The Cure:

Of, By And For The People

(The Short Version)



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

Anonymous Proverb

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Short version

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About this edition

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Chapter 1: Intro and Chapter 2 - It Takes Money to Make Money - How the Stock Market Strongly Favors the Ultra Rich

The dictionary defines Capitalism, the dominant socio-economic system in the United States and most of the world, as a socio-economic-political system in which resources are owned and controlled by private parties, which can be individuals or corporations. These "private parties" who control access to resources and processes are almost always a microscopically tiny handful of ultra-wealthy people and the corporations that they command. There is a slightly larger segment of the population who serve and enforce the will and interests of these ultra-wealthy and administer land, labor and other resources on their behalf. The vast majority of people are forced by economic necessity to live in dwellings ultimately owned by this tiny ultra-wealthy sector, and work for them at whatever wages the ultra-wealthy choose to pay while paying whatever this same sector chooses to charge for literally everything. Whether we look at land, goods, services, or simply access to basic needs and necessities, we see that almost all of them are controlled by this miniscule sector.

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 same dictionaries define Feudalism as the Medieval socio-economic-political system in which monarchs and their families owned and controlled resources and processes, parceling out large portions of them to vassals and minor nobility to run as they saw fit in exchange for protecting and enforcing the will and interests of the monarchs, while the vast majority of the population were forced to live on the nobles' land and work for them, giving up to them as much of the fruits of their labors as the nobles and the Crown saw fit to take.

Though the vocabulary, titles, legal definitions, modes of enforcing compliance, and trappings are different, Capitalism, left unchecked long enough, reliably reproduces the core structure of Feudalism: a few control the resources everyone else needs. Therefore we refer to the ultra-wealthy, the billionaires who command the mega-corporations that control all but a few slivers of resources, as neo-Feudal Lords.

Generations have been taught that Capitalism is synonymous with democracy and freedom, while all other socio-economic paradigms are deemed synonymous with dictatorship, just as generations in the European Middle Ages were taught that Feudal dictatorship was the only Divine and natural order. This book shows how that is but a myth at best, and a deliberate deception at worst.

Under both Feudalism and Capitalism, the overwhelming majority of people are kept disempowered and compliant by brute force should they actively resist obeying the behavioral rules set by the paradigm and the 'Lords' at the top of the command structure. In daily life, compliance was assured in Feudal times by keeping the serfs and peasants underfed, overworked, steeped in fear, uneducated, and by using religion to make them believe that to rise up against the nobility was to go against God. Under Capitalism, compliance is similarly assured by keeping people underpaid, overworked, stretched thin and competing over deliberately scarcified resources and opportunities, and distracted by a wide range of entertainments and consumer goods while steeped in the myth that "anybody can make it," implying that if you aren't "making it" then it's because of some defect of your own.

Investment is the most reliable way to amass wealth fast enough to outpace inflation to a meaningful degree. There is a belief that investment is a pathway to financial freedom that is available to everybody. This is a myth, not a reality. It is compelling, like the myth that "anybody can win big" at a casino. In practice, the only way investment is truly viable is if one has enormous sums of money (think millions) to invest, and has enough income or wealth to be able to leave it invested for decades with no need to tap it. The reality is that the richest 1% of the U.S. population owns 50% of all stock, and the top 10% together own 92% of all stock. The 50th to 89th percentiles control among them just 7.75% of all U.S. stock. The bottom 50% own only a quarter of a percent of U.S. stock among them (Federal Reserve, Distributional Financial Accounts; Wolff, NBER, 2017). Inflation (about 3% per year) outpaces wage growth (0.28% per year); the

stock market out paces both (about 10% per year) on average. Yet a 10% return on a handful of shares is not enough to keep the wolf from the door.

When a farmer and a rancher meet to do business in a pre-Capitalist environment, they meet as equal partners negotiating an exchange as equals. Under Capitalism, the employer is always afforded a vastly superior bargaining position relative to the employee or job applicant. They do not meet as equals. Unless the applicant is a CEO candidate, they must pretty much accept the employers terms or they won't be hired. The one bringing a paycheck to the table dictates the terms. Yet when an individual is seeking a residence, they are still the one at a disadvantage since the landlord or mortgage lender is granted the right to dictate terms, which the applicant must accept. Since every living space is owned by someone else, the applicant has no real choice. In both situations, we see that the neo-Feudal lords, in the role of Corporate CEO and as landlord or landlord's employer, dictates the terms. In a society that prizes ownership above all, the employer often requires the employee to agree to sign over to the employer all rights to any inventions or innovations that they may produce. The non-wealthy individual must accept those terms or be without livelihood, food, lodging, or even the right to occupy space.

The Declaration of Independence proclaims our unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and the Constitution guarantees many more. The economic "reality" contradicts these rights, denying those rights to anybody who can't afford the price of exercising them. The microscopic sector of the population who ultimately decides how much we are paid, also decides how much we will have to pay. Any truly Capitalist society is essentially, schematically identical to the "company towns" of the pre-labor-union era.

Employee pay has gone up only about 12% since 1970, while the cost of living has risen around 500% and CEO compensation has increased 800 – 1,200 percent. The U.S. economy is becoming ever more Feudalistic at an ever-accelerating rate. As of 2017, the top 1% most wealthy Americans control 40% of all U.S. wealth while the bottom 50% or more control only 2% of the wealth among them all. This neo-Feudal economic power structure is in direct conflict and cross purposes with any form of government of, by and for the people, and constitutes a direct threat to it. It is inherent in the paradigm. Regulation has repeatedly slowed this, but it has not reversed it, because the pressure comes from the rules of the game itself.

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The necessity is clear to overthrow the economic power structure and institute an economic paradigm that is functionally compatible with, conducive to, and harmonious with government of, by and for the people. In any country having a Constitutionally democratic governmental structure, that structure is best left in place while non-violently forcing a Transition away from hierarchical, pyramidal economic power structures to peer-based, democratic economic paradigms consistent with a free, democratic, thriving society of self-actualized people working symbiotically together for the good of each and all. This economic overthrow and democratization of the economy will also require a whole new approach regarding how to non-violently force a change of paradigm. The fact that such an undertaking feels daunting and is unprecedented on such a scale does not negate the necessity or the viability of doing so. Paradigm changes of similar magnitudes have been successful many times in recent and distant history, from the American Revolution to the removal of the British from India and much more.

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

The extent of the subsumption of government into the service of the ultra-rich can be seen in efforts on the part of some governors and legislators to lower the minimum wage in U.S. states where the minimum wage already falls far below a living wage. In 2017, for example, Missouri's legislature cut St. Louis's new $10 minimum wage back to the state's $7.70 (News Tribune, 2017). Some legislators have even pushed to repeal their state's minimum wage law and let "market forces" determine wages (Record-Courier, 2015). In fact, at the time of this writing about 44% of U.S. workers aged 18 to 64, more than 53 million people, earned low hourly wages (Ross and Bateman, Brookings, 2019). This is because the structure and the psychological reinforcers inherent in the Capitalist paradigm strongly reinforce businesses paying the lowest wage that they can get away with while charging the highest prices that "the market will bear."

Capitalist apologists like to compare the paradigm favorably to Communism because Communism was implemented with monolithic central control of every aspect of the life, claiming that Capitalism grants freedom of choice and a democratic society. This is another myth. The only difference between Capitalism and Soviet-style Communism in that respect is that under Communism, central monolithic control was by the government, which was theoretically answerable to the people, while under Capitalism, control over most aspects of life is largely in the hands of mega-corporations and the billionaires who control them, who answer to shareholders, not to the people.

Resources are kept deliberately scarcified in accordance to the "law of supply and demand," thus putting the overwhelming majority of people in the position of having to vie against one another for scarcified resources and opportunity. As a standard finance reference puts it, in a capitalist system scarcity "is usually resolved through higher prices," and a scarce product is one that "can only be obtained at a price that prohibits many from buying it" (Investopedia, 2026). Keep currency scarce and hard to come by and make sure that everybody must have it, and you make sure that almost all people will be willing to enter virtual indentured servitude or slavery in order to get it. Keep housing, food, education, medical care, etc., in short supply and you can drive prices up almost without limit, as long as Capitalism is the only game in town and all are required to play. This is a very effective strategy for controlling most of a population and keep the people engaged in perpetual servitude and disempowerment.

Yet it is not a matter of bad people being bad. The problem is that the operating principles of the dominant paradigm strongly reinforce these neo-Feudalistic behaviors while failing to reinforce co-operation and synergistic mutuality.

Back to the dictionary, one of Merriam-Webster definitions of Feudalism is "Any of various political or social systems similar to medieval feudalism." By that definition, the current dominant socio-politico-economic paradigm fits the definition to a tee. We are not, however, doomed to continue in this paradigm. It only continues to function as it does because we all continue to live our lives and function according to the rules dictated by it.

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If we choose, pretty much en masse, to function according to the parameters of a different paradigm at every level of a country or society and cease following the parameters set by the feudalistic paradigm, then those addicted to the Capitalist paradigm will not be able to stop us, no matter how hard they try to suppress the Transition. There are ten thousand or more of us for every one of them. If we simply change the way the game of life from research & development to production of goods and services to distribution of resources to consumption of goods and services, at the grass roots level, the neo-Feudal lords will be helpless to stop us.

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

The forms, protocols and significance of the production and distribution of goods and services in and among human communities have changed dramatically since the early days of our species.

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The earliest human communities had no need of currency. All members of the community had, among them, the skills necessary to make sure everybody had food, shelter, and all other necessities and amenities according to the times. Each member of the community did their part. Enough of everything was produced or gathered to take care of everybody's needs.

Between tribes there was trade, mostly in the form of barter in which all parties met as equal participants in negotiation of an exchange acceptable to all parties. The degree or room for abuse of the process was extremely limited and minimal compared to what is commonplace today.

Agriculture, herding and other developments created more specialization in communities. Currency in various forms, from recorded debts and tallies to coins, tokens and seashells, developed over time to keep track of obligations and to facilitate the exchange and distribution of goods and services. Contrary to the familiar textbook story, anthropologists have found no society in which money grew out of everyday barter among neighbors; credit, gifts and mutual obligation came first, and barter appears mostly between strangers (Humphrey, 1985). At that point in history, currency was a reasonably practical way to simplify the process of distribution of goods and services.

Eventually, certain metals and minerals became widely-accepted exchange media. People assigned them an almost mystical aura of value, completely independent of their physical or aesthetic properties. Make no mistake about it, the "intrinsic" valuation ascribed to gold, silver, platinum, diamonds and the like, over which so much human brutality, treachery and atrocity has been committed, is as arbitrary and made-up as the rules of Monopoly, poker or soccer.

At various points in time, however, the antecedents of modern Capitalistic behaviors began to establish themselves. Some people realized that if they controlled and blocked access to vital resources, usually through physical force, they could extort goods, services, and compliance to their will on the part of people who needed or wanted those resources. The parties doing this then chose others to act as their agents to enforce their will upon everybody. Thus emerged the embryonic blueprint for the Feudalistic paradigm. From withholding access to vital resources, some of these incipient dictators realized they could also get their way through direct threat. Give me what I demand or I'll beat you up, kill you, or just take it from you and hurt you in the process. That is how many royal dynasties were established. The aura of respectability, nobility, and inherent entitlement to power and control were crafted and spun for generations over centuries until the entire population believed it to be a fact of nature. This is equally the way that generations of people in modern times have been trained to believe that the ultra-wealthy are ultra-wealthy because they are that much more inherently worthy, hard-working and deserving than the overwhelming majority of the population who are trained to believe that the reason they are struggling paycheck to paycheck is because there is something inherently inferior, defective or undeserving about them. (Hint: another myth) The difference between a royal family, a billionaire, a Mafia don, and a "third-world" dictator is as insignificant as the difference between a Muslim terrorist, a Christian terrorist, a Hindu terrorist, and an Anarchist terrorist.

At this point in history, currency/money no longer functions as an interface to simply the flow of goods and services among individuals and communities. It has come to act as an instrument of control by those highest in the socio-economic pyramid, to limit and restrict access to goods and services, including everything from luxuries to basic needs. Its form has morphed from metals deemed precious, to pieces of special paper, to bits in databases at financial institutions. It is a means of ensuring that we modern-day serfs and peasants have little or no choice but to work for them under their terms so they will pay us carefully-scarcified currency in order to purchase everything from basic necessities to desired items, also kept scarcified in order to ensure that the cost of living adds up to more than we are

paid. Credit as a proffered "solution" only deepens the degree of our servitude. Currency has morphed from an instrument of exchange among peers to a weaponized instrument of control over the population by a neo-Feudal economic power elite. For some of those at the top, the motive for this control is to feed a deeply-ingrained and enabled compulsion for power, privilege, opulence, and control over others, one that follows the pattern of a behavioural addiction. As with anyone caught in an addiction, people caught in this one can be dominated and driven by it, even at the expense of committing acts profoundly damaging to others and themselves. Sadly, Capitalist societies have extolled this compulsion and held up those caught in it as role models for success, to be emulated and admired, rather than recognising it for what it is and helping them get free of it.

As we see it today, Capitalism is a very efficient pyramid scheme that very effectively siphons and redistributes ever-increasing portions of wealth, power, and resources into the hands of the very few at the top of the pyramid and out of the hands of the rest of the population. In its basic structure it works much like the pyramid schemes the law forbids: wealth flows steadily from the many at the base to the few at the top, and mostly the terminology differs.

Nowhere is the function of currency as barrier as clearly visible as in the matter of real estate and the question of how people find a place to live, to occupy space. There are only two choices under Capitalism: renting or buying. Renting is paying a wealthier person, often a rental company or wealthy landowner, for the privilege of living in a place that they own. Home ownership is preferable. However, most people who consider themselves homeowners still owe on a mortgage, and their ownership is far more fragile than they think. On paper, they hold the title. Functionally, as long as they owe, the lender holds their home in its hands. If they become unable to pay, even after paying out more than the original price of the home (the "Principal"), the lender can foreclose and have it sold, usually at a steep forced-sale discount. Whatever is left after the lender's debt and costs are paid belongs to them, but it is often little or nothing, and the home is gone. Since homes are priced far beyond the ability of all but a very few to afford to pay in cash, the only way the vast majority of people can buy a home is to take a loan. Whether you are paying rent or a mortgage, the arrangement is basically one of paying "protection money" or ransoming your own existence every month under threat of homelessness if you don't. If you choose to neither buy nor rent, where will you live. All land that is not public land is owned by individuals or businesses. Even if such land or buildings are not in use, it is illegal to even walk into them. Most public lands are also off-limits. If you try to live in a motorhome or other mobile residence, most jurisdictions in a Capitalist setting have ordinances, regulations, and laws that make it impossible or nearly so to do so unless you are paying rent at a mobile-home park. In other words, you are literally forced to pay someone for the privilege of occupying space. Without that right, all of your rights are empty theory with no substance. The enforcement of compliance to the Capitalist paradigm has reached such extremes that dozens of U.S. cities have restricted or penalized sharing food with homeless people in public places (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2014), and police are empowered to confiscate the belongings of homeless people. In a society that proclaims that "possession is nine tenths of the law," a homeless person will be arrested for living on land owned by a billionaire because of the sanctity of property, but will be deprived of their own possessions because under Capitalism your rights, options, access to resources and opportunities, the respect you are afforded, and the degree of slack you are allowed when something goes wrong are directly determined by your place in the economic pyramid. If you are at the top, your rights are vigorously enforced and defended. If you are at the bottom, your rights are nonexistent. Your right to own a sleeping bag, tent or winter coat is not respected. This is not democracy. This is not freedom. This is the antithesis of a free, democratic, empowered and thriving society.

Even if you own a home outright, some towns and homeowners' associations have banned or fined front-yard vegetable gardens, under the umbrella of "zoning" laws and protecting "property values." One Florida village threatened a couple with fines of $50 a day for theirs, until the state outlawed such local bans in 2019 (NPR, 2019).

The concept of "free enterprise" is touted as a democratic model that allows everybody to do business in freedom and empowerment. Yet it is not so. Under Capitalism, the ultra-wealthy and their corporations experience free enterprise while the small entrepreneur or businessperson experiences a caustic environment that favors the mega-corporation at their expense. If a mammoth corporation is mismanaged, the government takes taxpayers' money to bail them out and the CEO who mismanaged the company is respectfully let go with a multi-million-dollar severance package. If a small business is mismanaged or encounters hard times, it is allowed to fail without any bail-out. If the small business owner mismanages, they are left with the fallout. If an employee mismanages or makes mistakes, they are fired with no severance package and negative references to dog their heels and make sure they won't easily find another job.

Psycho-social awareness and energy that could lead to a concerted effort among the people to end the Capitalist pyramid are also dissipated by the abundance of distractions and diversions available. Keeping the population overworked, hyper-stressed, and subgroups blaming each other for their plight instead of perceiving the bigger picture, are some of the methods used by the neo-Feudal Lords to keep the pyramid operating unchallenged. In the United States, people are brought up from birth to believe that they have freedom and democracy, a carefully cultivated belief that further turns people away from rising up to change the operating paradigm.

As daunting as it is to contemplate supplanting the dominant socio-economic paradigm on a national or global scale, it is not impossible. The American, Chinese and Soviet revolutions, the non-violent ousting of the British from India, and ending of Apartheid in South Africa are all examples of major paradigm-shifts that occurred against what would at the time have appeared to be overwhelming odds. The first three were armed struggles, and their violence is exactly what this Transition rejects; the ousting of the British from India shows what determined, unyielding nonviolent resistance can achieve. If we are to truly achieve government of, by and for the People, and a thriving community of empowered, symbiotic fully-actualized people, then this is a critical and necessary step.

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The power-and-wealth addicts, the neo-Feudal lords at the top of the economic pyramid will not willingly give up the object of their addiction but we cannot let that deter us. We must deconstruct the economic power structure itself and wrest power from their hands with the same mindset which would motivate us to wrest the car keys from a drunk or impaired friend or family member and for the same reason. It is not a matter of retribution or of replacing the ones at the top with other persons. It is a matter of shutting down the entire power structure and its mechanisms, and replacing it with a paradigm designed to reinforce and foster behaviors that give rise to a thriving, happy and healthy community of thriving, happy and healthy individuals.

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Chapter 4: Disparity

In a Capitalist society, one's degree of wealth or lack thereof is the most powerful determinant of one's freedoms, options, quality of life, access to resources, and the treatment one receives in the society. It is not unusual for CEO's to make in day or even in an hour what a median employee of the same company makes in a year. In a few cases the disparity is even more dramatic. In 2017 the wealth of Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, grew by approximately $33 billion, about $1,050 every second, while the median Amazon employee was paid $28,446 for the year (Glum, Money, 2018), which is just barely a living wage. His wealth grew by that employee's yearly pay about every 27 seconds. The current disparity rivals, and by some measures exceeds, that of Europe at the height of Feudalism in the Medieval period. In addition, the disparity is becoming ever more extreme over time, and the rate of acceleration is itself accelerating. Professions that a few decades ago allowed one a high quality of life and degree of freedom from the "wolves at the door," now only bring one a just barely over surviving level of existence (Paquette, Washington Post, 2018). Each generation now has a smaller chance than the last of doing better than its parents: about 90% of Americans born in 1940 came to earn more than their parents, but only about half of those born in the 1980s (Chetty et al., 2017). Many now work longer and harder for fewer options, less freedom, and more stress.

Capitalist societies justify and explain this disparity by postulating that one's wealth and power, or lack thereof, is a measure of one's productivity, worthiness and contribution to the community. Yet in most cases the CEO may contribute nothing more than generating more wealth for already-beyond-wealthy investors while contributing nothing to the community or even the processes over which they preside. Most of the actual production would continue without the CEO and other officers and upper management, since coordination can be done by the people doing the work, as worker cooperatives show. It would cease altogether without the machine operators, cafeteria workers, forklift operators, engineers, truck drivers, and others who actually produce goods and services. The "meritocracy" myth is thematically identical to the Medieval myth that held that royalty was in power because God had made them inherently superior to peasants and serfs and that to go against their power was to go against God and earn one a place in hell.

Another common Capitalist myth is the "anybody can make it" myth. Similar to the "anybody can win big" myth in a casino setting, it is not a complete untruth. It is true that anybody could theoretically "make it" or win big in a casino. There are plenty of anecdotal rags-to-riches stories to dramatize the myth and make it feel believable. Yet as in a casino, the Capitalist paradigm is sharply pyramidal. The paradigm itself cannot function if more than a very tiny segment of the population actually "make it." To believe otherwise is an illusion akin to believing in an engine that can function free of entropy. Yet the myth is very effective at keeping most people working hard to make it, believing that if they just work hard enough, or come up with the right business idea, or hang in long enough, they will ascend the pyramid to free themselves of functional wage slavery.

This is inherent in the very structure of the paradigm. It cannot be resolved by tweaking the current system from the top down, any more than a lead balloon can be made to rise by modifying it. Reforms handed down from above, however well-intended, are reliably eroded while the underlying structure remains. The change has to be built from the ground up, and only then completed through democratic law: once the alternative has proved that it works and has become firmly rooted and established, it can no longer be waved away, and governments will have to take it into account and answer to it. The change must come from the people themselves, by changing the way the daily functions and activities of decision-making and of production and distribution of goods and services are done in the factories, in the stores, in the streets, and in our lives.

Yet studies have found that most people vastly underestimate the extremity of the disparity (Norton and Ariely, 2011). The myths and propaganda serving the ruling neo-Feudal lords is working to keep almost all of the people compliant. The majority of people are blissfully unaware of how catastrophically far the stratification of their societies has progressed nor how rapidly it is accelerating. The direction of travel points toward a replication of Medieval Feudalism reinforced by sophisticated technology and propaganda mechanisms, a dystopian dictatorship that could well last a very long time if the paradigm driving it is not decommissioned very soon.

Chapter 5: Why Is There Inflation?

If prices were truly determined by real, natural factors such as the impact of weather on crops, the depletion of or discovery of new sources of a resource, or the effects of new technologies, then we would expect to see prices rise and fall in response to such factors. Yet what we see in practice in Capitalist cultures is that while prices may rise and fall with natural events, over time they inexorably rise, and do so faster than the wages of the vast majority of people.

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What drives this process?

Capitalist paradigms create an environment where it is imperative to amass as much money as possible, for individuals and families, and for businesses. Capitalist societies are also structured in such a way that different sectors of the population are pitted against each other. The common adage that "one man's loss is another man's gain" sums up this dynamic. Under the Capitalist paradigm, employers and employees, landlords and tenants, and other sectors each survives at the expense of the other.

Employers thrive best when wages are low, they do not have to pay for health insurance or other benefits, employees work long hours, and they can charge the highest price that "the market will bear" for their goods and services. Employee pay and benefits are an expense. A Capitalist imperative is to minimize expenses and maximize profits. These goods and services are typically things that employees must access – clothes, shoes, cars, food, etc. Employees thrive best when wages are higher than the cost of living, when they have healthcare and other "benefits," and working conditions and expectations are reasonable. When one end of the equation gains, it comes at the expense of the other end in an eternal tug-of-war that drives prices ever higher. Economists also point to other drivers, such as the money supply and shocks to energy and supply chains; but recent research finds that firms with pricing power drove much of the 2021–22 surge (Weber and Wasner, 2023).

Because the employer is assigned a superior level of power relative to employees, the cycle most assuredly starts with the employer. The employer sets the terms and wages. The employer sets their prices of their goods and services. The strong reinforcers in Capitalist paradigms drive them to make high demands on employees, keep wages low, and charge as high a price as they can get away with for their products. Employees then find that they can't afford the necessities of life, much less amenities, and experience negative impact on health and well-being, which drives them to strike and otherwise push for higher wages and healthier working conditions. Employers resist and fight this effort, sometimes to the point of violence and of course pressuring lawmakers to serve their interests. When employees do achieve gains, employers compensate by raising prices to preserve their profit margins. Employers then publicly blame labor costs for rising prices, portraying themselves as victims of nefarious and unreasonable employees. This cycle continues as long as the Capitalist paradigm operates. Companies who trade with one another also contribute to inflation when each tries to get the highest price while lowballing their suppliers.

Another aspect of this dynamic is manipulation of "the law of supply and demand." Quite simply, when a producer deliberately cuts back on production to create a shortage of their products, they can get away with raising prices. This kind of manipulation has been seen countless times and is often perfectly legal in Capitalist paradigms when a single dominant firm does it. The petroleum industry, the pharmaceutical industry and tech and toy companies marketing their "must-have" items during holiday season are all frequent expressions of this dynamic. With the level of highly-sophisticated advertising and propaganda currently in operation, companies often create demand for products and service using effective psycho-social manipulations of targeted populations who have been trained from birth to respond to such manipulations. "Built-in obsolescence," the practice of intentionally manufacturing products to have a short useful life is yet another factor in inflation, since these deliberately-crippled products break must be replaced much more frequently than would be the case if they were manufactured at the best standards that the state of the art allows.

Inflation is often disguised. Often, prices remain the same while package size incrementally and steadily shrinks. For the most part, people do not usually notice. A-la-carte packaging drives prices up as well. Companies often unofficially raise

prices across the board by dollars and then compete among themselves over pennies. Technically, no anti-monopoly laws are broken and all of the companies increase their profits and stock prices.

Inflation strongly favors mega-corporations and other massive producers. If a mom-and-pop business or freelance provider raises their prices too high, their customers go elsewhere. A huge company or companies that produce and control most or all of the supply of something, they can raise prices at will and consumers must pay their price or do without. When the products or services are necessities, such as food, clothing, medicine, etc., consumers have no choice at all. Ultimately the entire Capitalist country functions as the old "company towns" of pre-labor-movement America in which the employer required employees to live and shop in facilities owned by the employer while keeping the wages that they controlled lower than the cost of living which they also controlled, thus keeping employees in perpetual indebted servitude. On the national scale, it may superficially not appear to be the case, but in reality it is the same miniscule sector of ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal lords who among them control the corporations that control prices of almost all goods and services, who also control wages. What we see is a "company town" of unprecedented proportions, disguised in a veneer of democracy and freedom.

The legal atrocity of "corporate personhood" both insulates the neo-Feudal lords form being answerable to the people for anything they do, and ensures that an individual employee or customer who challenges or fights back against wrongdoing by a mega-corporation will meet the corporation in the courtroom in the same way as beaten and half-starved Christians met professional fighters in Roman gladiatorial games. A corporation has massive resources and a team of top-notch attorneys on retainer to defend their interests, while the employee or consumer, who is most likely living paycheck to paycheck, must struggle to afford an attorney if they can at all, and has few to no resources at their disposal.

Striking, demonstrating, boycotting, and pressuring lawmakers to limit the disparity and improve the situation of employees do have an effect, and they have won real gains. But by themselves they are not enough to cure what amounts to a metastatic cancer. In the long run, the influence of mega-corporations and the ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal lords who command them reliably overwhelms and erodes those gains, because the structural patterns that produced the problem remain in place and reassert themselves. What it will take is a carefully planned replacement of the current paradigm with one built on human, social and environmental well-being, and on mutual benefit rather than the good of some at the expense of others.

Yet it would be a tragic mistake to define the neo-Feudal lords and those who enforce their power as "bad guys" and engage in a revengeful "purge." These players are playing the game of Capitalism as designed and responding efficiently to the psycho-social reinforcers built into the paradigm. Without realizing it, we have all been playing the same game and responding to the same reinforcers and thus enabling and perpetuating the dysfunctional systems arising from the paradigm. The root of this destructive dynamic is the fact that the paradigm strongly reinforces the destructive behaviors. Basic behavioral psychology teaches us that whatever gets reliably reinforced will predominate. What is not reinforced will tend towards extinction. When we change the reinforcers in the socio-economic paradigm, predominant behaviors will change accordingly.

To lynch the players for being good at the game would not solve the problem and would destroy any chance of creating a compassionate, empowering, thriving society of mutually-benefiting actualized inhabitants.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

The solution is to shut down the game by forcefully but non-violently ceasing to play by the game's rules, and instead to play a new "game" based on a paradigm of win-win-win-win instead of win-lose-lose-lose, based on symbiosis rather than predation and exploitation, based on the well-being of the community, its inhabitants and the environment instead of the accumulation and expansion of wealth for a small group. The current neo-Feudal lords will react badly as would any addicts losing the object of their addiction, but we must resist and contain them, not punitively but pragmatically and compassionately. They will feel like victims. We must make absolutely sure that we do not actually make them into victims. But we cannot allow them to continue to serve their addiction to wealth, opulence and power over others. We will need to approach the deposed former neo-Feudal Lords in the same way the Allies approached the defeated Axis powers at the end of World War II, rather than how we approached them at the end of World War I.

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

Punishment is a much less effective mode of behavior modification than reinforcing the alternative. Capitalist societies both reinforce and forcefully reinforce the absolute need for money in order to live and function. Such societies are divided into subgroups with mutually conflicting imperatives: employers and employees, landlords and tenants, over-privileged and disenfranchised, Lords and Serfs. These sectors operate in an endless escalating tug-of-war in which each only gains at the expense of the other. When prices go up, employees need to fight for higher wages to keep up. When wages go up, employers raise prices of their goods and services to recoup the loss. Group is pitted against group, person against person when money and opportunity are intentionally scarcified as they are in all Capitalist paradigms.

Yet this inflationary escalation cycle is not symmetrical or balanced. Employees must accept prevailing wages or go without a job. Big employers, on the other, can easily replace employees from a plentiful supply. If you don't have an income, which for all but the ultra-wealthy means having a job, then you have no way to live or even to occupy space. During a strike, a mammoth corporation can weather their loss of profit far longer than striking employees can weather going without pay. Strikers and other people engaging in agitating for wage increases and other necessary compensation are increasingly portrayed in the news as hooligans, malcontents, and "economic terrorists" in the media, which erodes and undermine public support.

Even homeownership is largely illusion. Most "homeowners" are paying off mortgages, because home prices are far too high to buy otherwise. The title is in their name, but as long as they owe, the lender holds the real power over the home. If the "homeowner" becomes unable to continue paying, the lender can foreclose and take the home, even if the "homeowner" has already paid more than the original price (principal) of the home. But the illusion keeps millions of people compliant with the Capitalist rules of behavior.

A stunning array of tactics further advantage huge corporations over employees. Hiring at part-time status, hiring temps and contractors instead of employees, outsourcing, and cutting benefits are common. Companies invest in stock buy-backs which further concentrate wealth into the hands of the neo-Feudal lords who are the large shareholders, rather than invest in employees' salaries, benefits or working conditions. Employee pay increases are measured in pennies while large investor gains are measured in millions of dollars. The neo-Feudal lords are unaware that they are doing anything wrong – they are simply practicing "good business" according to the reinforcers of the world they function in, and such societies lionize them and hold them up as examples to be emulated. They do not see their striking resemblance to the classical Feudal lords of Medieval times.

While homes are out of reach for most people, there are a plethora of entertainments, distractions, recreational products, and symbols of apparent prosperity that are affordable. Stressed, overworked employees cope with the stress by availing themselves of these, which dissipates the emotional, mental, physical and social energy that could otherwise coalesce into a realization of the bigger pattern leading to concerted, coordinated action to challenge and dismantle the pyramidal economic power structure. Programmed from birth to be dutiful employees and consumers, people work overtime to purchase the illusion of freedom and prosperity. This serves the same function as religion did in the Medieval Feudal paradigm. It keeps people compliant indefinitely.

The neo-Feudal lords at the top of the economic pyramid are not free or immune to the damage done by the Capitalist socio-politico-economic paradigm. They are not truly free. Many of them live in thrall to a runaway compulsion for wealth, opulence, privilege and power over others, one with the hallmarks of a behavioural addiction like gambling. Just as with people struggling with drugs or gambling, the lives, choices and actions of those caught in it can be dictated by the compulsion, and they may do dangerous, destructive things in pursuit of it, as unaware of the harm they cause to billions of people and the environment worldwide as someone struggling with alcohol can be of its effects on family and friends. Many of them will react badly when the object of that compulsion is no longer within reach.

Decades of efforts to fix, tweak, regulate or modify this paradigm have slowed some of its harms, but they have not reversed these dynamics or made it serve and strengthen the empowerment, happiness, well-being and thriving of individuals or of the community. It is time to retire the paradigm as unworkable and replace it with one that is workable.

Chapter 6: The Biggest Product of Modern-Day Capitalism is Scarcity

The United States of America presents itself to the world and to its people as a bastion of freedom, liberty, human rights, and opportunity. We use the U.S. as an example since it is the most aggressive propagator of Capitalist paradigms in the world and has replicated its paradigm in many countries around the world. The Declaration of Independence proclaims our unalienable rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, and the Constitution has evolved to guarantee many more. Yet interwoven with the Constitutionally-established governmental and legal structure is an socio-economic power structure that directly contradicts, nullifies and undermines the Constitution and the rights it guarantees. While cultural folklore holds up Soviet Communism as the archetypical antithesis of a free and democratic society, in fact under Capitalism one is not free to live outside of the Capitalist paradigm, even if one is not taking anything from anybody and harming no one.

In order to exercise one's Constitutional rights, one must have a place to live, to occupy space. Yet since nearly every square inch of land in the United States that is not public land (owned by the government) is owned by an individual, business or other economic entity. Privately-owned land is off-limits to any but the owner, unless one pays money to the owner for temporary conditional permission to be there. Even if the owner is an ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal lord who will never use it or even worse, who will render it uninhabitable in the process of extracting resources from it for profit, it is illegal to live there. Public land is also off-limits. Even if you live in an RV that you own outright, most places have made it illegal to live in it unless you are paying rent in an RV park or to the owner of some other piece of land. The same goes for living on a boat, if one wishes to have access to land. Many cities have given police the power to confiscate the tents, sleeping bags and other meager possessions of homeless people in a culture where "possession is nine-tenths of the law." In other words, in theory one has rights starting with Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, while in practice one only has what rights one can pay for, and one's freedom, options, quality of life, and the degree of respect that one's rights are given is directly proportional to one's place in the economic pyramid. Apparently Constitutional rights only fully apply to the neo-Feudal lords and disembodied spirits who have no need to occupy space.

Cuba is held up as an example of a totalitarian dystopia. Yet most Cubans own their homes outright, with no mortgage: a 1960 law made a place to live a right and turned tenants into owners (Peters 2014). Homes may now be bought and sold (since 2011), but in the author's view that was a step back under the pressure of a decades-long U.S. embargo, not proof that the commitment failed. Cubans are also guaranteed access to medical care. In the United States neither is guaranteed: beyond emergency care, access to both depends largely on ability to pay. That is not to say that Cuba is a paradise – it does suffer from its own anti-democratic problems. Yet it is one example of proof that the Capitalist paradigm enforced in the United States and many other countries is not the only viable model, common conceptions and propaganda notwithstanding.

A logical question is, how did land and other resources come into the hands that own it now? Briefly put, when the Europeans started occupying the Americas there were between 20 and 100 million people living there in many diverse nations and cultures. The Europeans unwittingly brought diseases with them to which the original Americans had no immunity, which resulted in a lot of deaths. This was unknowing and unintentional. What was intentional, however, was the systematic slaughter of those peoples while forcing them from the lands they lived on. Many of them had no concept of land ownership and would have coexisted with the Europeans with no problems. Massive herds of buffalo that could have fed Native Americans and Europeans were slaughtered to near extinction by commercial hunters, a destruction many army officers openly welcomed and encouraged as a way to starve the Plains nations onto reservations (Smits, 1994). At Fort Pitt in 1763, British officers gave Delaware envoys blankets from the smallpox hospital as gifts, hoping to spread the disease (Fenn, 2000). Biological warfare is far older than that, going back to antiquity (Riedel, 2004), but few cases are as cynical: disease offered as a gift. The Native nations were not treated with even the basic level of respect afforded between European countries at war. The intention and mentality were nearly identical to that of the Nazis in Germany when they set out to exterminate Jews, Roma and Sinti and other groups deemed inferior and an infestation of vermin. Do not think of them as "tribes," since that perpetuates the stereotype of them as less than nations. They were nations with their own rich and complex cultures, religions, laws, alliances, and codes of conduct. The "Jewish Problem." The "Indian Problem." Same solution with slightly different methods. This was state-sanctioned at the highest levels and systematically, relentlessly carried out.

Then when the blood of the slaughtered peoples was not yet dry upon the land, the land was parceled out and given to homesteaders, prospectors, and even developers (such as the railroads). If you were there, you got a piece of land. If you weren't, then your only option since then is to either rent from a landowner or buy land, which is kept so expensive that the overwhelming majority of people must take out a mortgage in order to buy a home, in which case for practical purposes they are renting from the lender until the mortgage is paid off. The home will be repossessed if the borrower becomes unable to keep up with mortgage payments. Yet with such a history and etiology, how can we respect such a construct as sacrosanct and immune to challenge. How can we continue to perpetuate it once we know both its derivation and its effects in the present?

Thus, Capitalism creates scarcity and barriers to access to land, something that was present before humans ever lived on it in sufficient abundance to accommodate all of the population. Yet over three-fourths of U.S. residents are paying every month to have a place to be. More than 770,000 Americans were homeless on a single night in January 2024 (HUD, 2024), while millions of homes sit empty, many of them second homes or investments. The shortage is above all a shortage of homes people can afford, where they need them; access is blocked by price. The largest private landowner in the United States owns more land than the area of the entire state of Delaware (Land Report, 2024), while eighty percent of the people live in urban areas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census) covering only about three percent of the land. Ownership continues to concentrate unceasingly into fewer and fewer hands, leaving an ever-growing majority with nowhere that belongs to them. This pattern under modern Capitalism is functionally indistinguishable from the pattern under Medieval Feudalism. It is most certainly not a picture of a free, democratic society of unparalleled freedoms and human rights governed of, by and for the people.

Land is only one vital resource that is kept scarcified with currency barriers blocking the vast majority of people from access to ownership. It is given special focus because the right to occupy space is essential to all other rights and needs of life. It is also unique in that while a house does require building, the land itself was present and no human labor was involved in bringing it into being. Yet people were killed so that other people could control access and thus force billions of other people to pay them to be on the land, even though the controlling parties contributed nothing to the existence of the land.

The same pattern, however, is replicated with respect to every resource and necessity. Water is similarly controlled for the most part. It is there in lakes, glaciers and rivers whether or not humans are present. When someone takes control of a water source upstream, they can withhold it from those downstream unless they pay a price. Again, no value is created. Access is blocked. The resource is held hostage. It is more complicated of course since in modern times infrastructure must be built to distribute water to those who need it. Where water is privatized, however, the price charged often rises well above what is needed to cover the cost of the infrastructure. If the current trend continues, continued air pollution will lead to some corporation purifying air to make it breathable and charging people for the privilege of breathing it.

Capitalism is often called "free enterprise," a term carrying an emotional implication of autonomy and freedom for the people to pursue their survival, yet its current form is anything but. Mammoth corporations with more resources than many countries dominate most goods and services, creating a business environment toxic to small business and individual initiative. Walmart or Target can move into a neighborhood and easily undercut competing small businesses out of existence and hold down local wages. Former small business owners may end up as struggling employees of the large chains, working for sub-living wages. It is no more "free enterprise" than was the control and domination of the British Crown and corporations of pre-Revolutionary days in the U.S. When the mom and pop store went under, there was no help for them. If Walmart or Target were in danger of going under on the other hand, the government would take billions of dollars of taxpayer's money to bail them out, as has happened under administrations of both main U.S. political parties.

Gigantic mega-corporations are able to largely control and dictate the course of scientific and technological research and development. One well-known example is the petroleum industry. Oil companies' own scientists accurately projected global warming from the late 1970s, while the companies publicly cast doubt on it (Supran, Rahmstorf and Oreskes, 2023). These corporations are able to assert their interests upon elected officials in such a way as to ensure that lawmakers, executive and judges will support their agenda and effectively suppress the development of alternative technologies, or at least ensure that they are kept on the fringes of energy usage. We see this very clearly in the current regime in power, who enthusiastically promote the interests of the petroleum industry over alternative technologies and

even a stable climate for human civilization. Though these multinational corporations may escape the legal definition of monopolies, they collaborate among them to function as a monopoly, setting pretty much any price they want. Pharmaceutical companies are another high-profile example, setting prices astronomically even on medications that they did not even develop. They do this because they know the demand is high and they control the supply, and because there are no consequences for doing so. Under Capitalist paradigms, this is not illegal. Such behavior is actively and strongly reinforced.

Truly, the principal product of Capitalism is scarcity and barriers to access to everything from a place to live to food to life-saving medicine.

Chapter 7: The Pyramid Scheme

It is clear that Capitalism is at cross-purposes to the happiness and well-being of the community and the people in it, both locally and globally. It is clear that it creates an escalating pandemic of human suffering and threatens the very continuation of life on earth. So why do billions of people continue to participate in keeping it going instead of taking action to end it and replace it with a win-win-win paradigm that does serve the happiness and well-being of the people?

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).

One reason is because of cultural myths coupled with and exploited by carefully-crafted propaganda.

In Medieval Europe as well as ancient Egypt and Japan right up until the end of World War II, peasants and serfs were kept compliant with the feudal power structure largely through the misuse of religion. They were brought up from birth to believe that to contradict the feudal lords was to go against God in one form or another, thus earning them a horrific place in Hell.

Capitalist societies are also rife with cultural myths which are exploited by the ultra-wealthy neo-Feudal lords to guarantee widespread compliance. Religion is still used in this regard, but to a lesser degree than in medieval times. Another myth effective in gaining compliance with the Capitalist paradigm is the myth of meritocracy: the belief that those who have "made it" have done so through admirable qualities and that, if we wish to "make it," we can do so by learning how the ultra-wealthy think and act, then emulate it. The corollary of this belief is that if you aren't "making it," then it's because of some failure, flaw, or unworthiness on your part. This keeps people playing by Capitalist rules in the hope that they'll "make it" if they just make themselves worthy to do so. It also keeps people divided and striving against each other, since everybody is aware that opportunities to "make it" are few and far between so for every person who does make it, there will be multitudes of others who will not. It is inherent in the structure of the Capitalist paradigm. You or I "making it" does not change the fundamental pyramidal hierarchical structure of such societies, any more than a slave gaining their freedom now and then would end slavery before the U.S. Civil War. Capitalism is, by its very core operating principles, a pyramid scheme indistinguishable from illegal pyramid schemes. As long as people believe the myths of meritocracy and "anybody can make it," they remain compliant and continue to actively hold up the economic pyramid on their shoulders. This is a most dangerous course of action in which we voluntarily participate in nourishing the parasitic system feeding upon our time, our energy, our productivity, and our lives.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Our only viable option is to take concerted forceful but non-violent action to end the Capitalist paradigm and replace it with a new paradigm that will reinforce and sustain the mutual well-being, empowerment and happiness of all members of the community.

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

If we do not, we risk living to see the emergence of an oppressive dictatorial neo-Feudal society that could far outlast its Medieval predecessor and possibly bring about the end of human life altogether.

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 overriding any legal or Constitutional guarantees or assertions to the contrary. No sane person would transfer weight from a stronger aircraft to a weaker one before crossing tall mountains or from a large boat sitting high in the water to a small boat sitting an inch above sinking. No competent engineer would reinforce and remove load from a stronger support of a structure while adding load to a weaker support that they neglected to reinforce. No electrician would connect a 1-amp device to a 500 amp circuit while plugging 450 amp device into a 10 amp circuit. Yet under Capitalist paradigms, those in the strongest economic position on the pyramid are accorded every consideration, load-lightening and assistance, are deferred to and given the benefit of the doubt, and enjoy the most favorable terms in every dealing, while those in the weakest economic position are given the worst terms in every dealing, are systematically burdened beyond their ability to bear, and are most heavily penalized for their economic situation as surely as if it were defined as a crime.

Social activism can eventually produce temporary gains and improvements for the non-mega-wealthy; but in the long-run the neo-Feudal lords are able to reverse, neutralize or ignore such gains. During the economic crash of 2008, which the official inquiry blamed on reckless risk-taking on Wall Street and widespread failures of regulation (Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, 2011), these same mega-corporations were bailed out with billions of dollars of taxpayers' money. They then went on to impose "austerity measures" upon employees and perform massive layoffs while having lavishly opulent meetings in high-end resorts for their senior executives and awarding exorbitant bonuses to their CEO's. Under the 2017 tax law, the ultra-wealthy and their corporations were given astronomical windfalls in the form of tax breaks under the carefully-crafted propagandistic argument that they would in turn "trickle it down" to benefit employees. What they actually did, however, was to lay off thousands of employees and perform stock buy-backs that concentrated even more wealth into the already-engorged hands at the very top of the economic pyramid. While the tax burden on the wealthy and their corporations was greatly lightened, most employees got only crumbs: about $40 a year for the poorest fifth, against about $33,000 for the top 1%. 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). Most of the jobs that were created were sub-living-wage. Small businesses got a deduction, but nothing like the permanent windfall handed to large corporations. Small business owners were left to fend for themselves and when small businesses failed, the owners were left crushed under the debt with no help and no remedy.

While the ultra-wealthy and their corporations are given every consideration and support when they run into financial trouble, the individual employee is burdened with punitive escalating fees, threats, verbal abuse, harassment, higher costs and vicious intimidation. Some Capitalist apologists like to claim that non-wealthy people are struggling because they choose to live beyond their means. Yet such behavior is in fact far more prevalent among the neo-Feudal lords than among the rank-and-file employee living paycheck to paycheck. Criticism for "living beyond one's means" is cruel mockery when directed at someone who has to choose between keeping the lights on, filling needed prescriptions, and putting gas in the car to go to work. And let us not forget that we are all constantly awash in an unending sensory bombardment of advertising, having been conditioned from birth to shop, to buy, to consume.

When you surviving on barely or just-over-living wages, it doesn't take much to put one into an overdraft. A raise in rent or mortgage, an uncovered medical expense, or a car repair can crush you with compounding $35 overdraft fees at the bank and reconnection fees at one's utility company. One is never far from homelessness no matter how hard one works, how efficiently one budgets, or how frugally one strives to live. The practice of penalizing those least able to pay is illogical, impractical, inhuman and untenable. Nobody wins. The beleaguered citizen loses all quality of life, while the bank and creditors are unlikely to ever get paid. Adding more fees does not make a struggling person more likely to be able to pay. It makes them more likely to give up trying. To make matters worse, sometimes a struggling person's account goes negative not because of their spending, but because of fees imposed by the bank for keeping too low a balance, for too much or too little activity, for service fees, or countless other reasons. One can spend within one's means and still end up penalized by one's bank with parasitic fees. One can literally become homeless without ever spending a penny more than one has earned. Credit card companies charge loan-shark interest rates to people in the

most dire economic straits and grant the lowest rates to those in the strongest position. This is no different from strengthening the strongest supports of a structure while overburdening the weakest, or to transferring load from a powerful aircraft to a weaker aircraft before crossing high mountains. The only thing it accomplishes is to crush the life out of human beings for the crime of not being wealthy in a paradigm designed to ensure that wealth belongs to only the smallest few.

There are countless ways in which the cost of living is actually higher for the poorest among us (Ehrenreich, The Atlantic, 2014; "It Is Expensive to Be Poor," The Economist, 2015). From higher credit interest, to less help available, to higher medical, car and home repair costs because of not being able to afford preventative measures, to higher insurance rates and poorer employment prospects, the burden is always heaviest on those least able to bear it. Credit scores are used to determine whether or not one will be offered a rental, mortgage or even a job. This is a classic definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results.

