back into the old paradigm by playing upon these human emotional responses. In order to prevail, we must understand, identify, resist, and ignore the pull of those voices in ourselves, and answer them openly with facts wherever we meet them in our surroundings.

7) There are those who believe that to depart from capitalist paradigms is to accept a life of poverty or primitive existence, return to the Stone Age, invite privation, abandon our individuality and self-expression or have it savagely wrested from us for the sake of forced robotic conformism. In fact, nothing could be further and more opposite from the truth!

This is more propaganda, strengthened by examples of improperly implemented paradigms flying the banner of Communism but which were not truly Communist any more than a Capitalist Democracy is truly Democratic. Images of bleak East German streets and the killing fields of Cambodia have been burned into millions of peoples' minds as the inevitable result of anything other than capitalism. Yet the images of equally bleak U.S. streets or the tortures, murders and other crimes of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile do not trigger the same response. That dictatorship overthrew the democratically elected government in 1973 after a deliberate, well-funded U.S. campaign to destabilise it, including $8 million in covert CIA spending, urged on by corporations such as ITT (National Security Archive). The CIA knew of the coup plotting and appeared to condone it, then actively supported the dictatorship, even paying the head of Pinochet’s secret police (CIA, 2000). How much further Washington’s hand went in the coup itself is still debated; what is documented is damning enough.

As a point in fact, the "Communism" implemented under the cited regimes was not the true classless society envisioned by Marx, Engels, Lenin or Mao. It was rather a class-stratified society broken down into a ruling elite and the rest of the population, just as is the case under Capitalist paradigms.

In practice, egalitarian and synergistic communities offer the prospect of a much higher quality of life on every possible dynamic or metric than is possible under either Capitalistic or Stalinistic paradigms. As is shown elsewhere in this writing, Capitalism reliably concentrates control of vital resources in the hands of a small segment of the population and makes everyone else pay for access, using currency as a barrier.

Capitalism offers the illusion of prosperity, freedom, and quality of life as opiates offer the illusion of bliss and stimulants offer the illusion of boundless energy. Similarly to these drugs, Capitalist paradigms and systems give brief spurts of short-lived illusory seeming prosperity in the midst of an ongoing reality of vain struggle against the denial of one's very existence. This functions just as these kinds of drugs, which offer brief spurts of bliss or energy in the midst of an ongoing reality of struggling just to not feel sick.

True economics of, by, and for the People, coupled with government of, by, and for the People in a peer-based, synergistic, symbiotic paradigm offers a level of prosperity, well-being, self-actualization and expression, safety, security and thriving that is accessible to only those at the very top of the pyramid under Capitalist paradigms. Once again, if we are to ever thrive, we must identify the illusions and make ourselves impervious to them.

Chapter 44: Topics for Research and Exploration

1) The post-Transition Paradigms will be peer-based, synergistic, and non-hierarchical in nature. Yet in the interest of remaining balanced and avoiding the pitfalls of absolutism, it may be beneficial to study and come to a better understanding of what factors determine which individuals will become abusive, destructive and despotic in positions of power or authority in a hierarchy, and which individuals will not. While the dynamics are certainly too complex to quantify, too variable and individual to reduce to absolutes, there are factors which contribute to attitudes and behavioral tendencies. Genetics, nutrition, early and ongoing life experiences, metabolism, training and education, life-changing events, brain structure, neurotransmitter balance or imbalance, cultural factors - all of these and more to varying degrees affect, influence and help to determine how a person is likely to respond to different situations and stimuli.

Human beings are not deterministic like machines, and it is dangerous to attempt to treat ourselves or one another as such. However, if we can learn to identify and recognize what factors predispose a person to abuse authority or rank in a hierarchical context, or to be resistant to these tendencies, then in unusual situations where limited hierarchical structures may be necessary, we can learn to structure and people them so as to minimize the inherent weaknesses and potential for abuse in such structures.

In the systems and structures of the new Paradigms, the need for hierarchical structures will be minimal or nil, and most likely temporary if at all. In such circumstances, we will do well to ensure that they are formed explicitly as temporary, and never allowed to take on a life of their own.

Another possible way to reduce vulnerability to emergence, reinforcement or development of destructive abusive dynamics might be to keep such structures small and train all participants to take on any role in such limited temporary hierarchies. Roles will rotate frequently enough to prevent distorted personality traits or dynamics from establishing themselves as permanent. This will also hopefully reduce the measurable inhibition of compassion and empathy that comes with holding power over others. In experiments, even a small or momentary sense of power has this effect, and it tends to ease when power is relinquished, which is one more reason for roles to rotate.

In addition, the creation or perpetuation of any such structure must be carefully weighed and considered alongside other alternatives, and only implemented when the greatest good is truly served. Any hierarchical structures must be initiated with very clear, and clearly limiting, definitions of their purpose and function, with the understanding that when that purpose or function has been completed or fulfilled, the structure will be disbanded and dismantled.

Another safeguard might be a clear communication and understanding that at any point any participant is free to leave that provisional hierarchy with no harm or negative repercussions. The clearly-understood right to disengage at will, will at least partially defuse the ability of a person higher in such a hierarchy to intimidate or abuse those lower in the structure, should such tendencies begin to emerge. If and when they do, it will immediately trigger a rotation and reassignment of roles.

One dynamic that fosters and entrenches abuse, corruption and destructive dynamics in hierarchies is the existence of punitive enforcement and absence of freedom of choice. Any hierarchical undertakings would, if done at all, be understood to be for purely functional purposes. This principle would be further reinforced by the absolute absence of any stratification of privilege, rights, working or living conditions, or "perks."

2) It is unlikely that we will ever achieve 100 % positive and constructive human dynamics or perfection. In fact, the concept of perfection is impossible to define. It is too subjective.

We must strive to arrive at ever more empowering and synergistic ways of being, but at the same time we must be scrupulously careful to avoid absolutism. Even the most worthy and compassionate ideologies, philosophies and principles become oppressive and destructive when interpreted blindly, insensitively and mechanistically in an absolutist fashion.

Every culture sits somewhere on a spectrum, from highly individualistic to highly collective, and from “loose” cultures with few strictly enforced norms to “tight” ones with strong pressure to conform (Gelfand and colleagues, 2011). Each position

has real strengths, and each becomes harmful at its extreme.

Individualism can be a positive principle when it supports and empowers each human being to find fulfillment and make their greatest individual contribution to the community; but when taken to unhealthy extremes, it creates an abrasive social dynamic where each individual is an alienated island. In such a culture, it becomes difficult and sometimes impossible for many people to engage in any close human relationship or for people to work together in solidarity for common good.

On the other hand, working well in a team for a common purpose is a very positive principle in and of itself; but when taken to an extreme, in any culture, it can suppress individual initiative and expression and become oppressive.

The principle of equality is central to our Transition and the kinds of community that we will forge afterwards; yet as we have seen in various historical experiments, when "equality" becomes enforced conformity in which people are expected to become identical to one another, where differences and diversity are suppressed, it betrays and oppresses the very people it seeks to free and empower.

No matter how fundamentally compassionate and beneficial a principle or ideal is, we must always be alert and vigilant to apply and interpret it with sensitivity, wisdom, common sense, and enough flexibility to allow it to accommodate variations among individuals, communities, and circumstances. The moment a concept or ideal is treated as above human happiness, empowerment, and well-being and the good of the community (both of which must be the highest priority along with long-term sustainability and the robust health of the natural environment), then it is being mis-applied.

We will do everything possible to set up the new Paradigms in such a way that this kind of scenario is not reinforced and becomes vanishingly unlikely to occur; but should it occur due to the imperfections and unpredictability of human beings, then we must address and adjust the interpretation or implementation, not abandon the principle itself unless it proves for some reason to be truly non-viable.

3) It may seem a small matter, but one important aspect of guarding against allowing the post-Transition paradigms to devolve into inhumane and oppressive ideological cookie-cutter parodies of their original intent, is the importance of striving to avoid developing cult-like rhetoric and terminology of the kind that occurs in many movements. Such rhetoric tends to create a mechanical, unconscious mindset over time that can gradually erode the initial conscious awareness and behaviors and eventually replace them with conditioned responses and rigid thinking. Such rhetoric is the hallmark of many cults and autocratic institutions throughout the world. It tends towards the lumping of people and situations into categories that can then become more important than the people in them.

Some new terminology may be genuinely necessary when new situations require words that did not exist before, just as the term "telephone" had to be coined with its invention, and terms like "President," "Premiere," and "Representative," had to be coined when monarchies were abandoned in favor of democratically elected representational governments.

Where there are already existing terms, however, the artificial creation of new terms often creates a sense of separation and alienation between “Us,” the ones on the Inside who know and use this special jargon, and “Them,” the ones on the Outside who don't use the jargon. This runs counter to the intention of the Transition. We will enjoy a much greater degree of success in creating a thriving, empowered new human renaissance if we succeed in avoiding this pitfall that all too often affects new movements.

4) As mentioned elsewhere in this writing, there are numerous inventions, technological and other innovations, and scientific discoveries with practical implications that languish unknown, un-developed, and untapped in patent offices, corporate records and the basements of unknown inventors. Some of these could have profound beneficial applications, in terms of offering sustainable alternatives to non-sustainable technologies, non-polluting alternatives to polluting applications, more small-scale compatible versions to replace versions requiring large centralized facilities and more.

These intellectual treasures span all aspects of life and technology, from medicine to transportation, from energy generation to communication, from civil engineering to education, from metallurgy to the social sciences. These forgotten, unknown

and un-developed nuggets are unknown for a variety of reasons, mostly due to various inevitable dynamics of capitalist paradigms.