The reinforcers in Capitalist paradigms strongly select for this behavior, to the point where people who consider themselves pragmatists continue to repeat them even though they benefit nobody and hurt everybody. Under Capitalism, one's freedom, options, quality of life, access to just about everything, and the respect one is afforded is almost exclusively determined by one's place on the economic pyramid. Profits are valued and prioritized over human beings in every aspect of life under that paradigm. It is inimical to and utterly incompatible with government of, by and for the People and a free, empowered, thriving community of fully-realized people.

In Feudal societies, it was believed that royalty was in power over peasants and serfs because God had put them there and made them more worthy and capable. Under Capitalism, it is believed that the neo-Feudal Lords, the ultra-weathy billionaires at the top of the economic pyramid are there because they are inherently harder-working, smarter, better, more worthy than those working paycheck to paycheck who are deemed inherently lazy, less intelligent, inferior, less worthy and therefore deserving their place on the pyramid. The specious circular logic is identical even though the terminology is different. The result is just as destructive, insidious, and despotic.

This rigid financial power structure pervades every aspect of any Capitalist culture. In the legal system, any time a typical neo-Feudal serf or peasant (typical wage-earner) goes into court against a corporation or neo-Feudal lord, the latter comes armed with top-notch attorneys whom they keep on retainer to serve only the interests of their employer, while the former comes armed with an overworked, underpaid public defender with a massive case load if they come as a defendant. If the serf or peasant comes as plaintiff or petitioner, or as respondent in a civil suit, then if they can afford an attorney at all, their champion will most likely be far outmatched by their opponent's attorneys. If the struggling individual must prove discrimination, harassment, or wrongful termination, it is an uphill battle as the burden of proof is on the plaintiff. Employers and landlords can easily make the individual renter or employee look like a frivolous, petty or mentally unbalanced person in the eyes of the court. Add to that the fact that the employer controls the records. In one case, a federal appeals court found direct evidence that, after deciding to fire a worker, the company "acted to create an exculpatory paper trail" (*Burton v. Freescale Semiconductor*, 2015), and we can see that the odds are drastically stacked in favor of the neo-Feudal lord or corporation. The travesty of "corporate personhood" makes the matter even worse for two reasons. The court sees the paycheck-to-paycheck employee and the multinational corporation both as "persons" which is like pitting a single soldier with one rifle and one magazine against an armored division and declaring it a fair fight. Secondly, the individuals within a corporation who are responsible for wrongs done to the employee or consumer are rarely held personally responsible, by much the same logic as concluding that a murderer's hand can't be charged with pulling the trigger.

Thus again we see that Capitalist paradigms are fundamentally dictatorial and wholly incompatible with any kind of free, democratic, and empowered community of empowered, free individuals. Capitalism is currently spreading itself literally at gunpoint across the face of the earth like a fatal malignancy. We must phase it out and leave it behind if we are to have any hope of ever achieving anything approaching government of, by and for a free and thriving people. To proclaim a society or country successful based on strong financial indicators while its members are withering and dying in hopeless despair is the act of a terminally ill and failing society.

Chapter 9: The Lure and Illusion of Entrepreneurship

Under Capitalist paradigms, the pyramidal economic power structure ensures that, with extremely few exceptions, the only way to secure one's access to life, liberty, resources, necessities, respect and the pursuit of happiness from imminent threat of cancellation is to invest large sums of money. It is almost, but not quite, impossible to do this through wages for one's productivity. Just enough individuals "make it" to keep the "anybody can make it with enough hard work," "Rags to Riches" myth alive.

Except for the modern feudal lords at the top of the pyramid, most people work for sub, barely, or just-over-living wages. Our very right to eat or occupy space is constantly in jeopardy; so naturally some of us hope to "get ahead" by starting a business, being one's own boss. Sadly, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, only about 80% of new business establishments survive their first year, about half survive five years, and only about a third survive ten. (Claims that 90% fail circulate widely, but government data do not support them.) For someone who has put their savings, or borrowed money, into the venture, those are high-risk odds; those with capital to spare can absorb such losses, while the rest of us cannot. And many of the businesses that do survive end up yielding little better results than a typical low-paying job.

For all of us who aren't in the modern feudal elite, the cost of starting a business is out of reach, the legalities and bureaucracy are tortuous and barely navigable, and our resources vastly limited. If you're living paycheck to paycheck, the only way to start a business is to get a loan from a bank or other entity high up on the economic pyramid. To do that, you must convince them that they'll make a lot of money off of their investment if they back you. You're more likely to be denied than accepted, just because of your financial situation.

On top of that, a new small business commonly takes two to three years or more to become self-sustaining, and during that time most owners rely on savings, loans or credit. In the meantime, the new entrepreneur has to not only be able to cover business start-up and operating costs, but also survive as a person or family. Starting a business is a full-time job, not really compatible with working a job as well. So once again, only those very high up on the pyramid can do this. For the rest of us it's like climbing a greased pole.

Competition is fierce. If you are competing against a giant corporation then they can easily afford to undercut your prices, impede your supply chain, out-advertise and out-maneuver you while offering a bigger selection of products or services. They will play ruthlessly and dirty, with vastly superior resources in every way. Your strong work ethic will only carry you so far in the face of this. Mega-corporations often own their supply chain and distribution resources. A small business owner has to pay market prices for raw materials and supplies.

For most small business owners, the only practical difference in their life as compared to wage earners is that they are their own boss. The living they make is rarely much better than in a typical job. The stress and exhaustion are different but no less. Your skill, expertise, and the quality of your goods or services will not get you very far unless you also have a keen talent for business itself. The world is full hardworking innovators who, like Mozart and Mary Anderson who invented the windshield wiper, end up broke.

One alternative to a traditional brick-and-mortar business in today's world is a virtual business on the Internet. The startup costs are much less. However, the competition is even more fierce. Your only chance of success is to find a niche that isn't already saturated. You'll need a lot of technical know-how, business acumen, and be a top-notch marketer and advertiser. You'll still need the funds to pay for top visibility in Web searches, which doesn't come cheap.

Another alternative business model is the Multi-Level Marketing and Network Marketing companies, selling everything from cosmetics, supplements and household products to vacuum cleaners, insurance and legal-service plans. Just about everybody knows someone who's joined one. Every time they see you, they enthusiastically invite you to an "opportunity meeting" or "business meeting," asking you as their friend or family to come support them in their new venture and see how maybe you might be able to improve your financial situation as well.

The first thing you need to do is weed out the "legitimate" such businesses from the much more numerous scams and illegal pyramid schemes disguised as businesses.

These business vary widely in the goods and services they offer, the exact terminology and the details of exactly how you get paid, if and when you do. At such a meeting, you'll be reminded of the fact that the mainstream Capitalist paradigm is a glorified pyramid scheme that engorges the wealthy on the backs of employees. This much is true. These MLM's, however, don't propose to change the paradigm. They claim to offer you a way to make unlimited income and be your own boss. And they show you testimonials by people who literally lifted themselves out of debt and poverty by working the business. It can sound very enticing.

You can sign up as an Executive, Silver, Diamond, or other similarly impressive title and work your way up to Regional Vice President, Platinum, Double Black Diamond or something similar. There are usually three or four entry levels, with greater "earning potential" coming with a higher buy-in price. You will be told that this isn't sales, it's really about helping people better their lives. Yet the "work" consists of recruiting people into the business and, of course, getting people to buy the goods or services.

You are not paid for your time. This is strictly commission. You make money when you sign people up, and when you sell goods or services, though you typically have to sell a certain amount of product and sign people up in a particular pattern for it to translate into income. You are also paid, up to a point, when someone in your "downline" (those you signed up and those whom they signed up etc) signs someone up or sells above the threshold of product. Meetings are primarily pep talks and testimonials.

Many of these businesses also have "charge-backs." This happens when somebody who signed up under you or under someone under you either leaves the business or cancels their subscription, premium, or recurring order. If your MLM practices charge-backs, then the company will take back your commission. You can suddenly find a lot less in your bank account than you had yesterday.

Most people who join never come out ahead. 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). The problem is that you have to be a very specific kind of personality type in order to make any kind of living at such businesses. Yes, some do truly achieve "financial independence." These are the people who live, sleep, eat, and breathe to do the business with a near-religious level of devotion. If you're as passionate about the business as a cult follower is about their religion, if you're willing to risk alienating friends and family by being relentlessly pushy and manipulative in order to "make it," if the business becomes your main reason for being and you're a natural "closer," then you will probably do very well in such a business and become one of those inspiring success stories. Otherwise, you will probably invest a lot of time and energy and never come close to making a living at it, much less a good living. Most such businesses have a handful of people who "made it big," the star performers, and a whole lot of struggling people who end up wasting their time. In a 2018 AARP Foundation survey of people who had sold for such companies, nearly half lost money and about a quarter broke even (AARP Foundation, 2018).

Such businesses aren't really alternatives to the Capitalist paradigm. The paradigm is inherently unstable, unsustainable, and directly at odds with the well-being, thriving and fulfillment of the people. It creates conditions that spawn a toxic, mutually-predatory social ecosystem. Like a lead balloon, it is an unworkable design: decades of tweaking, adjusting and revamping have slowed its harms without reversing them. If we are to achieve a truly free and democratic society of, by and for the people in it, we have no choice but to leave the Capitalist paradigm behind once and for all and replace it with one based on a symbiotic model of socio-economic dynamics.

Chapter 10: Metrics

Various metrics are commonly used to measure the "health" of an economy: Gross National Product, Gross Domestic Product, the performance of stock exchanges and currencies, and balances of trade are a few. They all fail miserably to paint a clear picture of what it's like to live in that economy as a paid employee. The "economy" often looks great by those criteria in contrast to the extreme hardship and stress lived by most working people.

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).

It's also a challenge to compare different time periods. Besides inflation and other variables, what constitutes a living has varied dramatically over time. Beyond the universal needs of food, shelter, water and medical care, many of the today's necessities did not exist in 1900, and vice versa. Perhaps a better picture might be found by looking at how many hours a week it takes to make ends meet in different eras, regions, and for people of various income and wealth percentiles. How many hours make a living wage? Remember that a living wage means that income just covers living expenses, assuming no unexpected expenses or income losses occur.

Careful analysis of available data shows that as of 2019, ¼ to 1/3 of working Americans cannot survive on the accepted standard of 40 hours a week or even twice that. You can see more detail in the long version of this book. Housing alone makes the point: in no U.S. state can a full-time worker on the minimum wage afford a modest two-bedroom rental, and the average minimum-wage worker would need to work about 113 hours a week to do so (NLIHC, 2024). There are 168 hours in a week. One must be at around the fiftieth income/wealth percentile to be able to break even on 40 hours per week.

At that level, you could be homeless or deep in debt very quickly if you lost your job or incurred an unexpected expense or two. In order to be able to absorb such a setback, one would have to be in about the sixty-fifth to seventieth percentile or above.

Other costs measurable in hours include commute times, time spent paying and disputing bills, and costs of car maintenance and repair. A commute of half an hour each way is common, and an hour each way is not unusual, especially in larger cities. A job applicant is expected to absorb such a commute. This translates to another 10-14 hours per week. If you are able to get the recommended 8 hours of sleep most nights, that's another 56 hours a week needed for basic survival.

Using person-hours of work also gets around the illusions created by using currency as a measure. Two families both bringing in $60,000/year live very different realities if one family is living from one income at 40 hours a week while the other family is living from 3 $20,000/year incomes of 40 hours a week each meaning 120 hours a week.

Another more useful measure would be a ratio of salary to cost of living per unit of time. This automatically filters out the effects of inflation. Let's say the cost of living is Y per week and one's salary is X per week. Anybody for whom $X/Y = 1$ is breaking even with nothing to spare. If your $X/Y < 1$ then you're not making it through the month. If $X/Y > 1$ then you are, at least a little bit, able to save a little at the end of the month. If $X/Y > 2$, then you're able to save half of your wages after paying expenses. This also scales very well over time.

It is also important to avoid using averages as a sole indicator of income distribution. Averages easily skew upwards, giving an unrealistically rosy picture of the life of people in a community. For example, in a town of 1,001 people, one of whom makes $1 billion a year and the rest of whom work for them making $25,000 a year, the average income comes out to $1,023,976.20. Taken by itself, that creates an extremely misleading impression of a thriving community of wealthy people. In such a town, the median income is $25,000, the mode is $25,000, and the range is $999,975,000. In this context, the difference between the average and the median shows just how extreme the disparity is in this hypothetical community.

We also have to keep in mind the impact of investment income on one's options, degree of freedom, and quality of life. This is out of meaningful reach certainly the lower fifty percent of the population, and only marginally accessible to

those from the fiftieth to the ninetieth percentiles. Only those in the ninetieth percentile and above can realistically expect to be able to rely on investment income to cover a major part of one's expenses.

As mentioned earlier, one must have a large sum, at least six figures and ideally far more, that one can invest and leave untouched for decades in order for your investment to make a meaningful contribution to your income and wealth. At least eighty percent of the population just can't manage that. Even if one is able to save and invest some, any unexpected expense would force one to liquidate one's investments. That cushion is reliably available only to those near the top of the wealth-and-power pyramid, above all the modern feudal lords.

In terms of metrics to measure the "economic health" of a society, one would also have to factor in the degree of access, or lack of access, to investment options. Throughout the lower fifty percentiles, investment income is effectively zero. From there to the eightieth percentile, it is barely significant. Only in the uppermost fractional percentiles is investment income enough to live on without stress. Any meaningful measure of the economic health of a society must be centered on the well-being of the people who make it up in order to be of any real use. Any other kind of metric is worthless elitist econobabble.

In establishing metrics, it's always a challenge to define what a "living" is. Beyond food, shelter, safety, health, water and a few other universals, a "living" varies wildly from epoch to epoch and place to place. On the one hand, it's clear that a private jet is not a necessity anywhere, ever. On the other hand, Internet access may be a necessity in Tokyo while a functioning well may be a necessity in a small village in Africa. A tractor is a necessity for a farmer. A boat is a necessity for a fisherman/woman, but a luxury for a city dweller. That is harder to quantify than the hours of one's time that one must spend to attain a "living."

Perhaps a good rule of thumb would be to define a "living" as access to all that empowers one to live and function in their place and time without experiencing deprivation or oppression. If the members of a society normally have access to all resources necessary to pursue their life, liberty and happiness while experiencing a high degree of empowerment, well-being and fulfillment, then the economy is healthy. If not, then the society and economy are not healthy, regardless of any other measurements.

The classical concepts postulating that if the wealthy and gargantuan corporations are getting richer, the amount of stuff being produced and consumed is rising faster and faster, and stock prices are rising, then the society is economically healthy are complete fallacies. These concepts are as meaningless as the concept that if the royal family is prospering, then the realm is in good shape. In fact, the socio-economic paradigm operating is one that cannot function unless the huge majority of the population are perpetually disempowered and disenfranchised. It is functionally no different from classical feudalism. It is truly a pyramid scheme in every sense of the word, though it is legal in such societies, inexorably siphoning control and resources from those at the bottom of the pyramid to those at the top. If we are to ever craft a truly free, democratic and thriving society, we must discard all of the currently-accepted socio-economic metrics.

The current paradigm is a win-lose-lose-lose-lose-lose… paradigm. It cannot be made to support an free and democratic society. In order to achieve this, we must strive for a win-win-win-win society in which there is strong reinforcement for working together to strengthen each other in symbiosis, rather than the current pattern of mutual predation. The new paradigm will have to be self-modifying and adaptive to experience of what does and does not work, within the core principles.

For any metric to be useful, it must describe and measure the hours of work needed to thrive, mental, physical, and community health and well-being, the prevailing degree of happiness, fulfillment, freedom, quality of life and engagement of the people.

We will also need to examine the dynamics of interaction between economics and government. There can be no free and democratic, empowered society without both government and economics of, by and for the People. No hierarchical power structure is compatible with this principle.

The Soviet Union strove to create a democratic economy, but developed a government repressive of the will of the people, and stratified into a caste system of Party-members, celebrities, and the rest of the people in a close approximation of feudalism. In the United States, the Constitutional basis of government is set out as of, by and for the people; but the socio-economic power structure reproduces the feudal structures almost perfectly, spawning a power structure that steadily enriches and empowers a microscopic modern feudal elite at the expense of the life, liberty,

pursuit of happiness, well-being, respect, quality of life and the very existence of the rest of us modern-day serfs and peasants. Both failed to achieve their intended empowered, egalitarian, democratic goals.

For metrics, we also must look at psycho-social measurements of the happiness, well-being and empowerment of the people themselves alongside how elected and appointed officials self-rate their performance. With the creation of a central, universally accessible online forum and database, outreach and responsiveness will be in real time and constantly updating. This will function similarly to social media but will be geared and oriented to the processes and functioning of the community and government. Existing psychological metrics can be adapted to form measures of people's experience living in their community and society. This online forum will support a lively public discourse in which all will equally be able to contribute, express, discuss, and analyze what's working, what isn't, and innovative ideas and suggestions. In the absence of hierarchical power structures, there will be little or no risk of reprisal against anybody for expressing their thoughts, feelings and suggestions. This online forum will form a channel for free and lively exchange of information, ideas, suggestions, and creative solutions. It will also serve as a way, for example, for potato farmers to see directly how many potatoes they need to grow to meet the real needs; car manufacturers can track how many cars and parts are actually needed and which features are working for people or which are not. It can be a vehicle for logistics, public discourse, self-examining and self-improvement for the community and the society. It can also potentially be a medium of interaction between elected officials and their constituents. With the development of such a forum, the impact of a pandemic or blizzard will be less disabling.

Under the current paradigm, one's degree of wealth or position is often seen as a measure of one's "worth," worthiness, productivity, contribution, and moral fitness. Such criteria are utterly worthless. The illusion or myth of "meritocracy" is easily proven false. An enterprise or any social structure is sustained by the combined efforts of all people in them. In typical large corporations, the CEO earns in a day or less what a median employee earns in a year. In one corporation (Weight Watchers, in 2017), the CEO made in about twenty minutes what the median employee made in a year. Who can possibly determine whose contribution is greater: the engineer or designer, the assembly-line worker, the truck driver, the floor sweeper, the secretary, or the cafeteria worker? Would you rank the organs in your body into worthy and unworthy? Would you over-nourish your heart or brain at the expense of depriving your leg of nutrients? One thing that is clear is the CEO's contribution to the enterprise is not hundreds or thousands of times greater than that of any employee. In fact, the main focus of the CEO is to keep increase profits, stock prices and market share, and to make the wealthiest investors happy. They often contribute literally nothing other than consolidating the wealth and power of other modern feudal lords.

The notion of meritocracy is a myth and a propaganda ploy to keep people motivated to go on playing the game as it is. There are just enough rags-to-riches stories to make it feel possible that if you work hard and long enough, you too can "make it," just as in any casino the photos of big winners on the walls can make you feel like if they can win, you can too if you just play long enough. Both illusions have the same effect. Both are not, strictly speaking, absolute lies; but they are disastrously misleading. It leads to the modern feudal lords being held up as ultra-worthy role models to be admired and emulated while those who struggle and fall are reviled as somehow lazy, morally deficient, stupid, or somehow inferior and treated accordingly. People at the bottom often view themselves through this same lens. They were conditioned by their culture to do so.

In fact, in the United States, employees' earnings are almost completely decoupled from their 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 full-time employee was paid about $46,800. All employees together, benefits included, received only about half of everything produced; much of the rest went to the employers and to the ultra-wealthy who control them. From 1979 to 2019, productivity grew by about 60% while the pay of typical workers grew by only about 16%. Stock prices have averaged 10% growth per year, which benefits almost exclusively the feudal lords at the top of the pyramid, the top 10% of whom control about 88% of all stock. If this mechanism keeps working at its current rate, a living wage will become a privilege of the few, and the rest of us will be bound to our jobs much as serfs were bound to the land. Factor in inflation, and you can see the picture clearly. From 1989 to 2026, the top one percent increased their wealth by a staggering forty-eight trillion dollars after inflation, while the bottom fifty percent, fifty times as many households, gained only about two and a half trillion between them: roughly $36 million for each household at the top, and about $36,000 for each household in the bottom half. Besides the utter fallacy of evaluating a person's worth in economic terms, these facts prove that the "meritocracy" is at best a myth and at worst a subtle but effective means of shaping the behaviors of populations. If the game isn't completely changed very soon from its

foundations, we, or our children, will find ourselves living in conditions where chronic exhaustion, undernourishment, survival struggle and stress will put us at risk of being unable to take any action at all. This paradigm shift must come and soon if we are to both survive and ever achieve a free and democratic, empowered society. The alternative is a Dark Age that could last hundreds or thousands of years.

Just as in feudalism, the lords were allowed to take whatever portion of a serf's, peasant, or craftsperson's work product as they saw fit, so we see in the modern workplace environment. Employment agreements usually include language that states that any inventions or innovations by the employee are the property of the company. Some go so far as to include things conceived or produced at home independent of work. So if you make twenty thousand dollars a year and come up with something that saves or makes the company millions of dollars a year, you will most likely get a handshake (if your manager doesn't claim credit for your innovation) and still only twenty thousand dollars a year. Your hard work and contribution will only very rarely ever translate into enough more pay to secure your access to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, or even your right to occupy space. If you write and record a hit song in your free time, some employment agreements even give your employer the rights to that song. No different from feudalism.

The myths in each dysfunctional paradigm are unsurprisingly similar. In Medieval societies, the myth was that God placed royalty over the rest of us, and to go against them was to earn a place in Hell. And it was assumed that without the lords to rule over them, the serfs and peasants would descend into chaos. In the slavery era in the United States, the myth was that the dark-skinned Africans were inherently inferior to their Euro-American masters and that slavery was their natural and proper condition, even going so far as to say that the slavemasters "civilized" the slaves and made them "better." In modern feudal societies such as the United States, the myth is that the modern feudal lords are where they are because of their fundamental superiority, and that the vast majority who struggle to make ends meet are in that position because of some inherent inferiority or unworthiness.

Those at the top of the pyramid can cause vast harm to employees, the public, customers/clients, and the world with no major repercussions. One pharmaceutical CEO raised the price of a lifesaving medication from $13.50 a pill to $750 a pill after maneuvering to get control of the rights to the drug, which the CEO and his company had no part in developing. He did it because, in the rules of the current paradigm, he's allowed to. Yet if an employee were to smuggle out some doses to save the life of a homeless veteran who needed it desperately, that employee would be fired, probably criminally and civilly charged, and have their life ruined. It is also not uncommon to see people in positions of upper management who have literally no grasp of the processes or people over which they hold power, and no willingness to learn. The hierarchical command structure ensures that power will be abused without consequences while innovation and initiative from low in the pyramid will be squelched and suppressed. A bad leader's dysfunctionality is propagated down the chain of command and imposed on all under them. Any who speak up or oppose will be disciplined or fired with no recourse, and be burdened with a job-search-killing bad reference in their record.

Some believe and argue that we're better off under the current paradigm than we would be otherwise, claiming that we are compensated in ways beyond our salary. Technically this is true to a point but is just as much a myth as "meritocracy."

"Benefits" such as health coverage are helpful, but only because medical care is so extremely expensive that all but the modern feudal lords and their enforcers/protectors cannot hope to afford treatment for any serious medical procedure. Even routine visits like a yearly physical exam cost enough to make us have to choose which bills to pay and which to delay that month. Employee health coverage does mitigate that situation; but the employee "contribution" takes a huge bite out of one's paycheck. That portion more than tripled between 1999 and 2019, from about $1,740 to about $6,015 a year for family coverage (KFF, 1999; KFF, 2019), and deductibles have climbed steeply as well. What has shrunk is what's covered and how much. Every insurance company employs people whose job it is to find and exploit any legally defensible way to deny claims, sometimes going so far as to deny claims out-of-hand and leave it to the insured to challenge the denial, at a time when the insured or their loved-one is already sick or injured and under extreme stress. The situation is so extreme that one sees insurance adjusters with little or no medical knowledge dictating to medical practitioners what diagnostics and treatment to perform or not, where, and how. In 2023 ProPublica reported that Cigna's medical directors had rejected more than 300,000 claims in two months without opening patient files, spending an average of 1.2 seconds on each; Cigna disputes that description (ProPublica, 2023). An insurance company is a business. Their priority is profits, stock price, and market share. Strong reinforcers guarantee that the health and well-being of insured people is a secondary or tertiary priority that is almost always overridden by business priorities.

The right to healthcare and access to a healthy lifestyle is part and parcel of the right to life, much less liberty and the pursuit and happiness.

The insurance industry in all of its forms is a parasitic industry that actually drives up the cost and drives down the accessibility of medical treatment. It creates no real value like a car or a surgical procedure. It fills a manufactured need whose existence is utterly arbitrary and absolutely unnecessary.

Imagine you live in a town where gangs extort protection money from everybody. Imagine your employer will cover three quarters of your protection payments, if you opt in and let them deduct three percent of your paycheck. That is not a reasonable solution. The reasonable solution is to shut down the gangs' operations.

Similarly, when the current socio-economic paradigm is phased out, decommissioned, and replaced with one based on an organic model of peer-based, consensus-based or democratic symbiosis, there will be no dichotomy of employer-employee, landlord-tenant, lender-borrower, lord-peasant, no need for currency of any kind, and no barriers to access to resources for anybody. Medical care will be given by practitioners based on medical considerations only, for the good of the patient. The only limitations will be the skill of the practitioner and the state of the art at the time.

No metric can obscure the fact that the prevailing socio-economic paradigm will inevitably always generate escalating disparity in terms of access to resources, quality of life, degree of freedom and respect one is afforded, power over one's own life and access to interact with those in government. It is functionally indistinguishable from Medieval feudalism except that Medieval feudalism was relatively stable while modern economic feudalism is escalating the disparity geometrically. It is a pyramid scheme pure and simple, no different from the illegal varieties.

It is quite true that money cannot buy happiness. We must create that ourselves. Yet in the dominant socio-economic environment, the lack of money can cut one off from all resources including a place to occupy space. Being disempowered, disenfranchised, worked chronically to exhaustion or unable to find work, and frequently devalued is most definitely an utterly unjustifiable hindrance to one's most basic rights and most definitely compromise physical, mental and emotional health in major ways.

A microscopically small segment of the population controls an ever-increasing share of all resources, including land. This same segment sets the tone for prevailing cost of living and ensures that for most of us it is higher than prevailing wages.

Keep in mind that most land ownership in the United States, for example, traces its lineage back to the systematic wholesale slaughter and destruction of the millions of people and dozens of nations that were here before the Europeans arrived.

There's no conceivable justification for one person, organization or group owning or controlling resources that they don't directly use and blocking access to such resources from others.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

In the new paradigm, this will cease. It will be legally impossible to own or control any resource that one isn't directly using or to block or limit access of another. Thus, the renter under current modern feudalism will be the legal owner of their residence, and the former landlord will be the owner of their residence. The same will apply to groups and/or enterprises. Land and other resources currently "owned" by wealthy people and corporations as a "tax dodge" or investment will become open for use by any who wish or need to use them. We will still need zoning laws to ensure safety and environmental preservation. We will need to learn to establish reasonable and respectful – and somewhat flexible - limits on how much of any resource an individual, family, enterprise or other group can claim, to prevent abuses. We will need to develop legal mechanisms for the establishment and transfer of ownership, as well as for resolving disputes in the most equitable ways possible. Any unoccupied living units, of which there are well over ten million in the United States, will be immediately available for habitation. Legal processes will need to emerge to ensure that this process is done in a fair, orderly, compassionate and reasonable way. Resources such as marinas and country clubs that are currently the public venues of the modern feudal elite will be open to all persons. Any feudal lords who try to destroy such premises to prevent the "riff-raff" from using them will be guilty of a crime, as will any who try to vandalize them to "get back at" the former feudal lords.

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

For a precedent, we can look back to the concept of the “commons” that predates the advent of feudalism in Europe. In many towns, flour mills and lumber mills, water sources, much of the land and other resources belonged to the people themselves. In the United States now we see some cities planting “edible forests,” large tracts of land maintained with a plethora of edible plants using permaculture methods and available to all. There are many other similar examples. We will need to take this to a whole new level and apply the same principles to every aspect of public life.

Without the right to occupy space, eat, breathe, drink, work, and remain healthy, the rights to life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, religious freedom, freedom of speech and the others become a cruel mocking joke, a promise given in bad faith with no intention of being honored.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

To get from here to the new paradigm, we will need to make a rapid transition. We will agree on a date. We will need to act decisively, forcefully, non-violently, compassionately and respectfully to all, including those who oppose us. In the wee hours of that date, all banks, financial institutions, stock exchanges and similar facilities will be physically blocked from access, cut off from power and jammed from communication. Any persons inside at the time will be safely and respectfully escorted out and informed of the transition to the new paradigm. All persons will cease charging or paying each other for goods and/or services. Corporate command hierarchies will be ignored as operations will abruptly transition to peer-run through consensus. When newly-deposed members of the former command structures will ignored and informed of the transition. We will treat them with respect and compassion but not obey them. We will invite them to join in the shared operations as a peer among peers and bear them no ill will from the past. If they try to use force to reassert their dominance, we will defend ourselves with the minimum possible harm and then render assistance to any injured.

Some former modern lords will feel like victims due to being deprived of their former power positions, privilege, and opulence. We will strive to reassure them that nobody is going to attack them or drag them out of their homes, they will want for nothing, and they will be respected as equals, alongside and not above others.

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 mutually predatory, adversarial dynamics of the current socio-economic paradigm are destructive to all and to the very world we call home. Among employers and employees, landlords and tenants, lords and peasants, abuses abound. One gains only at the expense of another. There are abuses among all of these groups pitted against each other. It is a paradigm destined to brutalize all who inhabit it and live their lives by its rules and principles.

In the new paradigm, we will see metrics of human happiness, well-being, productivity, health, creativity, and life satisfaction steadily rise. We will see metrics for crime, suicide, waste, injustice, and violence steadily sink. The new empowering paradigm will facilitate and precipitate the emergence of a new Renaissance that could rival or even surpass the European Renaissance in degree and duration.

Chapter 11: Ownership

The concept of ownership, as obvious as it may seem, is an arbitrary construct that serves a number of purposes. In the dominant culture in the world today, it is virtually unchallenged. It is a central underpinning of the feudalistic socio-economic power and wealth structure.

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The concept of ownership most likely arose out of instinctive territoriality in our distant past. Members and groups of most species establish territories, which give each group or individual access to roughly enough food, water and other resources to survive. Territories often grow when resources are scarce and shrink when resources are abundant.

In humans, both the individual and the groups we form need a "territory" for the greater and smaller good. In its constructive expressions, ownership, when agreed upon among community members, is one way (but not the only way) to make sure that you can count on having unrestricted personal use of your home, car, tools, clothes and so forth without having to constantly fight or argue to keep it. Without such continuity, life would be absurdly chaotic which would benefit nobody.

The problem arises in the dominant feudalistic socio-economic paradigm because there is virtually no upper limit to how much of resources can be owned by an individual, group or business, and no lower limit to what an individual may own. Thus in the U.S. we have one individual who owns more land than the entire state of Delaware while millions barely own the clothes on their back. This is the essence of feudalism, classical as well as modern.

A microscopic segment of the population, directly and through their corporations, owns and controls the vast majority of land and all other resources, thereby dictating and determining who does or does not have access to a home, food, medical care, or even water, and under what conditions they may have access. These modern feudal lords own not just their own home but most likely yours, mine and many more, as well as running the companies that control access to the jobs that we all need in order to pay that same segment for access to resources. In the United States, for example. the Declaration of Independence proclaims our unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and the Constitution guarantees other rights, but neither guarantees access to what one needs to fulfill those rights. In the current paradigm, it is functionally illegal to occupy space unless you are paying someone for the privilege, unless you yourself are one of the ultra-wealthy modern feudal lords or one of their vassals, in which case you are the one who must be paid. If you attempt to live without paying someone for permission, even without welfare or causing anybody any inconvenience, there are police with guns who will enforce this requirement.

The current interpretation of ownership is, therefore, seriously flawed and unsustainable if we value a free, democratic society of, by and for the people.

Clearly, the concept, definitions and laws dealing with ownership must be modified and re-cast.

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Once we have decommissioned the current paradigm and replaced it with a workable, sustainable one, we will immediately need to redefine ownership. A key change will be to specify that any individual, group or entity has the right to own and access the resources that they directly use and need, be it home, tools, production facility, and more; however it will be impossible and illegal for any person, group, or entity to claim ownership of, or obstruct access to, any resources that they aren't directly using. Thus today's landlord will keep ownership of their personal home, while today's tenants will become the owners of their living units. Today's employees and employers will become co-owners, co-stakeholders, and co-deciders of the development, production and distribution facilities where they work. Utilities will be run by peer consensus by all who work in them and will be freely available to all. Reasonable, flexible common-sense limits will have to be placed to prevent a group or individual from claiming an unjustifiably large resource share for themselves. Legal procedures will be developed to define how property and other resources can be exchanged, change ownership, and disputes over ownership be settled equitably. Public

lands will still be public lands, owned in common by all of the people. Unoccupied resources formerly "owned" by feudal lords or corporations will be available for occupation or use. Corporations will cease to exist entirely. Various forms of the concept of the "commons" will be revived regarding shared resources such as rivers, beaches, community recreation centers, distributed power generation nodes and such. Thus we will arrive at a form of ownership that strengthens and guarantees our basic rights and supports an equitable and sustainable distribution. In the new paradigm, it will be impossible for a feudal-style ruling elite to form.

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

We humans are not rigidly constrained by instinct, which leaves us with the freedom and ability to re-examine and redefine how we define and enact ownership or territorial boundaries into forms that better serve our thriving and well-being.

One practice that's become increasingly common in the dominant society is "subscription-based" goods and services, in which you must pay every month or lose access. A prime example is in software, in which failure to pay the monthly fee not only causes the app to stop working, but also stops you from editing or saving your own files until you pay, leaving you able only to open and print them (Microsoft Support). This is a direct assault on our ability to own resources that we use. If this is allowed to expand without limit, eventually we could find ourselves having to pay a monthly subscription fee just for the "privilege" of being able to shop at the supermarket. This is already happening among some medical providers, under the name "concierge physicians," who charge you a non-trivial monthly fee just to keep you as a patient, in addition to whatever they charge you for medical procedures. The same is happening in agriculture, in which companies like Monsanto and others claim "intellectual property" rights not only to their genetically-modified seed stock, but to the crops that farmers grow using their seeds. If farmers keep some of the seed from this year's crop as is traditional as seed for next year's crop, the contract forbids it, and the company they bought the seed stock from can sue the farmer and force them to buy seed every year. In 2013 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that farmers may not replant patented seed without paying. Monsanto alone had filed more than 140 lawsuits against more than 400 farmers and some 50 small businesses in the United States, and some farmers were ruined. In 1998 a patent was even granted for seeds engineered so that the next generation would be sterile, soon nicknamed "Terminator" seeds; a worldwide outcry kept them off the market, but hybrid seeds, which do not breed true, have kept farmers buying new seed every year for nearly a century. Farmers are drawn to these seeds with promises of high yield per acre. The other part is in the contract fine print.

With upcoming genetic therapies in development, one can easily imagine a genetic therapy being developed for, say, spina bifida which is given to the fetus in utero, correcting the issue. Once born, the child could be charged a monthly fee for life by the company that developed the therapy, for the very act of living while using the company's genetic therapy. This kind of abusive human rights violation will also cease as soon as we mothball the current paradigm and enact the new one.

Under the current paradigm, even the concept of ownership itself is deceptive. If you're paying a mortgage or car payment, you will tend to think of yourself as the "owner." On paper, you are: you hold the title. But as long as you owe, the lender holds your home in its hands, because if push comes to shove, it can take it. Even if you're in the thirtieth year of a thirty-year mortgage when you get laid off and can't find a new job, the steps follow one another: late fees, a crashed credit score, and after four months, foreclosure (12 CFR 1024.41). The home is sold at a steep forced-sale discount (Campbell, Giglio and Pathak, 2011), the lender and its costs are paid first, and you are left with little or nothing, and without your home. Here, as so often, 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.

The current feudal socio-economic paradigm acts as a society-wide funnel, channeling an ever-growing portion of resources into the hands of a tiny collection of modern feudal elite at the expense of all of the rest of us modern-day serfs, peasants and even artisans. The system functions in such a way that stacks it against the individual serf or peasant. If you pay all of your bills on time for many years, then hit hard times and fall behind for a few months before getting back on your feet, you are punished via a low credit score for many years to come. This can actually block you from getting a job or finding a place to live, since applicants are often discarded because of a low credit score. It's a

vicious cycle. It can take a brief moment for your credit to be crashed, but many years to restore it. Yet if a wealthy feudal lord stiffs a client or supplier, or defaults on a loan, financial institutions most often bend over backwards to accommodate and work with them.

In a society that places prime importance on ownership, access to ownership is severely curtailed or nonexistent for a growing portion of the population. In some cities in the United States, police are allowed to confiscate the coats, blankets, backpacks, and sleeping bags of homeless people (Mother Jones, 2016). A homeless person's ownership of their sleeping bag is not respected, while a corporation's ownership of land that they intend to strip-mine is upheld. This modern feudalism is directly incompatible with government of-by-and for the people and with a free and thriving society of free and thriving people.

The concept of "Eminent Domain" exists to allow the government to force the sale of land by owners in order to make way for infrastructure projects meant to benefit the larger community, such as roads, reservoirs libraries, schools and hospitals. Owners are supposed to be paid a fair and equitable price. Yet Eminent Domain has also been used to take land away from homeowners and farmers and give it over to private developers and corporations for for-profit projects like big-box stores (Southeastern Meats of Pelham v. City of Birmingham, Ala. 2004). The Supreme Court allowed this in *Kelo v. City of New London* (2005); public outrage led dozens of states to pass laws restricting it, though many of those laws proved largely symbolic (Somin, 2007). In the process, the corporations are able to manipulate the laws in order to pay far less in property taxes than the homeowners or farmers had paid, which increases the burden on remaining homeowners (Texas Comptroller, Fiscal Notes, 2017; Badgett, "The State of the Dark Store Theory," Coates' Canons, UNC School of Government, 2018).

This is utterly identical to the situation under Medieval feudalism. Royals and their vassals were allowed to confiscate whatever they wanted from any peasant of serf – their farm, equipment, harvest, even their daughters or wives. In Medieval times, resistance carried a death sentence. In modern times, one is looking at a prison sentence, fines, or simply being dragged away in handcuffs while watching one's home being bulldozed.

The current paradigms of ownership don't even do a particularly good job of safeguarding owners' claims. Look at all of the forms of theft, identity theft, robbery, fraud, legal loopholes exploited to deprive people of their ownership of something, and even the use of military force between countries, and it's clear that the paradigm isn't working. Even without breaking the law, those who already own a disproportional amount of a resource can and do very easily expand their level of ownership, at the expense of the rest of us. The travesty known as "corporate personhood" sets up a situation where it's very easy for a corporation with billions of dollars of resources and a small army of top-notch attorneys on retainer to wrest ownership rights to just about anything from an individual who can't afford any attorney without selling their home. With the emergence of the new paradigm, we can expect property crimes as listed above to dwindle quickly to near extinction. When all persons have access to the resources they need, then the motivations and reinforcers for theft, fraud, robbery and the like will evaporate. Why steal a TV if you can just walk into the electronics depot and pick one out? Why steal a car when you can go into the nearest auto depot, pick one of your choice and drive it home? Why rob somebody if money is obsolete and unnecessary?

The favored approach to ownership seen in the United States and similar countries is far from the only possible or existing paradigm. In traditional Kibbutz communities, there is no formal ownership of apartments other resources, yet every resident has their place to live which is more secure than their apartment or house would be in the dominant paradigm. In Cuba, a place to live is a right: a 1960 law turned tenants into owners, and most Cubans own their homes outright, without a mortgage. It is not the laws governing property and ownership that give us safety and personal space. It is a shared agreement in the community, to respect each person's home, possessions, rights, and sovereignty. The current paradigm creates scarcity of most vital resources in order to drive prices up and consolidate control by the feudal lords at our expense.

Lest we feel aghast at the concept of redefining such a fundamental concept that we've held as sacrosanct, let's revisit how much of the land ownership in the United States (and many other countries) came about. Millions of people were living here in diverse cultures and lifestyles. Other people came from overseas and proceeded to cheat them out of their ancestral homes in the best of cases, and exterminate them in the worst of cases. The murderers then handed out land deeds to homesteaders. That is not the kind of origin that inspires profound respect or unquestioning adherence and perpetuation of a practice. Millions were murdered to bring this paradigm about, and continuing it is harming millions. If England were to do this to France (or vice-versa), the international community would be up in arms and not recognize

the legitimacy of the action. It is time for a major, fundamental change based on experience of what does and doesn't work. We created the existing paradigm. It is imperative that we re-examine it, redesign, and decommission the old, dysfunctional paradigm. It is in our power and it behooves us.

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

It only makes sense that the highest priority of any socio-economic paradigm must be the well-being, happiness, quality of life, freedom and fulfillment of every individual and the community. The dominant paradigm, in contrast, places prime importance on the movement of currency and the generation and consumption of goods and services. Cultural myths in such societies postulate that those criteria generate abundance, freedom and quality of life. In practice, this paradigm generates scarcity, chronic escalating stress, and virtual enslavement for all but the few modern feudal lords who reap the harvest of the efforts of the rest of us.

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The current paradigm is also extremely wasteful and inefficient. Competing companies vie over market share, stock prices and profits. Developers are forbidden to share any information between companies. This creates wasteful duplication of efforts and generates goods and services that are all inferior to what would come if collaboration were encouraged. Competition is a lot more about marketing, advertising, and predatory business practices than it is about the quality of goods and services. In fact, reinforcement is in place to produce inferior goods designed to not last long. Why build a product to last if you can sell a replacement sooner? For example, electronic devices are built with built-in batteries that can't be replaced without destroying the device, forcing consumers to buy an expensive new device instead of a relatively cheap battery. The technical gains from this kind of design are small, and from 2027 the European Union will require most portable devices to have batteries that end users can remove and replace (Cooley, 2025). Thus we see a self-devouring cycle of artificially forced overproduction and overconsumption, creating along the way massive unnecessary pollution, depletion of natural resources, waste, and soul-crushing pressure on folks who work in production facilities.

The "law of supply and demand" becomes a feudalistic control mechanism when those who control the supply create scarcity and artificially force and manipulate the demand.

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The solution is to eliminate hierarchical profit-driven production and distribution models of competing profit-and-market-driven corporations and replace them with autonomous consensus-run, peer-based enterprises in which engineers, developers and producers from former competing companies work together to pool and amplify their knowledge, skill and expertise. These enterprises will run as public utilities under public oversight.

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The new mandate will be to produce the best goods and services that the state of the art permits, to make them easily serviceable and upgradeable with quality and longevity in mind.

As everybody is supplied with enough of goods and services, production will scale down to the trickle necessary to cover breakage and population growth. The work-week will plummet. People working in all sectors will experience a dramatic reduction in stress and increase in time to devote to other pursuits, while enjoying a level of quality of goods and services superior to what was previously reserved for only the modern feudal lords. In that paradigm, automation will no longer deprive people of livelihood, but will fulfill its original promise of improving quality of life. Products will be user customizable and adaptable, and will be designed to last as long as possible.

Competition that drives innovation won't cease. Instead of competing for market share and stock price, which are irrelevant to product quality, innovators will compete for the best design, implementation and processes. A lively online dialog between producer enterprises and the public will ensure that actual consumer needs and desires are met, and

that no demand is artificially created or inflated. Instead of a bewildering selection of parallel inferior products, there will be one line of products that reflects and responds to consumer needs and desires at the highest level of quality.

Upgradeability will become universal. Form factors will be agreed upon so that, for example, if a new improved kind of car engine is created, existing cars will be upgraded by simply replacing the old engine with a new one. No need to change the whole car. This paradigm shift will be replicated in every industry and sector.

Advertising and marketing will become obsolete and disappear. The public central webspace will allow people to locate what they need. Thus resources currently devoted to advertising and marketing, which in some industries rival or exceed the resources devoted to research and development (California Healthline, 2015), will be conserved. There will be a massive decline in auditory and visual pollution – no pop-up ads, no advertising billboards, no commercials in any media. Hype will be replaced with clearly-stated specs. The current unending sensory assault that we all endure will end once and for all.

Current outlets, dealerships and retail facilities will be repurposed as distribution centers where anybody will be able to come to pick up what they want or need. Some degree of reasonable limitation will be necessary to prevent misguided, enterprising individuals from snatching up truckloads of TV's and selling them in countries that still use the current paradigm. Currency of all kinds will be obsolete.

In transportation, emphasis will be given to expanding public transportation in efficient, comfortable and practical ways and replacing damaging technologies such as internal combustion with sustainable alternatives. Parallel, alternative road systems will be developed to accommodate bicycle, foot, horse, skate board, scooter and other forms of small-scale transportation, complete with rest stops, food courts, and access to everyplace served by the existing automobile roads.

Where possible, emphasis will shift from large central production and distribution to small-scale local production and distribution. Certainly this applies to food and power generation. This restores control and autonomy to the people where they live and reduces the disparity of influence and empowerment that comes with an emphasis on large central facilities. Community, enterprise and home gardens will be actively encouraged and developed. A large percent of food will be produced and consumed locally. Power generation will largely shift from mammoth central generation plants to a diverse grid of home, block, neighborhood and regional generation making use of wind, solar, water wheel, geothermal, tidal and other local energy sources. Some modifications to the grid will be necessary; but the technology exists and is well understood. Self-composting toilets will increasingly replace traditional toilets, vastly reducing the burden on waste-processing plants and converting human waste into fertilizer for local and home gardens. This will be most strongly felt in big population centers. An emphasis on recycling organic waste will similarly be a double win for everybody.

The emphasis on local production and distribution will also reduce necessary commuting and restore the interdependency among people that fosters a sense of community and connectedness that is difficult to impossible when our lives are fragmented and spread out over large areas. As social humans, this is fundamental to how we function best. When each of us is an island stretched across a fragmented landscape of disconnected living, we experience alienation, disempowerment, isolation, and profound dysphoria. It becomes hard to impossible for people to act in concert even for mutual good. It becomes difficult to trust. We come to live in a state of perpetual anxiety, knowing that if we fall for any reason, we fall utterly alone. Such a social environment makes it easier for us to perceive each other as rivals and threats than as allies and friends.

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It also dissipates potential social energy that could come to a focus to take decisive action to non-violently force a change of paradigm.

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Individual is pitted against individual, and individual against society. When we decommission the current paradigm and replace it with one designed to foster a win-win symbiosis which reinforces working for mutual benefit while valuing and respecting each person's uniqueness, we will all experience a dramatic improvement in quality of life, of

relationships, and of peace. We will finally be living in a paradigm that works with, rather than against how we are evolved or designed to function at our best. When we are stakeholders in an undertaking, our motivation and engagement is much higher than if we are forced to serve those who are stakeholders when we are not.

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 favor 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 are these ideas Gaddafi's alone. Governance in which everyone takes part, and in which people work as partners rather than employees, appears in many places and times. Some forms grew up naturally: the New England town meeting, held since the 1600s; Switzerland's open-air cantonal assemblies, the *Landsgemeinde*, still held every year in Glarus and Appenzell Innerrhoden; the councils of the Haudenosaunee; the consensus decision-making of hunter-gatherer bands; and the assembly of ancient Athens, open to all its citizens. Others were built deliberately: worker cooperatives such as Mondragón, where each worker-member has one vote; the general assembly of the kibbutz; the Paris Commune of 1871; participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, since 1989; and the rotating councils of the Zapatista communities in Chiapas. For more, see Documented Alternatives.

Chapter 13: Capitalism and Human Relationships

The socio-economic paradigm pits individuals and groups against each other. With economic resources tightly controlled and scarcified by modern feudal lords and their corporations, there is strong reinforcement for mutually-predatory, adversarial behaviors for survival. Cooperative, symbiotic behavior is strongly reinforced against. This sets the stage for a society chronically riddled with dysfunctional, toxic relationships at every level, as you'll see below.

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In the workplace:

The pyramidal hierarchical power structure of enterprises ensures that there are the most jobs available at the bottom, lowest-paid bottom end of the pyramid and very few highly-paid positions at the top. Those few positions go disproportionately to people from wealthy backgrounds and elite schools, and only rarely to those who rose from the ranks of peasant or serf employees. In between are a few positions that pay a living or just-over-living wage as compared to the barely or sub-living wage paid to the majority of employees.

Promotion opportunities are few and far between. Assuming the company will promote from within, only one among the many employees struggling on sub-living wages will get the promotion. The paradigm is set up on a win-lose-lose-lose-lose-lose model. For one to win, others must lose, usually multiple others.

While individual responses will vary widely, this setup strongly reinforces mutually-predatory and adversarial relationships and behaviors within the workforce. Behaviors that are reinforced will predominate, those that aren't will tend towards extinction. You survive by getting the promotion or bonus, not by one's workmate getting it. This sets the default tone for interpersonal relationships in the workplace. The cultural myths of such societies reinforce and amplify this toxic dynamic. The myth in question is that predatory, aggressive, adversarial, greedy, bullying, manipulative behavior is a natural part of human nature and that cooperative, symbiotic, synergistic, mutualistic, compassionate behavior is contrary to human nature. It's a vicious cycle in which the reinforcers in the society give rise to a dysfunctional social dynamic, which is easily misrepresented or misinterpreted as "proof" that it reflects human nature. Add this to the adversarial relationship between employee and employer, and you have a destructive brew of alienation, desperation, jealousy, distrust and despair. Backstabbing and backbiting are commonplace.

Human nature is a rich palette including a wide range of possible motivations and behaviors. What is reinforced gets amplified and becomes the norm. What isn't reinforced becomes the rare exception. Psychological studies have also reproducibly shown, in addition, that the mere fact of being in a position of power inhibits compassion and empathy to a measurable degree; in experiments, even a small or momentary sense of power has this effect, and it tends to ease when power is relinquished. Rigid hierarchical social systems actually work against much of human nature: for most of our history humans lived in small societies that actively kept hierarchy in check, and such systems reinforce destructive behavior and suppress constructive behavior. A paradigm that reinforces constructive behavior and suppresses (by not reinforcing) destructive behavior will reliably outperform what we see around us today. Individual and community will thrive, be empowered, be happier and more fully actualized than is possible under the current paradigm. "One man's loss is another man's gain" is not a law of nature. It's an arbitrary concept that sets the stage for unprecedented human suffering to no good end. There is no upside.

In The Family

For all of us not in the ruling modern feudal elite, the gap between income and cost of living is a constant source of stress as we constantly struggle for survival. Within a family, this often puts a strain on the relationships among family members.

When each family member is doing their best to contribute to shared survival but the results still fall short, resentments often arise, with members blaming each other for not doing enough to bring in income or reduce spending. This strain is

multiplied when one or more family members are unable to find work or brings added expenses such as student, medical or credit card debt.

Sometimes people develop coping mechanisms, such as “shopping therapy,” gambling addictions, drug or alcohol use or escape through video games, which increase the lack of currency for survival. Resentments and recriminations can become unresolvable. Yet we’re conditioned from birth to shop, to spend money to make ourselves feel better, creating a vicious cycle that keeps us stuck like quicksand. Mutual blame often rips families apart in the most painful ways. Those who cope by stoically enduring clash violently with those who cope by spending more money in one way or another. This kind of stress destroys countless families, harming all concerned.

When families are blown apart by such stresses, each family member must survive on their own. Expenses multiply as one household becomes at least two, each with its own rent or mortgage, car insurance, utility bills etc. If attorneys are involved, all parties may find themselves deep in debt in the process. The result is the disempowerment of all concerned. It’s true that the most harmonious, healthy socio-economic paradigm doesn’t guarantee successful, harmonious relationships; but such a setup does vastly reduce the stresses and the reinforcements of destructive behaviors. A boat that sinks under combat conditions might have decades of good service as the fishing boat it was designed to be if not put in combat. Such a boat should never be subjected to combat conditions!

While ultimately our happiness and the condition of our relationships is up to us, there’s no doubt that the socio-economic paradigm has a big impact, as the fertility and sufficiency of soil and water impact the quality of wine produced on a given farm. We dare not assume that one’s life condition is up to the individual alone and fail to change and correct toxic conditions in our control that we know cause incalculable harm with no benefit. That is a crime against humanity. The concept of adversity “building character” must never be used as a justification for perpetuating oppressive, toxic behaviors and norms that are within our power to change. We may not be able to stop ageing or change the laws of physics; but we can certainly choose to change the way we interact and treat one another.

Effects on friendship:

Friendships are affected very similarly to families under the dominant socio-economic paradigm. Financial issues strain countless friendships to the breaking point and beyond, often turning friends into enemies.

When a person has a financial crisis such as losing a job, home, or health coverage and/or becomes homeless, it’s natural to turn to friends and family for support. Yet since all but a very few people are barely or not quite surviving, our natural instinct as a social species to help each other is countermanded by the reinforcers of the socio-economic paradigm. You can’t help your friend if you barely have enough for yourself and your family. If your lifeboat is floating barely an inch above the waterline, how can you take on your friend? This dynamic again leads to resentments which often cannot be healed.

This is not to say that people never help out their friends in need; but such behavior is strongly selected and reinforced against. Very, very few are in a position to be able to help out a loved-one without having to worry about how doing so will affect their own survival. Perversely, those who do manage a rags-to-riches trajectory all too often try to distance themselves from the marginal existence of their past and are not inclined to help out those still struggling, even treating them like vectors of a deadly contagion. This is not because they are “bad” people. It is a behavior that is statistically inevitable in any society operating under the current dominant paradigm.

The worse and longer a person’s misfortune, the less likely they are to be able to find help. Once one has had an eviction or been jobless for more than a couple of months, their prospects of finding a job or place to live plummet in a vicious cycle that’s nearly impossible to reverse. It can take years of deliberate, consistent effort to arrive at a relatively stable situation. It can take less than one day for all that you’ve built and worked for to be utterly destroyed for many years to come. Disaster may come in the form of layoffs, a legal action, a predatory mortgage, a property being sold from under you, a car needing major repairs or any number of circumstances.

Regardless of what the law or Constitution may say, the default reality under the dominant socio-economic paradigm is that you have no rights whatsoever unless you pay for them constantly in perpetuity. Getting the money to pay for them is kept forever just out of reach for all but a very few. Under the dominant paradigm, we don’t even have the right to occupy space unless we pay for it every day of our lives. It is a paradigm based on denial-of-life. We are eternally kept hostage and must constantly ransom ourselves over and over and over.

The paradigm also spawns and reinforces manipulative and predatory behavior. It's not unusual for people to manipulate each other for financial gain, to form relationships for financial advantage, and even to betray each other over finances. Not everybody will do so of course; but those behaviors are strongly reinforced. In such a paradigm, people sometimes observe that "nice guys finish last" or "everybody has their price." It becomes increasingly difficult for people to trust each other.

In Society At Large:

As it does with individuals, the dominant modern feudalistic socio-economic paradigm creates conditions which cause societies to break down into groups and castes which are set up to conflict with one another, since whatever gains or benefits one group makes come at the expense of another group or groups. This guarantees that these groups will distrust, blame and even attack each other mentally, emotionally and practically. Group is pitted against group for artificially scarcified resources and opportunities. This pattern effectively neutralizes the potential for the kind of united, concerted awareness and action that are necessary to force the paradigm out of operation and replace it with one based on freely chosen mutual benefit and support.

Modern feudalism's ultimate extreme is seen in the phenomenon of slavery. The U.S. southern states built an entire economy based on the fundamental principles of the paradigm: minimize expenses and maximize profits. The reduction of human beings property status, allowing a business to eliminate the expense of salary and benefits, with no constraints on how much they can demand of their slaves. There is nothing in the paradigm that works against this. It took a bloody war to end that atrocity. The fact that slavery was ended is proof that we humans have a deep compassionate instinct that is strong enough to override the dominant paradigm upon occasion. Yet forms of slavery still persist underground in the form of human trafficking for both labor and sexual exploitation. The paradigm creates strong incentives for it.

In the World at Large:

Under the current paradigm, many corporations and wealthy individuals wield more power in every way than many countries, and are functionally immune to consequences, being accountable to nobody.

Given the focus on the "bottom line" imperative in the dominant paradigm, it was inevitable that companies in the U.S. and other developed nations would outsource to reduce their expenses, especially in technical and remote support roles, as well as subcontracting manufacturing to sweatshop facilities in developing countries. Why pay an American an appropriate wage when you can pay someone in India, the Philippines or China $40 per day for the same work? The number of well-paying jobs in the country plummet, leaving a growing percentage of people competing for sub, barely or barely over living wages. In the outsourcee country, the ripples of damage continue. Those employed in those jobs become well-off in their country but often must work long hours under sub-optimal conditions to keep their salary. The overall socio-economic conditions in the country don't change much. Consider that the much-publicized Chinese Middle Class amounts to about forty million out of 1.2 billion, a little over three percent. A very small drop in a very large ocean.

Agricultural supplies companies advertise their genetically-modified seed stock to farmers as a way to get vast yield per acre. In 1998 a patent was granted for seed engineered so that the next generation would be sterile, soon nicknamed "Terminator" seed, to stop farmers from saving seed; only a worldwide outcry kept it off the market. The same goal is reached by other means: hybrid seed, which does not breed true, and patents and contracts that forbid farmers to replant seed, enforced with lawsuits that have ruined some farmers (Barlett and Steele, Vanity Fair, 2008). Farmers are forced to buy fresh seed every year for no reason other than that the companies can get away with it. There is nothing in the paradigm to contradict or discourage such behavior. Where national law protected farmers' right to save seed, as in Brazil and Argentina, Monsanto set up a private royalty system at the grain ports to collect its fees anyway. Resistance can win: in 2014, after some ten days of mass protests led by Indigenous and campesino communities, Guatemala repealed a law under which saving protected seed without permission could have meant up to four years in prison (Waging Nonviolence). Here we see again the feudal nature of the paradigm which is inherently incompatible with a free and democratic society.

The forced overproduction and overconsumption driving the paradigm drives the accelerating unchecked depletion of the world's natural resources, the generation of an unmanageable amount of waste and pollution, and the destruction of our biosphere including the Amazon river basin, the Artic, forests around the world, and the oceans themselves as well as depleting and degrading soil, water and air. This process serves and perpetuates the accelerating accumulation of

wealth, power and control in the hands of the modern feudal ruling elite. The operating principles of the paradigm guarantee this.

The behavior of some modern feudal lords and their corporations is reminiscent of people caught in a severe drug addiction, such as to the Russian drug Krokodil (desomorphine), whose lives come to be wholly driven by the compulsion even as it does them terrible physical harm. The compulsion to accumulate that grips some of the modern feudal lords is no less powerful. Allowing the current paradigm to continue is no different from allowing an impaired pilot to keep flying an airplane.

Food quality suffers, since the paradigm reinforces getting the most produce out of an acre, getting it as big and good-looking as possible as quickly as possible. The food thus produced is measurably lower in some nutrients (Davis, Epp and Riordan, 2004) and often has less taste. To get enough nutrition, we must buy more food which increases profits and reinforces the behavior.

Tourism is a big money-maker for the modern feudal lords and their corporations. In its current form, luxury tourist resorts destroy not only the natural environment in an entire region, but also the livelihoods of local people, their way of life, and their well-being. The cost of living skyrockets so people who've lived there for generations can't afford to stay. A sharp socio-economic stratification occurs with the modern feudal lords at the top, the tourists below them, a very few locals under them acting as an exclusive aristocracy over their fellows, leaving many locals in low-wage service jobs, unemployed, or priced out of their own towns.

Both man-made and natural sites of beauty and historical significance are overcrowded and progressively damaged or even destroyed by a phenomenon called overtourism (Jet, Forbes, 2018). Because of the economic dynamics, money-bearing tourists are given priority over local residents for access to many things, which can even be off-limits to locals.

To reiterate, the problem is not specifically the players; it's the game itself and its operating principles, what it reinforces and fails to reinforce, what it suppresses.

The Travesty of "Corporate Personhood"

The moment corporations were given status as "people" under the law, the rights and sovereignty of real human beings was permanently compromised.

The impact of this is far more severe in practice than most people imagine.

Corporations have small armies of top-notch attorneys on staff, whose sole job is to serve the corporation's interests and agendas. The corporation incurs no added cost in legally litigating against an individual. A typical citizen is barely or not quite surviving on their pay and must try to find an attorney who is competent, trustworthy and affordable, which is kind of like looking for a unicorn. Most good lawyers charge more per hour than most people make in a week or two or even a month. As a result, one usually does not find representation anywhere near as good as the corporation's. Since the outcome of court cases depends as much on the gamesmanship, skills and resources of the attorneys as it does on the facts of the case, the scales weigh heavily in favor of the corporation.

As a defendant in a criminal case, one has the right to a public defender, who is most likely underpaid and carrying a tremendous caseload. If you're the defendant against a corporation, your disadvantage is clear. If you're the plaintiff, you get no public help, nor do you in a civil suit, unless you can find a lawyer willing to work on contingency or qualify for scarce legal aid. Corporate personhood puts you and me in a position similar to a single soldier armed with one assault rifle and one magazine, up against an armored division with unlimited resources. Repeat players such as corporations, with deep pockets and experienced lawyers, win far more often than individuals who go to court once (Galanter, 1974).

Going up against an individual of the modern feudal ruling class is not much different from going up against a corporation. In fact, often they are functionally one and the same. Yet "corporate personhood" actually shields bad actors within a corporation against liability and consequences. If a CEO or senior executive committed an offense, one ends up going up against the corporation, not the person within the corporation. The law looks at it more or less as the same idea as not being able to sue or charge a thief's hand for theft. This legal fiction is a direct negation and mockery of the sovereign status and rights of every individual not in the ruling modern feudal elite.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

When the current paradigm us decommissioned and replaced with a mutually-empowering symbiotic paradigm, corporations will cease to exist. “Corporate personhood” will be relegated to the same historical junkyard as “Divine Right of Kings,” flat earth theory, and the Greek gods.

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

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 Rights End At Your Workplace Door… And Where You Live

In the United States of America, the Declaration of Independence proclaims our unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and our Constitution guarantees each of us freedom of speech, assembly, religion and more. The Constitution is intended to be the template upon which the society functions. Members of the military, police and government all take an oath to protect and defend it against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Yet the socio-economic power structure directly contradict this foundation, erodes and functionally nullifies it in everyday life. Since ownership confirms authority and given no practical checks and balances on ownership, we have a tiny minority of ultra-wealthy individuals and the corporations that they control owning and controlling the vast majority of everything, it leaves the rest of us owning little or nothing. When we're on our landlord's property and working on our employer's property, we have no rights, just like the serfs and peasants of a thousand or more years ago. Thus the economic power structure directly undermines the democratic principles of the Constitution. Thus, our duty is to defend the Constitution against the metastasis of the modern feudal power structure. We all know who holds the stronger position in confrontations between employee and employer or tenant and landlord in the majority of cases.

The asymmetry of transactions consistently favors the same parties at every level. Contrary to popular misconception, one can't truly say that the party bringing currency to the table has the stronger bargaining position. This is true when employee or applicant meets employer, except if the applicant is for the position of CEO or similar position. Yet when tenant, homebuyer, or applicant meets bank or landlord, the one bringing currency to the table is in the weaker bargaining position. This demonstrates that in all interactions under the dominant socio-economic paradigm, the same party always dictates the terms: the party who is a member or agent of the modern feudal elite. While the Constitution mandates government of, by and for the people, the socio-economic paradigm creates a "heads I win, tails you lose" situation, in which the same party consistently wins.

The workplace is the "private property" of the employer, giving them legal dictatorial authority over employees while on the job. Beyond very few hard-won legal protections, which are constantly being eroded, our Constitutional rights yield to the "rights" of employers to control their "property." Unless we own our residence outright, the same is true there. In most U.S. states one can legally be fired for one's political views or off-hours speech if they offend the boss, and it happens routinely. There's the illusion of freedom of choice; yet having been fired hobbles one's job search. Without a source of income, one can't pay for permission to occupy space. This pretty much deletes all of one's rights. If our rights aren't respected and enforced in practice, then their existence in theory is but a cruel mockery.

Hard-won gains of the labor movement have been ground away under "at-will employment" and "right to work" laws which allow both employer and employee to terminate at any moment, with or without cause, another cruel mockery. Employees are easily replaced, jobs not so much. If one person is firmly footed holding a rope from which another person is hanging over a cliff, it's pretty clear that saying that either party is free to let go at any time is even more heartless than Marie Antoinette saying "Let them eat cake" when told that the people were hungry.

For that matter, even if you own your own home or place of business outright and fall on hard times such that you can't pay your property taxes or other major debts, then you could find your home taken away from you and sold to pay the debt. This could happen to you or me, but it would never happen to modern feudal lord, a billionaire. It is economically and sociologically impossible. If one is fired, the employer has preferential treatment even beyond that moment. A simple statement from your former boss of "No, we would not hire this person again" is enough to torpedo future job applications. If you try to tell your side of the story in a way critical of your former employer, a prospective employer will reject you as a disgruntled troublemaker. The circumstances of one's firing are rarely examined. Innocent until proven guilty does not apply. You are presumed guilty with no chance to prove otherwise. An employer's word is taken at face value. Your word is rejected at face value. Period. With no income, you have no way to ransom your existence and pay for permission to occupy space. In effect, by controlling access to the money that you need to buy access to all of life's necessities, in a very real way your employer had power of life or denial of life over you.

The property of a homeless person is generally not respected. Many cities allow their police to confiscate sleeping bags, coats and other property of homeless people and drive them out of any public or private property where they may be,

even if they are occupying unused locations. In fact, if you don't own the land you're standing on, then whoever does own it gets to say whether or not you can even be there. In many places it's also illegal to live in one's vehicle or camp on public property. If you own no land, have no money to pay for permission to occupy someone's private land, and aren't allowed to exist on public land, you are truly deprived of all rights, Constitutional or otherwise. You have the right to do anything you want, but only as a disembodied spirit.

Where rent control exists, landlords and tenants are pitted against one another and abuses exist on both sides. Where there's no rent control, tenants often have few protections against landlords who abuse them. They can tell you how many people can live there, whether or not you can have pets or plant a garden, and more.

Even for true homeowners, a plethora of laws, codes and regulations limit harmless activities and enforce arbitrary requirements. Homeowners can be fined for letting their lawns go brown, as well as for watering their lawns during draught. In many places homeowners' associations and local codes can ban front-yard vegetable gardens, rain barrels, working on one's car, parking an RV on one's property, and a lot more. The reason for this is that in the dominant socio-economic paradigm, currency is sacrosanct and anything that could reduce the value of commodities is forbidden or discouraged. In such a culture, the above activities can cause property values in the neighborhood to go down. Thus they are forbidden. This is yet another way in which the modern feudal paradigm undermines a free and democratic society. In some times and places, the very presence of people of color or mixed-race families has been seen as a threat to property values, causing "redlining" and all manner of exclusionary discrimination in the real estate market.

Such societies value or devalue a person based largely on their financial situation. Those struggling or not making it are seen as "losers" and fundamentally inferior to those who are doing well. Struggling people are often generally shunned, given less or no benefit of the doubt, rejected out of hand for jobs and places to live, and generally kept almost forcibly in their situation. There's an almost superstitious attitude that it's "bad luck" to be around such a person. It is easy and fast to fall into a hole, and nearly impossible to climb out again.

Another front of attack on democracy is called privatization, which is passing control of a public resource like schools, libraries or even the Postal Service to "private" entities AKA for-profit corporations, big developers and the wealthy feudal lords at their helm. In the U.S., there has been a relentless encroachment of privatization since the 1980's. People are often wiling to accept it because psychologically they associate the term "privatize" with "private" which has an emotional connotation of implying the individual's personal sovereignty. It doesn't. Quite the opposite. It is the redirecting of public resources out of the control of the people and into the control of the ruling feudal elite. The socio-economic paradigm also quietly undermines freedom of speech: corporate gatekeepers decide what reaches mass audiences, a form of censorship that needs no secret police. Content that offends network executives or major advertisers rarely makes it to air.

Employees are also robbed of the products of their ingenuity, in exactly the same way as medieval peasants were robbed of their produce. Many employment agreements include legally-binding language in which the employee grants the employer all rights to any inventions or innovations that the employee devises, some even those unrelated to the workplace, although several U.S. states, including California, limit such claims. Thus you could come up with an innovation that brings in millions to the company but never see a penny of it yourself. You must sign away your rights to get the job.

"Free enterprise" is another myth in these societies, as is self-reliance. In most such societies, street vendors and performers are heavily restricted by laws and statutes, and in some places banned outright. It's no coincidence that this happens to the economically weakest members of the community. Gargantuan businesses have little tolerance for competition from smaller competitors. There is no "free enterprise," other than the myth.

Even within the confines of entertainment business corporations, it is the writer, composer and performer who reap the microscopically smallest portion of what they bring in. Similar to the situation of an innovator in a technical business, the corporation robs the actual producers of the wares that generate corporate wealth of the fruits of their productivity, the lion's share of which goes to the parasitic business structure built around them.

All of this goes to illustrate that the dominant socio-economic paradigm is inherently and fundamentally inimical to, and incompatible with, a free and democratic society governed of, by and for the people. Such a governmental paradigm absolutely requires a very different socio-economic paradigm.

Chapter 15: Science and Development

Those who promote and defend the dominant socio-economic paradigm like to say that the competition generated by profit motive drives greater innovation and productivity than can be achieved in more collaborative, symbiotic paradigms. Indeed there are situations in which competition does fuel innovation as people try to outdo each other.

There's no denying that we humans have a competitive side to our makeup, as evidenced by the rich variety of games, sports and contests in which we invest a lot of our attention in most or all cultures. We also, however, have a cooperative, synergistic side to our makeup. Each is there because it in some way enriches our lives and survival, depending on the situation. It is up to us to determine how, where and when to invoke which sides of our nature in order to bring about the greatest degree of human happiness, well-being, health, empowerment and thriving of individuals as well as the community.

For example, an aggressive, even violent response may save our lives when confronted with a predator, terrorist, or other threat. That same response is utterly harmful when applied in any other situation. Compassion, solidarity and mutual nurturing are powerfully beneficial in most situations of normal life. Yet to respond to a psychopath or terrorist with an open, trusting heart is disastrous.

Let's look at scientific research for example. Research is most productive when there are both a high degree of collaboration and a degree of competition. For best results there must be free, unimpeded sharing of information among researchers. In collaboration, the benefits of sharing information are obvious. In competition, competing researchers and developers can scarcely poke holes in each other's work if they can't freely read, analyze, and try to reproduce each other's results.

When information sharing is blocked or restricted, research and development suffer; society and the people in it pay a steep price. It doesn't matter whether such restriction comes from government, as happened to researchers in the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, or whether the restriction comes from nondisclosure agreements and restrictive business policies that ban developers at competing companies from sharing anything of their work. The inhibition and crippling of research and development is the same. Neither collaboration nor competition can proceed.

Imagine what would have been accomplished if Soviet and U.S. scientists had been encouraged and supported to share their work freely in the Space Race, medicine, agriculture, and more! Both countries would have benefited from their combined knowledge and expertise.

Now imagine what would happen if designers from all of the world's auto manufacturers were to get together and design vehicles based on the combined strongest features of all brands! We would enjoy vehicles that have all of the best features of Ford, Toyota, Mercedes, Volkswagen and all the others combined in one. There is no down side. Collaboration would integrate knowledge, while competition would eliminate all but the best designs and features. The wasteful duplication of efforts under the fragmented dominant socio-economic paradigm is immensely destructive and utterly unnecessary. Imagine the benefit to both countries if the U.S. and the Soviet Union had examined, without bias, each other's successes and failures socially and politically, then both countries would have benefited greatly. The U.S. had greater success implementing political freedom and led the world in research, but left the arts, sciences, and higher education out of reach for much of the population. The Soviets had a dismal record in terms of political freedom, and censored science and the arts (genetics was suppressed for decades under Lysenko), but made science, the arts, and higher education widely accessible. If only they had chosen to learn from each other.

In the Soviet Union, it was the government that restricted and censored artists, scientists and developers. In modern economic feudalism, it's the employer who restricts and censors artists, scientists and developers. There is little difference in the results in both cases. If you doubt this, look to the U.S. during the McCarthy era, when some of the most talented people, such as Charlie Chaplin and the director Jules Dassin, ended up working in Europe to escape the state sanctioned, life-ruining anti-communist frenzy. In the entertainment industry, performers, writers, composers and other artists have been blackballed, sued, and worse because they did or said something that major sponsors or the network didn't like. Successful shows have been canceled because a sponsor or executive disagreed with anything about it. Story lines, story arcs, and character development are often dictated by arbitrary and capricious decisions that have

nothing to do with the artistic integrity or quality of the content. For practical purposes, the power of the modern feudal lords overrides and nullifies our Constitutional rights if they decide to exercise it.

Any developers at competing companies who do share their "secrets," can find themselves fired, sued into bankruptcy, and in some cases even imprisoned for "industrial espionage" or for violating nondisclosure agreements without signing which they would have no job. Under the dominant modern feudalistic paradigm, the employer, who is often an extension of one or more modern feudal lords, takes ownership of any developments the employee creates, just as the Medieval feudal lords laid claim to as much as they chose of peasants' and serfs' produce, labor and products.

This causes wasteful duplication of efforts. Each company must design and manufacture its products in a void. The illusion of abundance of choices belies the waste and inferiority of products thus created. Each brand has its own strong and weak points. Were all designers from all companies to be encouraged to pool their efforts, their products would combine the best of all designs and features into a solid line of products that would be the best that the state of the art allows.

Instead of multiple lines of similar competing products, each of which is inferior in different ways and all of which are designed to be short-lived, there would be one or two lines of durable, upgradeable, optimal products with high customizability. The depletion of natural resources, pollution and waste byproducts of manufacturing, and flow of broken or discarded products to landfills would be cut to a tiny fraction of accelerating rates.

Lest you worry that such a collaboration would end competition and thus stall innovation, consider the fact that under the current paradigm, competition is not over the quality of products and services; it is over marketing, advertising, business strategies, profits, stock prices and market share. In those priorities, the quality of products is a secondary or tertiary priority. If profits can be maximized by making inferior products and promoting them effectively, then that's what companies will do.

In contrast, when the current feudalistic socio-economic paradigm is discontinued and replaced with a symbiotic, peer-based paradigm, true competition over the quality of products and services will truly drive innovation, hand in hand with cooperation. The best idea, design or product will survive, not the product with the most successful advertising backed by the most ruthless business practices. Pride of workmanship, actual rather than manufactured needs, and the quality of life of self and community will replace profit motive as the central driving force and motivation.

Fortunately we have many current real-world examples of products designed, developed, and distributed under a paradigm very like the democratic economy that will replace the current feudalistic one. One powerful living example is the Open Source movement in the field of computer software.

We're all familiar with the operating systems Microsoft Windows and Apple OS X, as well as apps like Microsoft Word, Photoshop, QuickBooks and the plethora of other commercial software available for a price. When you buy a new computer, you get the hardware, an operating system, and a few minimal apps. You have to pay extra for a word processor, spreadsheet; a photo, video or audio editor, or any other app that you want or need. Some software houses are now moving to a subscription model, in which you have to keep paying them every month, or else the program will not only stop working, it will lock your own files and hold them for ransom until you pay. Imagine if your car or refrigerator were to stop working and lock you out unless you paid the manufacturer a fee every month! Yet people accept this with software.

Software developers at Apple, Microsoft and other competing companies are forbidden to share information. The companies are run hierarchically under strict control from the top down. The "business needs" of the company dictate development, even at the expense of the quality or even reliability. In fact, if the product is buggy, companies can make money from technical support. Contrast this reality with that of Open Source. Software development easily accommodates the open peer-based collaborative/competitive paradigm, since participants can work, share and interact from anywhere in the world and work using tools freely available. No industrial infrastructure is needed.

In open source, the code belongs to everyone. Volunteers and company-paid developers from around the world cooperate and compete in public to produce operating systems and apps that are the equal, and sometimes superior, to their commercial counterparts, and no one can lock the code away. 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. These products are

legally available to everybody for free. Motivation is driven by pride of workmanship, the joy of collaborating and competing to create the best products possible and to equal or surpass their commercial equivalents. Their success is easily verifiable.

The main Open Source operating system is called Linux. There are many competing versions of Linux that compete purely on how happy users are with the products, i.e. their quality. You can look them up and download them at will at distrowatch.com if you want. There's no advertising. Each "flavor" has a factual description of what it does and who its target audience is. There are versions meant for everybody, and specialized versions for artists, scientists, businesses of any size, automation, forensics, schools and universities, software development, gaming, for believers of just about every religion and more.

Windows, OS X, and Linux all do pretty much the same things. They give you an environment in which to run your apps. All three have a desktop with icons to click to run apps via a mouse and keyboard. Most people have a preference, and people can get very emotional over their operating systems. Each one has its quirks, advantages and disadvantages.

When you buy a computer installed with Windows or OS X, or if you build one and install the operating system yourself, you have a computer with an operating system and few useful apps. You have to pay for each app that you want or need, beyond the included browser, notepad, and media player. The cost of commercial apps can dwarf the cost of the computer.

When you install almost any version of Linux on a computer, you have a computer with an operating system as well as an office suite, video editor, browser, web page editor, and many other products, installed along with the operating system. If you want apps that aren't installed by default, you can easily install them for free. The most successful "flavors" of Linux are compatible with the vast majority of PC and Mac hardware. In most cases, the same hardware runs faster and more reliably on Linux than on Windows or Mac.

When a "flavor" of Linux is buggy, flawed, or unreliable, then either its developers improve it, or it will fade away. When Microsoft had major problems with Windows Millennium, Windows Vista, and Windows 8 and 8.1, rather than resolve the flaws, the company marketed the products full steam ahead. Their dominance in the market kept them from losing dominance or profitability. In the case of Vista, Microsoft went so far as to inform PC manufacturers that they'd have to design their hardware to be compatible with Windows Vista. They had no reinforcement or incentive to fix Vista, so they foisted it upon the world until the next version came out.

Apple has also had multiple fiascoes, with results similar to those of Microsoft. El Capitan caused many users' Macs to lose WiFi compatibility. Their iMovie video editor was a quite serviceable video editor until they sabotaged it by removing the timeline, which made it unusable for serious video editing. There was also the iOS update that secretly slowed older iPhones, leading many customers to buy new ones; Apple later agreed to pay up to $500 million to settle the U.S. lawsuits, without admitting wrongdoing (NBC News, 2020).

Windows out of the box is not compatible with most hardware. You need special files called drivers for it to work with your sound and video card, motherboard, monitor and all of your hardware. If you buy your computer from major company, they've taken care of that for you so you won't notice any problem. If, however, you build your own computer, have to replace a crashed hard drive or malware-damaged boot partition and don't have a Restore disk or image available, then after you buy Windows and install it, you'll have to identify every part of your hardware and go look for drivers online, a lengthy process fraught with frustration.

Macintosh doesn't have that problem, since Apple makes both the hardware and operating system. Everything is compatible by design, though only with Apple hardware.

The best Linux versions are compatible with most PC and Mac hardware. They automatically detect the hardware and install drivers automatically. You can download Linux and burn it to a DVD, then boot your PC from it and see if it's compatible. If it isn't, nothing is compromised on your computer. Just take the DVD out of the drive, reboot it, and your Windows or OS X is still there.

The source code that programmers write is off limits to the public for Apple and Microsoft (and other commercial) products. Open Source products explicitly require that the source code be freely accessible to all.

The Open Source movement and community produce more than just operating systems. Just about every software program available commercially for a price has a free Open Source counterpart that does the same things as well or better. Most Open Source apps are compatible with their leading commercial equivalents so files can be shared.

In terms of security, Windows is by far the weakest of the three operating systems. There are literally tens of thousands of viruses and other malware targeting Windows. Mac and Linux each have around 40 viruses in contrast. Linux is somewhat more secure by design than Mac.

Linux can routinely be downloaded and burned to a DVD or Flash drive which is bootable on any compatible computer. This lets you test compatibility with your hardware but is also useful if you need to use your computer right now when your hard drive has crashed or you got hit with serious malware. Windows and OS X can also be installed on a bootable Flash drive, though not a bootable DVD that can be used for anything but installation; but the process is more challenging. In the case of Windows, you will probably have to buy a license or go through a bureaucratic process to transfer a license from another computer.

If you haven't heard of Linux or Open Source, it's because there is no advertising, no marketing. At first Linux was mainly for computer enthusiasts and professionals so it got a reputation of being hard to use; but it's evolved into a product every bit as user-friendly as its commercial competitors. It spreads by word of mouth. It is a slower process. That does not reflect its utility or user friendliness. It's widely in use in schools, universities, the military, enterprises, government agencies and more. Your Android phone is running a Linux version.

Both OS X and Windows do have corporate technical support if you need it, though it often comes at a price. Linux has paid support from companies too, but it also has a global online support system of savvy people, some of whom are happy to advise and assist for free.

The True Nature of Competition under the Modern Feudal Paradigm:

Proponents of the dominant modern feudal socio-economic paradigm like to say that it stimulates competition, which in turn stimulates innovation which leads to higher quality of life with better products. But that's more illusion than reality. Here's why:

The main driving motives are profits, market share and stock prices. Innovation, product or service quality, and progress only tangentially drive decisions or policies, if at all. The behavior that's reinforced is to reduce costs (including employee salary and benefits, as well the quality of materials used in manufacturing) and raise prices as much as possible. To accomplish this, salaries are depressed, the materials used are not the best but the cheapest, and emphasis is on marketing and advertising rather than on goods and services themselves. The real competition between companies is actually between marketing and advertising departments, not research and development teams. The company that successfully markets an inferior product will out-sell and out-earn one that does a poor job of marketing a superior product.

It gets worse. A company that makes a durable, upgradeable, easily serviceable product will not do as well as a company that makes an inferior product that doesn't last long, can't be serviced or upgraded, and therefore has to be replaced often. It's called built-in obsolescence. It's a choice that companies make because the behavior is reinforced. Make an inferior product with impressive packaging and presentation, hype it with skillful advertising, and convince people that they just have to have this month's model anyway, and you will have a perpetual, self-renewing income stream. From the point of view of maximizing profits, ensuring that products are likely to break just past expiration of the warranty further bolsters profitability.

Another tactic used by some manufacturers, most notably software houses, is the "subscription model." Originally, for example, when you bought Microsoft Office, you could use it as long as you wanted. You only had to pay for an upgrade if at some point it stopped working, you changed operating system to one incompatible with the app, or you decided you wanted the latest functionality. In recent years, however, we see that Microsoft Office 365 doesn't work that way. You can't pay once for it and keep using it. You have to pay every month. If you don't, it drops into a reduced mode: you can still open and print the files you created, but you can no longer edit them until you pay again. This behavior is strongly reinforced in this socio-economic paradigm. Imagine if one day we have to keep paying our car dealership every month to keep our car running and if we don't, it will lock us in and not release us until we pay. Would we tolerate that? Now we wouldn't; but people could tolerate it in then end if it happens little by little.

All kinds of sleight-of hand are used in the "marketplace" to boost profits. Most of them are legal in a society that believes the paradigm is sacrosanct. Car makers spend a lot of money to make their car doors sound solid when they close – not be solid but sound solid. Restaurants display mouth-watering pictures of their wares that bear little resemblance to what comes on the plate. When telecom companies realized that more and more people hated their two-year contracts, they repackaged their offerings as "contract-free" while the reality changed little or none. Either way you end up paying about the same and either way, if you opt out earlier than a certain date, you owe them a big chunk of money. Non-Linux operating systems come pre-installed with useless demo versions of apps which makes them look more attractive.

Another example of companies sabotaging their own products began when Apple released their iPhones with batteries that can't be replaced without destroying the phone. When your battery won't hold a charge any more, you can't buy a new battery on Amazon and put it in. Unless you're a techie yourself, you have to either pay a techie a lot of money to replace the battery, or you have to buy a new iPhone. There is little technical reason or advantage to this. It's as simple as Apple wants you to have to buy a new $700 phone when the battery dies, instead of a $40 battery. The ploy has since metastasized throughout the cellular industry. Good luck finding a current phone with a replaceable battery! Add that to the upgrade to iOS that slowed the devices down, and Apple cleans up at our expense. Advertising and marketing aren't enough to maximize profits and stock prices. Forcing customers to frequently have to buy new products boosts the bottom line.

Every large corporation has a small army of top-notch attorneys who know exactly what they can get away with under the letter of the law. Loopholes abound, since corporate lobbyists directly influence lawmakers to make sure that they do – and every loophole is fully exploited.

In many industries, marketing and advertising budgets are bigger than research and development budgets. Pharmaceutical companies, for example, are notorious for it: in 2013, nine of the ten largest drug companies spent more on sales and marketing than on research and development (California Healthline, 2015). They are also known for often profiting thousands of percentages on products they never even developed, by cornering the "rights" to the patents. They often profit dramatically without having created anything whatsoever of value. Drug prices have gotten so extreme that diabetics routinely risk their lives by rationing their insulin when they can't afford the full amount that they need.

Of course, the companies don't really pay the costs of advertising and marketing. That cost is borne by the customer. A large part of the prices of things is to cover advertising, the obnoxious visual and auditory pollution that's always in our faces, mailboxes, screens and everywhere we look. We pay for that. The reason is that under the dominant paradigm, generous marketing and advertising spending is linked to higher profits and is thus strongly reinforced.

Behind the scenes, the typical employee is paid sub or barely living wages while the CEO of the same company makes in an hour or a day what the median employee makes in a year (Horowitz, CNN Business, 2018).

If true competition over best design and implementation were to occur in a free, democratic socio-economic paradigm, the inferior goods and services that now predominate would quickly fail and disappear.

Space exploration is a field, which has traditionally been free of the shackles of profit motive, since it's been run by governments on behalf of their people. The technology developed to meet those challenges has led to many innovations that have benefited humanity. In spite of the fierce Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, when Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon, his quote "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" was an acknowledgement that space belongs to all of humanity along with any other sentient life that may exist.

Sadly, we now see the erosion of this ethic. Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, two of the modern feudal lords who get richer by the moment while the rest of us get poorer, are working to privatize space exploration. They are offering trips to space for a fee that only a billionaire can afford, are already taking over the ferrying of astronauts to and from the International Space Station, and talking about colonizing Mars.

We should insist that space remain the common heritage of humanity, as the 1967 Outer Space Treaty declares when it calls space "the province of all mankind" (Outer Space Treaty, 1967). Unchecked privatization of space would very likely lead to billionaires and their corporations laying claim to Mars and any other celestial bodies that they reach, turning space into the exclusive province of the modern feudal lords while the rest of us will be stranded on the Earth, which is increasingly depleted, polluted and rapidly moving towards being uninhabitable. In the event that climate catastrophe

or other calamity make earth not a good place to be, the feudal lords and their vassals will take refuge in space and other worlds, leaving the rest of us, the modern peasants and serfs, to scrabble for survival on Earth, serving as their labor force and consumers of their goods and services. This can never be allowed to happen. This is yet one more reason why the modern feudalistic socio-economic paradigm will have to be fully replaced if we are to have any chance at a truly democratic, empowered society of thriving, empowered individuals.

The paradigm strongly reinforces behaviors that lead to accumulation of wealth and power. Those who excel at those behaviors become the functional modern feudal lords of our societies. In order to achieve that kind of position, an individual must have a passion for, and dedication to. gaining wealth and power over others, similar to that of a religious zealot and similar also to the focus and single-mindedness of an addict. In fact, the dominant paradigm all but guarantees that many of the modern feudal lords are caught in a compulsion for wealth, opulence, privilege and power over others that follows the pattern of a behavioural addiction. Yet, instead of recognising this and helping them get free of it, our societies hold them up as shining success stories to be emulated as role models, thus setting in stone a fatally dysfunctional socio-economic dynamic. Imagine a society that lionizes whoever can drink the most alcohol and remain standing. Alcoholism would predominate. We will do best if we stop enabling this compulsion and, firmly but compassionately, help those caught in it face reality and get free of it. Medicine is another field that is distorted and inhibited by the profit-motive of the dominant paradigm. Because the paradigm imposes compulsory profit motive upon every person, group, and endeavor just to survive, we see both research and clinical medicine driven first and foremost by “market forces” and profitability. The good of patients is at best a secondary, tertiary or even lower-level consideration.

The purpose of medicine is to keep us healthy and to heal us when we’re sick or injured. Doctors take an oath to “do no harm.” Yet medical schools, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, doctor’s offices and every other entity involved in medicine are businesses. Profits, stock prices, market share, and competitive advantage are the driving criteria.

The dominant paradigm operates on “supply and demand.” When demand is high, prices can be raised to the maximum that the market will bear. People’s health is naturally important to them. This creates a built-in demand. When you’re injured or sick, getting treatment isn’t “discretionary.” It’s vital. In the dominant paradigm, healthcare providers at every level are reinforced to raise their prices into the stratosphere, because they know that enough people will sell their homes, go into debt, and go to any lengths to pay just about any price they decide to charge. They don’t care about those who have no way to pay and can’t afford insurance. Prices are out of all proportion to production costs because they can get away with it. This is the utterly inevitable result of the conditions and reinforcers generated by the socio-economic paradigm. It can no more be regulated and tweaked into serving the good of all of the people, than a Bengal tiger can become a vegetarian or a deer can become a carnivore.

This applies to “alternative” medicine as well as mainstream medicine. All practitioners and providers are under the same constant pressure to come up with money to pay for literally everything, including just permission to occupy space.

The same is true for dentistry, veterinary medicine, legal professions, psychology and psychiatry, real estate, anything to do with transportation, and higher education in countries laboring under this paradigm. This is exacerbated by the fact that a freshly-licensed doctor, dentist or lawyer is arriving at the starting gate saddled with hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars of student loan debt, after being forced to work for free during at least part of their internship in many cases. They can’t afford to be affordable.

Some doctors in the United States have even gone so far as to charge patients a monthly fee, just to keep them as patients, over and above what they charge for actual medical services (Lincoff, Healthline, 2015). These so-called “concierge” doctors charge hundreds of dollars a month just to keep you as a patient. This predatory, callous, heartless practice is perfectly legal and in alignment with the structure and principles of the operating socio-economic paradigm.

The out-of-reach cost of medical care has spawned parasitic insurance industries that take advantage of the situation. Unless you are one of the feudal lords, your only hope of being able to afford more than the most trivial medical care is to pay even more money for insurance. Insurance companies are businesses. Their prime imperatives are profit, stock price, market share, and business arrangements that maximize these. They are reinforced, incentivized to raise premiums and deductibles as high as they can get away with and pay out as little as possible. These companies have employees whose job it is to either deny claims by default, putting the burden on the patient to challenge the denial, or

to find any viable legalistic way to justify denying claims. This parasitic entity further drives prices up. The clear trend over time is towards higher and higher costs to patients who receive less and less coverage for their trouble. It is an inseparable, fundamental feature of the paradigm. To compound the damage, hospitals take advantage of claims that insurance companies do pay, by charging extreme prices: medical-billing advocates have documented charges of $8 for a box of tissues, $10 for a plastic medicine cup and $53 for a pair of non-sterile gloves (Becker's Hospital Review), and a journalist's review of real bills found diabetes test strips at $18 apiece that cost about 56 cents at retail (Brill, *Time*, 2013). 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). Almost all of the profits from these practices are funneled into the hands of the billionaire feudal lords at the top of the wealth-and-power pyramid.

In contrast to the United States' predatory healthcare system, much-maligned Cuba, which has had to make do with scant resources due to a decades-long U.S. embargo against the country, 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. Cuba has done much with little. The United States does little with much. Cuba is no Utopia. Its health system is now in severe crisis, with shortages of medicines and supplies, long blackouts and many doctors leaving the country (UN News, May 2026), and Cuba has its own policy failures and political repression. Yet it's important to learn from what works and what doesn't work, regardless of where or when. The strange vendetta that has driven the United States' ongoing harassment of Cuba has little to do with human rights. Cuba's violations are real, but the United States maintains close ties with governments whose records are far worse, and has serious violations of its own. It has everything to do with the fact that the dominant socio-economic paradigm, like a cancer or invasive species, does not tolerate or live in peace with any paradigm contrary to itself. Governments have been overthrown, people tortured and murdered, and whole populations displaced and decimated in order to protect corporate economic interests or open up new markets for exploitation.

Some believe that the dominant paradigm stimulates innovation which improves the lives of the people. Yet the net effect of the paradigm is actually to suppress and distort scientific research and development. Here's how:

What's reinforced is to maximize profits, stock prices, and market share. When "private" companies dominate research, they are strongly reinforced to pursue only research that looks likely to generate profits, the bigger the better, the sooner the better. Anything that doesn't seem likely to do so will never be given the go-ahead. In fact, any research that looks like it might threaten a company's profits will most certainly be suppressed. We always make choices about which lines of inquiry to follow. Countless lines of inquiry that could vastly expand our knowledge and understanding of the world and spin off unforeseen technologies to benefit us, either languish for lack of funds or are actively suppressed. If a technology is more profitable than a competing technology, then it will survive and the other perish, even if the other one was superior to the profitable one in every way.

Under this paradigm, there is an inexorable trend for the "private" (corporate) sector to steadily gain power and for representative government to cede that power to the private sector. There is always a relentless push to "privatize" literally everything possible, thus taking more and more resources and processes out of the hands of those responsible to the people and into the hands of those responsible to only the modern feudal lords, who answer to literally no one.

Another field in which millions of people have suffered as the direct result of the paradigm is energy and transportation. Renewable energy and cleaner transport technologies have existed in some form for decades, and today there are more of them, and they are cheaper, than ever. Yet we are still globally locked into dependence on fossil fuels. That is in large part the result of sustained, and largely successful, campaigns by petroleum, automotive and related corporations to slow the mainstreaming of other technologies. Oil companies' own scientists accurately projected global warming from the late 1970s, while the companies publicly cast doubt on it (Supran, Rahmstorf and Oreskes, 2023); yet many of the feudal lords at their helm are so caught in the compulsion to accumulate wealth and power that they chose that over long-term survival. The pattern is the same one seen in experimental rats who have electrodes implanted in the pleasure centers of their brains and activated by pressing a lever. The rats will keep pressing the lever, to the exclusion of eating, sleeping, or drinking, to the point of death. Addictions die hard.