Some are untapped because their discoverers or inventors lacked the resources, business skills, and "connections" necessary to bring them to the marketplace. Under capitalism, anything that doesn't make it to the marketplace remains unknown. Even when an innovation does make it to the marketplace, if it doesn't have sufficient marketing and advertising to make it widely visible, it will likely never reach public awareness. This is all the more so when such products compete with the established products of producers who have virtually inexhaustible legal, marketing and advertising budgets.

Other such innovations remain untapped because they are actively suppressed by mega-corporations whose profits, market share and stock prices would be threatened by their introduction. It is not uncommon for an under-funded inventor to approach such a corporation with the expectation that the corporation will welcome the innovation. All too often, the corporation either offers them a lump sum payment for exclusive rights to the invention in order to shelve it, or else takes it and leaves the inventor high, dry, and legally prevented from developing their own invention.

With the end of capitalism and the implementation of the new Paradigms, we will all benefit tremendously if we embark on a thorough search of patents, records of decommissioned corporations, scientific publications going back at least a hundred years, and making public appeals to inventors and innovators in search of such gems. Those bringing such innovations to light can be publicly celebrated and acknowledged and those invented them even more so. This will be in sharp contrast to their treatment under Capitalism where the overwhelming majority of such innovators languish in anonymity, often stripped of even the ownership of their own creations. The boon to the quality of life of individuals, the larger community, and long-term survival and thriving will be incalculable.

5) In addition to identifying and developing existing inventions, discoveries and innovations that have languished forgotten until now, we will benefit greatly if we encourage a culture of research and inquiry in all areas of science, art and engineering, both pure and applied.

Emphasis of applied research should be on technologies that have minimal or no damaging effects on the environment at every stage of their production and use. This is not to endorse suppression of other kinds of research and development; but we will do well to keep in mind that a guiding principle of the new Paradigms will be to achieve a long-term sustainable human presence in the ecosystem, longevity and upgradeability of products and services, user serviceability and customizability, ease of use, and positive impact on human quality of life.

A product that most people can build at home from easily understandable instructions is preferable to a similar product requiring a large, complex and polluting factory to manufacture. A product whose production requires destruction of forests, damming of rivers, strip mining, toxic or noxious waste as a byproduct, and so forth is to be discarded in favor of an equivalent product that does not have those effects. A medicine easily derived from a common weed or plant is preferable to one requiring a huge lab to produce, all other factors being equal.

Of course, not all goods and services will easily fit these criteria. Aircraft, cars, and ships for example are impractical to translate into small-scale production. We can, however, transition to renewable and non-polluting fuels, electric motors, artificial muscles, and other technologies to power these vehicles. We can manufacture them to be durable, easily serviceable and upgradeable, thus dramatically reducing waste and resource depletion. We can produce them in quantities sufficient for actual need, with a small surplus as reserve to accommodate the unexpected, and then dial back production to keep pace with real need, thus even further reducing waste and freeing workers from the constant demands of keeping up with forced overproduction imposed by Capitalist paradigms.

In the new Paradigms, we will benefit tremendously from greater emphasis upon psychological, sociological, anthropological, and historical research. The better we understand our own inner workings as individuals, in relationships and in groups, the better we can tailor and fine-tune our paradigms to reinforce and bring out those aspects of ourselves that will most enhance our happiness, well-being, health and thriving as individuals and communities.

Much is already known, but we have only scratched the surface of our potential. We have barely begun to identify and understand the factors that impact us, how we are inclined to respond and why. For far too long, we have tried over and over to force ourselves to function in non-viable paradigms while ignoring what we already know.

This will change in the new Paradigms. No longer will we conceive arbitrary rules contrary to human nature and punish those who do not follow or thrive under them. Operant conditioning will replace reward-and-punishment schemes. Peership will replace hierarchical command structures. Sustainability will replace compulsive overconsumption.

To address questions that may arise in your mind due to pre-existing propaganda and programming, this is not about controlling people or brainwashing. It is the opposite.

Every human environment reinforces some behaviors and attitudes and does not reinforce others. So far in human affairs, these reinforcers have either developed haphazardly or have been crafted to allow some people to control others. Thus in Capitalism, people are conditioned to accept and perpetuate the economic Pyramid, to work and consume within its enforced parameters, and to take on the role and burden of carrying the crushing weight of those at the top of the pyramid upon their backs.

In the new Paradigms, reinforcers will be scientifically crafted to reinforce those aspects of human nature that lead to the greatest achievable degree of empowerment, actualization, fulfillment, creativity, productivity, and synergy within and between individuals and communities. History will be studied with the goal of identifying what has and has not worked throughout human history to further these goals and values.

6) We will also become a more vibrant, thriving community if we re-dedicate serious resources and efforts to opening frontiers such as deep space, deep sea, and even interstellar exploration. Such endeavors have historically and repeatedly shown themselves to have major beneficial effects across many parameters in the human community.

Technological advances arising from such efforts translate into innovations that improve the quality of life for people here on earth. In medicine, communications, computation, energy technology, quantum mechanics, locomotion, and more areas than one can imagine, the ripples of beneficial advances spread to all sectors of the human community.

Having such frontiers and endeavors in active full swing also has immeasurable beneficial effects culturally and in terms of inspiring, uniting and invigorating generations of human beings worldwide. Under Capitalism the greater human instinct to push the frontiers of knowledge and exploration have been gradually sublimated, re-channeled and short-circuited into an insatiable fascination with and hunger for more, fancier and newer consumer goods.

After going to the Moon, we have contented ourselves largely with military and commercial satellites. Space science has continued, with the Voyager probes, the Hubble and James Webb telescopes and robots on Mars, but on budgets that are small next to what we spend on advertising or arms. After Jacques Cousteau's inspiring deep-sea explorations, we have degenerated into cruise ships, military exercises, massive floating continents of human-generated trash, and offshore drilling.

Inspiration, passion, curiosity and reaching beyond have been supplanted with addiction to acquiring objects, money and status. The resulting culture is one of alienation, cynicism, short-sightedness, lack of compassion and connection, proud ignorance, apathy, harsh selfishness, disempowerment, lack of critical thinking and creativity, lack of authentic passion or inspiration, conformity, and enshrined mediocrity.

Capitalist society is an embodiment of soulless, heartless addiction, a hollowed-out parody of the human essence reduced to a scripted, toned-down unconscious loop, replaying endlessly, going nowhere while steadily consolidating the power and control in the hands of the capitalist neo-feudal lords, many of whom are themselves caught in a compulsion for money and power. This is a lose-lose scenario that will be our extinction if we don't change it as quickly as possible.

Chapter 45: What Are the Purposes and Goals of This Transition?

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

What are the aims and purposes of this Transition?

It is not to seize power, replacing one group or faction with another in wielding power over others and controlling the government. It is not to take revenge on the individuals who have perpetuated this dysfunctional system. We all have unwittingly perpetuated it even without realizing or understanding how. It is also not to redistribute wealth and control from the current ruling elite to a different one.

It is to completely change the paradigms of our economy and society from a pyramidal hierarchical power structure driven from the top down, to a peer-based, non-hierarchical, symbiotic structure based upon mutuality, co-decision-making, co-responsibility taking dynamics with little or no hierarchical structure, economically and socially.

Capitalism has had a long time to prove itself as a supposedly enlightened paradigm embodying freedom and bringing out the highest of human potential. Yet what we observe over time is the progressive rise of a self-serving economic ruling aristocracy at the expense of an ever-expanding majority of disempowered, marginalized hard-working people whose efforts bring them less and less of a life, more and more futility, suffering and stress as the disparity widens and freedom gives way to economic bondage and thralldom.

Doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results is one of the classic definitions of insanity. It is time to recognize and admit that this paradigm is not working. It has not even come close to performing as advertised. Like any fundamentally unsound design, it is time to retire it and come up with something better.

We are taught to play fair and deal honestly, to share and be compassionate, to be considerate of each other; but the reinforcements in our current economic system strongly reinforce making money, getting ahead, accumulating wealth and power over others. There are a few laws that limit the lengths that one may go to in pursuing these ends; but there are no real psychological reinforcements for working together for mutual good, for playing fairly or honestly, or for being considerate or compassionate. In fact, laws need to be frequently updated to cover some new form of innovative cutthroat business practice that is not forbidden by current laws. Earlier in this writing we have seen current examples of crimes against humanity committed by corporations in pursuit of profits that are not even defined as misdemeanors or infractions by Capitalist societies, that are in fact reinforced, encouraged, and protected by law.

Thus for example in the United States, we see a social value system that is often taught, and a Constitution based on these principles. We also see an economic system that actively reinforces greed, predation and cutthroat competition while failing utterly to reinforce teamwork, mutual supportiveness, solidarity, and valuation of the individual within the team.

A central principle in behavioral psychology is that behaviors that are reinforced will predominate; behaviors that are not reinforced will tend towards extinction. No amount of lip service, admonishments, or even the threat of punishment will ever overcome this. It is unrealistic to expect that rhetoric about brotherly love, playing fair and being supportive to one another will lead to a society embodying those principles when the operant conditioning, the strongest reinforcers, are to the contrary.

In our Transition, we will create a society that is designed to reinforce the best in us, the behaviors that empower one another to the good of each and all rather than the good of some at the expense of others.

If we put forth the goals of achieving human societies that tend towards mutually beneficial symbiosis among individuals, and between the individual and the community/society, we do well to consider carefully what reinforcers to build into our societies. So let us put forth the goals of this Transition:

1) To form human societies designed to reinforce a reciprocally beneficial set of relationships between individuals, groups and the society at large. Instead of the current win-lose (one man's loss is another man's gain) paradigm, we seek to create an environment that reinforces collaboration and cooperation for the benefit of each and all. Briefly stated, we need to reinforce the win-win-win-win, not the win-lose-lose-lose societal model.