At present, most power is generated in massive facilities controlled and operated by large utilities and energy corporations, although about one in seven U.S. electricity customers is served by a community-owned public power utility (American Public Power Association). This gives them a truly feudalistic degree of control over access to electricity and provides an endless "revenue stream" to ultimately further enrich the billionaires at the helm. Our degree

of dependence on fossil fuels gives large producers, both corporations and countries, a huge degree of control over most of the world. Checks and balances are weak: regulators are often close to the industry, and ordinary customers have little recourse. The modern feudal paradigm sets this pattern up to be inevitable and set in stone.

A grid based on huge centralized generation facilities is extremely vulnerable to a whole range of things that can go wrong, such as natural disasters, malfunctions, terrorist attacks, sabotage, and warfare. Anything that shuts down a few major generators can paralyze millions of people's ability to function. Such a setup is inefficient, disruptive, and unstable.

A grid based on a distributed network of diverse small to mid-scale power sources would be much more robust. A coordinated national and regional system of home, production facility, farm, neighborhood, town and county windmills, solar panels, waterwheels (preferable to dams), geothermal, mechano-chemical and other generators will be far more robust, fault-tolerant, and far less vulnerable than the current model. A beneficial side-effect will be that we ourselves will learn, work together, and become empowered to maintain and be deciders for the grid, which we who depend on it will control and operate. This will contribute to a sense of empowerment, engagement and community connection. It will help counteract the current degree of alienation and lack of connection predominant in "every person is an island" culture that most of us live in, as well as the alienation between each of us and the sources of the electricity, food, and other goods and services upon which we depend. Naturally there will need to be changes to how the grid processes the energy generated, which will present technical challenges, all of which are resolvable (Australian Energy Market Operator, 2019; Bird, Milligan and Lew, NREL, 2013). We can realistically expect to become almost entirely free from the need for gargantuan centralized facilities.

Such a social and technical environment will encourage and reinforce innovation. Inventors with novel energy generation technologies will be able to make their contribution and see their inventions prove themselves in the real world. They won't have to worry about finding a venture capitalist willing to fund their invention or a company willing to buy it, possibly only to then bury it.

The human footprint will also fall a lot less heavily across the face of the earth and the environment in the new paradigm. The current paradigm strongly reinforces making money, period. There is no reinforcement, no incentive, for research and development that might lead to innovations that would hurt profits even as it benefits the people. There is no reinforcement for operating in ways that don't pollute, create waste, deplete resources, or lead to a mass extinction. Unfortunately, making a profit is almost always directly incompatible with game-changing innovation, empowerment of employees and consumers, and environmental sustainability.

There are plenty of examples of catastrophes that have resulted from practices typical in multiple industries. Massive oil spills. Nuclear meltdowns and fallout. Preventable power outages followed by crippling price spikes during unforeseen weather. Birth defects. Cancer clusters. Global warming. With a distributed, diverse community-based, collaboratively operated power grid, these inhibitions on progress will subside.

The same principle can be applied to agriculture and animal husbandry. In place of the gigantic factory-farms run by mega-corporations that is increasingly the norm in most of the world, shifting the approach to food generation to diverse, widely distributed small-scale production at the individual home, neighborhood, factory, building, school, and park level will bring about increased abundance and quality of food while actively fostering greater community connections among neighbors and coworkers and increasing people's sense of empowerment of people to new record levels. We will shift from large tracts of land devoted to single crops, to smaller-scale plots cultivated by permaculture in which multiple crops are planted and interspersed in a way that creates small symbiotic ecosystems. Yields can come close to those of industrial farming, with higher quality and more diversity, and the quality of the soil is maintained (Ponisio et al., 2015). Most fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides can be eliminated or greatly reduced. This approach is far less damaging than mega-farms run by mega agribusiness corporations, but it is inherently incompatible with their business model. There's no way to make that approach profitable.

If you're wondering how people will have time in their busy lives to participate in community gardening and maintaining their little corner of the grid, remember that with the end of the current socio-economic paradigm, the endless escalation of forced overconsumption and overproduction will cease. Supply of goods and services will adapt to supply real, authentic needs, not artificially-induced "needs" conditioned, programmed and drummed into us. Quality and durability of goods and services will go way up, so they'll last longer and be easily serviced and upgraded. Therefore,

the demands of the workplace will dramatically scale down. We can realistically look forward to societies where all members enjoy a superior quality of life in every way, where the typical work week is twenty or thirty hours. People will have a lot more free time for productive and fulfilling pursuits.

Another advantage of distributed small-scale power generation, food and other production is the magnitude of resources needed to get it up and running. In the time it takes to build a big dam, nuclear or fossil fuel generator, millions of small-scale installations can be built and brought on line, with far less negative impact on the environment and far fewer resources expended.

It is long past time to move beyond this current dominant socio-economic paradigm, which is showing us every day, for a long time, that it is not viable. It is long past time to retire it and replace it with a well-thought-out paradigm that builds up and reinforces healthy, constructive interdependence and collaboration while empowering each of us and all of us together, a paradigm based on an understanding of what brings out the best in us and what brings out the worst in us. Our socio-economic paradigms are not forces of nature or laws of physics. For better and for worse, we create them. We maintain them and perpetuate them. It's time for use to fully realize that we also have the power to change and replace them when we see the need to do so.

Chapter 16: Modern Feudalism and Women

Any governmental or socio-economic paradigm that aims to be mutually-empowering among all individuals and groups, and to foster the thriving of each and all, must value each and every person.

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).

Unfortunately, many cultures and paradigms, including the dominant modern feudalism, devalue, marginalize and disempower women. That's fifty percent of the population who are treated as less-than. Women in the United States earn about 82 cents for every dollar men earn (Pew Research Center, 2023), and even comparing the same jobs and qualifications, an unexplained gap remains (Blau and Kahn, 2017). High-level opportunities disproportionately go to men. There is no conceivable justification for this behavior. In a culture where money defines one's options, ability to survive, degree of freedom and respect granted one, this disparity directly and unjustifiably harms women.

Some argue that women's menstruation hurts performance and that they will likely get pregnant and end up leaving the workplace, and use that as justification. Women are thus penalized for keeping the species going. Men, however, aren't paid less if they are in the armed Reserves, which will lead to time away from work and could lead to being killed or injured. No double standard is in any way acceptable.

Businesses are primarily concerned with profits, stock prices and market share. Anything perceived as diminishing those even a little bit, is seen as needing to be culled. In the employers' ideal world, employees would work long hours for little to nothing with no benefits. If they can get a good deal on a machine that can replace the employee and work for no pay at all, they will jump on it, wholesale.

Over and above that, the preferential cultural attitudes elevating men and devaluing women comes from long before the current socio-economic paradigm dominated the world. That paradigm, however, like any hierarchical social structure, amplifies those attitudes, socially sets them in stone and perpetuates them, largely unchallenged.

In such cultures, some women, faced with the prospect of trying to survive on sub-living wages, opt to marry for money as a survival strategy. The result is dysfunctional, loveless relationships in which wife and husband are using each other. This leads to even greater alienation. The result is normalization of inauthentic and unfulfilling relationships.

In these cultures, prostitution arises when women are struggling and perceive that the only way they can pay the rent and put food on the table is to sell their bodies.

To expunge disparaging attitudes towards women (along with people perceived as "other") will not happen automatically when the paradigm change happens. It will take a lot of effort over a long time to achieve that goal. But ending the current paradigm will end money as a means of inducement and enforcement over women. Nobody will be able to threaten anybody with loss of livelihood. The goal of cultural healing will become much more attainable, once hierarchical social structures are mothballed.

The new paradigm will strongly reinforce collaboration, cooperation, mutual empowerment and respect. It will not reinforce bullying, intimidation, obstruction, exclusion or abuse. What is reinforced predominates. What isn't reinforced tends towards extinction. There will be no power positions for anybody to abuse. There may still be prejudiced, ignorant people; but they won't be in a position to use economics to inflict their ideas on non-consenting people. Nobody will be in a position to block access of anybody else to any resource, except with respect to their own person and living space.

With currency obsolete and all resources from homes, to food, to education, to transportation, to healthcare to virtually everything accessible to all, there will be no motivation for anybody to create shortages or withhold access to goods and services. Attempting to do so will be a prosecutable crime. None will be able to stand in the way of another's life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness and everything that goes with them.

Yet we do best to be vigilant and proactive in working to eliminate sexism, racism, religious and ethnic intolerance. Its means of enforcement will be mostly gone, but the mentality itself will require a long process to undo. There are a number of examples of such attitudes that persisted and festered. The Soviet Union sought to end gender bias and made major gains in women's education and employment, though women still carried most of the domestic work and rarely reached the top (Lapidus, 1978); after the dissolution of the Union, pre-Soviet sexist attitudes resurfaced openly. In the United States, freeing the enslaved did not end racism: it mutated into Jim Crow laws, lynching and segregation, and racist acts and attitudes persist to this day. The Nazis were defeated in WWII; yet since the mid-2010s, in the United States and in Europe and elsewhere, we've seen a proliferation of white supremacist and neo-Nazi terrorist groups and attitudes (CSIS, 2020), who have made inroads into infiltrating government itself. If not addressed explicitly, destructive generational attitudes tend to fester and re-emerge later. In other words, the transition to the new paradigm will be just the beginning of an ongoing process of rebuilding, redefining, and healing our societies and ourselves.

Our goals will include the empowerment, fulfillment, synergistic, symbiotic engagement, freedom and quality of life for ourselves and each other. Replacing the mutually-predatory current modern feudal paradigm with one that fosters mutual support, symbiosis, synergy, will reduce racism, sexism, religious intolerance and inter-ethnic hatreds from Himalayas to foothills. We will still absolutely need to conquer those foothills. We dare not become complacent, think that our work is done, or rest on our laurels.

Yet attempting to simply suppress hateful attitudes and ideation won't undo them. It will drive them underground and cause them to fester. People holding those attitudes will see themselves as victims or even martyrs, which will lock them more strongly than ever into their attitudes. We will need to address these attitudes directly, possibly with an approach similar to the one that helps people get free of any addiction. They are caught in a compulsion to be entitled to be and act as though they're above others, as some CEOs are, even more so. Deprived of their "drug" of choice, which will no longer exist, at least some of those people will react badly and possibly violently.

The full range of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors will have to be out in the open. We will need to strike a delicate balance. We will not thrive if bullying, hatred, intolerance, exclusion and abuse are common and reinforced. Yet directly suppressing those attitudes would only drive them underground and out of sight, making them all the more dangerous.

From the beginning, the people bringing in the new paradigm will clearly state that one of its principles and goals is to set up a society, at local, national and international levels, that empowers and sustains every one of us, guaranteeing each person access to all their needs and supporting them to make their best contributions.

The new paradigm will be peer-based, not hierarchical. There will be no positions of power that would enable one or some to impose their prejudices or personality disorders upon others. With all resources directly accessible to all, no party will own or control the access of others to goods, services and resources. This will greatly reduce the ways discrimination or exclusion could be imposed. Economics will no longer be a means of preferential control.

There will still be the problem of groups of people sharing exclusionary, bullying, abusive, slanderous or demeaning behavior towards others. That won't magically disappear. Yet such behaviors are already illegal in most countries. Such laws will have to be strengthened and rigorously enforced across the board.

The current dominant paradigm germinates, feeds, and amplifies inter-group resentments and hatreds. The paradigm routinely creates shortages of all resources, including jobs and other sources of income. There isn't enough to go around. In this win-lose-lose-lose game, one person or group always gains at the expense of others. Existing ethnic, racial, religious and other conflicts are amplified and new ones spawned. The normal functioning of the paradigm guarantees it. We are thus kept divided against each other and kept playing the game by rules set by the modern feudal lords, in full accordance with the principles of the paradigm. Concerted unified societal action for fundamental change is thus inhibited and often extinguished. The one group that always gains at the expense of all others is the modern feudal lords. The paradigm reliably generates such a feudal aristocracy. It matters not who occupies that position.

The intense hierarchical structure of the paradigm creates an intensely stratified society. Women often occupy a lower position in this hierarchy than their male peers to varying degrees. The economics of the power structure become ever more set in stone over time. The ones at the top of the economic pyramid are reliably those most driven to accumulate, and most devoted to, wealth, power, opulence and privilege. Like most people caught in a compulsion, they act to

protect and preserve its objects at all costs. The paradigm strongly reinforces this, and by playing the part assigned to us in the "game," we reinforce this behavior.

The new paradigm will erase this modern feudal power structure. With the need for currency obsolete, nobody will be in a position to lord it over another or block another's access. All persons will have direct access to what they need and want (subject to reasonable limitations – how many cars does a person need?). There will be no ruling class and no subjugated class.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Any who try to enforce the old hierarchical power structure by force, or try to block another's access to goods and services, will be guilty of a crime and prosecuted as such, as will any who violently try to avenge themselves against formal feudal lords.

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

Pre-existing resentments and attitudes acquired under the current dominant paradigm will persist for a while. It will be important to encourage and reinforce open public dialog and mobilize psychotherapeutic resources to support the Transition. Mutually beneficial collaboration and symbiotic modes of action will be reinforced. Predatory, coercive, bullying behavior will not be reinforced. Those who find it hard to adjust will have support and assistance to find their place to thrive in the new paradigm. The old attitudes, behaviors and patterns will increasingly fade over time. The first generations to grow up in the new paradigm will never learn the destructive, dysfunctional behaviors of the current paradigm.

Some may still seek to intimidate, exclude, or harass certain people or groups, and may refuse to interact or work with them. For that reason, we will need to strengthen and vigorously, impartially enforce laws prohibiting such behaviors. Judges, prosecutors, administrators, and police officers who are unable or unwilling to behaving in accordance to these principles will need to be replaced with ones who do, not in a punitive spirit but in the same mindset with which a person with failing eyesight may need to be prevented from driving. To minimize the opportunities for abuse, all functioning of public functionaries will have to be fully transparent to the public in real time.

One would not put an alcoholic in charge of the night shift at a liquor store. We will not put a person who has shown, by their conduct, that they cannot act impartially toward all persons because of an intractable prejudice or hatred, in a position of authority over the public or of serving it. Such a person will not be put in a position of being able to harm, exclude, bully or demean others due to their dysfunction. The full range of support will be available, at no cost, to anyone who wants help letting go of hatred.

In the public discourse, we'll need to support each other in avoiding blame of persons. There will be no place in the new paradigm for "payback." Those who were once exploiters and oppressors will have no power to oppress. Those who were once oppressed and exploited will no longer be. What is now the current paradigm will be in the past. We will do best if we learn from the past but emphasize the present and the future and how to steer our society in the new paradigm on a course towards universal human thriving, harmony, symbiosis, actualization and fulfillment.

Generational, ingrained ethnic, religious and other hatreds with lives of their own will be a bigger challenge. 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. We will meet it with firmness and compassion, using every reasonable means, from contact and education to counselling, to help people free themselves of it. Individuals who act on it, by harming or credibly threatening others, may need to be kept separate from the rest of the population, but only through a lawful, transparent process with due process and independent review, possibly in a manner emulating the Norwegian prison system (Sterbenz, Business Insider, 2014). Holding a hateful belief will never by itself be grounds for this; conduct is what counts. The purpose of this will not be punitive. These individuals will be

treated with respect and compassion, with every opportunity to change, but prevented from being a threat to the well-being of others.

In short, the Transition to the new paradigm will not end all prejudice, bullying, violence, abuse, or other harmful behavior. It will, however, reduce the scope, prevalence and severity of such behaviors from Himalayas to low foothills. Mutually beneficial behaviors will be reinforced. Destructive, predatory behaviors will not. What is reinforced, predominates. What is not reinforced, tends towards extinction. The new paradigm will give rise to a self-reinforcing cycle of expanding benefit to individuals, groups and the larger community.

Chapter 17: The Quality, Integrity, and Truthfulness of Readily Accessible Information

Under the dominant feudalistic socio-economic paradigm, there is strong reinforcement for selling products and making a profit. There is no reinforcement for presentation of truthful information about products, beyond what the law requires. This generates a relentless total-immersion avalanche of advertisements assaulting us wherever we go. We grow up in this ocean of ads, so we tend to take them for granted and not question them. The Internet has only provided a virtual Petri-dish for unrestricted proliferation of unsolicited advertising.

No company will ever say that their product is about the same as competing products, or even that they may be inferior or overpriced. Ads present each competing product as the best, uniquely superior, doctor or engineer recommended, and the best deal. This is obviously not possible. The competing products can't all be the be-all-end-all, unless they're indistinguishable from one another. In other words, we can't trust advertising to aid us in arriving at an informed decision regarding which product best meets our needs.

Truth-in-advertising laws come only when prolonged, concerted public pressure briefly outweighs the constant lobbying and other pressure from corporations opposing such laws. Then enacted, such laws typically have loopholes, are not vigorously enforced except in the most extreme cases, and are quickly eroded under the relentless influence of lobbyists on behalf of modern feudal lords and their corporations.

Finding useful information is further complicated by the influence of economic pressures on scientists, engineers, and developers. Under the dominant paradigm, literally nothing can be done without currency. The very nature of the paradigm reliably keeps taxpayer-funded, government-sponsored research under-funded relative to need, except in wartime. The modern feudal lords don't want new innovations to be freely, publicly available. The lion's share of funding comes from the "private sector" AKA the modern feudal lords and their corporations. Research that isn't considered rapidly profitable won't be funded and won't happen. Scientists and other researchers working for such a corporation must sign nondisclosure agreements; so if a developer is aware that the company's advertising about a product they developed is misleading or downright untrue, they can't reveal what they know without risking their careers and livelihoods.

Finding truly useful, informative information to guide us to make informed decisions among competing products requires inordinate amounts of time, energy, and know-how. In practice, every atom of useful information is buried in a planet-sized mass of misleading or useless advertising. Unless you're a specialist with a strong background in literally everything as well as a multidisciplinary lawyer and doctor, it's vanishingly unlikely that you'll be able to find out what you would need to know. For example, which dietary supplements are really best for you? Do you even need a supplement? If you go by the ads, you'll work an extra job to afford all of them and buy a storage container to keep them handy.

Critical examples of the possibly-irreversible damage inevitably coming out of this paradigm are the tobacco industry and the degree to which humanity is still globally dependent on fossil fuels. In both cases, the dangers and damage weren't known at first. When Europeans started using tobacco as an everyday thing, which the Native Americans had used only for specific ceremonial purposes, they didn't know its harmful effects. Likewise when internal combustion engines became one of the go-to technologies for everything from transportation, to power generation, to manufacturing, nobody suspected the possibility of global warming.

Eventually, in both cases, the danger and long-term damage from tobacco and from fossil-fuel use on a global scale, were identified and publicized by rare scientists who were unencumbered by corporate constraints or cold-war government restrictions. Physicians noticed tobacco-related cancers as early as the 1700s, and by 1950 major studies had shown that smoking causes lung cancer (Doll and Hill, 1950); the tobacco industry then spent decades manufacturing doubt (Oreskes and Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, 2010). By 1965, scientists advising the U.S. president warned that carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels could measurably change the climate (President's Science Advisory Committee, 1965), and by the late 1970s oil companies' own scientists were accurately projecting the warming to come (Supran, Rahmstorf and Oreskes, 2023). The basic physics had been worked out in the nineteenth century. In both cases, mega-corporations whose profits come from tobacco and from fossil fuels became aware of the harm that their

products cause. In both cases, companies invested enormous resources to suppress and discredit all such research and findings (McKibben, The New Yorker, 2015; Wang, Climate Liability News, 2018). Corporate lobbyists schmoozed with lawmakers, convincing them that making any serious changes would lead to the collapse of civilization and, even more importantly to them, of corporate profits.

In the case of fossil fuels, there are multiple alternative, nondestructive, sustainable technologies which could replace the vast majority of applications for fossil fuels without hurting our standard of living or quality of life. The shift to emphasis on these technologies would create far more jobs than would be lost in the fossil fuel industries: the International Energy Agency's net-zero pathway projects about 14 million new energy-supply jobs by 2030, against about 5 million lost (IEA, 2021). Yet here we are, still stuck in dependence on fossil fuels, thanks to the unflagging efforts of the fossil fuel and related industries to convince lawmakers and the public that such a change would kill jobs and cause unspecified bad things. And we still have many people dying of tobacco-induced cancers.

Thus we find ourselves in a survival crisis with time rapidly running out. If we act globally and quickly on a massive scale, we still have a chance to avert a cascading ecological breakdown that would threaten civilization itself. Around a million animal and plant species are already threatened with extinction (IPBES, 2019). If we don't act, we risk escalating what's already recognized as a man-caused mass extinction to the point where our own species could join the dodo bird. Remember that many of the ultra-wealthy modern feudal lords are caught in a compulsion for extreme wealth, power, opulence, and privilege that follows the pattern of a behavioural addiction. As with anyone caught in an addiction, the compulsion can dominate their behaviors and decisions, even to the detriment of survival itself. If we are to survive, we cannot allow this situation to continue. We cannot continue to enable this compulsion by playing the game by the rules that reward it.

Once the current paradigm is decommissioned and replaced with the new peer-based, symbiotic paradigm, the current oceans of advertising and disinformation will evaporate. Advertising will have no purpose. Information among researchers will be openly and freely shared. Currency will be obsolete because the need for its will be eliminated. There will be no such thing as profit, stock, or market share. Goods and services will be developed to fill real, authentic needs. There will be no motivation to "manufacture" needs through psycho-social manipulation AKA advertising. There will be reinforcement for sharing of meaningful information. The proportion of useful, truthful information to disinformation will be reversed.

Scientists will still disagree, compete, and argue among themselves, ultimately producing a growing body of knowledge called progress. Some scientists may still lie or stretch their findings just for the sake of "being right." Truthful, useful information will be the norm. There will be no corporations, no nondisclosure agreements, and no restrictions on collaboration. Theories and technologies will grow or wither on their merits, not on marketing or aggressive business practices.

Instead of multiple competing, redundant brands of things with no clear way to know which, if any, is "better" than another, there will be multiple designs which will compete within a wide community of researchers and developers who will no longer forbidden to share knowledge due to nondisclosure agreements. The best features of the formerly competing companies will be distilled and integrated into one complete line of, for example, cars which will span all real needs, from sports cars to eighteen-wheelers. Products will be flexibly customizable to users' needs and tastes. All goods and services will use standardized protocols and form-factors to make them highly forward and backwards compatible an easily serviceable. That line of products will combine all of the best features of the formerly competing products, at the highest level of quality that the state of the art allows, and will be designed to last.

All information will be centrally and easily accessible to any and all persons. Search for what you want or need, narrow down to what version best meets your needs, specify custom features, submit then go to the supply depot of your choice to pick it up soon after.

In medicine, the only considerations will be purely medical. There will be no uncertainty over financial factors overriding or shaping medical decisions, to the patient's detriment, as the norm now. Extra tests are ordered, or vital tests not ordered based on financial reasoning. Medications are marketed by mega-corporations who, in the United States, by one estimate spend almost twice as much on promotion as on research and development (Gagnon and Lexchin, 2008), and who decide what to develop and what not to, based on projected profitability in the long term.

These practices will cease. Medicine will return to its central mission: ensuring and restoring the health and well-being of you and me.

As the hierarchy is dismantled, those who have been calling the shots will no longer be able to command others, or to decide on their own what everyone else may have. We will never start violence, but some may try to. If so, the response will be the same as in any democracy: law enforcement and, if necessary, the National Guard, acting under the law and accountable to the public, along with every person's right to defend themselves. We must act with firmness and with compassion. We must not allow the old paradigm to be forced back upon us, and at the same time, we must not allow ourselves to slide into brutality or a desire for revenge.

In the new paradigm, truthful, informative, accurate and useful information will be easily available to all.

Chapter 18: Mental, Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual Well-Being of the Individual and Society under the Current Paradigm

Under the current paradigm, the driving imperatives of all businesses are profit, stock price, and market share. All other considerations are secondary to those factors. In a society where one's rights, freedoms, options, the respect one is given, and quality of life are mostly determined by how much wealth one does or doesn't have, this spawns cultures where the lives, quality of life, or well-being of human beings are sacrificed daily in pursuit of those imperatives.

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).

Think of one of the central tenets of the dominant paradigm: the "law of supply and demand." This means that when demand is high and supplies are low, suppliers can get away with raising their prices as high as "the market will bear," meaning, as high as they can get away with. Conversely, when demand is low and supply is high, prices drop, sometimes meaning that goods and services get discontinued since they are not profitable enough. Sometimes those products are life-saving medicines for people with certain life-threatening conditions.

The paradigm has few to no built-in limits on how far providers and employers can push the envelope. It doesn't take a genius to see that all a producer has to do to drive prices up, is to cut production or hide surplus in order to create scarcity, cover it up with explanations blaming it on weather, war, labor unions, or whatever they can spin. This is actually common practice, which is encouraged, reinforced, and accepted. In fact, a widely-quoted economist, Milton Friedman, argued in 1970 that the only social responsibility of a business is to increase its profits, so long as it stays within the "rules of the game" (Friedman, 1970). In practice, that principle has been used to justify almost anything legal, regardless of how it affects employees, clients and customers, the nation, or even the world. His pronouncements are treated as though they were laws of physics. They aren't!!!!!!!

Look at all things medical, dental and legal in the United States, from college to actual practice. Prices put serious care out of reach for many, and medical bills can ruin even middle-income families: about 14 million American adults owe more than $1,000 in medical debt (KFF, 2024). Health insurance is needed by most people in order to even have the possibility of getting treatment for unexpected medical crises, though insurance companies do pay certain employees a good salary to look at all claims to find any legally defensible way to deny them.

Why are these kinds of services so arbitrarily overpriced? It's because when you have a medical, dental, or legal problem, you have little to no choice but to have the service. It's not a luxury item or a "wish list" kind of thing. It's you life, your quality of life, your pain that won't go away on its own, or your freedom at stake. Just as an animal caught in a trap will chew off its own leg to escape, so many people will sacrifice their home, car, nest-egg, and go into debt to cover the cost, because the alternative is disaster. Providers and whole primary and parasitic secondary industries relentlessly and mercilessly exploit this non-optional demand to the max. You wouldn't take a home equity line of credit, sell your possessions, or take on massive debt to buy a yacht or personal jet, or to afford an inflated piece of jewelry, but you might do so to save your life, your loved-one's life, keep yourself or loved-one out of prison, or to be able to eat again without unbearable pain. The paradigm places few to now limitations on this exploitation. In fact, this gouging is encouraged and strongly reinforced. Those who engage in these practices are playing the game the way it's designed to be played. The problem is the game itself.

Everybody, at ever level, adds to the hyper-inflated costs to the patient: doctors, hospitals, labs, pharmaceutical companies, manufacturers of surgical equipment – the list goes on and on – as well as the parasitic insurance companies. Thus we see a single generic acetaminophen tablet billed at $1.50, when a hundred of them can be bought online for about the same price (Brill, 2013), and similar markups on items as simple as a tiny box of tissues or a disposable medicine cup.

The pervasive disparity of such societies are evident even in a lucrative field such as medicine or law. Hospital administrators make enough money to not have to worry about their long-term survival. Doctors are typically paid six figures. Nurses earn far less than the executives above them. Orderlies are often not paid a living wage. The EMTs who perform a $1,500 ambulance ride are themselves paid a median of about $19 an hour. In the U.S. at this time, there's a disturbing trend where "private equity firms" keep stables of medical providers, who are out of network for most or all patients, and contract them out to hospitals and clinics at vastly inflated rates which are passed on the patients, who have no knowledge, choice, input or appeal on the matter. If you insist on an anesthesiologist who's in-network, then you just can't have that life-saving surgery. Until recently, you most likely wouldn't even find out about it until you got the bill, and there were few to no protections; only in 2022 did the No Surprises Act bar most such surprise bills. And guess what, the CEO's of private equity firms make multiples of what hospital administrators make. To these companies, doctors and medical services are no different from tractors or investment properties, and patients are not even a consideration.

Pharmaceutical companies routinely decide what to develop by profitability, not by medical value. In 2018 a Goldman Sachs report asked investors outright, "Is curing patients a sustainable business model?", noting that Gilead's hepatitis C cures had shrunk the company's own market (CNBC, 2018).

For the billionaire modern feudal lords at the top of the socio-economic pyramid, cost is literally a non-issue. There is no conceivable medical procedure that would even noticeably dent their lifestyle in any way. For the rest of us, our only option is to fork over money every month to parasitic entities called insurance companies whose lobbying of lawmakers is so successful, that we see that year after year, insurance premiums, deductibles and copays ratchet up rapidly while both range of procedures covered and percentage of costs covered steadily decline. Claims are routinely denied, leaving it up to the stressed and possibly gravely ill patient to navigate the quicksand and obstacle course of challenging the denial: on the HealthCare.gov marketplace, insurers denied one in five in-network claims in 2023, and fewer than 1% of denials were appealed (KFF, 2025). Yet without insurance, any major medical need could cost us our home or our life.

Accountants and insurance adjusters often dictate what medical options are or are not allowed, based entirely on financial considerations (GAO, 2011; Lazarus, Los Angeles Times, 2017). Yet nobody is prosecuted for practicing medicine without a license, because under the parameters of the paradigm, financial considerations always outweigh all other considerations, unless arms are legally twisted behind backs in a big way. The best treatment from a financial point of view is almost always not the best treatment for the patient, medically.

Other parasitic industries that arise out of the dominant paradigm surround medicine are collections agencies, brokers who buy and sell medical debt, advertising and marketing agencies, lobbyists, medical coders, billers, and of course the various scammers and con artists that abound in such societies, pushing untested medicines and remedies on vulnerable people.

All of these harmful behaviors are strongly reinforced by the dominant socio-economic paradigm. If such behaviors were to not happen within the confines of this paradigm, businesses would go under, jobs would be lost, and facilities would close. The problem is that the paradigm is inherently non-viable and inimical to the good of real human beings on every level. It is a paradigm that has been tried countless times and proven itself utterly harmful. We are a social species which is how we've survived and proliferated. When one of us suffers, it diminishes all of us. When one of us benefits, we all benefit. It is inhuman and inhumane to knowingly let a fellow human being die or suffer unnecessarily. Marines will risk their lives to get wounded comrades to safety. Yet administrators, accountants, and insurance adjusters will deny treatment to patients whose lives depend on it, and not feel the least remorse. That is the mentality conditioned into us by the social environment under this paradigm. "It's just business" is used to justify all manner of decisions and practices that enrich the ultra-rich at the expense of everybody else, even to the point of ruining or ending lives.. And people accept it. In that case, it's time to do away with "business." The "just business" excuse is about as tenable as the "just following orders" excuse. It should no more be accepted than should female genital mutilation, in cultures where it is practiced. Dehumanization is never, ever acceptable, anywhere, at any time!

The parallel between the prevailing modern feudalism and classical feudalism is incontrovertible. Medieval royalty had complete power over the life, death, and property of serfs and peasants. Today, the ultra-wealthy modern feudal lords have unrestricted access to all goods and services, at all times. The corporations that they control are themselves considered "persons" under the law. They control enough of all resources and wealth, that they set prevailing pay rates

and cost of living, in ways that ensure that wealth and resources continually flow into their hands and out of the hands of employees and consumers. As in Medieval times, we peasants have no appeal or lever to bear on this mechanism.

In both mainstream and alternative medicine, making a profit is strongly reinforced. Serving the best interest of the patient often runs counter to what's most profitable. There is nothing but lip-service to reinforce prioritizing the good of the patient over profits.

The gouging and exploitation in health matters doesn't end with healthcare. Healthier foods, or foods popularly perceived as healthier, cost more than "less healthy" foods, even when their production costs the same or even less: a healthier diet costs about $1.50 more per person per day (Rao et al., 2013). When you're living on sub or barely-living wages, that is a real barrier, and fresh fruit, fish and good meat are often simply out of reach. The same is true for supplements, weight loss programs, and more. People who have enough money, mostly the ultra-wealthy, pay the price without a second thought. People living on a-little-above-living wage will sometimes pay the prices, even though it means taking another job or risking not making it through the month. Everybody wants to be healthy, a fact exploited effectively through marketing and advertising.

In addition, advertising for unhealthy food and drink is concentrated in poorer neighborhoods and aimed disproportionately at Black and Hispanic consumers (*Journal of Urban Health*, 2015; Rudd Center, 2022). And the quality of food available in poorer neighborhoods is demonstrably inferior to that offered in affluent neighborhoods.

There is also a plethora of related products and industries, mostly unregulated and having few if any standards, that prey upon people's health concerns: "enhanced" bottled water, weight-loss and fitness regimens, health spas, seminars and retreats, "Self-help" books which may or may not be effective, and numerous MLM"s and network marketing businesses. The common response when these purveyors are challenged on their (usually exorbitant) prices is "How can you put a price on your health? Surely you don't want to scrimp on you health, which is priceless!"

On the topic of food, why is food sold in less affluent areas inferior to that sold to the wealthy and their vassals?

It goes back to the core principles of the dominant socio-economic paradigm. The highest priorities are profit, stock prices and market share. The maximum yield per acre serves all of those priorities, even more so if produce has the appearance of quality, regardless of actual taste or nutritional value. If profits are maximized, then little to no thought is given to nutritional quality.

In order to maximize yield per acre, both plant and animal crops are forced to grow bigger and produce quickly at high volume. Hormones, antibiotics, fertilizers, insecticides, and genetic manipulation of genomes are all used to achieve this goal. As a side-effect, the nutritional value is measurably reduced for several nutrients (Davis, Epp and Riordan, 2004), and taste often suffers too, which you can verify by comparing produce from your own garden to the same veggies from the supermarket. The food we eat in less affluent neighborhoods is less nourishing, which leads to the need to add supplements or eat more, which means profits for yet a different industry, another vulture feeding on the decaying carcass of employee-consumers.

The fact that these fast-track methods also contaminate water tables and deplete the soil is not even considered in operational decisions. It's much more cost-effective to pay lobbyists to convince lawmakers to look the other way or deny that there's any harm done. Also, depleted soil means more profits for companies that make fertilizer.

Genetically modified crops have added their own damage to the big picture. The mega-corporations that produce these strains market them to farmers around the world with promises of higher yield and higher profits. Due to the dominance and competition of mega-agribusiness corporations, small farmers must maximize profits just to stay afloat. Many sign on, then only later learn that they have stepped into quicksand that they never saw coming.

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 commercialize 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 organized resistance on a global scale to hold the worst of it back.

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.

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 seed-sterility technology; CBAN on Terminator technology; *Bowman v. Monsanto* (2013); The Guardian on the Center for Food Safety report; The Conversation on Brazil's seed royalties; La Vía Campesina on Argentina; The Ecologist on Malvinas Argentinas.

Many farmers have neither the background, nor the energy, nor the time to read through the fine print of such contracts, much less understand what they mean in everyday terms. Companies know this and take full advantage, since they know that as far as courts of law are concerned, "You signed it" is all that holds any weight. The precedents stemming from the concept of a genetically modified organism being the "intellectual property" of the person or company that did the editing, are far-reaching, dangerous and dystopian in the extreme.

At the moment, there are multiple efforts in medicine to develop genetic treatments for many conditions, from cancer, to diabetes, to inherited conditions such as sickle cell disease and hemophilia. Sooner or later, genetic treatments will most likely become more and more common. Who wouldn't welcome a shot that will cure their child's congenital heart defect or type 1 diabetes in utero. Cures will come for currently uncureable conditions.

Yet, given existing precedents and the prevailing thought shaped under the dominant feudalistic paradigm, we can easily imagine where this could lead. Gene therapies already carry prices of $2 million to more than $3 million per patient (BioSpace), and drug makers and insurers have experimented with paying for them in instalments over years, "like you'd pay a mortgage" (*Managed Care*, 2019). Agriculture shows how far the logic can go: farmers who plant patented seed may not save and replant it, and must buy again every season, as the Supreme Court confirmed in 2013 (*Bowman v. Monsanto*, 2013). It is not hard to imagine the same model applied to a person: a child cured of a congenital condition before birth, whose parents, and later the grown child, are locked into paying for that cure for the rest of their lives. No one would legally own that person's body; but a lifelong obligation to keep paying for one's own healthy body, with no way out, would be a form of servitude. There is nothing in the operating principles of the paradigm that prevents it, and plenty that pushes in that direction.

In many cases, the dominant paradigm has shaped decisions that unequivocally degraded and sabotaged abundant food sources. A prime example is the deliberate gratuitous slaughter almost to extinction of the native buffalo in the United States and their replacement with imported European cattle. The buffalo were an abundant food supply, free to all and sufficient to sustain Native Americans and European invaders as well, if hunted purely for food. The dominant

paradigm cannot and will not abide the existence of any resource that is not exploitable for profit. So the buffalo, free to all, were turned into a commodity: in the 1870s, hide hunters supplying a booming commercial hide trade killed millions of them in barely a decade, often leaving the meat to rot, and the land was turned over to high-maintenance imported European cattle, which are highly profitable. Motivation for the atrocity wasn't restricted to just food source profitability, however. It also served the goals of the European colonisers who invaded these lands, intent on displacing, starving out and killing off Indigenous nations in order to claim ownership of their lands while native blood was still wet. Almost all of that land was taken by force or deception, and many of today's reservations are not the ancestral homes of the peoples who live on them, but places to which they were forcibly removed when others wanted their land. Since then, none may live anyplace unless they pay someone for permission to occupy the space. Hardly the hallmark of a democratic and humane society.

The funerary industry is yet another predatory industry that preys upon people at their most vulnerable. 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.

Sources: Washington RCW 68.20.010; FTC Funeral Rule.

As in medicine, dentistry, and law, literally everything about the funerary industry is cripplingly expensive. A casket bought from a funeral home commonly costs thousands of dollars. Much of the burial and preparation process is shaped by rules and industry practice and priced out of reach of most of us. Cremation is another option, but still typically costs in the thousands of dollars. Funeral parlors use cold manipulation and guilt psychology to try to sell their wares. "Surely your dearly-departed deserves only the best! What's a few thousand dollars, if it means they'll be comfortable and suitably presented for all of eternity?" Whether or not you can afford these costs is irrelevant. They will be forced upon you, no matter what, and if you can't or don't pay them, they will go to collections and can have your wages garnished, tax returns seized, or liens against any property you many have.

Consider how it affects us physically, mentally and emotionally to grow up and live our lives in a socio-economic environment where we must constantly struggle against an ever-present default, implicit denial of our right to exist, occupy space, eat, drink, or exercise any of our Constitutional rights, and where our fellows include potential competitors and exploiters? Imagine how it would be to live in a society that by defaults values us, respects and facilitates our access to all that we need and want, and is populated by potential colleagues, friends, and benefactors!

This lifelong battle to combat the default denial of our right to exist, creates constant, pervasive stress, anxiety, and traumas that cause ongoing, measurable harm to our health and well-being.

As hunter-gatherers, we evolved to be able to respond well to the stress of intense but short-lived emergencies such as natural disasters, encounters with predators, and the need to find food and shelter. We are well-adapted to that kind of stress, and its occasional occurrence is not necessarily detrimental in and of itself. The kind of stress induced by living under modern economic feudalism, however, is a different kind of stress. It is unrelenting, ongoing and all-pervasive. And in contrast with natural disasters and such, in which we typically respond in a more or less unified social unit, the socio-economic stress that we live with is configured that each of us must confront it alone or, at most, with one partner. Not only that, but this kind of stress is artificial and arbitrary, with rules that change and that generally work against us. In a natural disaster or confrontation with a predator, we are not constrained in how to respond. Under financial assault or attrition, we are severely restricted in our options. The physical, emotional, mental and spiritual toll are crushing over time. We were never evolved to be able to cope with this kind of stress. It is always damaging, wearing us down more and more over time, and it is utterly arbitrary and unnecessary.

Another form of harm caused by the dominant paradigm arises out of the enforced level of alienation between individuals, groups, and subgroups, and the fragmentation of our lives on every level. All to commonly, there's little to

no continuity or connection between where we live, work, shop, recreate, worship, study, and perform the other activities of our lives. Our home and work are often far distant from one another. Our workmates mostly live far from where we live. As employees, we are not involved in decisions of our workplace. We often have no natural flow of activities in which we would naturally get to know our neighbors. The food we buy is produced far from where we live. We are reduced to tiny individual or nuclear family islands. Extremely little remains of the strong bonds of community out of which our strength and resilience as a species arose. Forced by the socio-economic paradigm deprived of our greatest strength as a species and subjected to permanent toxic stress, we are weakened, crippled, and disempowered. The paradigm makes this state of affairs mandatory, since the restoration of strong community bonds among fully empowered individuals would weaken and eventually undo the hierarchical power structure and the hegemony of the ultra-wealthy modern feudal lords. This was expressed explicitly in Tonga. A European visitor in 1895 called Tongans "the most independent people imaginable", since their land gave them most of what they needed, and estimated that the average Tongan worked about one day a week, which he could only see as laziness (Jenson, 1895). Missionaries reshaped Tongan religion and law, and church contributions and taxes pushed households to produce for money. When Tongan copra growers formed their own cooperative in 1909 to sell without European middlemen, it quickly gained thousands of members, and the British agent had it shut down (Tonga Ma'a Tonga Kautaha). In the 1970s an anthropologist found that Tongan farmers still generally avoided wage labour, joining the cash economy mainly when they needed money for specific obligations (Marcus, 1978). And as recently as 2010, a World Bank report on Tonga recorded people saying that "money is not considered to be that important – people just stop working when they have what they want", and that church and family obligations always take priority over business (IFC/World Bank, 2010). What outsiders treated as a problem was common sense: work to meet real needs, then turn to family and community. For the modern feudal paradigm to survive, all but the feudal lords must be completely and unconditionally locked into utter compliance with the imperative to keep profit flowing to the oligarchs at the top of the command structure. The more we are disempowered, the more we can be sold products that we would never want or need if we were fully empowered and living in vibrant, integral, connected communities. Products that clumsily replace what we lost as we lost that mutual social support system.

This is not to romanticize the hunter-gatherer days of our evolutionary origins. There were many down-sides; and such a lifestyle wouldn't be practical with our current population, in addition to which most people wouldn't want to adopt that lifestyle and would be completely unprepared in terms of skills and appropriate technology.

Yet it's not wise to abandon every aspect of those origins. We will thrive best if we look at all of our collected experience, from the distant past through the present, in order to identify what does and what does not serve our happiness and well-being from each era and culture, in order to discard that which causes harm, doesn't work or doesn't serve and then weave together all that does work and serve into a functional framework for human society, regardless of whether a particular practice came from the twenty-first century, the twelfth, the sixth B.C., or before recorded history and regardless if it arose in Europe, China, South America, Africa or wherever. Regardless of whether it came from Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, shamanism, feminism, communism, or any other source.

Much of modern technology is either beneficial, or has beneficial applications. It would be a mistake to throw it out, just as it is a mistake to perpetuate it all, as is, without re-examination. Once we replace the current modern feudalistic paradigm with a modern symbiotic, peer-based one, profit motive will disappear. We will then be free to look at which of our technology serves our well-being and which does not. That also means looking at alternative forms of similar technology, with a high preference given to forms that are sustainable, renewable, and not damaging to the ecosystem of which we are an integral part.

We will also benefit from restructuring the patterns of our social and functional interactions, with the goal of creating a more interconnected, integrated default way of life. This may likely involve emphasizing distributed small to mid-scale local food and energy production while de-emphasizing large-scale centralized production. Lifestyles will integrate so that healthy exercise and rest are inherently part of normal life. Producers and consumers of goods and services will interact directly to a much greater degree than now.

Greater emphasis and support for community arts, theater, sports, and technical innovation, with lively collaboration between communities and individuals, will also help to replace dysfunctional alienation with healthy interconnectedness. There will still be professional artists, athletes, and the like, but without the intrusion of profit motive, we will see Music, Theater, Cinema, Sports, instead of the Music Industry, the Cinema Industry, the Sports

Industry and so on. Artists, athletes, cinematographers, sound and video engineers and other people directly engaged in production will drive undertakings, in the absence of owners, executive producers, network executives, investors and brokers. This will seed a cultural, artistic, technological and social renaissance to dwarf the classical Renaissance in Europe.

We can see living and historical examples of how paradigms similar to the new one to come have thrived. 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. There are many other examples. Usually such successful societies are sundered by violence or other coercion on the part of hierarchical economic or political power structures that are unwilling to live and let live, which feel the need to dominate and destroy all alternatives. Thus we will need to be prepared to defend our new paradigm if it's attacked by those clinging to the old one.

Psychological and sociological research shows that people who grow up in supportive, creative, nurturing environments overwhelmingly tend to be happier, better adjusted, and more productive that those from abusive, neglectful or unsupportive environments. Such research has also shown that psychologically typical people can become capable of committing atrocities if such behavior is normalized, legitimized and reinforced to them. The structure of a society, and what it reinforces or fails to reinforce, has a huge impact on social norms and the prevailing degree of well-being socially and individually.

Under the current paradigm, people at the lower end of the wealth and power pyramid, the modern day peasants and serfs, simply can't afford to eat healthy, practice preventative medicine, or join a gym. In the new paradigm, all people will have access to all resources. Inferior products will no longer be produced. The caste system embodied by high-end, mid-range, and low-end goods an services will cease and be unenforceable.

The new paradigm has not yet been enacted on such a big scale as will be after the coming Transition. Defenders of modern feudalism often claim that cooperation is inefficient, unproductive, and against human nature. The evidence says otherwise. Elements of the new paradigm have already been tested, and they work. Worker cooperatives and employee-owned firms reliably match or exceed the productivity of conventional firms, by roughly 4 to 18 percent in the studies that measure it, when workers genuinely share in decisions. They also survive at least as well, keep jobs more secure, provide better benefits, and support their communities (Logue and Yates, background paper for the ILO *World Employment Report 2004–05*). Some have lasted for generations: the Mondragón cooperatives in Spain, begun in 1956, now count nearly 70,000 members (*Christian Science Monitor*, 2024). Fuller experiments were crushed by force before they could prove themselves over time: the Paris Commune, which ordered abandoned workshops handed to the workers' cooperatives that had run them (decree of 16 April 1871), before it was overrun that May; the collectives of Revolutionary Catalonia and Aragon in 1936–39, which participants described as transforming their daily lives (Souchy); and the worker-run industrial belts of Santiago, Chile, destroyed by the military in September 1973 (University of Virginia dissertation).

Each culture tends to see itself as the most natural, highest, and best expression of human nature. Many conflicts have arisen from two or more cultures feeling the need to cast each other in their own moulds. In reality, human nature boasts an extremely varied palette of traits. In any society, traits that are reinforced become predominant, while those that aren't reinforced tend to be relatively rare. With the new paradigm, the cultures will change for the better.