It is important that we strive to avoid the oppressive mentalities and imbalances that occur when either individualism or collectivism are carried to extremes. On the one hand, where individualism is carried to an extreme, it creates alienation, isolation, lack of connection and community, and fragmentation that disempowers both individuals (each person is an island in a sea of islands jostling and competing for insufficient resources and space) and society, while making concerted group effort for mutual good especially difficult and problematic. On the other hand, where group effort is strongly reinforced but in a way that suppresses individual initiative or expression, the collective fails to truly support individuals or benefit from their potential contributions.

Yet the relationship between individuals, or between the individual and the community, does not need to be and is not inherently oppositional. An optimal kind of scenario would be one in which individual expression, contribution, and initiative are prized and reinforced in such a way that the recognition, celebration and reinforcing of the individual's contribution is perceived as benefiting all (which it does). One person's win will be everybody's gain, in contrast with Capitalist environments where one person's promotion or bonus means less to go around for others.

When there is no punitive hierarchy meting out rewards and punishments to underlings, then each person will have nothing to fear from making a mistake (which will be learned from) and nothing to fear from the success or recognition of another. Molly bakes awesome bread, all benefit. Jessie is a whiz with mechanical devices, all benefit. Jake doesn't come up with a lot of innovative ideas but is always happy to work long and hard at physically demanding tasks, all benefit. Fred is a good listener who always has good advice for someone in a rough moment, all benefit.

A population of informed, critically thinking, self-realizing individuals whose contributions are appreciated by one another, who are unfettered by arbitrary hierarchical tyranny, forms a community of committed and motivated co-workers, co-decision-makers, co-problem-solvers and mutual supporters, thriving as a community and as individuals. It is important to design the socio-economic structure so that it reinforces mutually-benefiting paradigms and does not reinforce predatory or mutually-destructive, mutually-detracting behaviors.

It is important to keep in mind the fact that hierarchical social structures of any kind tend to reinforce arbitrary dysfunctional behaviors of persons high up in them. Whoever first said "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" hit the nail on the head. A paradigm where some individuals, or one individual, has power over others is a paradigm that institutionalizes and reinforces abuse of that power. Not every person becomes a Stalin or a Hitler when in a position of power; but petty tyrants abound in every part of both public and private sectors. The manager who micro-manages those under him or her and makes sure they know who's boss, or the clerk in the HR office or the government agency who has the power to approve or deny, to make things easy or hard for an employee or a member of the public all too often develops a propensity to deny and create difficulties by default, or perhaps according to their mood or whim.

The fact that an organization or institution will stand behind the person abusing the power creates strong reinforcements to continue doing so. Rank and position take on a life of their own. In a paradigm where the vast majority of the population are constantly living under stress in a disempowered state, it is virtually inevitable that a high percentage of people will tend to abuse power when they have it, even a little of it, because it makes them feel like they at least have some power over something or someone. This paradigm is almost guaranteed to reinforce many of the most destructive aspects of human nature: those at the top of a chain of command are reinforced in abuse of power. The rest of the people in the hierarchy are not incentivized to show initiative, cooperate, be honest and open, or develop strong motivation. Abuse of power, however, is reinforced all the way down the chain of command, in proportion to a person's altitude in the hierarchy.

The reinforcers down the chain of command are to avoid punishment, censure, and other negative consequences and to gain favor with those above them. Those midway down the chain of command are reinforced to assert their power and shift consequences of their own mistakes onto those under them, while trying to please and appear favorable to those above them.

If ever there were a prize for a paradigm designed to create a dysfunctional society of unhappy, stressed-out, disempowered people, Capitalism is a prime contender for the prize. We therefore do well to develop a flat, non-hierarchical socio-economic structure that empowers and reinforces all participants to be fully engaged, take responsibility, work together, communicate effectively and make decisions through consensus or vote rather than chains of command. This does present challenges for a population that has been trained and programmed in dysfunctional hierarchical paradigms, but it has been done successfully in a variety of environments.

Egalitarian foragers such as the San (Ju/'hoansi) of southern Africa and the Hadza of Tanzania have lived this way for generations, without money or fixed rulers, sharing widely and leveling anyone who tries to lord it over others (Woodburn 1982; Wiessner 2005). The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) governed themselves through councils that sought consensus, with clan mothers choosing chiefs and able to remove them. The traditional Kibbutzim in Israel have functioned very effectively in another variation of this model, and there are other examples as well. It is important to keep this in mind, as we will certainly encounter challenges, dilemmas and obstacles along the way. Since we have all lived in societies with endemic beliefs that any kind of society based on equality, mutuality, synergy and symbiosis is inherently contrary to human nature and doomed to fail, we must keep in mind at all times that this is a myth based on ignorance.

To put the myth in perspective, in capitalist societies the mortality rate for small businesses is approximately 50% within 5 years of starting. Approximately 65% (nearly 2/3) fail within 10 years (SBA Office of Advocacy, 2012). It is also a well-established fact that approximately 50% of marriages and other domestic partnerships end in dissolution (DePaulo, Psychology Today, 2017). Yet prevailing attitudes in such societies are that it takes tenacity and determination to succeed, even if one fails multiple times. No one is discouraged from trying to start a business or get married using an argument that such endeavors are against human nature and doomed to fail. The existence of risk and the importance of perseverance are no less true for our undertaking to create new paradigms based on equality, mutuality and synergy.

Over 270 kibbutzim have been founded in Israel since 1909 that are still in existence. These communities were formed by people who lacked a background in such a paradigm, who, like us, grew up in hierarchical Capitalistic or Feudalistic societies. The recent privatization of some kibbutzim does not indicate a failure of the paradigm, but rather the aggressive metastatic pressures of Capitalism to subvert and destroy any other paradigm. This is similar to how a family that lives in a gang-infested environment is likely to find their children joining gangs, regardless of what principles they teach them. The Kibbutzim exist in the midst of an environment where escalating Capitalism has sought to curtail and legally/economically destroy the Kibbutzim for several generations. The pressure was concrete. The kibbutz movement had been closely tied to the Labor movement that governed Israel from 1948 until 1977. After the Likud came to power, government support waned and open hostility followed; campaigning in 1981, Menachem Begin derided kibbutz members as millionaires with swimming pools. Like much of the Israeli economy, the kibbutzim had borrowed heavily during the years of runaway inflation, and when the 1985 economic stabilization plan sent interest rates soaring, many were left with crushing debts. The debt settlements of 1989 and 1996 between the government, the banks and the kibbutz movements forced many to sell land and bring in outside investors and managers, and set the stage for differential wages and private ownership. Meanwhile, the rising individualism and consumerism of the surrounding society pulled steadily at their younger members. The privatization that followed was not the natural evolution of the kibbutz model; to a large degree it was the outcome of decades of political and economic pressure from a society that would not tolerate a working alternative in its midst. Elsewhere such pressure has been far more violent: in Chile, U.S. corporations such as ITT pressed their government to undermine Salvador Allende's elected government, which was overthrown in the 1973 coup. Capitalism functions as an aggressive cancer in the body of the human species. It must be replaced, and unwaveringly prevented from ever establishing itself again.

There are risks, uncertainties, obstacles and challenges in every aspect of human society and in every human endeavor.

For any paradigm to work in practice, there must be reinforcers in place to strengthen the behaviors and attitudes that we want to prevail in our everyday reality. There must also be an absence of reinforcers for behaviors that we do not want. To clarify, reinforcers in this context are not laws, police or military who enforce, who use force to guarantee compliance. Reinforcers are very different from enforcers.

In an environment where there is controlled scarcity of resources and access is only possible to a very few, this constitutes a strong reinforcer that favors competitiveness and immediate-term self interest over mutual interest or long-term benefit. Conversely, an environment in which each individual's greatest good is clearly served by working for mutual benefit with others, then this kind of behavior will predominate. For example, if there is only enough food for one person on the table, but there is food for all up on a shelf too high for one person to reach, then working together to retrieve the larger cache of food is clearly reinforced. When there is only enough food on the table for one person, but a certain individual or group has enough for everybody but is forcibly restricting access, then reinforcement is for catering to or pleasing the ones controlling the supply. If those controlling parties convince everybody that there just isn't enough to go around, then the reinforcement is strongly for each person to try to get their own and not to share.

Likewise in a peer-driven workplace, freely sharing an innovation that allows twice the work to be done in half the time at the same level of excellence results in shared benefit: the work gets done quicker for everybody. The person who thought of it earns the appreciation of everybody. This creates a strong reinforcer for the person with the idea to share it immediately. In a typical Capitalist work environment, in contrast, the innovator is reinforced to keep the idea to him or herself, because it gives them a competitive advantage over their workmates. In that setting, openly sharing it would forfeit the advantage. Also, another employee might take credit for it and get the bonus or promotion instead of the innovator. If the person with the idea keeps it secret, then they double their productivity and their superiors will be more likely to promote them or otherwise reward them.

In a setting where scarcity and insufficiency is the norm, being the one getting the promotion, raise or bonus makes a critical difference in survival and quality of life for self and family.

A typical traditional capitalist business is strongly hierarchical. Changes are almost always initiated from the top down. If a low-level employee were to initiate a change, and if it were to be spontaneously adopted by their peers without consulting up the hierarchy, Management would often treat such a change as insubordination and disrespect for the chain of command. The idea could well be rejected out of hand. Even if it were adopted in the end, the employee who initiated it could be censured, punished or even fired for their trouble. At the very least they would be told that they should have taken it to Management for consideration instead of simply sharing it with peers. In that kind of environment, the manager has strong motivation to prevent being shown up by an employee under them. Often in these cases the manager punishes the originator, rejects the idea, then implements it as their own and takes credit.