The direct impact of the current feudalistic paradigm on human life is incalculably damaging. The damage is well documented and openly published by those who honestly don't see realize the harm that they're doing. Promising new medical therapies are advanced or abandoned not based on potential benefit to patients, but almost solely on their projected profitability over a long time. Pharmaceutical companies consider a drug to be a bad idea if it will do such a good job of curing or preventing a disease, that there will soon be few or no sufferers to whom to market the drug. We also have the example of Purdue Pharmaceuticals, who knew very clearly that their painkiller Oxycontin was highly addictive, marketed it to healthcare professionals as non-addictive and safe. Billions of dollars were made, and thousands of people have died. Insurance companies routinely make medical decisions based on economics, not medicine or the good of the patient. In every facet of any society operating under any variation of this paradigm, profits, stock price and market share are the prime and ultimate deciding factors. The good of patients, employees, society, or even the earth itself is always sacrificed to serve those metrics. "It's just business."

Regulation can soften the current socio-economic paradigm, as the Nordic social democracies show, but no amount of regulating, tweaking, fine-tuning or jerry-rigging can make it reliably empower, nurture, and sustain the happiness, well-being, mental and physical health, and fulfillment of all or even most of the people; wherever concentrated wealth can buy influence, those gains erode. By design, by its very structure, the paradigm, in all of its variations, reliably generates a feudalistic, non-democratic socioeconomic power structure in which a small handful of people will sooner or later become the new royals, with a small but slightly larger caste of their vassals and enforcers under them, and the vast majority of us in the role of serfs and peasants. One can no more configure this paradigm to foster a free, democratic, symbiotic, empowering society than one can turn a Bengal tiger into a herbivore.

The operating principles of the dominant paradigm casts societies into opposing groups in a mutually-predatory pattern where one group's or individual's gain comes at the expense of another. Employers must minimize expenses and maximize profits to survive. Employee salaries and benefits are expenses, therefore to be minimized. The federal minimum wage has been $7.25 an hour since 2009, and in many states tipped workers can be paid a cash wage of just $2.13 an hour, relying on customers' tips to make up the rest; the employer must make up the difference to $7.25 only when tips fall short. Even $7.25 an hour, full time, is far below a living wage. In the United States and some other countries, this economic principle was actually taken to its ultimate extreme: literal chattel slavery. The Southern states started a bloody war, rather than voluntarily give up their slave economy.

Employees find themselves unable to live from their pay and being exploited in inhuman ways by the employer following the imperatives of the socio-economic paradigm. Sooner or later, employees, also following the imperatives of the paradigm, strike or find some way to strategically force employers to raise pay, provide better benefits, and maintain humane and safe workspaces and norms. This in turn hurts employer profits, which leads to higher prices which employers blame publicly on labor costs. This cycle repeats indefinitely as long as the paradigm operates. The gains, however, are never symmetrical. The parties having wealth and power always sustain far greater gains and smaller losses than the modern serfs and peasants.

Mega-corporations can easily afford to pay a strong living wage and provide good benefits to employees, which would reduce their profits a very small amount. Small businesses, on the other hand, often cannot afford to pay a living wage and provide benefits and be able to stay in business. This is not the fault of the small business owners. It is the fault of an unworkable, non-viable, fundamentally flawed socioeconomic paradigm that puts people in these inhuman positions.

Let's liken such societies to a living organism. Every organism is a society or community of vast numbers of individual cells, organized into organs and structures. Each cell does what it was "born" to do. All of the cells, and the organs they form, work together to ensure the survival of all of the cells and of the organism that they comprise.

Using the dominant socioeconomic paradigm as an example, imagine an organism in which the various cells and organs survive by preying upon, by devouring or stealing nutrients and oxygen from each other. Such an organism would essentially be suffering from a fatal autoimmune disease, and would not survive long. Both the cells, and the organism, would soon cannibalize itself out of existence. A species of such organisms would never survive for long. Yet that is exactly how the dominant socioeconomic paradigm functions, with us as the cells.

In the United States and some other countries, the goal of a free and democratic society, governed of, by and for the people, is a central goal and mission statement. The only way we can ever even begin to approach this, is to abandon this socioeconomic paradigm as the nonviable design that it is, and replace it with a peer-based, symbiotic, synergistic paradigm that makes colleagues and allies out of the people in it, and fosters the thriving and full realization of each and every inhabitant. This will involve the elimination of currency, which in reality serves no productive function at this time, except as a means for those in power to enforce their power and dictate who has access to what, and who doesn't.

In the new paradigm, every one of us will have access to all that we need to live fully, including most or all of what we desire. There will be some limits, of course. It won't be practical for everybody, or anybody to have a private jet. But all forms of transportation will be freely open to all who need to travel. Perhaps today's private jets will be repurposed for use in emergency situations in whatever way they are needed. Food, healthcare, living space, education, tools, entertainments, and everything else will be available to each and all.

Technological and infrastructure development will be based on what best serves the safety and well-being of human beings and of the environment. There will be no need for, and no such things as, profit, stock price and market share.

Freed of current corporate restrictions, developers will communicate and collaborate freely, spurring an explosion of innovation to benefit everybody. Competition will be over real merits, not advertising and business practices. No one project will be shut down due to lack of funds. No patient will be turned away because of inability to pay.

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We will need to be prepared to repel and neutralize attempts of the current feudal lords and their vassals to re-impose the current paradigm, but to use the minimum force necessary. We will have to work quickly to prevent the feudal lords from trying to destroy or hide their data in spite. Initiation of violence on anybody's part will be ultimately be handled by law enforcement.

Ownership of all innovations will revert to the actual people who made them. Corporations as such will cease to exist; but operations will continue, fundamentally changed but uninterrupted during and after the Transition.

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

Chapter 19: Resource Management, Long-Term Sustainability, and the Environment

The imperatives imposed by the modern feudal socioeconomic paradigm lead to a runaway, escalating cycle of artificially-forced overproduction and over consumption devours and depletes natural resources, generates massive pollution and waste, and a preponderance of inferior quality products intended and designed to not last long, to not be easily serviceable, and to be frequently replaced. After all, if everybody has all the shoes they need and they last a lifetime, then how is a shoe company to maintain their profits? This spawns work environments driven by extreme pressure, long work hours and debilitating stress. This compromises our health, quality of life, and most likely our very survival as individuals and as a species. And it is almost entirely unnecessary.

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 call this the self-devouring cycle, because in our compulsion to pursue corporate profits, we must constantly consume natural resources faster and faster, to produce short-lived inferior products to sell faster and faster, driving employees under constant, unrelenting stress to keep stepping up production. Such an economy thrives by using up natural resources, spewing out expanding masses of waste and pollution, driving employees to the point of burnout in order to keep those same employees buying new products more and more often. Thus, we compulsively devour our resources including ourselves, trash our environment, and all to keep up profits and stock prices to keep the modern feudal lords getting richer and more powerful.

We, the modern serfs and peasants, literally carry the weight of the economic wealth and power pyramid of our society on our shoulders, and it is slowly but surely crushing the life out of us.

The new paradigm will completely change this. The new socioeconomic paradigm will be driven by maximizing human health, well-being, fulfillment, and ability to make one's best contribution to the community while fulfilling one's own dreams. Goods and services will be the best quality that the state of the art allows, will be designed to be robust and last long, will be easily serviceable and upgradeable to accommodate new technology, and will be designed to satisfy authentic needs and desires, not artificially-programmed ones. Once everybody's needs are satisfied, production in any given industry will dial back to what's needed to cover breakage, population growth, and eventual wear and tear. Typical work hours will settle down to probably less than half of what they are now. The typical citizen will have pride in workmanship alongside a lot more free time for creative, innovative, and educational pursuits. Depletion of natural resources will plummet, as will pollution and waste production. The best possible goods and services will be for everybody, not for just the ultra-wealthy. There will be no poor, no rich, no middle class.

Freed from having to focus most of our energy on coming up with enough carefully-scarcified currency to pay for literally everything, we will be free to focus on pursuing and fulfilling authentic, real needs and desires. We will do what actually needs to be done, not what has to be done to make the money to pay for what actually needs to be done. Our individual and societal quality of life will soar as never before. We will not, of course, be free of all problems and challenges; but we will be freed from the vast majority of unnecessary, arbitrary problems, stresses, and burdens. Artistic, scientific, and technological innovation will proliferate, the more so because all will have access to the education, training, equipment and other resources necessary to make such innovations. We can expect to enjoy a renaissance unparalleled in recorded history.

To further reinforce innovation, we will publicly celebrate and acknowledge artistic, scientific, technological and other innovations and those who bring them about. Not as permanent celebrities, but as heroes for long enough to feel the appreciation and validation of their community. A new universal social-media space will be created, which will form a forum for public discussion, collaboration, feedback, and information. Anybody will be able to post suggestions and feedback on existing goods and services or suggest ones that they think would be beneficial. Developers and producers will monitor such feedback and strive to implement the viable feedback and suggestions. Thus available goods and services will constantly adapt to the needs and desires of users. In addition, if you need something, in the absence of

advertising, you'll be able to find it on this central web space. Looking for a computer or roof tiles or a cardiologist? You will easily find it on the universal web site.

There will be no more phones with batteries that can't be replaced without destroying the phone, no upgrades that slow down your device to make you buy a new one, no apps that stop working and hold your files hostage if you don't pay a monthly fee. There will be no such thing as an "out of network" provider or a non-covered treatment. There will be no "bundles" – you will get exactly the channels you want. There will be no models that aren't supported after a couple of months, and no hidden fine-print "gotcha" to worry about.

The unsustainable, cancer-like self-devouring cycle will die a well-deserved death. Broken or obsolete appliances and other products will no longer pile up higher day by day in ever-expanding landfills. The rivers we drink from will no longer be drained nearly dry by our voracious compulsive consumption, both literally and metaphorically. We will start to heal and become whole again, and hopefully so will the ecosystem.

We must act fast to bring about the Transition to the new paradigm. The more than eight billion of us, with our agriculture, industry, mining, pollution, clear-cutting, and such have become a threat to around a million animal and plant species, many within decades (IPBES, 2019). The global metastasis of this self-devouring cycle arising out of the dominant socioeconomic paradigm is responsible for that paleontologists are calling the "Holocene extinction event" or the "Sixth Mass Extinction." This self-devouring cycle is literally killing off whole species at tens to hundreds of times the natural background rate (IPBES, 2019), putting us on course for the first mass extinction since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs (and a lot more), about sixty-six million years ago. When we were, as geneticists have determined we were at one time, approximately ten thousand hunter-gatherers, our impact was negligible. But what is negligible for a population of ten thousand hunter-gatherers is a critical emergency for a population of over eight billion of us, frantically consuming everything in sight, spewing waste and pollution including needlessly failed products, and doing little to nothing to mitigate the impact.

Picture all of the trees cut down to make cardboard for packaging for frequently-replaced inferior products. Picture the ever-expanding holes in the earth as mines voraciously churn up ore and other minerals to be used in products designed to fail after a year or two and be thrown away. Picture the more than a billion new smartphones shipped every year, each replaced within a few years – imagine a landfill just for all of the world's discarded cell phones! Now add in cars, washing machines, toasters, clothes, shoes, toys, aluminum cans and plastic bottles, and everything that we use every day.

To make it real, imagine every discarded or broken product, every box and wrapper, every empty beer can, every piece of junk mail, every piece of unsolicited advertising that you've ever gotten rid of. Imagine that instead of throwing them in the trash, you tossed them into a room in your home, your basement, or into the nearest yard or street. Would there be any room for you or for normal activities of living? If you live in a studio apartment, you'd be crowded out very quickly. If you live in a mansion, it would take a lot longer, but it would happen. Consider that when billions of us toss things in the trash, we're doing the same thing to the only planet we have to live on. That's just the physical waste. Now consider the same mental exercise applied to the pollution, and to the consumption of resources. If you burned furniture and wood from your house to heat a kiln to produce pots to sell, then sooner or later you would be living out in the cold and have nothing left to burn. This is what we're doing on a global scale. The self-devouring cycle is utterly destructive and unsustainable. It has no justification and no lasting upside. We devour in decades, resources that could have lasted centuries or more if wisely managed. Resources are finite. Space on our planet is finite. We simply cannot continue as we've been doing.

In the new paradigm, breakage and obsolescence will be a minute fraction of what they are now. Broken, obsolete or discarded items will be systematically recycled or repurposed, starting with what's lying around now.

Surely even the modern feudal lords, the oligarchs of our society, must realize that the current pattern is not sustainable! Do not forget, however, that many of these people are caught in a compulsion that follows the pattern of a behavioural addiction, much like gambling, drug or video game addiction. They are driven to accumulate wealth, power, opulence and privilege. Like anyone caught in an addiction, they can devote their lives and energies to feeding it, even when it hurts or kills others or even themselves. Many are also convinced that there's no jam that they can't buy, bully, influence, bluster, bribe, or bull-in-the-china-shop their way out of. Left unaddressed, their compulsion has become a danger and a threat to all of us, including themselves. It has gotten to this point because most societies have failed to

recognize it for what it is and to help those caught in it get free of it. Worse, most societies have actively encouraged and enabled it, holding it up to be emulated by all and treating those caught in it as success stories and role models. This cannot continue.

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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We will have to perform an intervention and withdraw these wealth-power-privilege addicts, cold-turkey, give them rehab, and destroy the objects of their addiction by rendering them obsolete and meaningless.

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

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If we were on a plane where the pilot was delusional, believing that he could fly the airliner through a mountain, we would have to breach the cockpit, pull him or her away from the controls, restrain him or her, and contact the nearest control tower for instructions on how to get there and land. Once he or she was no longer posing a danger, we would treat him or her with firmness and compassion, and make sure that they got treatment for their condition.

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.

A better way to see it: we are all on a plane whose flight plan points it toward a mountain, set by rules that reward flying faster and 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. Those now at the controls deserve the same care and respect as anyone else as they adjust to a world where 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).

In addition to the self-devouring cycle, overpopulation is itself the cause for major present and future problems. We can't keep growing our numbers indefinitely – sooner or later we would become so numerous that it would be literally impossible to feed, house, or even find a place for everybody. That is a more complex issue, which will have to be addressed separately. We never want to get to a scenario similar to the cannibalistic survival strategy in Soylent Green."

There is reason for hope, however, as recent census data shows that population is beginning to decline in a growing number of countries. This is due to slowing birth rates, not growing death rates. If this trend continues on its own, then we may eventually reach a stable, sustainable and balanced population with little growth or decline over time. Demographers attribute the decline mainly to falling child mortality, women's education and access to contraception; by 2024, population had already peaked in 63 countries and areas (United Nations, 2024). There is some reason to suspect

that living in a highly-dangerous environment with high mortality and scarcity of resources may intensify the reproductive imperative instinctively. In other words, the earlier and faster people are dying, the more important to replace them and more. Conversely, the safer, healthier, and more life-affirming the social and natural environment, the less urgent it is to keep the birth rate up and so the birth rate falls (see National Academy of Sciences, 1963; Pew Research Center, 2015). Hopefully this is encoded deep in our genes as a species. If not, then we will have to emphasize making conscious choices.

We would be wise to deal with overpopulation consciously and deliberately. If our growth reverses itself and stabilizes at a sustainable number, then we can relax on that issue. But if not, then it is a very sensitive and potentially controversial issue. Some people and countries would likely balk at the idea of reducing their birth rate, for cultural, religious, or nationalistic reasons. If action is needed, we must strive seriously to honor the good of all while respecting the rights of the individual, a very challenging undertaking! It must be undertaken with mutual respect and sensitivity.

This is separate from the issue of the socio-economic paradigm. Yet the modern feudalistic paradigm is likely to exacerbate overpopulation and resist reversing or stabilizing it. After all, a stable or shrinking population means reduced opportunities for profit, fewer workers to manufacture and fewer consumers to buy fewer goods and services.

There are only three ways to resolve overpopulation: reduce the birth rate, increase the death rate, or colonize other worlds. Obviously increasing the death rate is unacceptable. Colonizing other worlds is beyond our ability right now, above all because of immense physical and engineering obstacles, and partly because the feudal socio-economic lords and their corporations see interstellar travel and associated technology as not likely to be profitable quickly enough, and so have not rushed to fund research and development in that direction. Mars could possibly be terraformed; but the return on investment isn't enough to motivate them. We will only ever know what may or may not be technologically possible, if we free ourselves of the constraints of profitability imposed by the current paradigm.

Education and open, mutually respectful local, national, and global dialog will be needed, if possible. We do not want to ever become so overpopulated that no conceivable socio-economic paradigm can prevent mass starvation, privation, and fighting over hopelessly insufficient food, water, and space. In the process, we need to be sensitive to the fact that this issue touches on some of our most basic instincts and the most private, intimate aspects of our lives. We will fare badly if we use draconian measures to combat overpopulation.

Having lots of children was important to survival when infant mortality was high and lifespan was short. At this time in history, infant mortality is dramatically lower and longevity is far longer than in previous eras. What was needed then for survival as humankind is not the same as what's needed now. Some of the cultural beliefs and perceptions that served well for countless generations in the pre-technological past do not serve us well now. Cultural traditions, beliefs and attitudes are even more challenging to change than an individual's habits; but some of them will have to, for our own good.

The current dominant socio-economic paradigm exacerbates the problem of overpopulation in a number of ways. One arises out of the economic imperative to keep profits growing. In order to do this, the "market" must continually grow, as must the workforce. The market and the workforce are, for the most part, the same people: the modern serfs and peasants.

In addition, the dysfunctional extreme form of "individualism" that usually germinates under this paradigm, keeps us isolated, alienated and each having to fend for ourselves. Any kind of vibrant, tightly-bound extended family or larger community is very much not reinforced. There are even laws that make it difficult or even illegal to form the kind of cohesive extended-family/tribal/clan communities that were the source of our resilience as a species. For a couple to have only one or two children can, for some, feel too isolated.

Of course, in the new paradigm, the re-formation of tight, cohesive extended families and communities will end this isolation and alienation. Where there's a community of families and singles functioning as a tightly-integrated organism, children are welcome everywhere and are able to socialize with many peers. Parents will not feel isolated. You don't need to have eight kids, when you have two who usually have five or six friends over.

The new paradigm will remove the arbitrary, artificial economic pressures and reinforcers that currently select against the formation of cohesive extended communities and for the isolation and alienation of the nuclear family. Our natural social nature will begin to reassert itself. Extended healthy interdependencies and symbiotic bonds will naturally form.

The shift away from massive central energy, food and other vital production, and towards distributed, community-based modes of production, will also naturally reinforce and facilitate re-engagement among members of the community. The extinction of corporations and hierarchical command structures, and their replacement with peer-based co-ownership, co-decision-making, co-stakeholding models will re-empower and re-energize people in every sector. There will no longer be mutually-predatory groups who must gain at each other's expense. Instead, there will be organic associations of people, working together, voluntarily and symbiotically, for the good of each and all. The current fragmentation will end. Humanity will knit itself back into the living tapestry that is our strongest trait.

The healthy interconnectedness that will arise in the new paradigm will bring about a vast reduction of unnecessary stress and alienation, and will bring a sense of peace, belonging, and safety that is currently missing. Yet as individuals, we will no longer have to constantly fight against a relentless, permanent implicit denial of our right to live, to occupy space, to eat, to study and everything else. We will be truly free to pursue our life, liberty and happiness with no barriers, tollbooths, shackles, or manacles to hold us back.

Frank, non-judgmental multidisciplinary sex education in middle and secondary school has been shown to reduce teen pregnancy (Kohler, Manhart and Lafferty, 2008), and with it the rate of unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and, for that matter, the number of abortions. Such curricula neither stigmatize sexuality, nor encourage premature exploration. The goal and result is that by the time adolescents become reproductively capable and interested in sex, they are well-informed and prepared to make wiser, better-considered decisions. Free and open access to all forms of birth control finish the picture. In such societies, as in modern Scandinavia for example, adolescents and young adults aren't more sexually active than in more repressive or ambivalent cultures. They just make better choices with a higher rate of good outcomes. They understand the physiological, emotional, biological, and mental dimensions of their sexuality. They neither rush, nor hold back.

In such societies, there are few sexual taboos. Medical care is publicly funded. Maternity and paternity leave are acknowledged as a right. In the new paradigm, the entropic drag of currency barriers will be absent. All of us will have direct access to services and resources that we need, by default, just as all cells in our bodies have access to what they need.

In the absence of profit or profit motive in the new paradigm, we will be able to fully examine our technological developments to re-evaluate which technologies to prioritize and which to de-emphasize or abandon. Under the current paradigm, technologies prevail that make someone a lot of money. Other technologies, which may be as good or superior to them, but which aren't as profitable, fall by the wayside. In the new paradigm, the criteria will be what is most beneficial. If a distributed network of diverse small to mid-scale energy generation facilities, primarily renewable and non-polluting, can do just as good a job or better of providing electricity than central, gargantuan facilities burning fossil fuels or damming major rivers, then we will be free to change our grid. Under the current grid, energy-producing corporations influence lawmakers to actively limit how much power a household or small business is permitted to generate (Energy and Policy Institute, 2013), simply because these corporations are unwilling to allow their profits to dip, even if it is universally beneficial to individuals, society, the environment, and long-term survival. In the new paradigm, that dysfunctional and irrational behavior will cease, once and for all.

As it is with electricity, so it is with food production and many other vital areas of our lives. While there will still be some goods and services requiring a centralized large facility, such facilities will be democratically co-managed and co-manned by all who are involved in the manufacturing or production process. Technologies will similarly be re-evaluated in terms of benefit to individual, society, and the environment.

If a product is being distributed, and later it's discovered that it's causing unforeseen harm, as has happened many times in human history, it will be withdrawn, recalled, and replaced with something safer or better. There will no longer be corporations who must maximize their bottom line, and who therefore suppress unfavorable information, pressure and manipulate lawmakers and politicians, and even re-market such flawed goods in places where their dangers aren't known or acknowledged. Nothing will stand in the way of changing and correcting things that need changing or correcting.

The quality of goods and services will exceed anything currently available. The best of all former producer companies' designs will be combined in all products. Universal form factors and standards will be developed, such that products will be built to be robust, durable, easily serviceable and upgradeable, user-customizable, and to meet the actual needs

expressed by users. When a better kind of engine is perfected, you won't need a new car. Unless there's a valid technical reason to the contrary, you'll be able to bring your car in to the supply center, where the old engine will be removed and the new one installed, and drive home. The old engine or its materials will be repurposed. They won't end up in junkyards or landfills.

The underlying imperative to maximize profits, stock price and market share dominates all other considerations in the dominant paradigm. If that imperative conflicts with the safety and well-being of employees or the public, the imperative always drives decisions and behavior. This has led to some extremely serious consequences, such as the conspiracy, for which General Motors, Firestone, Standard Oil of California and others were convicted in 1949, to monopolize the sale of buses and supplies to the transit systems they had bought up in Los Angeles and dozens of other cities. Streetcars were already struggling against the private car, but these companies helped finish them off, and profited extravagantly from a metropolis made to depend on private cars, gasoline and all other related goods and services (Bianco, 1998). Then there was the case of infant formula, marketed aggressively in low-income countries where unsafe water made bottle-feeding dangerous for babies; the international boycott of Nestlé that followed led to the World Health Organization's 1981 code restricting such marketing (Global Nonviolent Action Database; WHO, 1981). We see it in cell phones made with the battery hardwired in, making it impossible for the user to replace a battery that won't hold a charge any more. It is expressed in the ever-escalating practice of changing models every few months and making sure not to support previous models, all of which have no user serviceable parts.

In the new paradigm after the Transition, all of these absurdities will evaporate.

Picture buildings designed and built to passively keep temperatures in a comfortable range without heating or air conditioning. The technology and materials already exist (Passive Solar Industries Council, NREL and Charles Eley Associates, "Passive Solar Design Strategies"). Imagine a distributed, diverse, robust power grid maintained mainly by everyday people instructed by technicians, with an attendant drop in pollution. Imagine how enriched we will be when we see multi-fuel cars, a shift towards sustainable energy sources, vastly improved air and water quality, steady declines in rates of cancer and many other conditions, the end of ads in all media including billboards, high-quality goods and services for everybody, tastier and more nutritious food, artistic media driven by artists rather than brokers and accountants, medicine available to all at the highest level of excellence. Imagine politicians who have no voices to hear or respond to, but the voices of all of the people, no lobbyists.

Imagine being able to easily service your own devices following simple instructions included in the manual – user-serviceable parts the new norm. Imagine extensive public transportation that goes everywhere, alongside a well-developed network of roads and trails for bicycle, foot, horse, and other small, low speed vehicles that also go everywhere, complete with all facilities needed to make it a viable and convenient option, with traditional roads much less crowded due to the abundance of comfortable, convenient alternatives. Imagine that you can pick up a new car at a nearby distribution center, to your specifications, with no financial transaction necessary. Imagine that your new car has all of the best features that the technology allows and is quick and easy to maintain and repair. These are but a few examples of how our lives will change radically for the better once the current dysfunctional paradigm is taken out of service and replaced with a new one designed to empower each and every one of us to thrive and be as safe as the physical universe allows.

Chapter 20: Automation

Since the Industrial Revolution of the Nineteenth Century, automation has brought both major benefits and equally major damages. It can free us from repetitive, dangerous, boring and unsatisfying tasks while raising productivity. It can allow us to get more done in less time, spend less time getting around, and thus free up big chunks of our time. On the other hand, in a socio-economic paradigm driven by profits, stock price and market share above all else, automation also eliminates jobs. It's often more profitable to automate than to pay flesh-and-blood employees. In a culture where we need currency for even our most basic needs, fewer jobs mean fewer ways to survive. Access to currency is thus scarcified alongside goods and services, ultimately at the whim of the modern feudal lords. The hardest hit are the most struggling segments of the population. The paradigm inevitably spawns such a dynamic, based on its most fundamental operating principles.

Under the current paradigm, automation is a classic win-lose-lose-lose-lose scenario. Because there are fewer jobs, employees lose. Because access to currency is thus scarcified, people have less currency to spend, forcing them to rely on credit if they can get it. The main winners in this scenario are the modern feudal lords at the top of the pyramid: the major stockholders, banks, CEO's and those with close ties to them.

A more competitive job market intensifies destructive competition, resentments between individuals and between groups, and makes it harder for people to work together for mutual benefit.

Once the current dominant feudalistic paradigm is decommissioned and replaced with one based on synergy and symbiotic peer-based mutuality, the downside of automation will disappear and the benefits will at last be fully realized. With the need for currency eliminated and all resources directly, freely accessible to each and all, automation will no longer threaten people's livelihoods. Then automation will only eliminate tasks that are dangerous, mind-numbing or unsatisfying for human beings and increase productivity, freeing people to pursue other, more satisfying pursuits where they can make their best contribution to their communities.

Where automation would cause harm to people or the environment, then nothing will prevent it from being left out, not implemented.

Some tasks will never be subject to automation, but those practicing them will likely benefit from automated processes to augment their work. Some tasks that can be automated my not necessarily need to be completely automated. For example, furniture making can benefit from automation; yet there are skilled cabinetmakers whose passion for their craft and the unique quality of their products need to be encouraged, empowered, and appreciated. In such fields, we might benefit both from a hybrid of human skilled and automated processes.

Most importantly, automation decisions will be based on the benefits to human beings and the environment, period. With the death of the self-devouring cycle of compulsive overproduction and over-consumption, production loads will be a fraction of what they currently are in any case. Real, authentic needs will be fulfilled. There will be no artificially-programmed, inflated "needs." Friction between groups and between individuals will diminish, since all will have access to what they need and usually to what they desire. At long last, automation will achieve what many touted in the early days of automation: the freeing of human beings from drudgery, the reduction of workload, and a Renaissance where everyday people normally have time and energy to devote to their dreams to mutual benefit. The Transition cannot come too soon. The sooner, the better.

Chapter 21: Law, Order, Crime, and Living Together in Ways that Make Sense

How does the modern feudalistic socioeconomic paradigm impact the nature and prevalence of crime? This question doesn't have a simple answer, but some dynamics are clear.

Let's start by defining "crime." A good working generic definition in a truly healthy society might be "any deliberate behavior that knowingly causes harm."

In most current societies, the definition of crime is much more complex.

For example, in the United states, it's a crime to be on land owned by someone else, even if the owner isn't using it for anything. In some cities, it's a crime to feed the homeless. In some states it recently became a crime to pass out food or water to people waiting in line to vote. Growing tobacco is legal but growing marijuana isn't, in many countries.

In past and present times, definitions of "crime" have often been capricious, arbitrary, and directly harmful. There are places and past historical times where it's illegal to marry outside of your ethnic or religious group, to use a language other than the official language, to practice certain religions, to go out unaccompanied by a male relative if you're female, to teach a slave to read and write, to hide and aid an escaped slave, or even to just be a member of a certain group. In medieval times, it was a crime to deny a member of the nobility anything that they chose to take, or even to fail to kneel or prostrate one's self. It was not a crime for nobility to kill, rape, beat or otherwise abuse a peasant or serf.

Thus, the definition of what's a crime has a lot to do with prevalence and nature of crime.

Under the dominant paradigm, there are four basic kinds of crime:

1) Crimes causing harm to living beings, which will be defined as crimes in the new paradigm. 2) Crimes of indirect harm to people or their property, such as fraud, theft, vandalism, discrimination, and breach of contract. 3) Financial crimes such as insider trading, counterfeiting, illegal gambling, smuggling, and money laundering. 4) Arbitrarily and capriciously defined crimes, such as failure to pay a fee, renew a permit, fill out a form, or wait a specified time. This category also includes laws such as those that cause an intimate relationship between a seventeen-year-old and a sixteen-year-old to suddenly become a serious crime when one of them turns eighteen. It includes the criminalization of technical information sharing between engineers working at two different companies. In some places it even includes laws illegalizing same-sex relationships or voluntary relationships between more than two consenting adults. In some countries it's a crime to criticize or satirize the monarch or ruler.

Crimes in category one will remain crimes in the new paradigm. They will probably never disappear from human behavior; but it's likely that they'll become a lot less prevalent after the Transition. Crimes of passion can happen in any paradigm; but we can reliably expect violent crime to diminish dramatically. More on this later.

In the new paradigm, crimes of categories two through three will disappear almost entirely, partly because the definitions of crimes will change, and mostly because the whole context in which such crimes occur will be eliminated. You can't strike out in football, or end up in the penalty box in basketball.

In a socioeconomic environment where currency is obsolete and irrelevant, where each of us has direct access to all that we need and desire, the current fertile soil for financially-motivated crime will become barren. Why steal your car, when I can go to the automotive distribution center and pick one up to my own specifications, no questions asked? Why steal my computer if you can go to the electronics distribution center and get one just like it or better? Crimes such as vandalism may still occur, or someone may grab someone else's stuff rather than go get their own, but the majority of category two through four crimes will cease to have meaning.

Where there are no banks, no need for currency, or stock markets, there will be no financial crime.

Where everybody has open access to the goods and services they need, there will be no reason to run cons, rob, steal, or cheat. Jealousy between haves and have-nots will disappear because all will be "haves." This will massively reduce the

incidence of greed, despair, desperation, and nihilism that underlie most category two and three crimes, thus reducing the current mutually antagonistic emotional states borne of socio-economic inequity.

Under the current paradigm, the stresses induced by the constant individual struggle against the default denial of access and rights, to keep coming up with currency to pay for literally everything, take a frightful toll mentally, emotionally and physically. People in such a situation are much more predisposed to act out violently.

Category four crimes will have no place in a healthy, synergistic, symbiotic society after the Transition. That change will have to come, like the Transition itself, from the bottom up. The more things we define as crimes, the more criminals we'll have. Eventually we could all become criminals if we're not careful.

The current prison system in the United States is glaring symptom of the dysfunction of the current paradigm. The increasing prevalence of for-profit prisons creates conditions approaching slavery, where prison companies profit from inmate labor while paying little or nothing. Many inmates are guilty of victimless crimes. Prisons are well-documented crucibles where "soft" criminals are forged into harder criminals, and hard criminals into harder criminals (Zoukis, HuffPost, 2017; International Centre for Prison Studies via BBC News, 2006). Because so many acts are defined as crimes, many of which harm no one, 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). The prison system consumes vast resources and has a very low rehabilitation rate. Contrast this with Norway's prison system, which is in many ways nearly the exact opposite of that of the U.S.

In the new paradigm, we'll see human trafficking, prostitution, illegal drug sales, smuggling, sweatshops, cons, swindles, robbery and many more crimes of harm against people plummet and go extinct or very nearly so. Things not defined as crimes under the current paradigm will become crimes: strip mining, dumping toxic waste, strip logging, and more will become crimes, but their driving motivation of profits will not exist. With currency irrelevant, there'll be no profit motive, and so such crimes will have no existential underpinnings. There's no point sacrificing lambs (or people) to mythical gods that nobody believes in any more. The new synergistic paradigm will see a sharp and sustained drop in nearly all categories of crime. There will be no psychological reinforcement for them.

Of course, there will still be a small percentage who will still be bullies, psychopaths, sociopaths, and other people prone to destructive, harmful behaviors. Their harmful behaviors will not be reinforced, even indirectly. They will have the full range of existing treatments available to them. People who act in ways that harm others will still need to be restrained so they can't continue to cause harm; but the impetus will no longer be punitive. Restraining people with those behaviors is a practical measure for safety, not a punitive, purposes. Where treatment is effective, offenders will be able to re-enter the community. Where it isn't, they can be kept away from the community but treated with as much dignity as possible.

While the number of activities defined as crimes will shrink dramatically, some new crimes will have to be defined, through democratically enacted law. It will become a crime to attempt to withhold, block or interfere with any person's access to and use resources or venues to which everybody needs and has a right to access, or to force someone to do something for them in exchange for not blocking their access. Stockpiling goods or "robbing" distribution services for the purpose of smuggling them out to countries still using currency in order to make profit, will be a crime. Stealing someone else's stuff will still be a crime.

Decriminalizing behaviors that harm no one, will be a hallmark of the new functional, empowering, symbiotic peer-based paradigm.

Chapter 22: Logistics and Rhythms of Life

Under the current paradigm, every one of us must constantly come up with currency to ransom our existence lest we lose our right to eat, drink, or occupy space. For all but the ultra-wealthy modern feudal lords at the top of the socio-economic pyramid, our jobs are our only way to come up with the currency.

From an employer's point of view, "business needs," AKA "the Bottom Line," are the ultimate determinant of decisions and policies. Profits come first. While there is variation among employers, the norm is to offer very little flexibility to an employee who needs time off due to an unforeseen life event, from a car that won't start, to a broken tooth, or any of the infinite range of things in an employee's life that can conflict with the business needs of the employer. Employees are allowed fixed numbers of days off and of sick days. Most employers won't work with you if you find yourself needing more days off, and on shorter notice, than policy allows. Unless you have a very understanding boss, you'll most likely have to choose between dealing with the issue, and keeping your job. Under this paradigm, you your boss doesn't care about your flooded basement, court appearance, or your injured child. It's up to you to contort things so that the business interests of the company aren't compromised, even a little bit.

You or I may have an employer who's understanding and accommodating. The problem is that, under the current paradigm, your employer is your feudal lord (like a duke, duchess, or count) who has the power to work with you, or not as they choose. You, the peasant, the serf, have no say in the matter. For that matter, in every U.S. state except Montana, employers are by default legally allowed to terminate you for almost any reason not specifically prohibited by law, with or without cause (NCSL), and even to search your person and belongings at will.

So-called "at-will" employment laws are touted by supporters as being fair to both employer and employee, since either can terminate the employment at any time. This is yet another distortion. To most employers, employees are interchangeable parts, almost as easily replaced as a toner cartridge or a battery. The company will always find someone to replace us. They'll function just fine without you. We, on the other hand, are not, however anywhere near guaranteed to find another job in time. We need the job just to get through the month. If we lose our job and don't find another one right away, we could be out on the street, making it even harder to find a job, kicking off a downward spiral of marginalization and disempowerment. There are far more laws, and far easier to enforce, protecting the interests of employers than there are protecting those of employees. What laws do protect employees are eroded relentlessly through the tight influence of the ultra-wealthy and their corporations on lawmakers.

Under the current paradigm, our lives are fragmented. Our jobs dominate our lives. We must contort ourselves to somehow fit in everything else that we have to do to live. We must somehow make things fit between job, doctor's or dentist's office, needs of family, courts, departments of motor vehicles, and much more, each of which holds power over our access to something we need, and how to make it work is our problem. The job, the doctor's office, and the DMV all have their hours, their requirements, their procedures, and the one thing they share is that they each dictate their expectations which you are expected to meet, which is sometimes impossible. This generates chronic stress and alienation that erode health and well-being while making us less effective in every aspect of our lives.

In the coming new paradigm, this will change drastically at long last. All enterprises will be peer-based and egalitarian in character. There will be no "business needs," only real, authentic needs, which will be a fraction of what is demanded by the current self-devouring cycle. Prime considerations will be human wellbeing. With no hierarchy, when you need an unexpected day or week off, you will simply inform your workmates. If there are extenuating circumstances or things to work out, it will be worked out among peers, with none holding power over the other.

There may still be situations where workplace needs take priority, due to actual, authentic needs such as harvest time, a natural disaster or building collapse or other overriding situation. Such situations will be understood by all peers in the enterprise, not imposed from above. There will be no rush to get a new model to market before the competitor does, when, besides appearance, the only thing distinguishing the new model from the old is that there are no interchangeable parts between them and the old model is no longer supported. The new paradigm will usher in an era of well-being and vibrancy the likes of which have rarely been seen in human history.

Chapter 23: Education

Under the dominant modern feudalistic socio-economic paradigm, young people must prepare and strategize from early-on how they will come up with the currency needed to ransom their existence from the moment they become a legal adult. Realistically, the best strategy is to learn a trade or get a college degree, though it is no guarantee. Without either of those, we can expect to be competing for sub-living-wage jobs.

While many developed countries, such as the United States, have free education through high school. Unfortunately, the socio-economic paradigm creates a radical disparity in the quality of education that kids receive, based on their socio-economic status (Chetty, Hendren, Kline and Saez, 2014; Chetty and colleagues, Mobility Report Cards, 2017). Millions of young people, especially in poor districts, receive an inferior education that barely prepares them for the lowest-paying, non-skilled jobs, much less college: in 2024, 45% of U.S. high-school seniors scored below the basic level in math (Chalkbeat, 2025).

In a society where a person's economic status determines one's options, quality of life, the degree of freedom and respect that one is given, and ability to thrive, the same is true of school districts. A district in a poor area receives few funds. A district in a rich area receives copious funds. In practice it works as an unofficial but very real caste system (Ogbu, *Minority Education and Caste*, 1978): a child's prospects depend heavily on the family's place in the pyramid, and the chance of out-earning one's parents has fallen from about 90% for Americans born in 1940 to about half for those born in the 1980s (Chetty and colleagues). The ultra-wealthy modern feudal lords' children almost always go to elite, exclusive private schools, which cost is astronomical.

Assuming that you, coming from a less-than-advantaged public school, succeed in getting good enough grades to get into a college or university, you still aren't in. Even at state colleges and universities, tuition, housing and living costs can approach $30,000 a year, a large share of a typical family's income (College Board). If we aren't in the ruling feudal elite, we have no way to manage it.

There is financial aid available, yet over time, tuition and other costs go up relentlessly while financial aid tends to shrink over time. In some places, you aren't eligible until your mid twenties. In some instances, the school will deny financial aid and try to force parents to pay, even when they simply can't. So all of your hard work studying and getting into a school could be for nothing.

Under the current paradigm, standards for eligibility for financial aid and most other social safety net assistance are demonstrably unrealistic and draconian. By analogy, imagine that you're on a sinking ship but the coast guard won't send help unless you are physically at or below sea level, which is defined for eligibility purposes as several meters below sea level.

To make things worse, the ever-accelerating rate of inflation in education (and living) costs, coupled with the glacial pace of wage growth, intensify and expand the disparity. In the United States in 1968, about seventeen percent of low-wage workers had some college education or a degree. By 2012, nearly half did, many of them burdened with crushing student debt. And don't forget that if job statistics state that the median wage for a given job is a certain amount, then that means that half of the people working at that job are making less than that.

In societies shaped by the modern feudal paradigm, there is strong reinforcement for choosing a career goal based on perceived earning potential, rather than on following your dreams, interests or strengths. This cements a pattern where people seek careers for which they may have little or no interest, ability or passion. This results in a majority of unfulfilled people working at jobs that they have no affinity for and are most likely not very good at. Quality of life is crushed, and the quality of goods and service that we experience is also seriously degraded. Students are often steered away from choosing their majors based on their passions and aptitudes, toward whatever seems most marketable. School counseling is geared, with the best of intentions, toward getting students into college and onto economically secure paths, not toward helping them discover what they love (Bryan and colleagues; McMahon and colleagues, 2017). And counselors are stretched far too thin to do more: the average American school counselor is responsible for 376 students, well above the 250 the profession recommends (American School Counselor Association, 2024). This is a clear example of the mindset that modern feudalism imposes on people. Where everyone depends on money to survive, and money is kept scarce for most, people are forced to organize their lives primarily around financial survival, and even

those who sincerely want the best for young people must steer them toward what pays rather than toward what they love.

As a result, we see societies where unhappiness, unfulfillment, and mediocrity are the accepted norm, where innovation is lackluster at best, and the economy is healthy while the people in it are suffocating. We are forced to choose between our passions and aptitudes, and survival. Apathy, alienation, cynicism, numb compliance, disempowerment and lack of connection or motivation are epidemic. This paradigm will always give rise to such a dysfunctional, crippled society. Both individuals and the community fall perennially far below their potential along every metric except profits.

This hurts productivity as well as human beings. People working at unfulfilling jobs for which they have little aptitude or passion, being paid sub-living wages and treated with little or no respect, produce far below their best, both consciously and subconsciously (Sturt and Nordstrom, Forbes, 2018). With poor quality of life their only realistic prospect, people's motivations are as low and grudging as the pay and treatment they're subjected to.

The only reason to stay in such a situation is the unrelenting enforced need to come up with a constant supply of currency in order to keep ransoming our existence. This creates operational chains as rigid and restrictive as any physical ones, keeping us modern serfs and peasants compliant.

Modern feudalistic paradigms appear to show more productivity than egalitarian, synergistic ones. This is an illusion. The apparent advantage is an illusion. You can do more, faster, and longer on meth – for a time. You feel full of energy, don't need to sleep or eat, and maybe you do move around faster. But the crash will come, your body and mind will pay a huge toll, and what you produce is rushed and defective.

In the new paradigm, this will completely change. Every one of us will be guaranteed our basic needs. Currency will be obsolete. Education and training will be open to everyone who wants it and can do the work, at no cost. There will be no reason to pursue any course of study or career that has no meaning for you or for which you have no aptitude. People working at their passions and natural aptitudes are demonstrably more productive at higher levels of quality. Goods and services will improve drastically. Our quality of life, as individuals and as communities, will soar, initiating a positive spiral of expanding wellbeing, productivity, and quality of life. We will all benefit in the new synergistic, symbiotic, empowering win-win paradigm.

Most likely, the very concepts of "work" and "play" will be much altered (Gray, Psychology Today, 2009). When we're working at something we love and enjoy, feeling empowered and respected, "work" is no longer a burden to be borne stoically by serfs and peasants. As time goes on, as empowered symbiotes, more and more of us will look forward to going to work nearly as much as we do to recreational activities.

Would you rather your surgeon, pilot, mechanic or the people who made your car were overworked, underpaid serfs or professionals in it for the money, prestige and perks – or fulfilled, empowered people doing what they love and are best at?

Many social democratic countries already do offer free education at ever level. In such countries, productivity, quality of life, worker and consumer satisfaction, and overall wellbeing are consistently dramatically higher than in countries under pure, unrestrained modern feudalistic paradigms such as the United States. The community supports and empowers the people in it, who in turn support and make their best contribution to the community.

Under the current dominant paradigm, many people have no realistic prospect of higher education. Many who do get degrees or training in a trade, end up working for sub or barely-living pay, staggering under student debt that can take decades to pay off. Society suffers from every person who would enter a trade or career if they could, who never becomes the composer, engineer, doctor, carpenter, artist, psychologist, or other contributors that they would have, if they had the chance.

In the new paradigm, there will be no "market forces" or "bottom lines." There will be mutually-empowered, fulfilled, people following their most authentic callings - peers and co-stakeholders highly engaged in every aspect of life. Communities that adopt it will be able to show the world whole new levels of thriving, and the practicality of the new paradigm will become clear to anyone willing to look.

Chapter 24: Modern Feudalism and Religion

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).

Religion, in one form or another, appears to be a fundamental expression of important aspects of our innate nature as humans.

Yet, religion has often been, and still is, often twisted and abused to bilk people and keep people compliant submissive. That is why Karl Marx famously wrote, that "religion is the opium of the people." Ensuing attempts to suppress and erase religion were unsuccessful. Religion resurfaced from underground as soon as the Soviet Union dissolved.

This was not surprising since religion seems to arise out of a basic part of our makeup, and because suppression through intimidation and punishment is ineffective, producing the overt appearance of compliance, coupled with fierce covert resistance. Our behaviors are much more responsive to reinforcement (not enforcement) or lack of reinforcement. Furthermore, any effort to suppress fundamental drives and motives at the root of who we are, are doomed. If one tries to suppress eating, sleeping, sex, humor – or religion, one will see people doing these activities but feeling conflicted and guilty about it. That is not beneficial to anybody, and does deep and lasting harm. The only result is to leave us at war with ourselves. So, on one hand, religion is often used to manipulate and control people, to their detriment. On the other hand, suppressing religion becomes its own dogma and only drives religion underground. How do we support authentic religious expression and prevent religion from mutating into harmful, toxic distortions? The United States Constitution does a good job, by simultaneously guaranteeing freedom of religion and separation of church and state. These two conditions are essential for any society and people to be free, empowered and thriving. The challenge comes when any religion becomes aggressive, domineering, and toxic. We see this in groups like Al Qaeda, Isis, Boko Haram, and "Gospel of Prosperity" televangelists, and various Christian denominations bent on suppressing everything and everyone who isn't part of their sects. Even the concept of "religious liberty" is being distorted into legalistic arguments defining and enshrining it to mean exclusively the legal "right" for those who control a resource, such as employers, landlords, lenders, hospitals, service providers, banks, realtors and many others, to discriminate against, fire, refuse to hire, withhold healthcare from, deny approval and otherwise exclude you and me if they say we in some way offend their religious beliefs. In this modern feudalistic paradigm, as in Medieval feudalism, the power of the ultra-wealthy feudal elite inexorably grows, expands and consolidates over time, and their influence over lawmakers overpowers the influence of constituents. Our rights and protections are eroded steadily towards extinction. If you are a billionaire who owns vast companies, lands, and resources, you are granted dictatorial power over all who are contained therein. If you own nothing, your rights under this paradigm are hard to exercise in practice, regardless of Constitutional guarantees, and you must not offend the feudal lords if you want to keep your livelihood, residence, or health. If you do offend them, they can blacklist you to prevent you from finding work or lodging elsewhere. This is in no way the face of a free, democratic, or healthy society. 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. If that trend runs its course, the only place where you and I have religious liberty is on our own property, if we are fortunate enough to own any. The vast majority of property is owned or otherwise controlled by the modern feudal lords. This is literally and functionally indistinguishable from Medieval feudalism. Once again, the socio-economic power structure subverts and overrules the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution. The voice of the ultra-wealthy and their corporations are loud and clear in the ears of lawmakers and judges, while our voices are a faint, distant whisper. The use of the term "religious liberty" to apply to this legal enshrinement of the power of those who have power to impose their religious beliefs on their employees, renters, borrowers, and customers is quite deliberate, calculated and egregious. It's hard to come out against "religious liberty" without sounding like you're implying that you're against religious freedom and being easily misperceived and spun as such. Such arguments are akin to arguing in the mid-1860's United States that abolishing slavery was a violation of the "civil rights" of slave owners, and that the government was unjustly depriving them of their "property." Such arguments were actually made at the time. This trend part and parcel the relentless and inevitable consolidation of ownership and control into the hands of the modern feudal elite, whether it be over land, food, water, electricity, transportation, or even many very personal aspects of the lives of us modern serfs and peasants. Regardless of the Constitution, if you displease your employer or landlord, for example, then they can deny you livelihood, lodging, and the ability to find new work and place to live. That is how this dominant socio-economic paradigm is set up. Reforms can slow it, but they reliably erode over time: it can no more be turned permanently from that course than a shark can cease to be a carnivore. It is fundamentally antithetical to any form of democratic, free society governed of, by and for the people. Dictatorship is not just imposed by autocratic governments. It is also impose by undemocratic socio-economic power structures. As long as this paradigm operates, we peasants and serfs can, at great effort and cost, achieve modest gains by pressuring politicians loudly and long enough; but always, over time, the modern feudal lords and their corporations will erode away those gains and reassert their control and dominance. In the new paradigm after the Transition, religious liberty will be explicitly defined as a personal matter and right.

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It will be illegal to obstruct or impede access of another to any resource for any reason whatsoever, except for resources that one is personally using. There will be no modern feudalistic socio-economic pyramid, and so no power of any over another. Corporations will cease to exist, and resources currently controlled by them will transition to consensus-driven collaborative peer-based governing. There will be no scarcifed, compulsory form of currency to be weaponized and abused as an instrument of control by those who have lots of it over those who don't. It will be impossible to own resources that one isn't directly, personally using.

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In shared environments such as workplaces, the civil and religious liberty of each and every one will be guaranteed, and it will be a crime to harass or exclude another over religious, ethnic, racial or other personal traits. We will have guaranteed freedom to follow our chosen path, but be prevented from imposing it on others, with no exceptions. You can dress how you want, but you can't tell me how to dress. I can eat how I believe, but I can't make you eat the same. With no profit motive, goods and services will be produced to fill authentic needs. There will be no artificial scarcification. For the majority of us, our religion (regardless of which one) is a positive expression of something life-affirming in our nature that enriches our lives, enlivens our communities, and inspires us to be better people. Adherents of every religion have been inspired to acts of heroism and compassion. Yet we all know that there are some in every religion who distort, twist, spin, or otherwise use it to justify and further their delusions, greed, arrogance, power-lust, narcissism, neuroses, psychoses, and misanthropy. There are a few basic underlying motivations behind these people's toxic expressions. Some misuse religion to manipulate people to give them money or property. When the current paradigm is mothballed, this form of abuse will become impossible and non sequitur. Some use religion as an extension and screen upon which to project their ego, delusions, power-lust, and other psychopathologies. While there is no guarantee that small social structures with domineering and submissive dynamics might not arise. However, under the

current, intensely hierarchical paradigm, most people are conditioned to be either domineering or submissive, or both depending on context. In the new paradigm, there will be little to no hierarchical social structures. After a couple of generations or so, dominance/submission mindsets will decline rapidly, as there will be no psychological reinforcers for such behaviors. Thus such phenomena will become much less common than in this paradigm. People in general will be a lot less susceptible to be drawn to seek power over others, or to seek an authoritarian character to tell them what to do. In the new paradigm, the social environment simply won't reinforce hierarchical and manipulative behaviors. It will, however, strongly reinforce synergy, symbiosis, co-creation and co-decision. Current generations are conditioned to respond to advertising, which makes them susceptible to other forms of manipulation if it's presented authoritatively. It's not that hard for a demagogue or self-styled prophet to gain followers. In contrast, in the new paradigm, a populace that's empowered, educated, informed, and critically thinking will be quite resistant to manipulation. School curricula will be expanded to include self-awareness, how to recognize and neutralize manipulation and bullying, and critical thinking. In the current paradigm, many or even most people are stressed out, disempowered, worn down and distracted to a great degree. A charismatic personality promising to make things better if they just follow, exerts a strong pull. In contrast, a community of self-actualized, fulfilled, engaged, healthy, happy, empowered people will be highly resistant to such a person. Thus, after the Transition, this second kind of abuse of religion should diminish greatly. All but a very few people in the new paradigm will be largely impervious to cult dynamics. For those few who are vulnerable, the societies in the new paradigm will be like wet wood, resistant to burning. Such cults as arise, won't get very big and won't be able to gather power or wealth. Affected people will be recognized as victims of coercive control rather than as willing fanatics, and offered support to leave and recover, including treatment for the trauma it so often leaves behind. Even psychiatry's own diagnostic manual (the DSM-5) recognizes identity disturbance caused by prolonged coercive persuasion, including recruitment by cults, as a condition: something done to a person, not a flaw in them. The third form of toxic distortion of religion more problematic: true believer fanaticism. Like Medieval inquisitors, Salafi Jihadis, and other fanatics, such religious fanatics truly believe that by beating, burning, killing, torturing, or compelling conversion at gunpoint, they are saving their victims from damnation in one form or another. They believe that finding a way to impose their beliefs on the people through the legal system is utterly justified. Such people aren't consciously distorting religion for gain or power. They sincerely believe that it's their mission and duty to convince or force others to their way. Such zealots have committed countless atrocities throughout the ages and continuing into our time, believing themselves to be doing God's will. No religion appears to be immune. The dynamics are much more complex and nuanced than in the other forms of toxic religion. Sometimes such fanatics have been raised, entrenched in their beliefs for untold generations and have never questioned it. Sometimes fanaticism is further fed by memories of past atrocities committed against their group by other groups. Often religious identity gets wrapped up in and entangled with cultural, ethnic, and national identity. This is the source of crusades, holy wars, and a wide range of atrocities. Such groups will stop at nothing to force society into their mould. When two or more such groups meet, bloodshed often follows. This kind of toxic distortion of religion is especially hard to resolve. Attempting to suppress it only drives it underground, strengthens it, and makes it more extreme. It also strongly boosts recruitment as such groups believe and portray themselves as persecuted martyrs. Suppression is also fundamentally incompatible with the empowering, compassionate, synergistic society that is our goal. The new paradigm will need to walk a tightrope regarding such groups. We will not survive a decision to suppress extremist groups, nor will we survive if they take over. It may take time to develop strategies that neutralize the danger while preserving our humanity. We will need to do a lot of research into the human and social psyche. A few general guidelines are clear, however. We will absolutely need to strictly adhere to separation of church and state. Religion and government must be stopped from interfering with one another. With the elimination of modern feudalistic power structures and the need for currency, there will be no such thing as lobbyists, bribes, or other financial inducements. The only voices our elected officials will hear will be the voices of the people. This will reduce, though not eliminate, the channels for religious or other special interest groups to influence government. The new paradigm will shift away from judgmentalism, blame mentality and punitive modes of action. Many things, which now would be scandals, will no longer be. It will be harder to blackmail politicians. If any individual or group, including religious ones, commits violence, intimidation, or other abuse of or assault against non-consenting others, they will be guilty of a crime (regardless of motivation) and will be contained and restrained by law enforcement, subject to due process. Whenever possible, therapeutic approaches will be favored over imprisonment. People who are refractory to all humane forms of treatment, and who would pose a threat to people and the community if allowed to run free, will have to be kept away from the community, though the approach will be much more similar to that of the Norwegian prison system than the current U.S. prison system. Such individuals will be restrained, but they will be treated with firmness, compassion, dignity and humanity to the maximum degree possible, with the main goal of preventing them from harming others or themselves, not punishing them. If we see extreme religious groups who aren't

bothering or threatening anybody, there is no reason to interfere, unless they are abusing their own members in any way, in which case intervention will be necessary to the extent of ending the abuse. Since religion is ultimately a personal matter, and since none of us is God or Goddess, the new paradigm will embody and reinforce mutual respect among people of all religions, leaving each of us free to pursue our own course of discovery.

Chapter 25: The Psychology of Status Symbols, Dress Codes and Formality - the Enforcement of Stratification

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 dominant modern economic feudalism creates stratification and disparity by its very nature. In these societies, where our place on the economic pyramid defines our options, degree of freedom and respect that we're afforded, quality of life and access to resources. There is strong reinforcement for people to display and enforce their rank upon those below them in the hierarchy, right on up to the modern feudal lords at the top, who go to great lengths to assert, display and enforce their power and status above all others. Doors usually open or shut based on our perceived economic status. Enter the existence of status symbols, formal and cultural dress codes, and the cultural attitudes to enforce them. Status symbols are easily affordable only to the wealthy. To most of us they are out of reach. This generates parasitic industries, both legal and illegal, that produce and sell these items. Often status symbols are in no way superior to ordinary products; their only purpose, is to display, or appear to display, one's socio-economic rank. Feudal lords display their status ostentatiously. Peasants and serfs try to afford knock-offs in order to increase their chances of being treated with respect. Getting and keeping a job can be seriously impacted. The socio-economic hierarchy imposes dress codes and status symbols upon the rest of us, reinforced by advertising (propaganda) that reinforces the sense of "need" for such items. The culture indoctrinates us with beliefs such as the need to "dress for success" and belief that "the clothes make the man." In practice, "better dressed" applicants can be much more likely to get a job or promotion than a less "better dressed" person, often regardless of their relative abilities, knowledge, skill, and attitude: people rate a man in a tailored suit as more confident, successful and better paid within seconds, even with his face hidden (Howlett et al., 2013). Keep in mind that in this socio-economic paradigm, the employer is in a privileged position relative to the applicant or employee. To the wealthy and ultra-wealthy feudal lords, we are as disposable as paper clips or laser printer cartridges. To us, our jobs are often the only thing that stands between us and homelessness. "Business-acceptable" attire is generally a lot more expensive (and less comfortable) than "casual" clothes. Employers usually require it, forcing underpaid serfs and peasants working for them to spend critically more of their sub-living wages on the arbitrarily-dictated wardrobe. The same goes for many public venues such as courthouses, many entertainment venues and clubs, and even some schools. Buying such attire is effortless for the wealthy, but a huge stretch, if possible at all, for most of us. Perhaps we are expected to be grateful that we aren't branded like cattle? Such clothing is usually uncomfortable, useless and impractical, such as men's ties and women's high heels. What constitutes status symbols varies from culture to culture; but they all have these things in common. Such requirements often fly in the face of common sense, such as requiring employees to wear suits and ties in hot summer weather, and requiring women to wear high heels which are harmful for their feet, legs and spines. Such dynamics also serve to constantly remind employees of their serf-like status in which the employer, and ultimately the CEO of the company, reserves the right to tell us how to dress, when we can go to the bathroom, and more. Yet many CEO's reserve the right to wear comfortable, informal clothing that others would be fired for wearing. The rules don't apply to the modern feudal lords. Functionally no different from Medieval feudalism. In such societies, "nothing is free," and yet employers in effect are allowed to demand that employees model for no extra pay, even though modeling is a well-paid profession. Here again we see the intensely feudalistic truth of this paradigm: the employer is allowed to do demand more of the employee than what they actually pay them for; yet the employee given little flexibility or leeway, and even for serious medical, dental, or familial issues, employees must get permission from their boss to take time off, which often will be unpaid. Remember that these societies, by default, deny our right to access what we need in order to pursue our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. We must keep coming up with currency in order to ransom ourselves from that denial. Losing a job is usually a big deal. We don't dare offend our employers or fail to meet their demands and expectations. Keep in mind the recent scandal in which Wells Fargo bank placed such unrealistic sales expectations on employees, with so little tolerance of failure to meet metrics, that thousands of employees found it necessary to open fraudulent accounts, just to keep their jobs. In the current socio-economic climate in much of the world, we can lose our jobs due to a personality conflict, misunderstanding, rumor, quota, or even a disagreement with our employer over politics, religion, or lifestyle. As a result of all of the above, most of us live under an unrelenting burden of arbitrary stress, which we "accept" as "normal" because we don't know anything else. To make things worse, the fashion, jewelry, cosmetics,

luxury car, exclusive club and other industries systematically pray upon our stress and insecurities, skillfully manipulating a predictable percent of the population into feeling the "need" to frequently buy more fashion items. Fashions are deliberately changed at an ever-accelerating pace, feeding this vicious cycle. This is considered acceptable in modern feudalistic societies. While it's natural for us to wear clothes and shoes and adorn ourselves, this natural side of our nature is shackled and exploited to support and engorge these parasitic industries and the modern feudal lords at the top of the pyramid. Our spontaneous, authentic adornment behaviors are overridden and manipulated into programmed, dysfunctional consumerism. While clothes, shoes, purses, wallets and the like serve actual functions, many status symbols serve no real purpose whatsoever, other than as badges of status, like rank markings on a military uniform. Different cultures have different status symbols and socio-economically obligatory objects, but the dynamics are the same. Often these items are socially mandatory and culturally enforced. Venues can also be status symbols. The more "exclusive" a club or other venue, the more of us are excluded. Here again, socio-economic stratification is thus enforced, glorified, and prominently emphasized for all to see and never forget. Both primary ("genuine article") and secondary (knock-off) parasitic industries arise to supply status symbols to the wealthy who can afford the former and to the rest of us in the less-expensive form of the latter. The goal is to display, or display the illusion of, wealth. As in most industries under this paradigm, the people employed to actually make such useless, high-priced items are themselves paid sub-living wages and often work in sweatshops. In the United States, every year at Christmas season, a few items are marketed and advertised in a way that activates a conditioned response in a large percentage of consumers, triggering an urgent sense of "need" for these items. Usually these are toys, where marketing skillfully targets children who obligingly pressure their parents to buy this year's hot item. A predictable percentage of parents will comply. Who doesn't want their child to be happy? To intensify the pressure, these items are sometimes kept in short supply, by design or by poor planning, with prices inflated as high as manufacturer strategists think they can inflate them for maximum profits. Media dramatize the "shortage," and people go to heroic lengths to get this hears "gotta have" items. People even come to blows in store aisles over the last few in stock. We must keep in mind, however, that this behavior is exactly what the paradigm reinforces. The perpetrators of these manipulations are merely playing the "game" the way it's designed to be played, and excelling at it. We have collectively enabled such destructive behaviors, by ourselves continuing to play the same game in our own way, thus perpetuating the paradigm and allowing it to continue disempowering us.

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We must not attack the perpetrators, but rather forcibly and compassionately change the paradigm, change the game from the ground up.

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Cultural attitudes deepen, exacerbate and intensify the stratification. Those who have the status symbols of wealth and power are lionized, emulated, and held up as success stories and role models. Those who don't have them are despised, mocked, shunned, and judged as "losers" and inferior, regardless of their actual impact on those around them for better or worse. The very existence of status symbols is symptomatic of a severely diseased, unhealthy, dysfunctional society. In the truly free, democratic and empowering society after the Transition to the new paradigm, status symbols will cease to serve any function in the absence of any status or rank to display. Bereft of any cultural function or reinforcement, today's status symbols will become pieces of tomorrow's miscellany. We will return to our own spontaneous, authentic expressions of adornment and aesthetics, as mutually-respecting peers and partners in our communities, free of hierarchy, rank, caste and status. Our aesthetics will unite, rather than divide us at long last. In the new paradigm, there will be no self-devouring cycle of forced overproduction and overconsumption of goods and services stratified into low-end, mid-range and high-end versions. All goods and services will be of the best quality that the state of the art allows and available to all. Enough will be produced to supply real rather than artificially programmed needs. In the coming win-win-win-win paradigm, there will be winners but no losers.

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Most of the current modern feudal lords will feel like they're losing out, being treated unfairly, just as any addict (which they are) feels when deprived of the object of their addiction. They will lose their power, privilege, and status; but they will not lose their homes, cars, clothes or quality of life. They will lose any properties and resources

that they aren't directly using, such as investment properties. They will be treated with respect and compassion by all of us, with firmness and compassion: unable to lord it over others but discovering that in exchange for losing the obedience of subordinates and lionized status, they will receive true human respect for who they are as individuals, not for any position, power or status. If they find the adjustment hard, they will have the same therapeutic support systems as the rest of us. We wouldn't encourage and enable a loved-one to indulge a destructive addiction. If all else failed, we'd stage in intervention to get them treatment. The time has come to do the same for the modern feudal oligarchs and their addiction to their status and all that comes with it.

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Continuing to play the game as we've been playing it, hurts both us modern serfs and peasants, and those at the top of the economic pyramid who are caught in the compulsion to accumulate.

Chapter 26: Parasitic Industries

By now you've seen the term "parasitic industries" a few times. These are industries that, like a parasitic organism, burden us and drain our resources without contributing anything to our well-being. These industries only exist because things like healthcare, home ownership, and many other necessities are priced far beyond what all but the feudal lords can afford. They also come into being to service the needs of the feudal lords and their enforcers. ("Parasitic" describes what these industries do, not the people who work in them. Most took the work that was available in order to live, and nothing here is a judgment of them.) There are many such industries in the dominant culture. Insurance companies are one epidemic kind of parasitic industry. We pay them a certain amount of money every month in exchange for the possibility that they'll cover at least a meaningful portion of our medical expenses, which in many cases we could never afford on our own. They aren't doctors, nurses or other healthcare providers. The premiums we pay are like "protection" money extorted from people by the Mafia and gangs in exchange for not harming them or their property, which is yet another parasitic industry. Insurance companies are businesses. Their top priority is to maximize profits, stock prices and market share. Under the current paradigm, those priorities are in direct conflict with the best interests of insured people. They play the game so that they will always take in a lot more than they pay out. They wouldn't survive as businesses if they didn't. Thus we've seen premiums steadily rise to unaffordable levels for private insurance and to ever-increasing "employee contributions" for employer health plans, as high as twenty percent or more of our salaries, roughly four times what they were in 1999. The average family premium is now over $25,000 a year, of which workers pay about $6,300 directly (KFF). Deductibles and copays have skyrocketed, while covered procedures have largely declined. 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). The core operating principles of the current paradigm guarantee that this trend will continue indefinitely. The solution is to retire the current socio-economic paradigm, permanently, and replace it with one that will give rise to an empowering, synergistic, life-affirming "game" in which all will be able to thrive and each will be free to do so with no artificial obstacles. With this background, it's no surprise that it's not unusual for insurance companies to deny claims by default, leaving it to patients to appeal and challenge the denial, tying us up in bureaucratic red tape at a time when they can least accommodate it. There are special insurance company employees whose job it is to look for any legal way to deny claims. Insurance companies spin themselves as looking after our health and well-being. Yet insurance is only "necessary" because the current paradigm puts basic needs out of reach for most of us; and it also further burdens and drains us by driving medical costs up, and by adding to the amount of money we're forced to have to come up with every month. If it comes to the "bottom line" versus the best treatment for the patient, insurance companies will dictate what procedures healthcare providers can, and can not, give. Insurance companies' financial interests too often override the medical judgment of doctors: on the HealthCare.gov marketplace, insurers denied one in five in-network claims in 2023 (KFF, 2025). This is all an inevitable result of the paradigm under which we're operating. Imagine a factory that pollutes a town's water with waste, making it undrinkable, and then starts a daughter company that sells bottled water to the townspeople. That is the reality of for-profit healthcare. Insurance is but one example from among multitudes of parasitic industries, which, besides insurance, include banks, collections, advertising, marketing, lending, billing, fashion, cosmetics, lobbyists, real estate, stock brokerage, corporate law, financial services, pawn shops and many more industries. Banks effectively serve the interests of the modern feudal lords; but for us serfs and peasants, they are parasitic. After we give them our money, they decide how and when we can access it, and charge us fees for a wide range of excuses, generally charging the most effective penalties on those who can least absorb them. If a billionaire overdrafts an account, banks work with them. If you or I overdraft an account, they charge us escalating fees. They invest our money, making massive profits off of it, and give us a few pennies on every thousand dollars that they make off of it. You can only realistically expect to make enough returns from investments if you have at least a few hundred thousand or, preferably, a few million to invest for a decade or more. Those with that kind of currency have access to much higher returns on investments. The rest of us don't have that kind of money. A few shares here and there won't amount to enough to retire on or weather a major financial calamity. And most societies are structured so that one cannot function effectively without a bank account and credit cards. The primacy of currency in the current paradigm also spawns a mass of illegal industries as well: loan sharks, pimps, drug and gun runners, extortionists, blackmailers, scammers, identity thieves, and many similar criminals are literally brought into being by the conditions arising inevitably out of this paradigm. When we decommission this paradigm and replace it with one that works, these kinds of criminal activities will cease, like status symbols, due to having no existential basis, need, or reinforcement. Not all crime will

cease, of course; but crimes motivated by currency acquisition will lose their reason to exist. The paradigm generates legal and illegal parasitic industries, as surely as a candy bar on the ground draws ants. In a society where the extent of our wealth and power almost completely defines our options, degree of freedom and of respect that we're given, and our quality of life, wealth acquisition is strongly reinforced above all else. Just to survive, people will turn their ingenuity and creativity to coming up with an endless array of schemes and strategies to get as much money as possible, along with the power and privilege that it confers. In the new paradigms to come, currency in all of its forms will be obsolete, irrelevant, and unnecessary. It will cease to exist. A beneficial side effect will be that parasitic industries will die out quickly, deprived of their lifeblood and reason for existence. People in those industries will indeed lose their jobs; but in the new paradigm, every person will equally have access to all resources. People in that position will almost certainly find new occupations where they can leverage their skills. With education and training open to all, they will have nothing blocking them from studying the skill or profession of their choice. In this place, the loss of jobs won't cause hardship, only change, and mostly for the better. Those few who find themselves unable or unwilling to give up the idea of being wealthy and lording it over or bullying others will be treated with the same respect as anyone else, and the full range of mental health services will be open to them, as to anyone, should they want it. And like anyone else, they will have to be prevented from harming, harassing or threatening others, firmly, compassionately, and matter-of-factly. The post-Transition paradigms will be non-judgmentally self-scrutinizing, designed to adjust and adapt if we see unintended harmful behaviors being reinforced in ways that we did not foresee. We will catch such societal glitches quickly and correct them before they would have a chance to become endemic or entrenched.

Chapter 27: Tourism

Tourism in its most common forms can be one of the most destructive, disruptive forces a community ever faces. Superficially, it appears to bring benefits. New businesses open up, tourists come with money to spend, and new jobs are created. A whole constellation of businesses, both legal and illegal, proliferates. At first, it appears like an overwhelming benefit. Usually it is only after a new resort or other tourist facility has been operating for a while that the local people begin to fully realize the damage that's been done, though sometimes people and communities feel the harm early on. It's not unheard of for whole local communities to be forcefully driven out of their homes, farms and businesses to make room for a new tourist enterprise. Often, especially in developing countries, people are displaced by simply bulldozing their homes, leaving them no choice but to flee. Almost none of the displaced people experience improvements in their lives. A very few may get jobs in the new tourist facility, but those jobs are almost always poorly paid and treated, and they become essentially servants of the tourists, their autonomy and way of life destroyed. Local ecosystems are often badly damaged or destroyed in the process of setting up an running a tourist resort, often irreversibly, causing escalating damage in ripple effects impacting neighboring and nearby biomes, in order to create a lifeless caricature of them for tourist consumption. The economic effects are no less complex and devastating. Tourism almost inevitably gives rise to a rigidly-stratified social structure in which the top of the hierarchy is occupied by the massive corporations and the tourists themselves. Below them are a very few local people who become the minor royalty – far below the ones at the top in wealth and power and dominated by them, but far above all of their peers, whom they treat as peasants and serfs. The vast majority of local people end up working long hours under demanding and demeaning conditions for sub-living wages, or else can't find source of income at all. The cost of living skyrockets to adjust to what tourists can afford, putting it out of the reach of most residents. Imagine going from being an independent farmer, fisher, or artisan who wakes up one morning to a bulldozer bearing down on your home, to living in squalor in crowded, cramped conditions, working long hours and still unable to afford the basics of life. The hierarchy is fanatically enforced. Even in "developed" countries, where the socioeconomic impact is less severe, the cost of living in the area hosting a tourist resort reliably inflates beyond local people's ability to afford. Tourism has gotten so out of hand that even Mount Everest is often so crowded that climbers actually have to wait in line to reach the summit, like waiting in line for a ride at Disneyland. The presence of large numbers of tourists, who are unfamiliar with the local situation, inevitably damages the surroundings in a wide range of ways. Skills and occupations that for generations been a good living and part of the culture and economy, quickly disappear as they have no niche or place in the new tourist-centered economy. Of course, where there's money to be made, a whole host of parasitic industries pop up like mushrooms after a rain, including everything from souvenir shops to prostitutes and pimps, to drug sales, a mixture of legal and illegal businesses (Slavov, Scientific Review of Physical Culture, 2015). Tourism in effect is to a community roughly as methamphetamines or crack cocaine is to a human body. At first it seems invigorating, but over time it becomes devastating. The damage is generally irreversible. In the new synergistic, symbiotic, empowering paradigm after the Transition, tourism will change fundamentally. It's a positive thing and natural for people to want to travel, to experience different environments, cultures, and customs and learn from them as well as enjoy them. The current form of tourism doesn't really accomplish this, however. Tourists are given a scripted, stylized, watered-down caricatured representation of local culture and nature. A Hilton in one part of the world is not much different from a Hilton on the other side of the planet. In the new paradigm, how we do tourism will change completely. Fortunately there are already some examples of different models of tourism for us to learn from. Israeli Kibbutzim and Moshavim offer tourists the experience of working and sharing in the life of the community for extended periods, with historical and cultural events and tours included. It is not a separate, artificial, luxury-oriented resort or an elite separate reality. We can also look at programs like Cuba's Venceremos Brigades, the U.S. Peace Corps and Vista programs, Doctors Without Borders and others, in which the "tourist" experiences a mutually symbiotic relationship with the members of the community, contributing to it through one's work while being accepted into the authentic life of the people. Nobody is exploiting anybody. Nobody is profiting off of anybody at someone's expense. The experience strengthens the community, rather than weakening it as most current forms of tourism do. Tourism in the post-Transition paradigm will be a rich and mutually-beneficial experience for both tourists and their hosts. It will no longer be a show put on for people with money by underpaid, exploited people struggling to survive in order to generate profit for the modern feudal elite. It will evolve into a rich, symbiotic avenue for human and cultural interaction and understanding, dialog and sharing of ideas and perspectives, and mutually-beneficial sharing. New, currently unimagined forms of tourism will also emerge in the new paradigm. For tourists from Transitioned, currency-free countries to countries still using currency under the

current paradigm, there will be new challenges. We will have to get creative in creating social, diplomatic and economic protocols and interfaces between countries enjoying the new paradigm and those laboring under the current paradigm. The logistics will be worked out to mutual benefit. Tourists coming to Transitioned countries from countries under the current paradigm will be treated to a new experience. Once the world moves past initial uncertainty and fear of the unknown and realizes that new paradigm countries and their people are stable, honorable, respectful, and safe, people will be curious. For one thing, their visit will not require money. All facilities, meals, transportation, culture, entertainment and everything else will be freely there for them as it will be for citizens and residents. Instead of luxury, artificial simulations of the local culture and nature, and subservient bellhops, maids, cooks etc catering to them, they'll experience authentic interaction, participation, and immersion in the local culture, nature and people. They'll be warmly received, and will see first-hand the rich, fulfilling, mutually-empowering thriving life in the new paradigm. Most will be favorably impressed. They'll return to their countries sprouting the seeds of yearning for the same degree of freedom, empowerment, symbiosis, and thriving that they experienced on their vacations. Their friends and families will have questions. Their experiences in the new paradigm will make them ambassadors and advocates for the new paradigm, laying the foundation and creating the igniting sparks for Transitions in their own societies in their own countries. The most precious souvenir that such tourists will bring home is the new awareness of what is possible and how to achieve it. During and immediately after the Transition, the world and many in the Transitioning country may have fears and uncertainties, since many revolutions have, tragically, involved bloodshed and violence. Many won't know what to expect. It won't take long, however, for people to perceive the integrity, stability, principles, transparency and viability of the new paradigm. In addition, we can expect there to be negative, defamatory and fictitious propaganda against the Transition, put out by the current modern feudal lords and their enforcers and apologists. This will lengthen the apprehension of those lacking direct experience; but the new paradigm, and the people operating according to it, will speak for themselves in their actions, words, and the ways that they interact with other people and countries. The realities of the new paradigm will ultimately overcome and break down such apprehensions. For countries Transitioning to the new paradigm, tourism will become a major avenue of diplomacy and relationship-building in the world. Our international relations will undergo major changes as well. Some countries still operating under the current modern feudalism will be apprehensive or angry that countries in the new paradigm will cease to be "markets" to be exploited for profits. But the people who visit well see that life in the new paradigm is safe, sane, free (in every sense), more harmonious, and empowering. They will see the win-win dynamics in everyday life. A natural question is, how will citizens of Transitioned countries visit and function in countries still under the modern feudal paradigm? The solution to that will take great research, thought, and creativity. As we develop mutually-beneficial new trade agreements with such countries, there will be opportunities to craft mechanisms and to acquire foreign currency, which could be held a pool in very limited-function bank-like agencies for very specific occasions. When a citizen of a Transitioned country travels to a pre-Transition country, accounts will be created for them for the duration of their trip, with funds sufficient for their stated travel plans. When they return, the account is closed and any unused funds return to the pool. We will need strict laws, quotas and mechanisms in both points of entry or exit and in shipping channels to prevent ambitious members of current-paradigm societies from grabbing items available to all in the new paradigm to sell them for money in their currency-addicted country. While tourists are here, everything will be open to them, just as it will be for citizens and residents. When they leave, they will be reasonably limited on how much they can take out: perhaps a few items but not quantities clearly meant for sale. Those products, being generally superior to products produced under the modern feudal paradigm, will also be ambassadors and advocates. International travel will pose unique challenges. All modes of international travel based in Transitioned countries will be open to citizens and permanent residents at no cost, in both directions. Foreign nationals from countries still using currency will be charged at the lower end of the scale for both ingress and egress, but will travel at no cost within the host country. These funds can be added to the foreign travel pool for residents. The new incarnation of tourism will enrich both tourists and host communities, and will act as a medium for expansion of the principles of the new paradigm from country to country, like the spread of a new technology or artform.

PART 2: TREATMENT

Chapter 28: The Transition

> **Clarification**
>
> This chapter describes the earlier overnight-transition model, which has been superseded by a gradual, community-based roadmap. The passage below that refers to physically fighting opponents reflects an earlier formulation. The current position: Transition does not initiate or employ violence. An individual may 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.
>
> Additional passages later in this chapter — comparing political opponents to impaired people, proposing "reservations," and characterizing dissent as mental illness — have also been superseded. They are preserved with strikethrough markup and followed by clarifications.

The Transition will end the current dysfunctional, unsustainable, profoundly destructive socio-economic paradigm and replace it with a fully functional, synergistic, empowering symbiotic paradigm that will facilitate every one of us to thrive in a win-win-win, dynamic, self-evaluating paradigm designed to evolve and improve over time. Untold unnecessary suffering will end. Like in all beginnings, we will experience many challenges as we implement the new paradigm, learning as we go, making some mistakes and learning from them. We must go into it determined to see it through and not be discouraged or dissuaded by difficult or unexpected challenges. We will do best if we keep in mind that, while the new paradigm will eliminate or greatly reduce strife, inequity, disempowerment and many ills of our societies, it is not a magic pill that will make all problems go away. We must be prepared to do the hard work needed to realize this most worthy and beneficial cause, and never abandon the goals. Our goal is vibrant human societies in which all are thriving, empowered, and symbiotically strengthening and supporting each other. Many well-intended revolutions end up punishing, vilifying, and even brutalizing those clinging to the old regime. We must not let this happen in our Transition. In crafting a compassionate, empowering society, we must keep in mind that some people will be displaced from their jobs, making them confused or afraid of the Transition. Some will oppose it vehemently because they are heavily invested or strongly identify with the old paradigm. People are adapted to the paradigm that they grew up in. While we will need to be clear and resolute in preventing a forced return of the old systems, we must treat those who resist with compassion. Their whole world will be changing. That’s scary. We must treat all people with respect and dignity, and exert ourselves to the utmost to help such people find niches to thrive as valued members of the community.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Even if those who oppose the Transition put us in the position to have to physically fight them, we must do so with the goal of minimum harm with the goal of neutralizing the threat, never with intent to punish or exact revenge.

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 the threat is gone, we will render aid and support to all wounded, with no blame or grudge. Let us learn from the difference between how the Allies treated the Germans after World War I, and how they treated the Germans and Japanese after World War II. The punitive terms ending WWI helped set the stage for WWII. The respectful terms and reconstruction ending WWII helped lay the ground for decades of peace and prosperity in West Germany and Japan, as well as among the Allies. Based on experience from revolutions and paradigm changes in the past, many who cling to the old paradigm will be terrified that they’ll be attacked, purged, and punished. We must make sure that that does not happen. Such acts would destroy all that we seek to build: an inclusive, empowering, compassionate renaissance society of highly-realized people thriving in symbiosis with each other. None must be excluded.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

As we act to prevent such people from re-imposing their dominance, we must do so with the same frame of mind with which we would take the car keys from an impaired family member to prevent them from driving, and offer support in adjusting to and finding their place in the new paradigm.

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.

It will be important to do our best to identify, in advance, jobs and sectors that will be displaced or made obsolete: the financial industry, marketing, advertising, corporate law, and many other whole sectors will cease to exist. Those jobs will disappear.

Yet remember that there will be no need for currency.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Every person or social unit will own their own home by default.

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

Access to all resources will be direct, free and unobstructed. Job loss will not impact survival or overall quality of life.

As many jobs will disappear, many new ones will come into being in whole new sectors: alternative energy, infrastructure, agriculture, the arts and sciences, and many more fields will grow tremendously. Many who will be displaced from their former jobs, will find their skills and expertise can be adapted to new niches opening up. Since education and training will be open to all, there'll be no obstacles to learning new skills, expertise, and trades. We will greatly expand social and psychological support systems, making professional counseling available to all who are having challenges finding their way in the new paradigm. No one will be left to struggle alone in an adversarial, unsupportive environment.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

If there turn out to be some few individuals who are literally incapable of being fulfilled or adapting to the new paradigm, we might consider setting up small reservations where small communities can function under a limited version of the old paradigm, subject of course to being prevented from imposing it beyond their community of consenting individuals. There will be no "re-education" brainwashing programs.

The few who cannot function without having wealth and power over others, are suffering from a mental illness or personality disorder. We will treat them with respect and compassion, and offer them the best life possible while preventing them from imposing their impulses upon others. They will not be harmed or disrespected, nor will they be allowed to harm others. The goal is to forge a society that has well-matched places for every one of our vastly diverse population, marginalizing or excluding none.

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

> **Clarification (September 2026)**
>
> The passages above — including the car-keys analogy, "reservations," and the characterization of opponents as mentally ill — used language that conflated political disagreement with psychological disorder. 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.

Conduct is different from belief. 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 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 based on demonstrable harmful conduct, not beliefs or personality types.

Persistent harmful conduct. When a person repeatedly imposes their will on others through coercion or abuse of position, Transition responds first with support — mediation, counseling, community accountability. If the conduct persists, the minimum necessary restraint is applied based on documented conduct, not diagnosis or political views, subject to independent review.

Voluntary pluralist communities. Adults may freely create or join communities organized around any social model — hierarchical, religious, anarchist, or any other arrangement — provided participation is genuinely voluntary, every person retains the practical right to leave without penalty, no one is subjected to coercion or brutalization, and the community does not impose its model on outsiders. Research such as Christopher Browning's study of Reserve Police Battalion 101 (*Ordinary Men*, 1992) demonstrates that hierarchical authority structures can override individual moral judgment and entrap even voluntary participants, so independent external safeguards and regular confidential check-ins must be maintained for all such communities.

No operational planning of violence. People may hold and express any view, including opposition to Transition. What is not protected is direct incitement to imminent harm, conspiracy, or operational planning of attacks — in any direction.

The goal remains: a society with well-matched places for every one of our vastly diverse population, marginalizing or excluding none.

Chapter 29: The Transition – Guiding Principles and Criteria

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).

When we transition from the current feudalistic power structure to the new peer-based symbiotic socioeconomic paradigm, we must be clear about what our guiding principles, criteria, goals and priorities are and be guided by them constantly. The most well-intended paradigm can devolve into an oppressive, dogmatic distortion of itself if guiding principles are missing or ignored and the effects of implementation on people is not taken into account. No system, religion, ideology or philosophy is immune. It's happened with tragic frequency in human history.

Karl Marx saw religion twisted to justify the oppressive power of and abuses by feudal lords, and set out to expunge it from our psyche. His goal was to empower and free people from manipulation via religion. Then his own philosophy was in turn warped into an oppressive distortion. Every religion and ideology has at some time persecuted every other.

During the Cold War, many brutal, murderous dictatorships were actively supported by both the United States (in the name of Democracy) and the Soviet Union (In the name of Communism and Socialism). Democracy has been used countless times as spin, under the term "free enterprise," to justify promoting the interests of mammoth corporations at the expense of local working people around the world. This routinely comes at the expense of the will and well-being of the people in the affected areas.

At our current level of maturity as a species, we need some kind of laws and principles to prevent us from descending into chaos on one hand, or being ruled and terrorized by bullies on the other hand. Let us not confuse anarchy with chaos. When we are ready for it, anarchy could be the highest form of human society: one in which people overwhelmingly interact respectfully and supportively without the need of formal laws and enforcement to make them. Perhaps the new paradigm after the Transition will start us on the path to being ready at some point.

For now, we still need laws and guidelines. Which ones will serve us best, and how do we define the criteria for what that means? To be considered viable, a law, implementation or policy must foster one or more of the criteria below, without compromising any of them:

1) Fosters the life, safety, freedom, well-being, empowerment, and quality of life for all individuals and subpopulations. Actively promotes psychological and sociological research to better understand what promotes the above and how best to translate findings into practical expression. 2) Fosters symbiotic, synergistic cooperative interactions and does not promote or reinforce hierarchical interactions and power structures. 3) Implements sustainable practices in achieving quality of life. This includes phasing out environmentally destructive technologies and practices in favor of sustainable, renewable ones; re-casting energy generation, food production and other suitable endeavors based on distributed small scale, community and individual based production in place of the current centralized large-scale for-profit models; ending built-in obsolescence; ending the need for currency, thus ending the self-devouring cycle of forced overproduction and overconsumption that's needed to drive profits under the current system. Goods and services will need to base themselves on real, authentic needs of the people, rather than on the artificially induced "needs" currently used. For example, people will generate their own authentic, individual "fashion statements" and aesthetics, rather than consuming products that they were programmed to buy via advertising and social reinforcers.

Profit motive will be replaced with pride of workmanship and striving for excellence and the access of every person to goods and services that satisfy their needs and desires. All goods and services will be the best that the state of the art allows, will be designed to be easily serviced and easily upgradeable to new emerging technologies. The new paradigm will reinforce these behaviors; thus they will predominate. Only things that contribute to the thriving of human beings and communities will remain in service; those that don't, will phase out.

Everything from cars to clothes to electronics to food will be the best possible implementations, designed to last as long as possible and to be easily upgradeable. Once everyone's needs are met for a given product, production will scale down

to just that needed to cover products damaged, defective, or needed due to population growth. Across all industries and sectors, this pattern will quickly lead to a reduction of the needed work-week, leading to dramatic increases in quality of life for everybody. Having more free time and less oppressive work environments, people will be more able to pursue their dreams and talents, which will in turn translate into greater contributions of individuals to their societies.

We will also greatly reduce our energy and other resource consumption rates: yet another beneficial effect of the new paradigm. More efficient technologies and materials will be universally available. Waste will plummet.

4) Phases out and eliminates hierarchical social structures; replaces them with peer-based, collaborative, synergistic ones. Since it's been established that hierarchies reinforce and magnify our most destructive potentials, we can see that in any hierarchical structure, at least some of those who are high up on the pyramid, will inevitably abuse their power. In order to initialize a truly thriving society of thriving individuals, we will need to eliminate as many hierarchical social structures as functionally possible.

Recent psychological studies and controlled experiments have confirmed and clarified what we've all observed since pre-history: power corrupts, even a little power. Researchers have observed that the very fact of being in a position of power over others, measurably inhibits our capacity for compassion and empathy. This happens, regardless of how subjects come to such a position. Susceptibility and severity vary from person to person, but few if any are immune.

The upshot of this knowledge is that hierarchical social structures reinforce our most destructive potentials and suppress our most constructive ones. In other words, hierarchical social structures work against the best of our psychological makeup, and so are incompatible with an optimally empowering society of thriving, empowered individuals living in harmonious relationship with one another. The current dominant feudalistic socioeconomic paradigm is severely hierarchical; thus it is not viable and must be replaced if we are ever to achieve thriving societies of thriving, empowered, fulfilled individuals engaged in democratic self-rule.

People who abuse positions of power aren't "bad" people acting badly. They are ordinary people responding to the operant conditioning present in the societies they live in. These operating principles reinforce and amplify destructive, hurtful, harmful behaviors to the point where they become the norm. It affects CEO's, functionaries, managers, supervisors, and soldiers with any rank above Private.

In a hierarchy, power cascades down through every level, and nearly everyone holds some power over someone. 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.

While some individuals are "natural leaders" due to big-picture perceptions and the ability to bring people together, motivate and inspire them, experiencing that position of influence or leadership will tend to inhibit their empathy and compassion. The leadership qualities that brought them to a position of influence will wane in favor of egotistical, arbitrary exercise of power. If this happens in a defined hierarchy, the dysfunction becomes set in stone. If, instead, there is no formal hierarchy, no ranks or special perks or privileges to go with them, then we expect such a person to decline in influence and "power" as their empathy is inhibited, and someone else whose empathy and compassion are intact to take their place. After a normal "reset period," we expect the person's capacity for empathy and compassion to recover. Thus, in the absence of any formally defined hierarchy, the inhibition of empathy should be limited in scope and duration, and reversible. Informal hierarchies can still form in groups that have no formal structure, as Jo Freeman warned (Freeman, 1972); rotating roles and keeping decisions transparent are the safeguards. It goes without saying, that anybody who tries to gain power or influence by bullying, manipulation, or power of personality will find no power positions to grab, and will be limited by an unreceptive social environment. Along these lines, we will want to integrate this knowledge into school curricula and allocate significant resources to research to better understand our inner workings, in order to better craft our operating principles to support and facilitate human happiness, well-being, and symbiosis.

5) Maximizes the mutually-beneficial relationship between individual and community, empowering the individual to develop their passions and talents, leading to them making their best contributions to their communities in a positive feedback loop. 6) Fosters a pluralistic socioeconomic landscape that allows a range of variations of the new paradigm to

thrive harmoniously side-by-side. This may include kibbutz and moshav-like collectives, individual family units similar to what is the current norm (but without the socioeconomic hierarchy or need for currency), tribal cultures, experimental social paradigms, and even small communities of consenting adults who are unable to feel at home in the new paradigm. They will be able to carry on the old paradigm in small communities as long as they don't try to expand it into non-consenting communities or individuals. 7) Is set up to be self-evaluating and adaptive, identifying and strengthening its features that are working in terms of human happiness, well-being, empowerment and harmony, and identifying features that aren't working and working to replace them with laws, policies, practices and mechanisms that will work. The new paradigm will generate a culture where individual and community re-evaluation will be reinforced and become the norm, rather than the reflexive homeostasis typical of most current cultures. When it's found that something works for some people and not for others, then restructuring will occur to accommodate the multiple variations, instead of arbitrarily attempting to make everybody fit one mold. Redefines definitions and concepts of ownership, legally, institutionally, and culturally, to guarantee and sanctify the right of each individual, family or other social unit to own their home, workplace (collectively), and other resources that they directly use.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Makes it legally impossible for one person or social unit to own or control resources that are used by others, or to obstruct or block the direct access of such resources to those who use them. Requires persons or social entities who now "own" multiple facilities to choose one as their own and release the others to those who directly use them. Redefines public resources such as roads, utilities, manufacturing facilities, distribution centers and such as publicly owned, along the lines of the pre-Medieval concept of the "commons." Defines such facilities, such as power generators, large farms and the like as the joint property of those who work them, to be jointly governed by democratic vote or consensus, transparently to and overseen by the public. Designates hotels, motels and the like as public inns, freely open to all travelers up to their capacity. Thus, people who must travel frequently won't be negatively impacted by having to give up a second, third or fourth home. Defines all non-public land not currently occupied (including what are currently holdings of wealthy people and corporations but not being used for anything directly or as "investment properties") as open for use by individuals or social units who need a place, while placing sensible limits on how much can be claimed by one individual or group and establishing equitable legal mechanisms for filing claims and resolving disputes between multiple claimants. Allocates all former exclusive luxury facilities, such as executive lounges and apartments, private or corporate jets and yachts, as shared property for use by all members of the social unit or community in the context of which these resources exist.

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

Zoning laws will mostly stand, since it's not in anybody's best interest to locate, for example, a steel refinery, an elementary school, and a residential neighborhood in too close proximity to one another. 8) Establishes legal requirements for sustainability and environmental stewardship, ensuring that activities damaging to the environment do not occur. 9) Legally codifies the fundamental rights of every individual and family to a safe, suitable place to live, access to transportation, food, water, medical care, education and all other resources.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

10) Functionally and legally abolishes all forms of currency, along with all institutions and transactional modes that require it.

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

11) Clarifies that one person's rights do not include the right to control another's rights, establishing boundaries and limits to ensure that it becomes difficult to impossible to infringe on one another's rights. For example, you will have the right to not eat pork, but not the right to restrict my access to it. I will have the right to dress according to my aesthetics or beliefs, but not to compel you to do so.

Chapter 30: Cultural and Philosophical Precedents

In planning and implementing the Transition, it is important to focus primarily on what we're creating, our goals and priorities, not on the current paradigm that we'll be phasing out and replacing. We already know that that paradigm is nonviable. We will succeed best if we are proactive, rather than reactive, focusing on where we're going. We already know where we've been. We must start with a fresh canvas.

Decisions and actions made from a mindset of reacting against a nonviable or destructive paradigm or regime, often have mixed or negative results. Often one evil is thrown out in favor of another evil. We will need to avoid "anything is better than this" thinking.

We will benefit from examining information and ideas from a wide range of sources, from scientific papers to such documents as "Das Kapital" by Karl Marx, the U.S. Constitution, and *The Green Book* by Muammar Gaddafi (1975), whose proposals for direct democracy, such as basic people's congresses in which every adult takes part in decisions, are worth studying with two cautions. The book also argues that a society's law should come from custom and religion, which this project does not share; we favor law made openly and democratically by the people it governs. And 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. That does not make the idea itself wrong. Regardless of whether or not the principles put forth in such documents were actually faithfully implemented, if the concepts are valid and work when actually applied, then they need to be taken into account. Nor are such ideas any one author's: assemblies in which everyone takes part, and work among partners rather than employees, appear in New England town meetings, Switzerland's *Landsgemeinde* in Glarus and Appenzell Innerrhoden, the councils of the Haudenosaunee, hunter-gatherer bands, the assembly of ancient Athens, worker cooperatives such as Mondragón, the kibbutz, the Paris Commune of 1871, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre since 1989, and the Zapatista communities' rotating councils (see Chapter 12 and Documented Alternatives). We will do well to look far and wide to learn from individuals and cultures across the world in space and time.