It cannot be stated too often or too strongly that it is vitally important to design and set up the new paradigm so that it reinforces working together for the benefit of each and all.

Our goal is to create a more compassionate, empowering, symbiotic, dynamic and flourishing society that will create the best achievable human experience for each and all, and to do so in a way that maintains, sustains and does not needlessly waste, disrupt or damage the earth and ecosystem that are our only home.

Critics of egalitarian socio-economic models claim and believe that such paradigms suppress individual expression and initiative while fostering a culture of mediocrity devoid of incentives to work, contribute, or take responsibility. Some critics point to educational philosophies that devalue outstanding achievement by validating and promoting all students equally, including those who are either unmotivated or unable to rise above mediocrity. Why should a student who does no work and does not learn the material be given an A? Why should such a student be given an unrealistic impression that they are doing an excellent job, when such a setup simultaneously discourages smarter, more motivated students from doing their best, while sending their less intelligent or motivated peers into the world set up to fail when they discover that they can't perform adequately in the real world? These are valid questions that deserve real and practical answers.

Part of the answer has to do with the relationship between the individual and the community. When individualism is carried to an unhealthy extreme, community breaks down. It becomes increasingly difficult to function, co-ordinate or connect as a community without it becoming tense and adversarial. Conversely, when the community becomes too rigid and conformist, demanding that all individuals fit a particular mold, the individual is suppressed and oppressed. Then the community suffers from lack of initiative or motivation on the part of its members. Yet it is possible to achieve a dynamic range of optimal balance in which the community and the individuals who comprise it support, enhance, and strengthen each other, bringing each other to a high degree of self actualization and motivation.

Equality is an important principle to strive for in any society that intends to be a free, democratic, and thriving community. Disparities, castes, and hierarchies of any kind are inherently arbitrary. They create and institutionalize social dynamics that reinforce destructive behaviors among all castes, making a free and thriving society impossible. It does not matter whether such disparities are based on hereditary privilege in the manner of old-style monarchies, on the basis of wealth as in modern day capitalist societies, on the basis of occupation and tradition as in the Indian caste system, or on the basis of Party membership as in the Soviet Union.

Since equality is such an important fundamental principle for a healthy and thriving society of healthy, thriving individuals, it is important to clarify what exactly we mean by "equality," as there is more than one interpretation.

One concept of equality that we can discard immediately is the "one size fits all" interpretation that seeks to make everybody the same, copies of one another. This is discussed earlier in this writing, but in essence such an interpretation or implementation dehumanizes all members of the community by attempting to suppress their uniqueness for the sake of an abstract and arbitrary concept of an “ideal person”. Instances where this interpretation has been attempted, have given all egalitarian, co-operative paradigms a negative image in many people’s minds. Proponents of Capitalism magnify existing failed examples of this kind to imply that they are the essence of all egalitarian models.

Another interpretation to discard is the version that pits a 250-pound linebacker and a 95-pound accountant, or a struggling human living on a sub-living wage and a multinational mega-corporation with more resources than some countries, against each other in the ring or the courtroom with the rationalization that they can fight it out as equals. The myth that the Capitalist environment offers an equal chance for all to succeed is no different.

We humans are widely varied in our strengths, weaknesses, tastes, abilities, needs, dreams, likes, dislikes, personalities and more. Each of us has unique contributions to make to the community and to one another. One of the many problems with the current dominant Capitalist paradigm is that it only reinforces a narrow range of behaviors, abilities, skill sets, and personalities. Capitalist cultures justify coercing all to seek ways to force themselves into those modes of being. This is destructive to the majority who do not fit naturally into those modes and also to those who do, since it forces them to develop only those aspects of their personalities and capabilities.

As a result, most of the population suffers extreme stress and disempowerment, while the community and society fail to benefit from the wealth and range of contributions that its members could and would make if not suppressed by arbitrarily determined survival pressures to make lots of money or perish. Any system that operates in this manner will be an anemic, impoverished human community of impoverished citizens, regardless of the official ideology.

A good example and metaphor for this is cultural concepts of beauty. Western culture has adopted the concept that thin is beautiful and anything else is not. Models and celebrities who fit this description become physical role models that many try to emulate. Those who do not naturally, metabolically and temperamentally fit that mould feel pressure to force themselves into it. Only a small segment of the population naturally has those traits. The rest suffer under a severe disadvantage, either by failing to fit the mould and suffering discrimination, or by jamming themselves into the mould at the expense of their health and well-being.

The fashion, cosmetics and diet industries, reconstructive surgeons, not to mention many enterprising con artists, exploit and exacerbate this situation by systematically heightening and strengthening this stereotype. The goal, of course, is to drive up the level of demand among the majority of people who do not fit the mould.

These parasitic industries deepen the negative self-image and insecurities of these vulnerable demographics in order to motivate them to buy more of their products and services. A chubby person who feels good about all aspects of who they are, will not feel the need to spend effort, energy or money to appear different from who they are.

This is tied to survival. Even though some (but not all) countries have laws against discrimination on the basis of physical characteristics, it is well known and statistically demonstrated that overweight people are less likely to be hired than thinner people in these cultures (Flint and colleagues, Frontiers in Psychology, 2016). It is notoriously difficult to sue an employer for such discrimination. One must keep in mind that the burden of proof is on the one bringing the lawsuit. A person who is jobless or working for sub-living wages does not have much of a chance of successfully suing a corporation with its team of top-notch attorneys, especially given that said team has advised the company well on how to avoid lawsuits. If the company's lawyers are worth what they are paid, the company will be clever enough to make sure that it will be almost impossible to prove a discrimination case against them, regardless of whether or not there is discrimination going on.

This narrow concept of acceptable appearance also leads to serious psychological and medical problems among the population: anorexia, bulimia, body dysphoria, social anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, and compulsive disorders are all prevalent well-documented results of this.

People of both sexes who are physically attractive by their culture's standards tend to receive very strong reinforcement to rely on that one aspect of their being to the exclusion of most or all other aspects of themselves. This can occur to such an extent that it often leads to lopsided, dysfunctional adaptations: egotism, manipulative behaviors, superficiality, and frustration due to other aspects of their abilities or personalities languishing unnoticed, un-reinforced, even suppressed in favor of their physical appearance.

Similar dynamics occur in the case of athletic star performers, people with unusual talents in specific areas (intelligence, charisma, wittiness, physical strength, math, singing or other skills) that get reinforced to the exclusion of other equally important aspects of their unique identities. These examples are of course not unique to capitalist societies. They reflect aspects of human social and interpersonal dynamics that are largely unconscious in most societies and individuals. Capitalist paradigms, however, exacerbate these dynamics by upping the stakes. It is one thing when one’s appearance or special talent generates excess attention on that trait. It is a much stronger reinforcer when that trait becomes a critical factor in ascending the economic pyramid over those lacking that trait, in unlocking access to needed and desired resources, freedom, and what passes for respect, or at least deference.

How to create more balanced dynamics on these psychological parameters is a subject for a different kind of writing, one much more subtle and complex than the subject at hand here. But they serve as illustrations of how the reinforcement of narrow ranges of traits and behaviors harms both the individual and the community.

A society where survivability is tied to the ability to make money and get ahead in the Capitalist paradigm, inevitably disenfranchises those who have real contributions to make but are not good at finding ways to make money at them, who lack the reflexes and talents necessary to be entrepreneurs, and/or do not mesh well in a corporate hierarchical social structure. Such a setup also reinforces lopsided and dysfunctional development among the small segment of the population who are naturally well adapted to the paradigm. The result is unhealthy for all concerned.

The principle of equality that we seek to apply and emulate is one that takes into account the prolific variety and range of individual abilities, talents, strengths, weaknesses, needs, traits and personalities in ways that ensure that each individual is most empowered to find their niche where they are fully actualized and fulfilled, both within themselves and in the community, to the benefit of both.

Of necessity, any truly viable socio-economic paradigm needs to be dynamic, adaptive and flexible enough to accommodate, embrace, empower, support, value and benefit from the unique contributions of the full range of human diversity. This goes beyond simple cultural diversity. It must also accommodate and support the rich diversity among individuals.

A good analogy is the cells and organs of any organism. The heart, liver, brain, stomach, muscles, skin and other organs are all very different from each other, as are the cells that comprise them. All are necessary for the optimal health and well being

of the organism. Each cell, each organ, lives and functions according to its unique nature and capabilities. Together they embody, maintain, and sustain the organism as a whole. The same is true of the individuals and social subgroups of a community, society or civilization.

Under capitalist paradigms, many (probably most) very capable people never have the chance to fulfill their potential and make their fullest contribution to the community, simply because of the demands of "economic necessity." How many excellent musicians, actors, inventors, healers, potential therapists, artists, engineers, scientists and more, are never able to develop and practice their excellence because of lack of jobs or niches, or because they lack the ability to sell themselves well? Instead, they end up working at something at which they are mediocre and for which they have no passion or interest.

When money has been rendered unnecessary, when every human being is guaranteed the rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness in practice and not just in theory, when these rights are the default with no money-barrier to contend with in order to exercise them, when all citizens are co-creators, co-deciders, co-workers, co-risk-takers, co-stake-holders, it will be possible for entirely new paradigms to develop spontaneously and most certainly they will. But it is wise to establish some guidelines to predispose mutually-benefiting, mutually-supporting, mutually-respecting modes of operation and interaction.