We'll also need to apply our own creativity and problem-solving skills to devise new solutions and implementations that may have never come up before the Transition. Our success will require us to remain self-aware, inquisitive and creative. We must never put ourselves or each other into a box or become narrow, closed-minded and dogmatic.

There are living and historical examples of paradigms with similar principles to what we will be implementing. The kibbutzim in Israel are one example. The author has also lived with a small semi-nomadic community that prefers to remain unnamed. In the author's experience, their culture is egalitarian, casteless, governed by a non-adversarial consensus process, symbiotic and mutually-empowering. When a decision has to be made, everyone gathers, including children; each person speaks in turn, and nobody interrupts. This closely resembles the talking-circle traditions documented among many Indigenous peoples. The value they place on this way of life is evidenced by their conscious shared decision, many generations ago, to go to great lengths and make great sacrifices to keep it intact. In their case, this paradigm wasn't implemented after a Transition from something else. It has always been their culture, which they value in the face of the many alternatives that they see in the world. It comes "naturally" to them. For us who will Transition from the current paradigm, a learning curve will need to be navigated as we learn how to operate along those principles. There is good evidence that it is achievable.

There is a web site devoted to Nonviolent Communication (Center for Nonviolent Communication) which is a good resource for people who want to learn the interpersonal communication skills that we'll need. There are most likely other similar resources as well. We'll do best if we share such resources and make liberal use of them.

If we scour the Internet, libraries, academic institutions and such, we will find multiple sources of techniques, principles, observations, knowledge, failed and successful experiments, and more that will help us greatly in filling in the details in implementing our new paradigm.

While it's true that a paradigm like this includes some uncharted territory, there are definite sources of information that will be supremely valuable as starting points from which to learn. Others have trod some of these trails before, and we can learn a lot from them.

Chapter 31: The New Paradigm Community and the Political System – A New Kind of Relationship

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 planning and executing the Transition, it's vitally important to be very clear that it is not an overthrow of the government, the Constitution, or the rule of law. We will be replacing the current, dysfunctional socio-economic paradigm with a new one embodying the democratic principles of the foundational documents in economic terms. This will form an empowering, symbiotic social dynamic that will empower every one of us to thrive on a model of win-win, rather than the current model of win-lose.

We will not disrupt the operation of government and the people in it, though we will free them of lobbyists and modern feudal lords who currently do interfere in their performance of their jobs. After the Transition, there will be no ultra-wealthy lords or corporations to bribe, threaten, manipulate, intimidate, or blackmail them. They will at last be able to focus on the jobs for which they are elected. Reinforcers for corruption will be dramatically reduced. We will probably see a whole new breed of human beings running for elected office.

This is certainly true for countries which have foundational documents, based on concepts of government of, by and for the people with egalitarian safeguards of civil rights.

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In dictatorships (secular and religious), monarchies and other paradigms in which the people are disempowered and disenfranchised under a rigid, abusive hierarchy with no or insufficient guarantees rights and safety, the overthrow of both governmental and socioeconomic power structures (which may be one and the same) will be necessary.

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.

A few countries, including the social-democratic Scandinavian countries among others, which operate using paradigms that produce a thriving, symbiotic society of thriving, empowered individuals, may not need to Transition, or may naturally do so as the countries around them Transition.

In short, the details and needs of each country's Transition must be determined from within, based on each country's internal dynamics, culture, unique history and operating principles. We must resist the temptation to attempt to bring about "cookie-cutter" templates for Transition to pressure everybody to follow. Guiding principles: yes; dogmatic conformism: no.

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Realistically we expect that some will attempt to suppress or derail the Transition by force and violence. Legislators, executives, or judges may try to define Transitionaries as terrorists or lawbreakers, or pass new laws tailored specifically to provide a mechanism for arresting or attacking us. Military, paramilitary, or law enforcement may be ordered to stop us. We must be prepared to resist firmly, uncompromisingly and unwaveringly, to defend ourselves and each other, physically if there is no other option; but we must never initiate violence under any circumstances. We must never comply with such attempts to reassert the old power structure, but resist resolutely but without malice towards our opponents. Once we have neutralized a threat, by the least harmful means possible, we must immediately render aid compassionately to the injured, regardless of their affiliation. There must be no displays of cruelty, punitive measures, or vengefulness. Our strongest discipline will be required of us, and we will have to support each other in resisting destructive or hurtful motivations. This is the same way that we will respond to

CEO's and other former feudal lords who try to reassert their dominance. They will find that there will no longer be a socioeconomic pyramid for them to rule. There will be only a consensual symbiosis of peers.

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

The sharply pyramidal socioeconomic power structure of the current paradigm is ruled by modern feudal lords who were not chosen by, and are not responsible to, the people. They almost always parasitize and disempower the people, who have no recourse or channel for remedy, no way to replace or recall the feudal lords. This power structure overpowers and subsumes democratic governmental mechanisms, converting them into enforcers and enactors of the will of the modern feudal lords. Thus this socioeconomic paradigm is incompatible with democratic government of, by, and for the people and must be treated as a life-threatening malignancy and replaced.

Once the Transition is complete, elected officials will have only one set of voices: those of the people for whom they work, whom they are entrusted to serve. Those voices will still often disagree with one another, but there will be no groups or individuals privileged above or below others.

While we will not interfere with the functioning of government, the Transition will drastically change the environment in which politicians operate. In the absence of hierarchical power structures, currency, and the reinforcers of corruption, we'll see corruption lose most of its incentives and shrink dramatically.

Under the current paradigm, the ultra-wealthy modern feudal lords at the top of the pyramid, and their corporations, have direct channels of communication with Presidents, Premiers, Prime Ministers and all kinds of representatives. We, the modern serfs and peasants, in contrast, have no such access. Elected officials perceive us primarily as statistics. To some degree, this is due to the large number of people who want or need to talk to their officials, too many to realistically be able to accommodate. But the modern wealthy feudal lords are able to get around this. Their voices are heard one-on-one over expensive dinners. Our voices are heard as background noise.

In the current paradigm, one's rights, options, access to resources, degree of freedom and of respect afforded one, quality of life and more are directly, rigidly determined by one's place in the socioeconomic hierarchy. When that pyramid is no more, we will all have the same access to resources, options, and, yes, those elected by us to serve the good of us, the people.

Under the current socioeconomic paradigm, it is virtually impossible for politicians to be in touch with the people whom they are charged to serve. In the new paradigm, people serving in government will be more keenly aware of their responsibility to the people who elected to them. There will be no competing input to confuse or distract them. Their very challenging jobs will become much less difficult. With the dissolution of hierarchical power structures, people in government will have to adapt to the fact that they are peers serving their peers, not rulers ruling over subjects. The very concept of leadership will be fundamentally redefined.

In the new paradigm, there will be no need for any form of currency. All persons will have direct access to all of their needs. None will be privileged above or below another. There will be nothing that a potential lobbyist could use as inducement or "perks" to influence politicians.

There will probably still be some lobbyists, but of a very different sort. The new breed of lobbyist will speak to elected officials to express the authentic needs, feelings, and positions of the various groups and subgroups that make up a society. There may be advocates for youth, the elderly, artists, laborers, residents of different areas, etc. The only message they will be able to deliver, however, is the concerns they are sent to express, to present merits of their arguments.

The Prime Minister or legislator will still have a challenging task, though much more straightforward than it is under the current paradigm. Making things happen will be much more direct and efficient. There will be no concerns, struggles and machinations over funding or the lack of it. If a bridge needs to be repaired and the materials are physically available, it will be built. If a new hospital, school, or distribution center is needed and the materials are available, it will be built.

The new paradigm will bring the level of disparity between different individuals and groups very close to zero. All members of the community will have the same degree of access to their elected officials. None will be privileged above or below the other.

In the new paradigm, the populace will not be conditioned to respond to advertising (as a form of propaganda. There will be no advertising. Such a populace will be more empowered, self-actualized, and resistant to propagandistic manipulation. Such people will naturally be more engaged with government and more inclined to hold their representatives responsible for their actions. Bad-faith politicians will tend to have very short careers. Opportunities and reinforcements for corruption will be close to nonexistent.

Post-Transition politicians will have to be keenly aware of their roles as servants of us, the people, not as privileged rulers over us. The previous stratification will be absent. Thus, their jobs will be much simpler than they are now. They will be responsible to the people, and to only the people. Our voices will still disagree about many things, and they will still have to honestly try to make the wisest considerations and compromises. If they fail to serve the public good, they will be voted out, recalled, or impeached. They will be relieved of the intense pressures and conflicts that new beset them, between the good and will of the people, and the will and interests of the modern feudal lords of the economic power structure.

One benefit of the new paradigm will be the end of taxation. When there's no currency and no need for it, taxation becomes unnecessary and serves no purpose. Resources will be directly accessible.

Elected officials will still have challenging issues to resolve: how to manage resources that are actually in short supply, deal with rising sea level and climate change, and resolve conflicting needs and claims of different groups and more will still demand their best skills. Such issues will be resolved among peers, not between a privileged aristocracy and a disempowered populace.

With a very different sociopolitical environment, politics will almost certainly attract people of a very different mentality than now. People driven by genuine passion for serving and improving life for the people, will predominate. The behaviors of such people will be strongly reinforced in the new paradigm, which will strengthen them. New political behaviors will be of a kind that reinforces and nourishes the new, symbiotic, synergistic win-win empowering paradigm, to the benefit of each and all.

We will still have to be ever vigilant for the possible dangerous emergence of toxic, charismatic, domineering demagogues of various stripes. In the new paradigm, there will be far less reinforcement for such personalities to form, yet given the wide range and variation among us, some such will still come along.

The occurrence of such aberrations will likely be a lot fewer and farther between than now, for several reasons.

First of all, the current paradigm doesn't recognize the aggressive, domineering, low-empathy personality it lionizes as the "alpha" male or female for what it is. It 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). Yet instead of being recognized and helped, the current socioeconomic paradigm (and the cultures shaped by it) strongly reinforces, lionizes, and promotes such behaviors as success stories, holding such persons up as role models. Such people tend to rise to the highest echelons of the socioeconomic power structure. Others are drawn to these individuals and become their vassals, the executors, enforcers, and enactors of their will.

Thus the pathology is entrenched and institutionalized in stone. Those lacking such characteristics and low in the socioeconomic hierarchy are seen as "losers" and looked down upon. In such rigidly hierarchical cultures, people are conditioned to defer to those above them in the hierarchy and to lord it over those below them. Those at the top are reinforced in exercising unrestrained control. Criminal acts that would land any of us serfs or peasants in prison, far more often go unpunished in a feudal lord.

Many such cultures also suffer from a concept of "respect the office." Even if the person holding a position of power is incompetent, abusive, corrupt or otherwise destructive, one is forcefully expected to obey and defer to them and not to challenge them. This makes as much sense as allowing a drunk pilot to continue flying the airliner, just because he or she is the Captain. In such intensely hierarchical cultures, many people develop a conditioned predisposition to defer to,

and fall in line behind, such domineering personalities. In the post-Transition world, such personalities won't be lionized or reinforced. Where the drive to dominate has become a compulsion, it will be met with understanding and help, as a gambling compulsion would be, not with contempt. People caught in it will receive the same firmness and compassion we would offer anyone struggling with a psychological condition.

Another co-factor in the vulnerability to charismatic demagogues in the current paradigm is our constant immersion in and inundation with advertising, to which we are conditioned to respond from childhood. Part of this phenomenon is the programmed conformism that creates in us a "need" to keep up with the latest fashion, technology, and trends. This conditioned response mechanism is easily exploited by such domineering personalities to sell at least a significant percentage of us on the rightness and justification of their claim to power. In the new post-Transition world, this conditioning will quickly fade, as it will no longer be reinforced in any way, and will have no existential support. Thus we can reasonably expect that such a demagogue will find a much less susceptible audience.

Yet another point of vulnerability in the current paradigm is the way every one of us is kept isolated in a state of perpetual siege in a socioeconomic reality where we must constantly struggle to come up with currency to ransom our lives and stave off the unstated default negation of our right to exist. We can feel powerless and overwhelmed. When an assertive personality comes on the scene who promises to make things better if we just let them lead us, it can become compelling for many.

After the Transition, all of the above factors and mechanisms will be absent. We will, of course, have to be alert and heighten our awareness of ourselves and of our responses. Long-held habits and conditioned survival responses will take time to go to extinction, especially in a societal context. With no reinforcement, the old patterns will steadily weaken and fade; in the meantime, we'll need to consciously, purposefully, diligently create the patterns and implementation of the new paradigm, which will strongly reinforce collaboration, co-operation with acceptance of diversity, symbiosis, and synergy. Let us keep in mind, patiently, that reinforced behaviors predominate, while non-reinforced behaviors trend towards extinction. That is a scientific reality that we can apply to our advantage in initializing an empowering, thriving society emerging into a new Renaissance.

Those of us who are already of age at the time of the Transition will still carry the old patterns of the current paradigm – for a time. With no reinforcement and no relevance or survival value in the new paradigm, they will fade in time. In support of this cultural transition, we will benefit from vibrant, active public discourse to raise and maintain our own self-observation to help further facilitate the shift. We will probably want to develop counseling modalities to assist those who find the Transition challenging, to ease and facilitate their finding authentic niches to thrive in the new paradigm.

Generations coming of age during and after the Transition will not be saddled with the task of having to overcome and transform the dysfunctional survival mechanisms acquired under the current paradigm. They will be the first generation to be fully empowered, free and self-realized.

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Those of you living in countries with freely elected governments may be wondering why we should take on the daunting task of overthrowing and replacing the socioeconomic paradigm, instead of using civil disobedience, strikes, demonstrations, petitions, referenda and other mechanisms of civil government to pressure elected executives and legislators to initiate the needed changes.

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

Such strategies have been effective at various times in many countries around the world. Yet the success of such tactics depended on a strong current in the zeitgeist of a sense of urgency and priority in curbing abuses and advancing human rights, social justice and equity. An aggressive, objective, fearless press dedicated to finding and publishing the truth (regardless of whom it may please or upset) was also crucial to the success of such movements in initiating meaningful change. When both of these conditions are absent, these strategies are largely ineffective.

These approaches often work where the following conditions are present:

1) The press and all media are unfettered, aggressively truth-seeking, nonpolitical and objective. 2) Open and free public discourse on controversial subjects is safe and possible, in a social climate of mutually-respectful dialog, and where all parties earnestly seek the betterment of society and all of the people in it. 3) A social climate in which many people are strongly outraged by, and unwilling to tolerate, corruption, abuse of power, injustice and disempowerment. 4) A governmental paradigm in which the government is in some major way beholden and responsive to the people.

Examples where this was the case include the Civil Rights movement in the United States, the Indian independence struggle, and the women's wage parity general strike in Iceland.

Where the preconditions are missing, such tactics are almost always ineffective. Examples include Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, the Soviet Union under Stalin, Spain under Franco, Tiananmen Square in China, and the current situations in Hong Kong, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.

In such contexts, the oppressive regime controls the media. All dissent and protest is violently, brutally and lethally suppressed. If dissent is reported in the press at all, it is presented as the actions of criminals, traitors or terrorists. Whole cities have been obliterated and millions have been murdered under such regimes with little or no consequences.

Currently, in the United States and other similar countries, traditional tactics for nonviolently forcing social change have been rendered largely ineffective in the following ways:

1) The modern feudal lords and their corporations are highly skilled in the use of propaganda to manipulate the populace, built upon their experience in advertising and marketing. Most media are now mega corporations owned by mega corporations. Thus, despite the appearance of free press, the press rarely reports anything much that goes against corporate interests. Protests tend to be underreported, not reported, or reported with a negative spin on protesters. 2) People are so constantly inundated with stories about violence, human rights abuses, injustice, inequity, and corruption that they are, much as soldiers can become desensitized to the violence of war. People have become numb to, and unmoved by evils that, short years ago, would have galvanized them into action.

Psychologically, the effect of overexposure to violent content such as is common in both news and fiction has been shown to lead to indifference and apathy toward the suffering of others (Bushman and Anderson, 2009). Furthermore, the sensory overload that we live immersed in, further leads to a kind of emotional and mental paralysis. It's more than the brain can process.

The kinds of demonstrations, strikes and other tactics that were very effective in the 1960's, 1970's and even before, now barely register. People are chronically overloaded and overstressed. Our personal struggles tend to overshadow bigger societal issues in our hearts and minds, even when those issues directly affect us. We just don't have enough left at the end of the day, to engage bigger issues.

Modern feudal lords have also become very adept at "counter-insurgency" tactics, including infiltrating peaceful demonstrations with fifth-columnists tasked with initiating violence, vandalism, and other behaviors meant to discredit the whole movement, setting the stage for media and government to portray demonstrators as criminals or terrorists. 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.

In the current highly-charged and divided U.S. sociopolitical climate, demonstrations for justice and humanity are always met by counter-demonstrations. Sooner or later someone throws a punch or an object, a brawl ensues, and the message is lost in the chaos, which is all the public usually sees.

To make matters worse, since 2016 more than a dozen U.S. states have made trespass on or interference with pipelines and other "critical infrastructure" a felony, with fines of up to a million dollars for organizations found to have conspired in such protests (Brennan Center, 2021), and Oklahoma has granted criminal and civil immunity to drivers who injure or kill people while "fleeing from a riot" (Associated Press, 2021). However much such laws strain constitutional protections of speech and assembly, when the feudalistic economic power structure conflicts with democratic modes of government, the interests of the former nearly always prevail.

People are also diverted from concerted, purposeful action to bring about fundamental change, by the myriad distractions and diversions easily available to us. A concert, movie, sporting event, new purchase, or episode of our favorite TV show takes our focus away from difficult, often overwhelming issues. Outrage over a celebrity's or politician's personal foibles and screw-ups takes the place of outrage over actual, consequential abuses and systemic dysfunction of the socioeconomic paradigm. Most of us don't have the time or energy to be outraged at both. This is by design. It also keeps us spending time and currency on those products (thus supporting the feudalistic power structure), rather than on forcing a change in paradigm.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Since pretty much all previously-effective modes of socioeconomic change have been largely neutralized, out only option is to take direct action, from the ground up, to (non-violently) force a change of the fundamental paradigm upon which most of society's functioning is based.

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

The current sociopolitical situation in the United States has revealed a vulnerability that wasn't foreseen by the founders of our nation. The checks and balances built into the Constitution assume that two or more parties will balance each other in the various branches of government, and that all involved parties act with the good of the nation and the people in mind, even if they disagree on many things. In the past four years, however, we've seen what happens when one party, single-mindedly motivated by power-lust, greed, and fanaticism, gains control of all three branches of government and proceeds to abuse them as instruments for solidifying their power and blocking all opposition. This scenario brought us perilously close to an authoritarian takeover by extremist, fanatical, power-hungry extremists. The danger is not past. We will need to quickly strengthen and reinforce the checks and balances in place to prevent this kind of coup attempt from having any chance of succeeding.

The United States has a major impact on the rest of the world. An authoritarian takeover there would embolden other similar actions elsewhere. On the other hand, the Transition of the United States to the new symbiotic, non-hierarchical, win-win paradigm would strengthen such movements around the world. It is crucial that to protect against the former and ensure the success of the latter.

The authors of the Constitution did an excellent job of protecting against many abuses and setting the country on a course guided by an overarching commitment to human rights, dignity, and equality. It has empowered us to evolve and upgrade to more closely embody those principles, as our awareness has grown. The founding principles have guided us through ending slavery, ensuring women's suffrage, ending southern apartheid, increasingly protecting the rights of employees and consumers, and much more. Even dysfunctional aberrations such as McCarthyism and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II were eventually corrected, though redress for internment took more than four decades.

It's clear that the Founders intended the United States to be a place of empowerment, dignity, freedom, symbiosis and well-being for all who live there. Until recently, there has been slow but steady progress to more closely embody those values. In the past four years, however, a collection of power-hungry, fanatical Machiavellian authoritarians managed to take control of the White House and both houses of Congress, and to pack the Supreme Court with ideologues loyal to their agenda above the Constitution. They then embarked on a program of subversion, bypassing, and repurposing of the democratic mechanisms in such a way as to neutralize their ability to impede authoritarian rule. Concepts were redefined in ways contrary to the intentions of the Founders. For example, the concept of "religious liberty" was redefined to enshrine the "right" (AKA power) of employers, landlords, lenders, insurance companies, healthcare

providers and others to discriminate against individuals based on “religious beliefs.” Government agencies were repurposed in direct opposition to their missions: the Environmental Protection Agency was used to roll back environmental protections and allow energy and other companies to pollute and destroy habitats, the Department of Justice was used as the personal legal outfit protecting and enforcing the president and his agenda at all costs, and the agencies protecting employees and consumers were redirected to enforce the power of employers and manufacturers, at the expense of employees and consumers. The president claimed to be immune from prosecution, even for publicly visible crimes committed while in office. Those in other branches of government who sought to hold him responsible, were unable to prevail due to the one-party chokehold on the mechanisms of government. The attack on democratic institutions went so far as an attempted violent overthrow of the government on January 6, 2021, an attempt that is still ongoing. The safeguards built into the Constitution were short-circuited. The question that remains is whether or not sufficient safeguards are still operational to neutralize the putsch, and whether the neutralized safeguards can be restored and reinforced to prevent future similar occurrences. In order for safeguards to work as intended, the people in government have to have the will and respect to use them as such. Otherwise we see a façade of democracy hiding a dictatorship, a much more pernicious version of the Wizard of Oz on steroids.

Just as in Medieval times and in Nazi Germany, this faction melded fanatical religion and ethnic vilification into government and distorted jingoistic parodies of patriotism, in order to manipulate a large segment of the population to follow them, turning their free-floating anxieties against those painted as “the other”: immigrants, transgender, gay and lesbian people, political opponents, and journalists branded “enemies of the people”. This keeps that population focused on the regime’s opponents, even when the regime harms them as much as anyone. That is the power of propaganda.

As long as competing parties or factions have more or less similar levels of influence in government, they tend to keep each other in check. As long as they all agree on respecting democratic governing principles and the good of the people, regardless of their philosophical or political disagreements, then democracy is safe. But when one party or group, who see the mechanisms of government as merely means to the end of cementing their power and forcing their agenda on the nation, then government of, by and for the people is in peril. Immensely stronger safeguards are urgently needed, and will need to be a priority in the post-Transition paradigm as much as now.

The Transition to the new paradigm, with the end of any need for currency and of the hierarchical socioeconomic power structure, will vastly reduce potential and reinforcement for abuse of power. There will be no modern feudal lords or corporations to override the voices of the people. Yet it would be over-simplistic to assume that it will completely eliminate such potential scenarios.

Besides strengthening and clarifying checks and balances, we might need to add new mechanisms, laws, and avenues to deal with abuses of power. We might benefit from a legal or Constitutional mandate requiring any elected official who commits a crime in office, to be immediately prosecuted, while protecting and empowering those investigating their conduct to do their due diligence unimpeded, with further safeguards on those researchers to prevent them from abusing their role to commit political assassination via “manufactured” evidence. All parties will need total transparency to the public.

We do and will need to put the highest priority on safeguarding elections and other government functions from domestic, criminal, and foreign hacking and cyber warfare. We have not yet updated our security systems and organizations to keep pace with cyber threats, as recent ransomeware attacks and the Russian interference in the 2016 elections show.

We might benefit from placing a limit on how much control any one party can hold, possibly mandating new elections and/or establishing a mandatory, broadly empowered non-partisan body tasked with overseeing all branches of government to identify any abuse or attempted abuse of power or corruption and take appropriate action in the event that such abuses occur. Members of this body would be rigorously screened and vetted to verify mental and emotional stability and objectivity, not just upon appointment, but periodically thereafter. Any members falling short of objectivity standards would be replaced, not punitively, but in the same spirit that grounds a pilot if their vision is too compromised.

Further benefits would flow from term limits on all members of both houses of Congress as well as Supreme Court; from a freeze on appointment of Supreme Court justices when one party has disproportionate control; from holding all candidates to the court to rigorous standards to ensure that they are guided by the Constitutional principles and not

ideological or religious beliefs; from making all proceedings and communications among members of congress, the executive branch, the Supreme Court and all government agencies open-source and easily visible to the public; from eliminating the “shadow docket” entirely; from eliminating all arbitrary perks and privileges currently given to elected officials and their staffs. Even under the current socioeconomic paradigm, we would see great benefit from requiring all elected officials to live on slightly less than the median income of those in their constituency, with their personal wealth held out of reach during their term; but under the new paradigm, such measures will be unnecessary, since currency and the need for it will no longer exist.

It is imperative that we act quickly and decisively to bring about the Transition globally, country by country. Like an aggressive cancer, the current modern feudalism is siphoning ever more resources into the hands of the few modern feudal lords, and pushing the rest of us into a downward spiral of disempowerment on every level. And like a cancer, it does not tolerate alternatives; it crowds them out. A dangerous sport is something people choose, knowing the risks. No one chooses to play this game: wherever it holds power, everyone is forced to. If we wait too long, we’ll have neither the strength, nor the ability, nor the will to act. It is past time. We must mobilize quickly and Transition as soon as possible, if we wish to avoid a modern feudal Dark Ages that could last a very long time, possibly hundreds or even thousands of years.

Chapter 32: Interfacing with the Not-Yet-Transitioned World After the 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).

Besides the internal challenges in initializing the post-Transition societies, we'll find external challenges as well. Until all countries have chosen to Transition, we'll have to develop ways to interface with countries still operating under the current socioeconomic paradigm. That will require careful thought, observation, and creativity.

Post-Transition, it will be vital to continue engaging with the rest of the world and not isolate ourselves. Self-isolating societies suffer cultural, social, economic and humanitarian damage that far outweighs any intended protection of ideological purity that's achieved. Besides, we want the world to see the new paradigm in operation, examine it freely, and observe its superiority to existing paradigms. This will lead to more and more people bringing about transitions more and more countries. The reality of the new paradigm will speak for itself.

Free and open interaction, exchange of ideas, perceptions, technologies, goods, services, culture and friendship enriches all involved, so long as nobody is imposing or forcing its own culture, ideas, or ways on another.

In the beginning, most of the world will be apprehensive, confused and possibly fearful. We've all seen revolutions, regime changes and paradigm shifts that publicized relatable ideals but practiced brutality and oppression. Many at home and abroad will wonder if the countries and people of the new paradigm are trustworthy or deceptive and manipulative, free and empowering or repressive and stifling, respectful of other countries or bullying and imperialistic, honorable or treacherous, reasonable or extremist, safe for foreign nationals to visit or dangerous. These are valid and natural questions and concerns that we should expect and be prepared for.

Our best way to respond to such concerns is to be open, transparent, welcoming, and consistent. Other countries who engage with the new paradigm will experience it as safe, respectful, consistent and reasonable. Visitors from other countries will experience the peer-based culture of safety, empowerment, symbiosis, synergy and equality that will become the new mainstream. They will share their experiences with others. The reality of life in the new paradigm will be its best ambassador and most eloquent advocate. More and more people will want that reality for themselves, once they've seen it. The transition will spread organically.

Since this kind of paradigm hasn't been adopted on this scale as publicly before, it's unknown to many. There'll be a tendency to try to interpret and perceive it as similar to something known, which will usually have negative or traumatic associations, though it is very different from anything most people have experienced. Fear of the unknown can be strong; more so when hearing analogies to previous traumas. Only time and direct experience will resolve and calm those fears. Patience will be essential.

As a rule, we'll want to start out honoring existing alliances, treaties and agreements. Exceptions will be where existing relationships functionally support or strengthen regimes or practices that go contrary to our values. Examples would be pre-existing alliances and arrangements that enable slave or sweatshop labor, oppressive regimes, environmental destruction, or human rights violations, which would have to be reexamined with new terms applied.

In such cases, we will need to clearly inform the other parties or our principles, requirements, expectations, and policies and explain what is negotiable and what isn't, and invite them to meet in mutually-respectful good-faith negotiations. It'll be crucial that we be consistent with our values in every sphere. We will conduct such negotiations calmly and succinctly, uncompromisingly holding the line in matters such as described above, but reasonably accommodating in all other matters, always seeking the balance of the greatest good for all parties. Once agreements are made, we will honor them. Other parties will learn in time that it is to their advantage to work with us.

We must be prepared to accept that some alliances, treaties and arrangements may have to be let go. We may be unable to find enough common ground with some countries, companies and other entities, which may be inherently hostile to the new paradigm for economic, cultural, religious or ideological reasons. In those cases we will assert our position

calmly and invite the other parties to resume dialog when they are prepared to work with our principles. At least at first, most other countries will still be invested in the current paradigm, and may feel threatened by the existence of the new paradigm. It will fall to us, the Transitionaries, to craft and develop ways to interface effectively between the two very different paradigms.

One possible mechanism might be international barter. Instead of two countries paying each other for goods and services, exchanges of equivalent value can be done. A northern-hemisphere country and a southern-hemisphere country could simply ship each other the same amount of agricultural produce during their respective harvest seasons. Country A could send Country B iron in exchange for an equivalent value in tractors. Initially, equivalent value could be approximated via "market value," but we'll need to need to shift quickly to using number person-hours needed to produce the product, factored in with other objective factors, to be studied and developed in real time. Person-hours are objective and universal, not subject to the instabilities of exchange rates. Both parties benefit, as there's no currency involved, no taxes, no tariffs. No party is automatically advantaged over the other.

Using the person-hour as the default measure of value has other advantages. A person-hour in the United States or Norway has the same value as a person-hour in Indonesia, China or Vietnam. A carpenter's hour has the same value as a farmworker's hour, thus promoting and reinforcing economic equality on an international scale. Countries will trade more nearly as equals.

Existing "time banks" have already shown that such an arrangement works at community scale, facilitating people of limited or no means to exchange services hour-for hour, that neither party could afford to pay for at going rates (Thorpe, Forbes, 2018).

In the twenty-first century, outsourcing has caused a lot of socioeconomic problems in "developed" countries. Well-paying jobs are exported to developing countries where labor is cheap, leading to sharp declines in such jobs at home. A much higher and expanding percentage of jobs in the "developed" country pay sub-to-barely-living wages. Boards of directors and major investors get richer and richer. The cycle of feudalization accelerates as a result. Pay low, sell high. A company that pays workers abroad, say, $40 a day instead of paying U.S. workers $40 an hour will have higher profits and stock price, and lower "overhead." That is how the paradigm is designed to function. That is why it must be decommissioned.

In the outsourcee country, the income and quality of life of those employees do apparently improve, but most of these employees already belong to the more privileged, better-off strata of their societies. Peasants and underpaid people deep in poverty don't have access to the necessary training and education needed for good-paying jobs like software developers, technologists, and consultants. Thus in outsourcee countries, the benefits flow mostly to people who were already better off, and the practice can deepen inequality and accelerate the feudalization process. Many of those left out of the gains face a rising cost of living, driven up by the spending power of a relatively small, well-paid class.

After the Transition, outsourcing will no longer be an issue. Where currency is obsolete and every person has direct access to what they need and desire, outsourcing will not only not mean loss of livelihood. It will also become unnecessary and meaningless. For the most part, there'll be no reason to practice it, and when there actually is a practical reason, it won't negatively impact any party. For example, software development would benefit from global teams where work can continue 24/7 without overworking any participant. The win-lose dynamic characteristic of the current paradigm will cease altogether. This will be the case within and between post-Transition countries.

The challenge will be in interfacing between production communities in Transitioned countries running the new paradigm, and those in un-Transitioned countries still running the current dysfunctional paradigm. It will be crucial and to everyone's benefit at both ends of such interchanges to embrace this challenge rather than avoiding it by self-isolating.

It will be crucial to demonstrate in practice to the rest of the world that the new paradigms are not only stable and extremely well-functioning, but not a threat to the people of old-paradigm countries and enterprises. People in pre-Transitioned countries will observe the dramatically higher degree of empowerment, happiness, health and quality of life enjoyed by people in Transitioned countries. We will lead by example. The new paradigms will propagate by virtue of their superiority in every aspect of life. We will never pressure or force any country to Transition. People will insist on

it from within, inspired by the experience of Transitioned countries. When they do, we will support, mentor and encourage them. Who would not choose health over sickness, or freedom over bondage?

The interfaces between new-paradigm and old-paradigm production teams will need to be well-thought-out by sitting down together, mutually determined to craft solutions and protocols that will benefit both communities in their respective socioeconomic environments. For old-paradigm (current-paradigm) teams, the advantages of working with new-paradigm teams will far outweigh the disadvantages.

There are several scenarios that we need to consider.

The first scenario is when an enterprise is based in a Transitioned country but has employees in countries operating under the old paradigm. Members in the Transitioned country will need no pay, while products distributed there will generate no profits. Members in old-transition countries will still be forced to come up with currency to continually ransom their existence, and products distributed there will necessarily generate profits. Interfaces will need to preserve the integrity of the new paradigm, while ensuring that members under the old paradigm are paid and treated well, and that operations in the un-Transitioned country are profitable.

One possible arrangement could be trade arrangements where parent facilities in Transitioned countries supply goods and services to satellite facilities in un-Transitioned countries, who in turn pay a good living wage and invest in good working conditions for employees there, instead of paying the parent headquarters. This would be a good place to use human-hours as the international medium of exchanged, expressed in local terms relative to the local economy. Goods and services of an enterprise will, of course, be open to all in the Transitioned country, and for sale for reasonable prices in the un-Transitioned country, thus respecting both paradigms.

Parent facilities in Transitioned countries will neither generate profits nor incur operating costs. The new peer-based, cooperative parent organizations will replace the current hierarchical corporate organizations. Satellite or subsidiary facilities in un-Transitioned countries will still be directed by the parent organization, thus guided into alignment with the priorities and principles of the new paradigm. For employees, this will mean a strong living wage with all necessary benefits, safe and reasonable working conditions and expectations, and reduced stress due to ending the self-devouring cycle. For the subsidiary companies themselves, this will mean a drastic drop in operating costs for operations in Transitioned facilities, thus enabling the un-Transitioned subsidiary to offer superior-quality products at far below-market prices and still be profitable. This will give them a competitive advantage over similar enterprises having all operations in un-Transitioned countries. This will be a win-win for both employee and employer, in contrast to the win-lose dynamics of the current paradigm.

Since new-paradigm operations will focus on making the best goods and services practical under the state of the art, striving for durability, serviceability, upgradeability, and responsiveness to user preferences, consumers in un-Transitioned countries will benefit as well. Higher-quality products superior to traditional “high end” products will be available at lower prices than traditional “low end” product. Thus employees, employers, and consumers will all benefit, and not at each other’s expense. The environment will benefit, due to the cessation of the self-devouring cycle. In this arena as well, the clear superiority of new Paradigm based goods and services will speak powerfully for the superiority of the paradigm itself.

The interaction with Transitioned parent facilities will largely neutralize the mutually-predatory dynamic of the current paradigm in which employers are reinforced to invest as little in employees and get as much out of them as possible, while employees must be prepared to strike to pressure employers to pay more and improve working conditions and expectations.

Enterprises in which part or all phases of production are in Transitioned countries will, ironically, have a serious competitive advantage in un-Transitioned countries over parallel enterprises operating entirely in un-Transitioned countries. The beauty of this is that the core of what is and isn’t reinforced will change, even in un-transitioned countries. Alongside the ubiquitous reinforcers generated by the current modern feudal paradigm, there will be a new set of reinforcers selecting for engaging with new-paradigm production facilities. The more of a company’s operations is in Transitioned countries, the more profitable the enterprise will be. Reinforcement for the operating principles of the new paradigm will grow and expand in old-transition countries, surely and steadily.

Un-Transitioned satellite and subsidiary facilities will be subject to some necessary changes, of course. This should not be difficult for those in such facilities to accept, since under the current hierarchical paradigm, they are already subject to inspections, protocols, and expectations from corporate headquarters. Only now the details will change. Facilities currently using sweatshop labor, underpaying or overworking their employees, imposing unsafe or inhuman working conditions, or damaging the environment will be required to pay employees a strong living wage and necessary benefits, treat them with respect and dignity, maintain safe and humane working conditions and expectations, give employees the right to unionize and have a greater say in operations, and discontinue environmentally destructive practices. Headquarters in Transitioned countries will actively aid, facilitate, train, mentor and sensitively but firmly enforce compliance. Such facilities will be inspected. Any which show chronic unwillingness to operate accordingly will either have their management replaced with new people willing to cooperate, or else the business relationship will be terminated and the subsidiary will be severed from the parent headquarters, in which case the parent facility will offer full assistance to any affected employees wishing to relocate to Transitioned facilities. Such employees wishing to form their own peer-based operations along new-paradigm principles in their not-yet-Transitioned country, will receive all necessary aid to acquire facilities, equipment, and get up and running.

We most definitely seek to propagate and replicate the new paradigm in more and more countries until it becomes the dominant paradigm setting the tone globally. We will not do this by force or deceit. If our new paradigm is truly inherently superior to the current one; if it gives rise to greater human happiness, empowerment, actualization, security, health, well-being, quality of life, harmony and peace; if it greatly reduces pollution, waste, depletion of resources and workload in every sector; if it brings about universally high-quality goods and services for all, then it will speak for itself. People in un-Transitioned countries will see how much better life is in Transitioned countries. They will decide that they want to live that way too. A truly superior innovation does not need propaganda, force, or deceit to spread it.

We will actively advise and encourage those striving to Transition their not-yet-transitioned countries. We will not intervene politically or militarily, overtly or covertly. We will respect the national and cultural sovereignty of their country.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

If the country is one where citizens don't have easy access to media or the Internet, we will take action to get satellite phones into the hands of the people, to empower them to stream events to the world, in order to work against Transitionaries being suppressed or silenced.

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 will form alliances among Transitioned countries for trade as well as mutual aid and defense, as democracies may under the right of collective self-defence in Article 51 of the UN Charter. We will need to be prepared to defend ourselves from un-Transitioned countries and mammoth corporations that will likely attempt to re-establish their dominance by force, until the Transition has spread far enough to deplete their existential support.

Now let's examine the scenario in which the enterprise headquarters is in an un-Transitioned country under the current modern feudal socioeconomic paradigm, and the satellite or subsidiary facility is an a Transitioned country. Dynamics will be different, but this situation can still be recast to the benefit of both parties in the equation.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

In this case, the subsidiary will reorganize as a new-paradigm peer-driven enterprise and inform the old-paradigm parent company of the change, declaring themselves independent of the parent company while enthusiastically inviting the parent company to sit down together to work out arrangements that will benefit both groups.

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This scenario has important factors in common with the first scenario we covered. Here, the Transitioned subsidiary will operate with no operating costs to the parent company, since employees will need no pay or benefits. Materials and energy will be available at no cost. There will be no tariffs, fees or taxes. The goods and services produced in the Transitioned facility will be consistently of the highest quality. The parent company will have to make products available at no cost in the Transitioned country, but in their own un-Transitioned country, they will have a tremendous competitive advantage due to offering solidly superior products for bargain basement prices while remaining quite profitable.

Under the democratically enacted laws of the Transitioned country, which a foreign parent company must respect there as it respects labour law in any country where it operates, Transitioned satellite and subsidiary facilities will also insist on a restructuring of their working relationship with the parent company, always emphasizing the unparalleled advantages being gained in the process. Such subsidiaries will work with the parent company primarily as a peer partner, cooperating for mutual benefit, neither being subordinate to the other. The parent company will have to accept that the subsidiary will only manufacture the best goods and services that the state of the art permits, and that the subsidiary will not submit to unreasonable quotas and workloads resulting from the self-devouring cycle.

Old-paradigm parent companies will most likely object to this change in their relationship to their subsidiaries and their loss of control. Yet they will benefit from the new paradigm. They will be able to produce and sell superior products at dramatically lower prices, for greater profits, than their competitors operating only under the old paradigm. Furthermore, employees in the home country will inevitably become aware of the higher quality of life, fulfillment, and overall well-being enjoyed by their Transitioned counterparts. Sooner or later, they will decide that they want their own Transition. Our example will embolden and inspire others, until the whole world will be Transitioned.

Multinational enterprises where all facilities are in Transitioned countries, will have the simplest situation of all. They will function as symbiotic, organic, peer-based collaborations. No interface will be needed, nor any currency conversion. The main challenges will be logistical, technical, and possibly intercultural. These enterprises will function much more efficiently than old-paradigm or cross-paradigm enterprises.

As people in un-Transitioned countries overcome initial misgivings and discover the significantly higher quality of life in Transitioned countries, there will most likely be a growing number wishing to immigrate. In advance of this development, we'll need to develop balanced approaches and responses. On one hand, no country can absorb an unlimited number of immigrants. On the other hand, it would be inhuman to turn refugees away by default. A cooperative effort among Transitioned countries may improve outcomes. Another good approach is to encourage, train and support people to enact their own Transition, so that they'll have the benefit of our own experience, without violating their national or cultural sovereignty and integrity.

Yet another challenge will be the inevitable emergence of numerous smuggling operations. Some people based in old (current) paradigm countries, given the reinforcers and functional imperatives in their societies, will inevitably want to load up on free goods in Transitioned countries to sell in their own un-Transitioned countries. It will seem irresistible. Some smugglers will immigrate, mainly for that purpose. We will need to be diligent. 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. Simple passive tags in products also make smuggled goods easier to detect at borders. Smuggled goods will be confiscated and returned to appropriate distribution centers, and international parcels will be checked at customs, as they are in most countries today; private correspondence is never opened.

Smugglers found responsible by a court, with due process, will serve a period of community service, during which time they will be treated respectfully, similar to the pattern of the Norwegian prison system, and then be returned to their home countries. We won't be able to prevent all smuggling, but realistically we can expect to keep it limited.

Such smugglers will of course be responding according to the socioeconomic patterns of their society, in which acquiring wealth is strongly reinforced and functionally compulsory. The most effective strategy will be to encourage such people and truly everybody in un-Transitioned countries to implement their own Transitions. To the apprehended smuggler, we will say "Why steal from us, when you can have the same quality of life, open access to all of your needs, and no need for money in your own country? We're happy to show you how to do it!"

People there will see the superior quality of life, social relations, and efficiency of Transitioned countries, thus learning that such a paradigm is both superior and achievable. That is half the battle. More and more will want it for themselves. We will want to set up training and education centers around the world and in our own Transitioned countries, to introduce curious and interested people to the functionality and principles of the new paradigm and of the Transition from the old paradigm, accessible to any and all who come. These will not function as the "re-education" centers of authoritarian dictatorships, but rather as forums and resources to assist those seeking their own Transition to learn how to bring it about and set it up to work, avoid known pitfalls, and deal with the inevitable challenges that come with any major change. Nobody will be brainwashed, pressured, or forced to participate. Each country's Transition will benefit from the growing body of experience of previously Transitioned counties. Such centers will also teach effective, communication, interpersonal problem-solving, and other skills involved in the peer-based,collaborative symbiotic functioning of the new paradigm, and empower learners to free themselves of the conditioned response patterns acquired in the current modern feudalistic paradigm. The principles of effective nonviolence and compassion will be part and parcel of the training, encouraging a culture in which no person or group will be attacked, punished or scapegoated, not even former oppressors.

The new forms of tourism will also inspire foreign tourists to want to emulate the new paradigm. First-hand experience and one-on-one interaction are often the most powerful modes of spread for new innovations that improve the quality of people's lives.

We will have friends and allies, enemies and detractors, and many people who won't know what to think about the new paradigm. It will be vital that we remain consistently, steadfastly in harmony with the principles of the new paradigm in word and deed. Friend and foe alike will learn that Transitioned countries are consistent and clear in our principles, honorable and respectful to deal with, non-belligerent, transparent, uncompromising on core principles such as human rights and empowerment, safeguarding the natural environment but open to discussion of creative, mutually beneficial solutions, superior in the quality of life, freedom, empowerment and well-being of our people and of products that we produce. They see that we propagate our paradigm by example, not by violence, intimidation, manipulation, or covert operations.

Some enemy countries may think that our Transition is a weakness to be exploited. They will quickly learn that we are more ready and capable as ever to defend ourselves if necessary. The world will know exactly what to expect from Transitioned countries, which will ease international relations in many ways.

Our new paradigm will existentially but not physically threaten the modern feudal socioeconomic power structure of un-Transitioned countries and other economic entities, by our very existence. Yet, as already shown, they will also enjoy unprecedented benefits in interacting with Transitioned countries. And they will come to know that our yes means yes, and our no means no. They will learn that, rather than maneuvering to gain advantage over the other party, we will negotiate and conduct business aiming to create the maximum mutual benefit, and that we will honor our agreements and treaties.

When natural or manmade disasters happen, we will make sure to be among the first to be on the scene to render aid. Not being hindered by funding considerations or issues, we will be able to mobilize much quicker than countries who are so hindered. And we will work in openness and cooperation with rescue and aid personnel from other countries. We may want to form a Disaster Relief Corps, trained and equipped for that specific purpose in a way not unlike the military. This will apply to both humanitarian disasters and environmental ones. This is a natural outgrowth and expression of our core principles.

Naturally, our global and international support efforts must not come at the expense of the thriving and well-being of our own people and communities. But it isn't a question of either-or. We will have to learn and grow into a sustainable, optimal dynamic balance. Every country exists as a member in the global community of nations, as part and parcel of humanity.

Likewise, we will strive to embody balance in our own communities. 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). We will thrive best if we avoid both extremes: an individualism so extreme that it leads to alienation, disempowerment, and isolation as each person or family struggles alone against the default economic denial of their right to exist, and a conformity so extreme that individuality is suppressed and strongly selected against. Our paradigm

will be a synergistic, symbiotic, collaborative community of fully empowered, self-realized and strongly-developed individuals, a win-win-win paradigm for the individual, their fellows, and the community or society. The current win-lose-lose-lose model will recede in the rear-view mirror of history as an object lesson on how not to thrive.

During and after Transition, our defense forces will have to be on high alert, ready to repel and defeat any country or mega-corporation that may try to invade, attack, or force us back to the old paradigm. In addition, as civilians we will be trained to support the military in national defence, as citizens are in Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Norway, so that any hostile force that reached our territory would meet resistance everywhere it went. Let us hope and intend that this not be necessary, and that one day we may reach a global evolution where we have no need for the military. In the meantime, we will need to be prepared to defend our selves if necessary.

Chapter 33: Limiting Factors: Real Vs. Arbitrary

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).

We humans have virtually limitless creativity, ingenuity, and problem-solving ability. It's widely agreed that we have barely scratched the surface. The post-Transition world will be an unprecedentedly fertile environment to explore farther than ever before.

The physical world, however, does have real limitations, such as gravity, mortality, entropy, disease, and a limited amount of forests, minerals, and other natural resources. We can't breath underwater or in space on our own. We can't go faster than light.

Confronted with such limitations, we frequently use our ingenuity to find ways around or past them. We build airplanes to fly. We devised scuba gear and space suits to function underwater and in space. We travel much faster than we can move on our own. We overcome diseases, build bridges, communicate over thousands and millions of miles. Nature doesn't fine us, jail us, or otherwise punish us for finding ways around its limitations. The earth does not charge us rent, and the sun doesn't send us a power bill.