To those who fear that the Transition will lead to a State-controlled dictatorial monopoly, let it be made clear here that the concepts of ownership and personal autonomy will not be absent, but will be redefined at their core. Each person will have ownership of where they live and of the things that they use. Coworkers in a facility will be co-owners of the facility. Public lands and resources will be the shared property of the community and the people in it, as will resources not currently in use by anybody. What will be missing is the concept of ownership of one person's, family's, or other social unit's assets by someone else or by the State. The sanctity of the individual, of the family or core social unit and of the community will be upheld and respected to degrees impossible under Capitalist paradigms.

If anybody doubts the practicality of rendering money unnecessary, one can again look to examples of such societies that have functioned very well. The Inca state ran a large economy without money, and many Indigenous societies of the Americas, together home to some 60 million people before 1492 (Koch and colleagues, 2019), organised exchange through reciprocity rather than currency. The kibbutzim in Israel (and some moshavim) have done without money in their internal life. There are numerous examples around the world that are not all what would be considered "primitive." The fact that this is not well known in Capitalist cultures is not a reflection of their nonexistence but rather of the inevitable fact that "the victors write the history books." Dominant capitalist culture sees itself as the pinnacle of human development and necessarily devalues any paradigm that contradicts it. Most if not all cultures do this.

Readers are invited to try a simple thought experiment:

Under capitalist paradigms, much of the land, by value and by acreage, is owned by a small percentage of the population. Those who own none are forced to pay for the privilege of having a place to live.

Because it is impossible, even illegal under capitalism to live without constantly paying money, everybody must endlessly find ways to come up with a steady flow of money. Money becomes not what makes the world go 'round, but what blocks access to the world for most of the people. If you do not pay, you have little or no access to a place to sleep, food, medical treatment, water, reading materials, clothes, etc.

It does not matter if you devote your life to cleaning up the trash from your neighborhood's streets, performing music that inspires and delights your neighbors, helping the elderly and the infirm, lending a listening ear to any who need it, or repairing things wherever needed. If you are not making money at it, your contribution to the community does not gain you much respect nor access to anything. Conversely, your job may involve taking people's homes and cars away from them, manufacturing and selling weapons, rendering large swaths of land uninhabitable for generations in pursuit of mineral or forest resources, producing and promoting products known to be harmful to people, putting innocent people in jail or out on the street, denying people healthcare whenever possible (as is common in health insurance companies), or selling products and services that people don't need and can't afford. If you are making money at it, then you gain access to necessities and luxuries alike. Capitalist society validates you.

The earth, the land, was here long before humans came on the scene and will be here for a long time to come, until the sun balloons out into a red giant and engulfs it in about 4.5 billion years. Almost all of the energy available on the earth comes from the sun. Neither the earth nor the sun charges for rent or utilities.

The sun's energy is transformed by nature into food, by physics into habitable temperatures for life as we know it to thrive, by human technology into electricity and so forth. In order to build anything, work must be performed. For life to function, work must be performed. Things must be done, designed, organized, built, fixed, produced, generated, grown, invented, developed, communicated, recorded etc.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Now imagine that on a day chosen by consensus across the country, any country, money gets taken out of the equation by workers, contractors and employees in every sector. They still go to their jobs and perform their usual tasks. But from that moment forward they will not participate in money transactions. They will not charge, nor will they pay. In addition, those employees whose job it is to turn off services, deny service or engage in collections activities change the way they do their job. Their new mission is to keep goods and services flowing to all customers no matter what.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

This could involve entering overrides, marking all accounts as paid in full, or hacking/fooling systems into believing they are.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

Some may try to keep people paying by pressure, threats or blackmail after the law has changed. The answer is not to destroy financial records, or to alter them. Records also protect people: they prove what people own and what they have paid, and they are the evidence of any wrongdoing. Once democratic law cancels a debt or ends a form of charge, the records simply lose their power over anyone, and courts protect anyone who is pressured to pay regardless. Changing records without authority would itself be fraud, and would undermine the very legitimacy the Transition depends on.

The systems that manage inventory, production and distribution will need to run on direct measures of need and capacity rather than on prices. These systems are already being built openly, as cooperative and open-source projects, and can run alongside today's systems, as the roadmap describes. When democratic law changes how an enterprise is governed, its workers adopt them openly. Nothing needs to be sabotaged, and the change stays visible and accountable.

The software that runs warehouses, shipping, manufacturing and inventory today is built around prices, invoices and payments. The Transition will need versions that do the same work without them, and they can be built now, in the open. We invite open-source developers to begin. This does not mean copying anyone's code or breaking any licence. It means building new software, from scratch or from existing open-source projects such as ERPNext and OpenBoxes, that does what the industry-standard systems do, with workflows that feel familiar to the people who use them every day, and with no financial functions at all. Used and tested by cooperatives and community projects along the way, it will be mature and trusted by the time the final phases arrive. Then, when democratic law changes how an enterprise is governed, the switch will be a routine software migration, not a leap into the unknown.

Some of those who now control knowledge may try to destroy it, or lock it away, rather than lose control of it: research, designs, software, and medical discoveries that could save lives. This danger is real, and it must be planned for. But it can be met in the open, by lawful means.

Much of the most valuable knowledge cannot be destroyed out of spite. Patents are public by design: to receive one, an inventor must publish how the invention works. Medical data is filed with regulators, clinical trials are registered publicly, and much research is published. And the deepest knowledge lives in people. The engineers, researchers and developers who created it cannot be deleted, and when the law changes, they will be free to share what they know.

The moment of greatest risk is when owners sense that they are about to lose control. So the safeguards must come first. Before any change in how enterprises are owned is put into effect, democratic law can require research, designs and source code to be deposited in protected public archives, as many countries already require for publicly funded research. Courts can order that records be preserved the moment destruction is threatened, and destroying them afterwards would be a serious crime, as destroying evidence already is. Governments already have the power to license patented medicines for public need, and that power can be extended. Whistleblower protections can be strengthened, so that people who see knowledge being suppressed or destroyed can report it safely. Meanwhile, open-source software, open hardware and open-access research keep growing the shared pool of knowledge, so that less and less of it depends on anyone's goodwill.

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Bills are no longer sent and ones received are shredded and ignored.

When the inevitable managers come on scene to object, they are respectfully but firmly informed that the game has changed and they are no longer in control. The same occurs when higher-ups arrive, right up to and including CEO's.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Workers have cell phones and other recording/broadcasting devices at the ready to post any aggressive behavior to the world should the higher ups become violent or should police or national guard be called in.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Rents and mortgages are also not paid. Landlords, banks, and other financial institutions are blocked shut and cut off from power and communications while their heads are similarly politely but uncompromisingly informed that the game has changed, that they no longer have the authority to demand payment, evict or repossess. At least a major portion of law enforcement and the military support the change because they have realized that the oath they swore to protect the Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic, obliges them to stand up to and resist the anti-Constitutional economic power structure.

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This is a new kind of strike in which vital services and functions continue undisturbed while the economic system is shut down. In order for this to work, this has to go viral enough for millions of people to act in unison. This is the weak point and vulnerability of the economic power structure. It is built upon, perpetuated and powered by the willingness of millions of people to keep it going by playing by capitalist rules.

There are vastly more of us workers, employees, and serfs than there are of the ruling elite at the top of the economic pyramid. We outnumber them by a factor of millions to one. Unlike traditional kinds of strikes and demonstrations that involve direct confrontations and disruptions of manufacturing and services, with significant risk and hardship for participants, this kind of game change will minimize danger, hardship, and disruption of daily life for the vast majority of people. Another advantage will be that those who would try to suppress it will be so vastly outnumbered that they will be largely ineffective.

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In addition, as covered elsewhere in this writing, traditional kinds of strikes and demonstrations have become less effective than in the past because of a number of factors.

Corruption, loss of vision, and lack of focus and cohesiveness in many labor unions have eroded their effectiveness. Alongside that, many jobs are not unionized for various reasons. Many states and the U.S. federal government have passed laws that have eroded the right to strike and neutralized much of unions' ability to wield an effective lever.

On top of these factors, subtle propaganda has produced a major hit to public perception of labor unions as a positive force in the socio-political-economic landscape.

Another vulnerability of traditional strikes and demonstrations is that they assemble participants in an easily identified, attacked and contained concentration. It is easy for those who have a vested interest in suppressing them to demolish public support for strikers and demonstrators by portraying them as economic disruptors or even terrorists, as evidenced by current attempts among some U.S. legislators to define dissenting demonstrations and strikes as "economic terrorism," thereby criminalizing them (Seipel, "Washington Republican Proposes Charging Protesters with 'Economic Terrorism'", The Hill, 2016).

It is also a simple matter for those bent on neutralizing such movements and activities to infiltrate their own people into the midst of the legitimate participants. This allows them to identify leaders to be targeted for suppression and discrediting, and to become violent, incoherent and in general act as hooligans in order to discredit these movements and activities in the public and world eye. This tactic has a long, documented history. In August 1939, SS men dressed in Polish uniforms staged an attack on a German radio station at Gleiwitz, giving Hitler his pretext to invade Poland the next day (the Gleiwitz incident). In the United States, the FBI's COINTELPRO programme (1956–1971) planted informants in civil rights and anti-war groups, spread disinformation, and worked to discredit their leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr.

The Reichstag fire of 1933 shows how a crisis can be turned into a weapon. A young Dutch drifter who called himself a communist, Marinus van der Lubbe, was arrested inside; whether he acted alone is still disputed, and there is serious evidence, including a former stormtrooper's sworn statement found in 2019, that he did not. But there was no Communist plot: even the Nazi-era court acquitted the Communist leaders tried alongside him. The very next day, the Reichstag Fire Decree suspended civil liberties, and thousands of Hitler's opponents were arrested.

With the degree of control that the Networks, themselves among the mega-Corporations with much to lose, wield over what the public sees, we cannot rely on traditional modes of social activism to be sufficient to bring about the necessary changes.

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This new kind of strike will put the strikers in the role of those committed to keeping production and services running normally. Those who attempt to forcibly suppress the strike will show themselves loudly, strongly, and clearly in the world's eyes as the ones bent on disrupting the lives of millions of citizens. The suppressors will be correctly perceived as the disruptors and hooligans that they are, against peaceful reasonable citizens working to keep things running smoothly.

The use of personal cell phones and other recording and disseminating technologies to stream events out to the world, will counteract any attempts by the ruling modern neo-Feudal Lords of the Corporatocracy to discredit and defame the movement and its participants by using corporate Media to disseminate dis-information AKA propaganda. It is possible that this may not be an issue if a major sector or even majority of Network personnel of the rank and file implement the game change as well. Network executives will find their orders falling on unresponsive, uncooperative ears.

This approach to changing the game, to forcing a shift to a new paradigm, will make it supremely difficult for opponents, the enforcers of capitalism, to suppress. In order to do so, they would have to forcibly take over and shut

down just about every factory, plant, business, hospital and facility, and arrest millions of people. It is doubtful they could succeed even if they were to try. If they did actually impose such a reign of terror, then the entire world would be against them and supporting the pioneers of the Transition, since it would be streamed live to the Internet by millions of mobile devices, which could never all be silenced. If it comes to that, the bringers of the Transition will be prepared to defend ourselves.

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Traditional types of demonstrations, strikes, civil disobedience and uprising might be necessary as well, along with guerrilla tactics used to disrupt communications and logistics used by those who will try to suppress our overthrow. Such efforts will hopefully emphasize "soft" guerrilla tactics aimed at disabling and misdirecting our opponents' technology and organization.

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Traditional demonstrations, strikes and civil disobedience may still be needed where people in power try to block or undo democratic change. They must always be open and nonviolent. We do not disrupt communications, misdirect or deceive anyone, or interfere with anyone's systems; such tactics would hand our opponents the very evidence they need to paint the Transition as dangerous, and would betray its principles. And we need to put all of our heads together to devise additional strategies and tactics to make this Transition victorious and successful, both in bringing an end to the capitalist neo-feudalistic pyramid and in creating new socio-economic paradigms that bring about a win-win synergistic, egalitarian, dynamic, thriving society.

Those who stand to lose power may try to resist by force, even to the point of gathering private armed forces. Preventing that from ever becoming armed conflict matters greatly. It is done the way democracies protect themselves: through law enforcement, courts and legislative oversight, a free press, and public transparency. Movements that ran their own secret intelligence operations have repeatedly become the very thing they opposed. Openness is the stronger protection.

This must truly be a Transition that changes the game and the paradigm. That means that we must resist the emotional temptation to express our anger in acts of violence and revenge upon those who have perpetuated this current dysfunctional system. There may be violence attempted against us. We may need to physically defend ourselves and others at times. We must be prepared for this in every way that keeps faith with our nonviolence: in de-escalation, in protecting the vulnerable, and in using no more force than an immediate physical assault requires. But we must never cross the line into vigilantism or lynch mobs.

But we must never initiate violence. When forced to defend ourselves, we must respond with the minimum force necessary to ensure safety and no more. The modern neo-Feudal Lords and their enforcers will expect us to attack them, punish them and take our outrage out upon them as they would do to us if they were victorious, as almost every revolution has done in the past. They may fight fiercely because of this fear, because of their tacit assumption of their superiority and inherent right to their position and privilege, and because the Transition threatens the object of their addiction: boundless wealth and power over others, always having things their way, calling the shots and living a vastly higher standard of living than everybody else.

We may have to defend ourselves and disarm those who attack us. Having done so, we must live and demonstrate by our actions the compassion and respect for all people that are at the heart of our new paradigm. We must treat those we have disarmed with the same respect as we treat each other, though with the same firmness that we would use in preventing a drunk person from driving a car or flying an airplane, and leave any question of their conduct to lawful, transparent process.

We will let the world know the true values and driving forces behind this Transition and new Paradigm. We will let them know this by our actions. We will let them see that government of, by, and for the People can only thrive alongside an economy of, by, and for the People.

Chapter 46: Example Text of Declaration of the Transition (U.S. -Oriented Version, to Be Adapted Appropriately for Each Country and Culture at the Time of Their Transition)

This chapter was written when the Transition was imagined as a single, rapid, coordinated event. Passages from that original plan are kept for transparency in marked boxes; the current approach is gradual, voluntary and democratic (how the approach has evolved).

Attention all citizens and residents of the United States of America:

The Declaration of Independence of the United States of America affirms that: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government."

We are now in such a situation once again in the United States. At this time in history, however, the threat to and negation of our rights, freedoms, peace of mind and security does not come from a foreign king or occupying force, but from an internal economic power structure that largely and increasingly influences, manipulates and controls the government, laws and courts of our country to the escalating detriment of the vast majority of the People. This power structure, and those who control it, are not accountable and do not answer to the People. This situation constitutes no less of a despotic abuse of the People than did the British monarchy at the time of the inception of our country.

Under the banner of "Free Enterprise," gigantic corporations and an ultra-wealthy elite are increasingly establishing themselves as new feudal lords of the modern era, at the expense of the life, liberty, pursuit of happiness and other rights of the vast majority of the People. The current economic paradigm is consistently and increasingly establishing itself as a legal pyramid scheme, functionally no different from illegal pyramid schemes. Those at the top of the pyramid overwhelmingly profit and gain power at the expense of everybody farther down the pyramid. These new ruling powers influence government through lobbyists, disinformation and control of resources, increasingly eclipsing and drowning out the voices and will of the overwhelming majority of the People.

Now we are seeing our country in thrall to an emerging culture and legal system that grants companies and corporations dictatorial power over their employees in matters of their personal lives, such that a person may be deprived of livelihood, medical care, and basic necessities because their employer does not like their personal lifestyle, political or religious beliefs. Without livelihood, and with negative references from a former employer, all Persons are effectively blocked from exercising all of their rights as a Person. There can be no government of, by, and for The People without a socio-economic paradigm of, by and for The People.

Under this current economic paradigm, all Persons are by default denied the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness unless they pay for it. It is largely and increasingly the same ultra-wealthy ruling elite who generally determine how much persons will be paid for their work and how much they will have to pay for the necessities of life. The resulting

economic disparity has widened to such extremes that the ever-increasing majority of people are unable to exercise any of their Constitutional rights. The United States of America has increasingly come to resemble a “company town” on a national scale.

Without economic empowerment and equality, without economy of, by, and for the People, there can be no democracy, no free society of free individuals, no practical expression of the spirit of the Constitution and the rights it confers upon us the People.

The current economic paradigm is a direct threat to a free and democratic society. It feeds and fosters increasing despotism through a power structure that is not answerable to the People. It weakens and damages us as a people and as individuals by bringing about the stratification and division of our national Community into opposing factions and sectors constantly at odds with each other.

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Any person who serves in our armed forces, law enforcement or other branches of Service who have sworn an oath "to defend the Constitution of the United States from all enemies, foreign and domestic," has a duty to oppose this economic paradigm, its institutions, and those who use force and subversion of the legal system to keep this paradigm in place.

When the time soon comes to decommission this fundamentally, irreparably flawed economic paradigm and system, you who have taken this oath to defend the Constitution must legally, logically and morally join and defend those who are bringing about the transition to a new system designed to nurture and foster a truly free, democratic society made up of free, empowered, fully actualized co-operating individuals. Your duty is not to defend those who cling to the old despotic paradigm but to support those bringing the change. Your sacred oath demands it.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

For decades, Americans have had to work longer to keep up: by 2007, the average worker was putting in 181 more hours a year than in 1979 (Economic Policy Institute, 2012), and middle-income married couples with children nearly 600 more, as mothers took on paid work to keep their families afloat (EPI, *The State of Working America*); today both parents work full time in nearly half of two-parent households, up from under a third in 1970 (Pew Research Center, 2015). And all of it for steadily less freedom, options, respect, dignity and quality of life, while a very few have gained wealth and power that effectively puts them above the law in practice. The abomination of "corporate personhood" has made a mockery of the sovereignty of the individual human being and pitted hardworking citizens against gigantic corporations that control more resources than many countries, in a manner reminiscent of a half-starved peasant going up against a large squad of the King’s best knights.

Under the current economic paradigm, every human being's right to exist is denied unless paid for. People are judged by their stature in the economic pyramid. The opportunities, level of freedom, options, quality of life and the respect they are afforded is rigidly dictated by their financial status.

The concept that "anybody can make it" is a half-truth that perpetuates an illusion because this economic paradigm can only function as a pyramid. There is not room in the upper reaches of the pyramid for more than a very few. This is directly contradictory to the spirit, letter, and intention of the Constitution and subsequent Amendments which have steadfastly adapted the original Constitution to explicitly grant more and more freedom, respect, dignity and rights to human beings as new issues have arisen that were not present in the days of the Founders. Yet under the current economic paradigm, the instruments of government are increasingly seeking to curtail the rights of most individuals in favor of granting ever more powers and “rights” to businesses and the wealthy over and above non-wealthy human beings.

This is an insidious and unacceptable example of what was meant when the Founders wrote "when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

Behind the forms of democracy, the United States has become a Corporatocracy, in which the ultra-wealthy and their corporations hold outsized control: economic elites and business groups have substantial independent influence on federal policy, while average citizens have little or none (Gilens & Page, 2014). In the spirit of the Constitution, the time has come to end this economic Paradigm and establish a new one designed to empower all individuals to exercise their rights and make their greatest contribution to the Community in a truly free, synergistic, cooperative process.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

It is therefore imperative upon us to change the paradigm by non-violent force of concerted action.

From this day henceforth, let every person, with certain exceptions detailed below, go to their job and perform it to the best of their ability but with one difference: the hierarchies of businesses are not to be observed, recognized, obeyed, nor respected. Let no person pay rent, mortgage, or bills nor pay for any goods or services, and let no person working in the production and distribution of goods and/or services charge for said goods and services.

Let all accounts be marked current and paid in full, in the software or accounting of respective enterprises and institutions. From this moment forward, let every enterprise be governed and decisions made by consensus among those producing in them, under scrutiny of the Public. When managers, directors, bosses, supervisors, boards of directors and their ilk attempt to impose their rule and authority, let all workers and producers steadfastly ignore them and inform them that their services are no longer required, then invite them to share in useful production or else escort them forcibly but respectfully and unharmed from the premises.

Let every person have their cell phone, camcorder or other recording device on their person, charged and ready to document the events as the overthrow and Transition continue. Let every person be a reporter, ready to stream unfolding events to the world. If minions of the deposed former owners, bosses, and other persons of former authority of the now obsolete business hierarchies attempt to force us to cease producing goods and services and re-establish their control, resist them peacefully but forcefully. Only use violence if it is absolutely necessary to defend ourselves or others in the face of violence on the part of our opponents, and even then only the minimum necessary to ensure safety.

If law enforcement or military personnel attempt to enforce the will of the deposed ruling class, let us resist them and refuse, respectfully but uncompromisingly, to comply. We will keep the lights on, the food coming to the tables, the hospitals and schools running, the airplanes flying, the flow of goods and services operating. Thus we will show proof that we can do so in the absence of the hierarchies and in the absence of money or the demands for money.

If the former ruling classes seek to re-establish their control, we must resist respectfully and forcefully while filming and recording to show the world who are the peaceful ones seeking to keep the normal operations of life running and who are the hooligans, bullies and barbarians seeking to bring things to a halt.

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We must at all times discipline ourselves not to engage in acts of revenge or of purging our anger and resentment against our former oppressors. Our goal is a more compassionate, free, democratic, humane society. There is no room in this for vengeance and vigilantism. The current economic despotism is the result of a deeply flawed and corrupt paradigm. When the game is oppressive, we need not punish the players for playing it, but simply abolish the game and replace it with something that better serves the freedom, empowerment, unity in diversity, quality of life and well-being of individuals and the Community.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Let all who have worked in banks, insurance companies, financial institutions, stock exchanges, loan and credit organizations, billing departments, collections and similar functions, lock, physically block with vehicles or other impediments, cut power to and cut or jam communication lines to, and otherwise prevent these institutions from opening or functioning. The only functions that will be performed in these facilities, if any, will be to process data to ensure that all people are shown in every system as paid in full, account current. Let software developers of production and billing software immediately set to work to redesign the software to eliminate billing, collections, and all similar functionality.

Let engineers, designers, and developers in all companies in all industries reach out to each other and grant each other direct access to all of your data and systems and begin sharing all data and expertise as the first step towards completely integrating your knowledge into unified databases. Your former corporate employers are hereby decommissioned. You and all who work to produce your goods and services are now co-owners, co-decision-makers, and co-stakeholders. Immediately lock out your former mangers and other superiors from all data and take measures to prevent them from deleting, sabotaging or sequestering data, schematics, processes, research, etc. If they attempt to interfere, use the minimum level of force necessary to prevent them and maintain a respectful attitude at all times.

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SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Let marketing and advertising agencies re-purpose themselves into instruments of education, information dissemination, and public service.

As of this appointed day, the United States of America is abandoning the reigning economic paradigm and establishing a new one that is in keeping with the spirit and intention of the Constitution in establishing a truly free, democratic and empowered society of free, empowered individuals.

All debts are hereby canceled and currency is abolished.

From this day forward, all processes of production and distribution of goods and services will be administered and driven by democratic or consensus-based decision-making involving all persons participating in the process. Hierarchical social and economic structures are to be eliminated and, where these are temporarily functionally necessary, reduced, minimized, de-emphasized, strongly regulated and transparent to public view.

This is not an overthrow of the government. It is an overthrow of the economic power structure and paradigm that have undermined the intention of the Constitution and deprived ever-increasing numbers of The People from exercising their Constitutional rights. Government personnel have nothing to fear and are encouraged to monitor the Transition and continue with their work. However, let those in government take notice that the Corporate lobbies that have long manipulated, influenced and determined governmental decisions, behaviors and policies, are hereby abolished by will and action of the People. Let our elected officials be conscious that this Transition means that they are now responsible directly to The People and only The People. Let them act accordingly.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

We the People call upon our government to freeze and seize the accounts, records, offices and other assets of all Corporations and large businesses and make all of their records easily accessible to The People and the world. Let full impartial investigations be launched into the policies and business practices of all such businesses and of all persons of decision-making and policy-setting power within such businesses. Where there is evidence of practices injurious to

employees or the People of this or any other country, or damaging to the environment upon which all life depends to survive, and that such policies were carried out in full knowledge of such damaging effects, then let those responsible be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law through due process as appropriate for fraud, extortion, crimes against the People or against Humanity, locally or via The Hague international court depending on the nature of their crimes. Let those found innocent of any crimes or offenses be allowed to go about their lives with no harassment or impediment.

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SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Let all citizens and residents of the United States treat each other with respect, courtesy and civility. If any formerly wealthy persons, landlords, bosses, owners, CEO's or any other persons insist upon being treated with exceptional deference and that their will be imposed, let their demands be ignored and unheeded. Neither obey nor dispute with persons displaying such behaviors but rather calmly ignore them. Do not reinforce these behaviors by engaging them in any way. If they or any other persons become violent, let us respond to them firmly but compassionately according to the law and with due process.

Since there may be confusion, conflict, panic, looting, rioting and/or lawlessness to varying degrees during the time of the Transition, due to predictable human responses to the unknown and due also to pre-existing tensions and resentments, let all peacekeeping personnel be on high alert and prepared to contain and de-escalate these reactions. Let them do so firmly and with an attitude of respect for all people, regardless of whether the violence be enacted by the formerly poor, racial or religious nationalists or fanatics, formerly elite persons seeking to re-establish and enforce their status and control, or any other persons. Brutality on anybody's part, including law enforcement officers, is not to be tolerated. It is to be neutralized with the minimum level of violence possible in a manner and with intention to go to the greatest lengths to preserve the safety, dignity and well-being of all persons. The purpose and emphasis of response will be to ensure peace and safety, not to punish or recriminate.

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Since our nation and our people also have real enemies among the nations of the world, let all Defense Forces place themselves on high alert and be ready to prevent, repel, and combat any attempts to attack or invade our borders. Once the Transition is complete, let all citizens be trained in civil defence and national defence, on the model of the total-defence systems of Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Norway, so that in the unlikely event of foreign invasion or an armed attempt by extremist groups to seize power, the people will be prepared to defend themselves, alongside the military or, if necessary, without it, as the people of the young United States did in their own Revolution. At all times let the principles of the Geneva Convention and of fundamental respect for life and humanity be kept in strong focus.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

From this day forward, each person, family, or other cohesive social unit is the owner and rightful possessor of the place where they live and mutual co-possessor of where they work. No person or entity may make claims upon land, buildings, facilities, or other resources that they do not directly and personally use. No person or entity shall charge or hinder another in any way for the right to live or carry out production and/or distribution of goods and/or services in any place. From this day forward, all dwellings belong to those living in them and all production facilities, fields, factories, plants, etc. belong in common to those who work and produce in them. All aspects of the operation all production facilities shall be made readily open or the public to see, in order to maintain public accountability.

Any unoccupied land that is not currently being used by someone or designated legitimately as a national park or monument, is legally available for occupation by persons needing a place to live, who may build on, park tents or

residential vehicles upon, or otherwise dwell upon such lands. Let Constitutional Amendments be enacted that specify this right for all citizens, as well as the right to unrestricted healthcare at the state of the art, transportation, education at all levels, food, communication, clothing, and all devices and resources needed to maintain a reasonable quality of life according to the technology and context of the times in which they live.

Special note to Billionaires, CEO's, senior managers, stockbrokers, landlords, and others who are ultra-wealthy and constitute the neo-feudal privileged ruling elite under Capitalism: You are likely worried or afraid that you will be in danger as a result of this Transition which is being forced upon you, albeit peacefully, by the Us the People who have long been disenfranchised under Capitalism. You worry that you will be vilified, attacked, imprisoned, or subject to abuse by an angry population with whom you have long had no close contact. You have seen this happen in many Revolutions around the planet. We who are bringing this Transition assure and promise you, in front of the Nation and the World, that this will not happen. We are instituting a socio-economic paradigm designed to empower all to thrive, and in so doing, uplift and empower one another. This includes you. Violence and vigilantism is contrary to the spirit and core values of the new Paradigms that we are ushering in, and will not be permitted or tolerated. The safety and sanctity of every human being and living thing is a right and is guaranteed. Any person or persons attacking, harassing, denigrating or violating the dignity of a former neo-Feudal lord or lady or others loyal to the old paradigm, whether for purpose of perceived justice or emotional purging or other reason, shall be arrested, detained, and charged with crimes appropriate to their actions. Similarly, any former manager, wealthy or powerful member or neo-Feudal Lord of the former ruling class who uses or attempts to use violence, force, intimidation, subterfuge, sabotage or other means in an attempt to reassert your dominance and control shall likewise be arrested, detained and charged with crimes appropriate to their actions.

You of the former elite ruling wealthy classes will live in peace, prosperity and well-being along with all others. You may feel treated unfairly, since you are now stripped of all power over others, over enterprises which you have ruled, over lands and resources that you are not personally using, of privilege or deference above that granted to others not of the ruling elite, of opulence, of exclusivity, of control over what you may consider to be empires that you built by your hard work. We remind you that whatever you have built was done so with not just your own work but by the work of many – hundreds or thousands or more – other people. In fact, what you of the former ruling elite are experiencing is withdrawals. You are addicts to wealth, power, and status as surely as others are addicted to drugs, alcohol, gambling, video games, or shopping. For far too long we as a people have enabled your destructive addiction, to the harm of all including yourselves. As with any addicts, you may feel desperate, victimized, panicked or depressed over the loss of your elevated status over others. Yet in the new Paradigms, all healthcare is free and you are encouraged to avail yourselves of counseling and treatment. This is not compulsory but it is available to you at any time.

In the new Paradigms, you will find a very different reality than what you fear. You will enjoy a sense of safety and security that you most likely never really knew when wealth and power made you the object of cons, sycophants, manipulators, competitors seeking to undo you, all manner of people demanding and expecting things of you, and always the subconscious fear that those at the bottom of the economic pyramid which you controlled may rise up and avenge themselves upon you. None of this will occur. You will find yourselves living in a world in which most of your fellow human beings are potential friends, allies, and support systems. You will find that money and power are not necessary in order to be safe, happy, and enjoy a vigorous and fulfilling life.

For those among you former ruling neo-Feudal lords who are not able or willing to make the transition, who are committed and married to the concept of being wealthy and having power and privilege over others, we regret the distress that the Transition causes you but we make no apology. For generations, we have enabled your money and power addictions. As a result, untold billions of people around the world have suffered, starved, been abused, oppressed, victimized, disenfranchised, marginalized, imprisoned, killed, enslaved, and worse. Horrible wars have been fought. The very long-term survival of life on earth itself has been put in grave jeopardy as a side-effect of your addiction and our enabling of it. We bear you no malice as you have only excelled at behaviors strongly reinforced by your socio-economic environment, and we all share responsibility as we have enabled your addictions. In the same way as we would not allow a drunk, drugged, delusional or disoriented person to drive a vehicle or fly a plane, we will not allow

your addictions to control the way the country or the world functions or to establish its norms. You will not be allowed to enforce your will or control over others. As a subculture, you former Feudal Lords of Capitalism never considered nor showed true compassion, care, or concern for the well-being of those outside of your circles. Often your choices and modes of operation devastated countless people at home and abroad. It is time for this dysfunctional Capitalistic paradigm to be retired and relegated to the annals of failed human experiments on the learning curve of human social evolution, alongside medieval Feudalism, monarchy, Soviet Communism, company towns, slavery, and theocracies. You will find that you will be treated with far more compassion and respect in the new Paradigm than you as a subculture ever showed to those whom you perceived as beneath you. However, you need fear no retribution. Our guiding principle is to create a community in which all are empowered to thrive, in which neighbor supports neighbor, in which one person's gain is another person's gain as well. You will be treated as equals, as individuals, and as sovereign human beings whose true dignity is sacrosanct, as will all others. We are instituting both government and economics of, by and for The People, which includes all people. All will be treated with the respect and compassion. This includes those who were once rich, poor, and middle class.

If you have in the course of ruling your Capitalistic empires committed crimes against Humanity or the nation, such as knowingly destroying the natural environment, polluting, using coercion or bribery to bend government at home or abroad to your will, engaged in the use of or knowingly done business with businesses or regimes that practice torture, oppressive/repressive policies towards their people, sweatshop or slave labor, human trafficking, displacing persons or populations who were unable to defend themselves, engaged in price gouging, monopolistic practices, compromised the public good or safety or that of employees or consumers in the pursuit of profit and market share, suppressed technologies or other information in ways that compromise individual and collective good, or committed other offenses against other human beings or the environment, then yes, you will be held accountable for your crimes via due process in a court of law in which you will find yourself in an impartial and level playing field. If you did not engage in such practices, then you have nothing to fear.

Henceforth all advertising shall cease and be replaced with an information network designed to inform the People of where to obtain goods, services, information and other necessities and resources.

All designers, developers, and producers of goods, services, and other resources, who have heretofore worked in competing companies constrained from sharing information and expertise by antiquated intellectual property laws, shall combine into teams tasked with integrating the best features of their former competing products into the best versions currently reasonably attainable on a scale sufficient to provide all citizens with access and availability of these goods, services and resources. Upon attainment of that goal, production shall be scaled back to only what is necessary to replace losses due to wear & tear, breakage, population growth, and replacement due to advances in technology. All products, services, and resources shall be designed to be as durable, reparable, interoperable and upgradeable as simply as possible. Products shall be distributed freely via former retail and wholesale facilities that shall become distribution centers.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

Let other nations be on notice that the United States of America, from this day forward, shall honor its treaties, alliances, and agreements, except where doing so would perpetuate or support genocide, human trafficking or enslavement, abuse of human beings and/or animals, destruction of the environment, despotism of political, economic, ethnic, religious or any other kind, corruption, abuse of power or wealth, or colonial/military incursion into other countries.

Our country will respect the sovereignty of other countries and nations, including Native American nations currently existing within the boundaries of the United States. We will not attempt to invade, annex, take or control by force, subterfuge, manipulation, or military, political, economic or any other kind of coercion, any other country or their territories.

Any country or entity that seeks to invade, annex, or take any territory away from the United States shall be met with the necessary force to be repelled.

Any treaties, alliances, or agreements that are found to be unacceptable in the above categories shall be renegotiated with the other involved parties in good faith to arrive at a new treaty, alliance, or agreement that is acceptable to all parties. Any that must be canceled shall be withdrawn with clear explanations of why, and only if the other parties fail to agree to cease the unacceptable behaviors after all attempts are made to resolve the issues.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

All facilities, properties, and resources within the borders of the United States heretofore belonging to or controlled by international or foreign businesses or corporations are henceforth the property and under the control all of the people working in them. The United States defense forces will defend this reality if necessary. All such facilities are hereby severed from their former owners/masters and made independent from them, neither owing nor owed any payment nor compensation in either direction. All attempts will be made to create interfaces and arrangements that allow production to continue, and coordination/cooperation to occur, between the liberated facilities in the U.S. and their counterparts abroad. The former parent companies will find strong advantages to working in concert with the liberated U.S. facilities to continue production under the new ground rules. We invite you to the table to discuss arrangements.

Facilities outside the U.S. that formerly belonged to U.S. businesses and corporations now decommissioned and re-cast under democratic member governance, shall be treated with respect and encouraged to continue operation as normal. Employees in those facilities shall experience no loss of livelihood and will be treated according to the improved standards instituted in the liberated headquarters in the U.S. Interfaces will be developed in cooperation between U.S. headquarters and overseas facilities to ensure the continued smooth functioning of both sets of facilities. U.S. headquarters will continue to direct operations. We will require employees in overseas facilities to be treated with the same respect as their counterparts in the liberated U.S. Any managers in such facilities who do not adapt accordingly will be fired and replaced from the rank-and-file. Any manufacturing, distributing or business practices in overseas facilities that conflict with our standards of treatment of humans and the environment, will cease immediately. The U.S. will provide every practicable form of aid and assistance in facilitating such changes. This is non-negotiable and not open for compromise. Such overseas facilities are encouraged to adopt the democratic consensus-based paradigm as their U.S. counterparts.

The Transition is committed to nonviolence, honesty, and open, lawful, democratic change. This passage belongs to the original plan and is kept as written, as a record of how the thinking evolved. See the Roadmap.

All foreign nationals currently legally within the borders of the United States are guaranteed safety, dignity, free passage within the United States as well as to and from the United States and access to all goods, services and resources necessary to live in the same quality of life as is currently enjoyed by citizens.

Any persons illegally in the United States are invited to come forth to apply for legal status, which shall be evaluated on an individual basis and granted, except in cases where individuals are found to be criminals, are harming others or attempting to profit from abuse of our new Paradigm by selling freely accessible goods from the United States abroad.

All countries and foreign businesses will find the new United States of America an honest, reasonable, respectful, creative, and trustworthy good-faith partner in negotiation and in any partnership, treaty, alliance or agreement. We invite all nations, ethnicities, businesses and other entities to open dialog seeking mutual benefit and better understanding.

We will support, advise and mentor any movements in other countries toward their own implementations of similar Transitions. We will not, however, supply arms, nor engage in interference in the internal affairs by covert or overt military or black ops involvement, manipulation or incursion. We do seek to propagate this paradigm across the world. We seek to do so by example and proof in practice, in everyday living, that this paradigm is superior to other existing socio-economic

paradigms in terms of the quality and sustainability of human life, both individually and in communities at large, and of the ecosystem upon which we all depend for our survival.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

We are confident that growing numbers of people worldwide will aspire to and bring about similar Transitions in their respective countries and communities, by force if necessary but never by violence, never perpetrating revenge, purges or oppression of other groups or peoples and never at the expense of human freedom, dignity, well-being or rights.

The project now follows a gradual, voluntary and democratic approach, based on historical evidence of what works. See the Roadmap.

From this day forward, the United States of America shall embody a social and economic paradigm that fulfills, reinforces, and guarantees the ability of every human being within its borders to fulfill their Constitutional rights completely and make their maximum contribution to a free, empowered, empowering, synergistic democratic Community. Our strength is in the dynamics of our diversity, in being one people united in our diverse talents, abilities, tastes, personalities, perspectives, and efforts. Let us be vigilant to make sure that no idea, law, concept, belief, custom, tradition or assumption compromises or is adhered to at the expense or detriment of the rights, dignity, life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, well-being, quality of life of the human beings who comprise our national Community, the World Community, and the ecosystem that sustains our existence.