In contrast, however, we humans often create arbitrary limitations to impose on each other. Some of them serve a practical purpose beneficial to all, such as mandating which side of the street to drive on. Yet a vast number of the made-up limitations that we place on each other are capricious, impractical and even outright harmful. Arbitrary laws and customs have, in various times and places, limited or mandated whom one may or must marry, what one can or cannot wear, consigned groups of people to slavery, exclusion or extermination, forbidden giving food to the homeless, banned growing food, and mandated that one may not occupy space or access any resource without paying for it with arbitrarily defined currency. Any who find ways to circumvent those arbitrary limitations are fined, jailed or otherwise punished by the enforcers of their societies.

For any community and the people in it to thrive and enjoy peace, freedom, and safety, there must be some universally agreed-upon guidelines, principles, and rules. We benefit from rules that ensure that drivers and pilots know what to expect from one another. We benefit from rules reducing fire and other hazards. We benefit from laws against murder, assault, rape, and enslavement. We benefit from customs that encourage mutual respect and basic civility.

Alongside such beneficial laws, limitations and norms, however, most societies have a plethora of capricious ones that actually cause harm, make life less livable, and even create a stifling, hostile and oppressive environment for some or most people in them. If we are to have a thriving community of symbiotic, thriving individuals, it is imperative that we end such laws, limitations and customs entirely.

Some social challenges have no clear-cut, absolute solutions. How to balance between the rights of neighbors who work different shifts who find themselves sleeping and noisily active at conflicting times? How to balance between the rights of a musician or carpenter to practice their craft, and the rights of their neighbors to not have to bear the inevitable noise? How to achieve equitable access to a water source for agricultural, industrial, recreational and residential needs in times of drought? Such questions must be informed by guiding principles of objective fairness, tempered by compassion and sensitivity, and resolved on a case-by-case basis. Absolute rules and laws for such cases will always do more harm than good.

When all involved parties are reasonable and seeking the mutual greatest good, resolution is certain. When one or more party are unreasonable, triggered, or thinking of self only, objective third parties may need to get involved, in order to facilitate a solution that honors the needs of all disputing parties.

Under the current socioeconomic paradigm, however, myriads of arbitrary, capricious enforced limitations, constraints, compulsions and restraints are placed on all but the modern feudal elite, who are exempt from them. They arise out of the strong reinforcers of the socioeconomic paradigm, which mandate artificially manipulated supply and demand (artificial scarcity), and the aggressive pursuit of profits, market share and stock prices above all else.

Examples of this are ubiquitous. A well-known case in point is the oil industry. The OPEC+ alliance of oil-producing states openly coordinates output cuts to hold prices up, as in its cut of 2 million barrels a day in October 2022 (Quantum Commodity Intelligence). Private companies have done it too, with no international crisis to explain it. In 2001, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission found no illegal collusion behind a Midwest gasoline price spike, but did find firms "curtailing production, keeping available supply off the market" to maximize their profits (FTC, 2001). In 2024, the FTC alleged that the former head of Pioneer Natural Resources, one of the largest U.S. shale producers, had traded hundreds of messages with OPEC officials in an effort to keep American output down and prices up (FTC, 2024). He denied it, and the order against him was set aside in 2025 (MyChesCo). Consumer class actions allege that eight U.S. shale producers coordinated to restrain output; the companies deny it, but in 2026 a federal judge let the case go forward (Reuters, via BOE Report). Meanwhile, pump prices go up like rockets and come down like feathers: a classic study found that most of a rise in crude prices reaches the pump within about four weeks, while a fall takes about eight (Borenstein, Cameron and Gilbert, 1997). In 2026, after the war in Iran, the Dutch competition authority found that crude oil was back to its pre-war price, but pump prices were not (ACM). Every disaster and geopolitical crisis becomes a reason to raise prices, and the profits follow: in 2022, the five largest Western oil companies made close to $200 billion between them (Offshore Technology). The system rewards this and does nothing to discourage it.

The petroleum industry has also expended vast resources to suppress the development and proliferation of alternative, sustainable technologies. They've used lobbyists to influence lawmakers to serve their interests, pushing arguments to the effect that alternative technologies will put people out of work, when the opposite is true. They have acquired control of promising competing technologies and then kept them from the market. In the 2000s, Chevron came to control the key patents on the large batteries that powered early electric cars; it sued Toyota and its battery supplier, and the confidential 2004 settlement restricted the batteries' use in electric vehicles (Institute for New Economic Thinking). In the 1970s and 1980s, oil companies bought up many of America's pioneering solar companies, then redirected or abandoned them when profits did not come quickly enough (Jerneck, *Science Advances*, 2017). In 2026, Michigan's attorney general sued BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil and Shell, alleging decades of collusion to hold back electric vehicles and solar power (Michigan Public); a federal judge dismissed the case in September on legal grounds, without ruling on whether the history was true (AJOT). The companies deny suppressing anything. But why would a company acquire a promising technology that threatens its main product, and then keep it from the market? The simplest explanation is the obvious one. They've slandered and discredited people who were a threat to their hegemony, and some have relied on armed security forces accused of beating, torturing and even killing local people, as in the case brought by villagers in Aceh, Indonesia, against ExxonMobil, which the company settled in 2023 while denying responsibility (Al Jazeera, 2023). All of this is the inevitable result of functioning under this paradigm.

Though petroleum companies have known for many decades of the devastating impact of continued global use and dependence on petroleum products on our climate and environment, they've expended vast efforts and resources to suppress and cast shadows of doubts upon the data. ExxonMobil's own scientists, for example, accurately projected the warming we have since seen, while the company publicly cast doubt on climate science (Supran, Rahmstorf and Oreskes, 2023). Though these companies know that their operations will likely lead to global catastrophe, they chose to go full speed ahead in service of profits, market share and stock prices. This follows the classic pattern of addiction. A person caught in an addiction will pursue its object, even at the expense of their own survival. Yet in the distorted perception of the modern feudal paradigm, this addictive behavior is perceived as "business as usual" or "good business practice."

The pharmaceutical industry is another salient example. Life-critical drugs are kept scarce with prices out of reach for all but the modern feudal lords. Prices bear little relation to development and production costs. Examples abound of drug companies maneuvering to gain all rights to a drug that they didn't develop, only to raise the price by thousands of percents. Many of these mega-corporations have spent as much or more on sales and marketing as on research and development, yet they officially claim that drug cost is meant to cover development costs. The reason why they get away of this is, again, the pernicious "law of supply and demand." When a life is at stake, or someone's ability to function, or chronic pain, demand is extremely high. Manufacturers methodically exploit this demand by jacking prices as high as "the market will bear." Some people will have to sell their homes, take on crippling debt, or expend their life's savings to afford a non-optional treatment, but they'll do it, and pharmaceutical companies have no compunction about putting people in that position. The imperatives of the paradigm functionally mandate it.

In this paradigm, it's not unheard of for food to be destroyed, though people are hungry, 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). Millions of houses and apartments in the United States are vacant while about three-quarters of a million people are homeless on any given night (Congressional Research Service, 2026), and people speak of the "housing shortage" though in fact there are many times more vacant homes than homeless people, even allowing for the many that are seasonal or in the wrong places.

For most of the twentieth century, the high price of diamonds was engineered by De Beers, a company controlled by one South African family, the Oppenheimers, which at its peak controlled most of the world's rough-diamond trade, stockpiled stones to keep them scarce, and ran a hugely successful marketing campaign ("A Diamond Is Forever", 1947) to elevate diamonds to an almost mythical status as the ultimate symbol of love (Epstein, *The Atlantic*, 1982), while keeping the supply severely restricted (Friedman, The Atlantic, 2015; Goldschein, Business Insider, 2011).

In airports, after the 9/11 attacks, it became forbidden to bring liquids including water through security. Ever since then, the price of bottled water in terminals has soared to unheard-of levels. This, once again, is the behavior that is strongly reinforced by the dominant socioeconomic paradigm.

That said, physical resources are finite on our world. There is only so much land, water, minerals, energy, air, forest etc. Yet, if managed effectively and efficiently, there should be enough to sustain us indefinitely. These real limitations rarely match the artificial, arbitrary shortages created by economic entities under the current modern feudalism.

Unfortunately, under the current paradigm, resources are not, nor will they be, managed in such a way to make them sustainable and ensure that they are deployed for the benefit of each and all of us. This is because resources are controlled by massive corporations headed by modern feudal lords, whose prime imperatives are profitability, market share, and stock price. In service of those priorities, it is necessary to overproduce short-lived goods for sale and ensure that people will have to keep buying new ones when they break, which is often. This is the self-devouring cycle in which the depletion of resources, pollution of the environment, and build-up of waste are drastically accelerated with no limit or end in sight. This is unsustainable and can only lead to global catastrophe, yet as long as the current paradigm is operating, that outcome is all but assured.

After the Transition, the self-devouring cycle will end once and for all. Goods and services will be produced at the highest quality and robustness, designed to last and be upgradeable, for the good and well-being of all of us. Resources will be managed with the goal of sustainability, renewability, and universal access for the benefit of each and all. The only limitations taken into account will be actual, physical or practical limitations. Pollution will plummet, waste will decline dramatically, and quality of life will rise tremendously. There will be no artificial shortages.

When there is an actual, physical shortage, decisions and solutions will be made among peers with the goal of achieving the best outcome for each and all, whatever that is in each situation. No person or entity will control such resources and thus block access from others. No person or social entity will be privileged above or below another.

Of course, the post-Transition world will not be free of limitations, conflicts and disputes. In contrast to the current paradigm, resolutions won't be arbitrary or unjust. Each party will be treated with mutual respect. Communication skills will necessarily evolve in the new paradigm, far beyond their typical level under the current paradigm. The goal will be to honor and support the good of each party in the most equitable way possible for mutual benefit.

Under the current paradigm, our position on the socioeconomic pyramid is by far the biggest determinant of our options, degree of freedom, the degree of respect we're given, and ability to attain our dreams. For people low on the pyramid, hard work, determination, and ability are rarely enough to overcome the disempowerment inherent in that position. For those few modern feudal oligarchs at the top, the lack of ability, hard work or determination is rarely a hindrance to pursuing their dreams and goals.

Those who argue for the current paradigm claim, and maybe believe, that ability, work ethic and determination are the main determinants of a person's success. They point to anecdotal success stories as proof. They typically claim that anybody who doesn't "make it," deserves what they get due to some moral or character flaw. Such arguments are circular at best, and rags-to-riches stories are presented in a misleading way. For every such story, there are thousands or millions of people who possess the same qualities as the successful protagonists but never "make it." These showcase

stories are inspiring to be sure, but rather than prove the thesis that 'anybody can make it,' in the bigger context they only illustrate how rare such successes are. Yet those who don't "make it" are culturally judged as "losers."

The reason for this is that the dominant socioeconomic paradigm must function as a pyramidal wealth-and-power structure, in order to function at all. The system would collapse if all, most, or even a large percentage of people became billionaires. It is structurally impossible. While it's true that anybody could "make it" (theoretically), in practice very few can or will, even with all else being equal.

Imagine two entrepreneurs: one from a wealthy family and one from a poor or lower middle class family. Imagine they both have the same idea at the same time, independently of each other. The wealthy one does not need to work and has virtually unlimited access to resources: bottomless wells of capital, personal connections to other wealthy and powerful people, lawyers on retainer, and automatic deference and respect when seeking a loan. Their non-wealthy counterpart is working fulltime or more to make ends meet, has very limited time and money, has no powerful connections, can't afford an attorney, and will almost certainly be turned down for a loan by just about any bank. Whose business idea do you predict will ever come to fruition?

Thus initiative and innovation among those low in the socioeconomic pyramid are effectively suppressed. There are just enough exceptions to keep people engaged in trying to win by playing the game. The psychological mechanisms are precisely the same ones that keep gamblers playing until most of them lose catastrophically.

In education, we see the same pattern. Children of the feudal lords and their vassals are only limited in their studies, by their ability, discipline, and drive, and sometimes not even that. Psychologically they have a background of usually getting their way by default. Poor and middle-class children share those limitations, but are further limited by lack of funds, by the need to work while studying, often lack of robust primary and secondary education, need to take on crushing student loans, and are inhibited by a life experience of disempowerment and exclusion by default. When the budding young feudal lord graduates, they don't have to worry about getting a job that pays enough to live on and pay back their loans. They're under no pressure. The budding serf or peasant, on the other hand, must find a job, fast. Without a salary, they'll be unable to ransom their life and buy temporary permission to exist and occupy space, and they will be increasingly marginalized, excluded, disempowered, and unable to thrive. The longer you go without a job, the harder it becomes to get one: in one U.S. field experiment, employers' callbacks for interviews fell by about 45% between one and eight months of unemployment (Kroft, Lange and Notowidigdo, 2013).

In societies under the current paradigm, currency, a made-up thing with no intrinsic value of its own, is kept scarce for all but the handful of modern feudal lords, who use it as a tool to control who has access to what, and who doesn't. Keeping money relatively scarce is, in fact, ordinary central-bank practice: as a standard finance reference puts it, "the central bank tends to keep the money supply relatively scarce" (Investopedia, 2026). This arbitrary construct becomes compulsorily the only way to access any resource. Medical care is a poignant example.

Billionaires and their immediate vassals will always receive the best medical care. They have functionally limitless currency so no expense is spared. There is no medical treatment that they can't easily afford.

Many of the rest of us peasants and serfs struggle to afford even basic medical care, much less care for complex, chronic or severe medical conditions; more than 100 million people in America carry medical debt (KFF Health News, 2022). Most of it is out of reach without coverage, so we pay every month for health insurance. When we call upon the insurance company to cover a medical treatment, we often find that our standard of care, or even whether or not we get care, is decided not by medical professionals, but by financial professionals, accountants and "adjusters" whose mission is to maximize the bottom line monetarily. When the best medical option conflicts with the best financial option, the financial overrides the medical. People are routinely denied care, given inferior or suboptimal care, and put through arduous bureaucratic obstacle courses if they wish to contest a denial of coverage, which amounts to trying to win against the dealer in a rigged game with a stacked deck while suffering from a rattlesnake bite. When all is said and done, many people are left buried under medical debt that becomes a huge stone around their neck for decades or even the rest of their lives. Others are simply buried, as they don't get the care that they need, in time to make a difference.

The cost is measured in years of life. 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 men, the difference in life expectancy at 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 (National Academies, 2015). 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).

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).

This is part and parcel of the paradigm in operation. Simple "supply and demand" is in play in medical, dental, and legal fields. Health, dental care, and our freedom are not optional commodities a tummy tuck or a tourist trip to space. Demand is inevitably high, as the stakes are high; so suppliers take advantage of this demand by raising prices as high as they can get away with, as high as "the market will bear." Most people would never mortgage their house, sell their car, or take a second job to afford a yacht, a private jet, or a piece of expensive jewelry. Most people who have the option, would go to those lengths to save the life, limb or freedom of themselves or their loved ones or to get them out of chronic pain. The fundamental principles of the socioeconomic paradigm guarantee that high-stakes goods and services like medical, dental and legal care, living spaces, and other vital commodities will be priced prohibitively high.

In the new post-Transition paradigm, these limitations will fade into historical footnotes. Every one of us will have equal access to the best medical care available, with priority set by medical need alone. Medicines and equipment will be kept in a little more than sufficient supply, with reserves to cover unforeseen large-scale emergencies. Nothing will be artificially scarcified to keep supply lagging demand to drive prices up. With no financial barriers blocking access to medical training, many will become healthcare professionals who would never be able to under the current paradigm. Thus the number of providers will expand considerably. The disappearance of insurance bureaucracy will also free medical practitioners to devote themselves purely to medicine.

The reinforcers in the new paradigm will strengthen very different behaviors than the current paradigm does. Production and supply of all goods and services, in every sector, will adjust to fulfill people's authentic needs and desires, which will no longer be artificially induced and manipulated through advertising, marketing and other forms of manipulative propaganda. Ethics and the healing ethos will reassert themselves among healing professionals, freed from the conflicting constraints and pressures of financial "realities."

In cases of actual, physical or technological shortage or limitations, decisions involving distribution will be made from only humanitarian perspectives. None will have automatic priority over others due to social or economic status. Difficult decisions will most likely have to be made according to similar principles to those used by EMT's and emergency room doctors when they triage patients, with the goal of most effectively helping and treating the most people in the best possible way. At last, medical providers will be free to honor their oath to do no harm.

Under the current paradigm, even the most intimate and personal aspects of our lives are bound, limited and restricted by economic limitations. Countless families delay marriage or cohabitation and childbearing, having to wait until they can afford to do so. In the post-Transition paradigm, such shackles will evaporate. With currency and the need for it ended and universal access to goods and services, people will be able to marry and have children when they are humanly ready.

In the current paradigm, governments often charge exorbitant fees for immigration processing, to exclude less affluent immigrants from coming and possibly becoming a "burden" on the host country. Because of this, multinational families often suffer prolonged separation, anxiety and privation. In the new paradigm, such barriers will disappear, and the concept of people being a burden to one another will become meaningless.

It is fact that under the current feudalistic socioeconomic paradigm, we are by default denied access to just about everything, including medicine, education, transportation, communications media, clothing, tools, and even food, water, and a place to take up space. In order to survive, we must constantly come up with carefully scarcified currency to ransom our existence and buy a temporary reprieve from the negation of our right to be. We are thus multiply harnessed to generate ever-growing wealth for the modern feudal lords: first by being obliged to produce the goods and services which generate their profits and drive their companies' stock prices, and doing so for whatever they choose to pay us; second, by buying those same goods and services from them for whatever they choose to charge us. Note here that we, the serfs and peasants, are both the producers and consumers of goods and services, while the corporations and feudal lords siphon off the wealth and power that we generate, but contribute little to nothing to production or distribution. It is not their fault. They are playing the game as designed.

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We must forcefully but nonviolently shut down the game itself.

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

The current paradigm is fundamentally unworkable. It generates an environment which elevates a very few to positions of dictatorial power over the vast majority of us, pits us against one another, and leads to conditions where one person's loss is literally another person's gain. The gain of the feudal lords comes at our perennial loss. Your promotion is my loss. My bonus is your loss. In the new paradigm, the win of one will be the benefit of all, and the loss of one will be the loss of all, not just poetically or philosophically, but in practice. The behaviors that will be reinforced will make it inevitable.

Chapter 34: Production and Distribution of Goods and Services – Choreography and Logistics

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 new paradigm, modern technology will make it fully possible to coordinate production and distribution of goods and services so that they meet the authentic needs and desires of the people, allowing a small surplus based on expected population growth (which we can hopefully slow voluntarily), immigration, breakage and malfunction. The self-devouring cycle will be absent; so only real, authentic needs will need to be met.

Formerly competing production facilities, organizations and development teams will be integrated, eliminating duplicated efforts and waste, and combining the best qualities of all former products into lines of the best products possible. Current distribution facilities will still function as such. Products will carry simple passive tags to discourage black market profiteering and hoarding, though they will never be linked to individuals (see the privacy section later in this chapter). Resources such as water and electricity will still be metered, and inventory will still be maintained of physical products, but no charges and no payments will be made. Tracking will be solely for the purpose of coordinating production based on demand.

We will create a central online portal where consumers, producers, designers, developers and others can submit suggestions, requests, feedback, and engage in discussion. For a few kinds of goods, we will need fair-share guidelines (described later in this chapter) to ensure that every person and social unit can meet their needs, while preventing black market profiteering and also excessive hoarding. Once a person or social unit has a generous amount of such a good, the way to get another will be to exchange one that they already have or that's broken. Real needs beyond that, such as those arising from disabilities or specific artistic, scientific, or creative undertakings, will be met simply by asking.

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At the time of Transition, many people will already have many of their own goods and be connected to utilities and other services. Services like electricity, gas and communications will continue uninterrupted. The only thing that will change for them will be that billing will stop. Of course, your clothes, car, dwelling, tools and other items that you use will remain yours. If you currently rent or lease anything, it will become your legal property. If you currently rent or lease something to someone else, it will thenceforth belong to them, while you will retain ownership of the house, car and other things that you, personally, use. Whoever wants to keep their current goods will find that they will be fully supported. Whoever wants to trade in their current goods for products of the new paradigm, will be able to do so at their convenience.

Anybody who lacks things that they need at the time of Transition, will be able to pick these items up at the appropriate distribution centers, including everything from tools, to clothes, to cars, to medicine and everything. All unoccupied living units will be legally available for occupation by homeless persons, with appropriate laws, protocols, and guidelines in place to ensure an orderly, fair process and equitably resolved disputes.

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

In the context of pre-existing trade agreements and contracts, renegotiation will be carried out by involved workers and agencies to redefine the working relationship with related facilities in un-Transitioned countries. It will be entirely up to those involved in production, to decide whether or not, and if so, to what extent, to accommodate artificially high workloads and deadlines resulting from the self-devouring cycle in the partner country. No individual, team, or entity will be legally or otherwise subject to forced or compelled production schedules or quotas.

Domestic production will adjust to a rate sufficient to meet real demand and maintain a small surplus to cover possible unexpected demand increases, which will be vastly less demanding than under the current paradigm. Quality will take

precedence over quantity. Goods will be produced at the best quality technically possible, designed to be durable, upgradeable, easily serviceable, and customizable. Once everybody has all that they need of something, its production will drop to what's necessary to replace broken and worn-out products and keep up with what will be minimal new demand. Production and supply will accommodate authentic demand, rather than the current artificially-driven frenzy of overproduction of inferior, short-lived goods. New innovations will create a temporary period of intensified production, which will scale back once people's needs have been met. As a result of this change, the number of hours in a typical work-week will drop dramatically with no drop in access to goods and services. Work stress will similarly decrease in the absence of dysfunctional hierarchical power structure, of unrealistic and artificially high and unrealistic production expectations, and of the constant threat of the wolf at the door. Motivation and work ethic will increase, as each involved person becomes an empowered peer decision-maker, worker, and stakeholder. This has been borne out in smaller scale implementations of similar setups: worker co-operatives, for example, are often more productive than conventional firms (Pérotin, 2016). People's mental, physical and social health and well-being will augment to previously unheard-of levels. We can expect a decline in the kind of violent crime and conflict that emerges out of the pressures and stresses of the current paradigm. This will truly be a win-win-win social model.

Trade with un-Transitioned countries will be especially challenging. Transitioned and un-transitioned environments will be at cross-purposes in many ways. Un-Transitioned facilities will be driven by the ever-accelerating demands of the self-devouring cycle, driving employees to their limits to produce an endless supply of inferior products with short lifespans. Transitioned facilities will be driven by production of the best possible goods and services in order to meet authentic needs, and then run just enough to keep up with breakage and population growth. The only way a Transitioned enterprise will accommodate the inflated pace of an un-Transitioned partner or parent company will be if the people in the former decide to, of their own free will.

One very strong bargaining point in such negotiations will be the fact that, for partners or parent companies in un-Transitioned countries, the very fact of part of production taking place in Transitioned facilities will result in vastly increased profits for the partner or parent company in the pre-Transition society. With no money changing hands in Transitioned facilities, and so no prices to inflate, pre-Transition entities will have a strong competitive advantage. They will be able to sell top-of-the-line products for less than bargain-basement prices and still make handsome profits. In the process, the new paradigm will be its own ambassador and spokesperson. Few will fail to see the superiority of the new paradigm, as compared with the old (current) one, on almost every metric.

In the world economy, people will quickly see that products from Transitioned facilities have quality beyond the most expensive high-end products of the old paradigm, with a price below the lowest of low-end products. The vastly improved quality of life enjoyed by residents of Transitioned countries will also quickly become apparent. Goods and services of the new paradigm will overwhelmingly out-compete those of the old (current) paradigm. This will inspire and fuel a rising trend of Transitions in country after country. It will be a clear case of survival of the fittest. Once the two paradigms are on global view side by side, the old paradigm will inevitably go extinct.

Most likely, some old-paradigm countries will try to tip the scale by imposing tariffs and other taxes on goods from Transitioned countries, to raise their prices to make them lest competitive. To prevent this, all trade and business agreements will need to have language embedded specifying that any attempt to handicap Transitioned goods and services will cause immediate termination of such agreements. This will become less and less of an issue as more and more countries Transition.

In place of the current chaotic deceptive sensory-overload of advertising and marketing, we will create an online interactive database where anybody can find out where to get what they want or need and what options are available, from tools to study to housing to cars to clothing, and view user and developer comments. Product and service descriptions will be factual and accurate. There will be nothing to motivate doing otherwise. Easy-to-understand manuals and specifications will be easily accessible. Both automated and manned call centers will respond to questions not answered online. We'll be able to order online, by phone or go in person to the appropriate distribution center. There will be direct channels of communication between developers, producers, and consumers.

Current malls, dealerships, malls and department stores will be repurposed as distribution centers for the same classes of product that they now sell. Since all forms of currency will be obsolete and unnecessary, all billing, credit and other financial transaction software will be discontinued, and the corresponding functionality will be removed from inventory and other applications needed to keep track of real demand and corresponding supply needs. Every facet of transactions

and operations will be greatly simplified and thus become much more efficient in every way. Service providers, such as repair shops, doctors, dentists, and schools will continue to function in the same facilities in use now. The difference will be that no currency will be needed by anybody, and service providers will be the masters of their own operations.

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The entire current financial sector, including banks, stock exchanges and brokerages, lenders, realtors, insurance companies, collections and repo operations, credit agencies and more will cease to exist. They will be obsolete and have no purpose. On the day of Transition, all such facilities will be physically (without violence) blocked, cut off from power and communication, carefully and compassionately evacuated, and repurposed. Some very limited version of such functionality will probably need to be maintained for a while, for the sole purpose of forming part of the interface between Transitioned and un-Transitioned countries and 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.

The current paradigm strongly favors large, centralized production facilities run by vast corporations. In the new paradigm, wherever possible and practical, emphasis will shift towards small and mid-scale production in widely distributed networks. This will be especially true in sectors such as energy generation and food production. This will not be very different from the pre Feudalistic concept of the “commons,” where mills, water, granaries and other resources were run and used in common by all in the community. Of course, some sectors won’t be easily or practically amenable to the distributed small-scale model. Ship and aircraft manufacture are good examples of this. No principle or guideline will be imposed upon people or operations where doing so would be impractical or cause unnecessary stress, inefficiency, or harm to people or the environment.

After Transition, government environmental and resource-management agencies will do a detailed study of the sustainable, renewable energy potential of each region and work with engineers and energy professionals in order to ensure a smooth, efficient shift. As much as possible, solar, wind, geothermal, mechanochemical, biological and similar technologies will largely replace massive fossil fuel plants and reduce our reliance on nuclear generators. Smaller-scale and run-of-river hydropower will replace damaging large dams where practical. Emphasis will be on generation at the neighborhood, block, and individual dwelling level, with materials, installation and maintenance provided by the appropriate professionals and training offered in communities. Thus we will become more directly empowered and involved in the production of the services we use, more knowledgeable, and more engaged socially on a local level. Vigorous research will seek to identify and develop new safe, sustainable, renewable, nondestructive energy generation and transmission technologies.

We will also devote major resources to restoring devastated ecosystems and environments, cleaning up and removing toxic waste and byproducts, reclaiming useful materials from landfills, abandoned factories, foundries and other facilities, reintroducing depleted species, and partnering with other countries on large-scale projects like cleaning up the massive accumulation of waste plastic in the Pacific Ocean, doing aggressive reforestation in many countries, restoring the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Amazon Rain Forrest in Brazil and much, much more.

Free and unobstructed access to all communications media, including telephony, the Internet, broadcast and printed media, and any future technologies, is a right shared by every person and the greater community. It is essential for our thriving, evolution, and well-being as individuals and as local and global communities. After the transition, we will integrate all of the best features of today’s competing products and services into a superior range of products and services that is unattainable in today’s anti-collaborative environment. The new systems will maintain backwards, forwards, and lateral compatibility with all current technologies and protocols for as long as needed and wanted. Eventually more and more people will trade in their devices for the superior newer products of the Transitioned industries, leading eventually to phasing out of support for pre-Transition goods and services. Universal form-factors and interfaces will facilitate upgradeability to new emerging technologies.

The universal database and web interface will incorporate data from sources that were formerly separate corporate, government, scientific and academic environments. Free and open communication, collaboration, and data sharing will be encouraged and facilitated in every area of endeavor. This network will also track and facilitate tracking and

coordination of real needs and production, to ensure that needs are met while production is not needlessly excessive. Over time, predictive algorithms will be developed that will learn and become increasingly accurate a forecasting of needs in every facet of society.

We will need to implement counter-measures to prevent talented black market profiteers from hacking the system and artificially manipulating algorithms or data to cause needless surplus goods to be produced and routed to themselves, in order to sell them in countries still operating under the current modern feudalism.

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.

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And of course there is no valid reason for one person or social unit to own more than one home, except in very limited and specific situations such as herders whose occupation requires a home near the winter pasture and another home near the summer pasture. Exceptions would of course be based on unbiased review of specific circumstances.

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

Both theoretical and applied scientific research will be actively encouraged and supported at every level. Unlike under the current modern feudalism where research and development are heavily skewed towards generation of profitable products, pure science will be welcomed, whether or not it leads to technological or practical applications.

Such research, as well as new technological developments, will be directly accessible to all of us, in both scientific language and plain terms understandable by lay persons. This will re-engage the public with the leading edge of science and new frontiers, rekindling the kind of shared inspiration and invigoration that were generated by early aviation, deep-sea exploration and the Space Race before our worldview shrank to encompass little more than the latest products and entertainments. This will be a tremendous benefit to us as individuals and as societies. We will evolve from programmed consumerism to eager engagement, empowerment, curiosity, innovation, and realization.

While innovation and curiosity are their own strong motivators, rooted deeply in the human psyche, some people may miss the prospect of financial reward for their creations. While under the current modern feudalism, such innovation only very rarely brings the innovator much financial benefit, many of us are conditioned to expect, desire, and even feel an emotional need for it, perhaps feeling cheated if we don't get it. While psychologically and culturally Transitioning, which will naturally take longer than the functional, operational Transition, we will probably want to introduce a new kind of segment into our mass media: to broadcast celebration and acknowledgement of people or groups who have made breakthroughs, new technologies, artistic creations and such, giving people positive feedback in the form of celebrity and public acknowledgement and appreciation. Such celebrity would be optimal if it is temporary – long enough to have a strong positive psychological and emotional impact, but not so long as to generate dysfunctional responses, behaviors and patterns. This will create strong positive reinforcers for such innovation.

All levels of education and training will be open to all of us, limited only by our ability and discipline. There will no longer be rich and poor neighborhoods, or "budgetary considerations" leading to cutting of programs. Thus the level of literacy, expertise, and realization of potential and passions will reach heretofore unseen levels, to the benefit of every individual and the greater community.

Legal definitions of intellectual property will need to be updated, making it explicitly impossible for anybody but the actual innovator to claim ownership. Any such rights that, pre-Transition, had been usurped from the innovator by an employer, a financier or any other parasitic arrangement, will, through democratically enacted law and with due process, revert to the person who actually did the work. If multiple people independently came up with the same innovation, then all of them will equally share rights. Of course, in the absence of currency and the needs for it, intellectual property won't have the high-stakes monetary dimension that today makes the subject so contentious and creates so many predators. International intellectual property law will be respected, except where it conflicts with principles of the new paradigm. For example, if a person or team in a Transitioned production facility creates an innovation that an un-Transitioned parent company claims the right to appropriate, such appropriation will be denied and not honored.

Currently, much of civil law is centered on currency. That will change. It will be impossible to impose a fine, or to award cash damages to a wronged party. New forms of compensation will need to be formulated, such as performing specified services or taking specified actions to mitigate or undo the damage or wrong done.

The core concepts of all forms of ownership will be redefined and recast.

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First and foremost, it will become illegal, and legally impossible, for one person or social entity to claim to control or own land, dwellings, facilities or other resources that they themselves aren't personally using, or to otherwise obstruct or hamper access of others to such resources or to hold such access hostage pending the other party's doing something of the offender's bidding. Current renters and people with mortgages, will immediately become the legal owners of their homes, cars etc. Clear and carefully thought out, fair and equitable guidelines will need to be created to resolve situations such as roommates. Homeowners who have been renting out rooms in their house to make ends meet will remain the legal owners, while the erstwhile renters will be free to choose residences of their own to move into and will be granted sufficient time to do so without undue stress, unless all parties agree that no one has to leave. Where one party has been house sitting for an owner who is away temporarily, the original owner will remain the legal owner unless they choose to relinquish ownership.

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

We will develop legal processes for claiming ownership of unoccupied or unused resources, with reasonable and equitable mechanisms for resolving disputes and conflicts. We will need to define, through democratically enacted law, humanly reasonable upper and lower limits on how much land or other resources one person, family or other social entity can own. The current and all past forms of feudalism all have in common the lack of such limits, making it possible for one person or entity to own everything or nearly everything, and for another to own literally nothing and thus be denied the right to take up space. We will absolutely need to correct this vulnerability, in order to prevent the dysfunctional feudal pattern from reappearing in time. Our goal will be to guarantee that each person, family or other social unit has enough space and other resources to carry out a fulfilling life, without interfering with anybody else's ability to do so.

Under laws enacted for the purpose, with due process for their present owners, currently unoccupied buildings and land will be available for use and habitation; homes that people live in, and their personal possessions, will never be touched. National parks, wilderness areas and other natural resources will still be protected from residential or industrial use or development. There will undoubtedly be conflicts when two or more parties want to claim the same house or land. We will have to form laws, protocols and mechanisms to resolve conflicts among contending parties, crafted to create win-win scenarios in which no party is left without a suitable building or parcel of land. Courses in construction and design will be easily accessible, and professional construction crews and equipment will be available to help anybody needing it. A central principle codified and implemented in the new paradigm will be that every person, group and social unit will be guaranteed a safe and reasonable place to live.

Large-scale centralized agriculture may continue to a much lesser degree than now; but emphasis in food production will shift towards small to mid-sized production at the regional, neighborhood, block, and individual dwelling level. The "victory garden" will return and be encouraged. Classes and training in small-scale cultivation will be widely available at community centers, community colleges, churches, municipal buildings and other easily accessible places. Robust seed stock, gardening tools and other supplies will be easily available to all. Some zoning laws will have to change to permit, protect, and encourage this distributed agriculture. Zoning laws that separate industrial from residential areas will be preserved for the protection of both.

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For the most part, we'll implement these changes immediately at the time of Transition, as much as practical.

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For practical reasons, however, the shift from centralized large-scale corporate food, energy and other production to small-scale local distributed production will take time to carry out, and will be done steadily in as smooth and non-disruptive ways as possible. We'll need to give ourselves time, for people adapted to the current, old paradigm to learn and master the ways of doing things in the new paradigm. This will not be done by force from above, though government will assist and facilitate. As we prepare for Transition, we must carefully, compassionately plan the practical aspects of how we will perform the Transition from the current modern feudalism to the new peer-based, symbiotic paradigm, a massive change in the very core operating principles of societies. We will encourage and facilitate, but not rush, our adaptation to the new paradigm. Through the Transition and beyond, our goal and responsibility is to make sure that the lights stay on, food still reaches our tables, schools and hospitals open, and all real goods and services continue with little or no disruption.

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If the deposed feudal lords try to re-establish their power and dominance through force or sabotage, we will have to counteract and neutralize their efforts as humanely as possible, with as minimal disruption as possible to the activities of normal living. During such confrontations, we will livestream events to the world, documenting everything for the world to know and see.

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

Once the Transition is complete and society re-cast into the new paradigm, we can look forward to dramatic increases in quality of life by all measures, for all of us. Stress will drop precipitously, as will the typical work hours needed to keep things running. Job satisfaction will soar. All goods and services will be of the highest quality. Pollution, sensory overwhelm, waste, and preventable conflict will reach historic lows. We will at long last experience a truly free and democratic society, in which each of use can fully pursue our life, liberty and happiness unobstructed, in true freedom. The success of one will inspire others, rather than threaten their chances of success. Science, the arts, technology, and overall innovation will reach new levels of excellence, ushering in a new Renaissance.

Chapter 35: Growing Up and Living 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).

Under the current modern feudalistic paradigm, all children not from families at the top of the socioeconomic pyramid face a potentially bleak prospect: the default denial of their right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, or anything else, that will descend upon them the moment they become a legal adult. They will have to fight against that default denial for the rest of their life.

From a young age, kids must develop a survival strategy that will lead to enough income to ransom their existence every month. The older the child, the more intense the pressure. Think of this, a ten-year-old child having to make career decisions and figure out how to compete in a caustic, adversarial society where they will be automatically denied access and rights unless they can come up with a lot of money to pay for it. Survival, quality of life, and options depend upon making choices based on economics, rather than passions or dreams. If we fail to make the rent or mortgage payment, then we lose the right to even occupy space. This is an indefensible, unnecessary trauma upon each of us, which translates into immeasurable human tragedy and misery.

In a healthy society, a person develops fully, playing, socializing and absorbing knowledge as a child; individuating, experimenting, stretching their wings, and finding their stride as adolescents, and finally becoming empowered, highly engaged, fulfilled adults. Such a person would have a strong disadvantage in the dominant societies of today, in terms of economic survival.

Most academic, career and other counselors and advisors advise young people to pursue a career path with the best earning potential, not the greatest level of passion, satisfaction, or meaning for them. They would actively discourage the latter. They might exhort their clients to “face the hard cold facts” and focus on how best to make enough money to ransom their right to eat, drink, occupy space and function for the rest of their lives. That is the norm under the current feudalistic paradigm.

The damage from growing up in the current socioeconomic system is multidimensional. In families on the lower portions of the power and wealth pyramid, parents often work long hours, under unrelenting stress, for insufficient pay, with little time or energy to spend with their kids, and little money to spend on extracurricular activities or hobbies. Schools are most likely under-funded, providing an inferior education. Their children are more likely to have poor nutrition and medical care available. In many places, life is made more perilous by gangs, who incidentally are businesses, even if illegal ones, no less than are legal businesses, and operating under the same principles.

Such children are more likely than their affluent counterparts to be bullied, due to the psychology of socioeconomic stratification and the inter-group ethnic, religious and other enmities both engendered and encouraged by the paradigm itself and the feudal lords at the top.

Entering the job market as a newly-independent adult, aiming to become self-sustaining in such cultures is often traumatic. In such cultures, every person is an island in a stormy sea. If you don’t have a couch or guest room with friends or family in the meantime, then you start your job search in imminent danger of homelessness. One month without income is all it takes. You may already have student debt. Door after door closes. Employees are a dime a dozen. You have to prove to hiring managers why they should hire you instead any other out of hundreds or thousands of applicants. You are denied the right to effectively exist, unless you can convince a skeptical someone otherwise.

The psychological impact is a deep negation of one’s worth. It gets worse the longer one is unemployed. More than a very few months unemployed is treated as evidence of one’s unworthiness, often ending an applicant’s chances without ever getting an interview.

Without money, you won’t long survive, no matter how contributory you may be. Functionally and socially, rejecting you from a paying job is equivalent to declaring you unfit to live, effectively telling you to go waste away and die

somewhere else, without actually taking your life. This is the pervasive reality under the paradigm, and its impact is devastating. Some hope to emulate “rags to riches” and other success stories; but for all but a very few, “financial independence” is forever in the future. Worse, the “anybody can make it” cultural myth causes people to judge themselves and each other harshly, assuming that not “making it” implies moral, mental or other deficiency, making one a “loser.”

Modern socioeconomic feudalism strongly supports and justifies the feudal lords at the top of the pyramid, while burdening, penalizing, judging and disempowering us peasants and serfs just for being in that position. We also see part of the damage from this in school shootings, gangs, high substance abuse, and suicide rates among people aged 10 to 24 that rose by 62% from 2007 to 2021 (NCHS, 2023).

Pressure and reinforcement is to find any way to economically survive, with no consideration of whether it’s satisfying, contributes to the community, fulfilling, or even truly a necessary function.

Such environments are fertile grounds for employment and get rich quick scams to emerge. “Make six figures in your spare time, doing what you love.” Falling victim to such a scam only reinforces belief in the inevitability of being disempowered and struggling unsuccessfully, and that anything to the contrary must be a scam.

These cultures suffer from widespread alienation, disempowerment, cynicism, destructive competition, nihilism, stagnation, and exploitation. People are conditioned to focus their lives and efforts on entertainments, consumer goods, and status symbols. We’re also conditioned to believe that the status quo is natural, inevitable, the best possible world that cannot be changed. Cultural myths equate a person’s worth and respectworthiness to their position on the pyramid. Feudal lords are seen as being superior, while the rest of us are seen as inferior due to moral, mental, physical, or emotional defects.

For those who do “make it,” strong reinforcement selects for keeping it to one’s self and against sharing it or using it to benefit one’s fellows and community.

The socioeconomic paradigm is of course, only one among many factors in human development. Genetics, home and wider social environment, nutrition, and unforeseeable events, experiences and exposures all play a part, positive and/or negative. That is true under any paradigm. Yet the arbitrary stresses and pressures generated under this modern feudal paradigm lead to markedly higher levels of dysfunction in families than are seen in more synergistic, non-hierarchical, symbiotic paradigms: across societies, wider income gaps go with worse health and more social problems, including violence (Pickett and Wilkinson, 2015).

Post-Transition societies will be freed from such stresses and dysfunctions, and will thus will change dramatically for the better. Along the journey from birth to adulthood, children will be fully able to be children, to play and learn and grow. Adolescents will be free to develop and discover themselves and their passions, pursue them, and prepare for adulthood. They will enter adulthood empowered, highly engaged, and fulfilled while contributing to their communities. Growing people will be encouraged to play, learn, work, explore and discover their talents and passions and pursue them. The artificial line between work and play will blur, as work will no longer be a yoke and a burden to be borne in order to ransom one’s existence monthly. Work will become an extension of play. There’ll be no competition for survival or “success,” so social interactions will be far more open, honest, collaborative, cooperative and mutually beneficial than is common now.

Of course, schools will still teach math, science, language skills, history and such, but they’ll also teach effective communication, conflict resolution, collective and consensus decision-making, critical thinking and other essential soft skills.

The priorities and emphasis for educators will change in many ways. Currently, schools treat education as an assembly-line that molds students and prepares them to become disposable wage-slaves and consumers to keep the socioeconomic pyramid going. Post-Transition educators will be tasked with teaching, training, and mentoring students, supporting their development into fully-actualized and empowered adults who will naturally merge into their natural niche in the community. Survival will become more of a dance than a struggle.

There will still be classrooms, but education will be much more individualized, and not confined to classrooms. Students will be supported in pursuing chosen courses of study, which will often reach into the community, which will become

much more engaged in the process.

When a student shows an aptitude and interest or passion for a field of endeavor, they will be able to attend advanced classes in universities or trade schools, learn directly from professionals in production environments, and develop at their own pace, which may be faster or slower than average, or faster in one area than another. When the student reaches adulthood, they will be far more prepared to enter their chosen field than is currently the case.

Students who change their areas of interest one or more times along the way will be supported in doing so, thus gaining valuable and broadening experience and become more rounded, balanced individuals. This is a common and natural part of human development.

Apprenticeship and mentorship models of education and training will become more prominent, thus engaging different generations with one another, leading to a more cohesive, connected, less alienated society. A person entering productive life in their chosen field will be far more prepared than is typical under the current paradigm, having both theoretical and practical experience. Under the current paradigm, a new doctor or architect has a fair amount of theoretical knowledge but little practical experience in a context where you need experience to get a job, but can't get experience without getting a job.

Trade schools will change less, but they will be able to focus more on teaching skills and innovation, rather than on churning out human products for the labor market.

The current paradigm is fertile ground for the proliferation of predatory for-profit schools.

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In the new paradigm, these outfits will either reorient themselves to provide the same quality of free, open education and training as all other schools, or else they will be taken over by educators who will do so after those unwilling or unable will quickly leave in search of 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 all artificial barriers to education gone, the prevailing level of education in the new paradigm will be much higher than at present. The level of skill, innovation, motivation and engagement in every sector will rise dramatically, as will the quality of goods and services that are produced. Job satisfaction will reach record highs; alienation, apathy, and job stress will plummet to new lows.

In the new paradigm the compulsive runaway self-devouring cycle will end. Production of the new high standard of quality goods and services will follow actual, authentic demand. Once equilibrium is reached, the typical work-week will most likely drop to thirty or even twenty hours. Work stress will be minimal or nonexistent. Since currency will be obsolete and unnecessary, reduced work hours will not impact survival or quality of life. There will be no negative trade-off.

The shift from hierarchical to peer-based social and functional structures will also greatly enhance social and individual empowerment and productive harmony. In large organizations, peer decision-making and discussions can be divided into smaller groups interacting, or mediated electronically in ways that we've seen used successfully during the COVID pandemic.

A distributed interface and database along the lines of social media will be an optimal medium for interaction. Teachers, parents, students, and others will be able to interact, discuss, and make collaborative decisions. Educational methods can be discussed, developed, tested, refined, and expanded upon or abandoned depending on results, in a way parallel to the development process in the Open Source phenomenon. In fact, we will benefit greatly if we learn from the development processes used in the Open Source world.

We're focusing on schools here since we're talking about growing up in the new paradigm, but this same Open Source mode of operation will be a widely useful starting point in the new paradigm. Educational, industrial, social, or other ideas, designs, processes or theories that work, will grow and be expanded and amplified; those that don't, will be re-

examined and either modified or abandoned. Thus will come a sustainable course of evolution, innovation, and development in every sector of society.

The dysfunctional hierarchical social structures dominant in the current paradigm will be absent. Boards of Education will have no power to impose their ideas, ideology, or methods upon teachers and students. The voices of teachers and students will not be suppressed. Teachers will no longer be expected to take a method that doesn't work, and force it to work or make it look like it does.

Hierarchical social structures reliably reinforce and amplify our most dysfunctional potentials and suppress our most productive, positive potentials, leading to incalculable human unhappiness, stress, abuse and stagnation and inferior products when all is said and done. The new paradigm will clear away this antiquated, unworkable paradigm and replace it with the new one, specifically designed to reinforce and amplify our most positive, life-affirming, innovative and collaborative potentials while suppressing our most dysfunctional potentials via simple lack of reinforcement.

Schools at every level will evolve into institutions that nurture, empower, equip, support, train, mentor and guide our children not just to perform their chosen role or roles in the community, but to take their place as fully actualized, empowered, engaged members of their community, able to fulfill their own lives while contributing their best to the community.

The Transition will usher in a Renaissance in every sector of society, which will dwarf the European Renaissance and last potentially indefinitely.

Chapter 36: Strategies and Tactics

> **Important context for this chapter**
>
> This chapter describes the earlier "overnight transition" model, which has been superseded by a gradual, community-based roadmap. Passages referencing armed defense and weapons do not represent the current position. Transition's commitment to nonviolence is absolute. The chapter is preserved with annotations so the evolution of the thinking remains transparent.

Traditional strikes have been effective strategies in many places and times. Employees shut down production, picket, and raise public awareness and support, while negotiating with employers for improvements in salary, benefits, working conditions etc. Often this is the only way to get employers to make improvements, since otherwise they simply won't, because the economic paradigm reinforces getting the most out of employees and giving them the least possible. Strikers often make huge sacrifices, living without pay with minimal help from strike funds, often harassed, threatened, jailed, beaten, tortured and even killed by intransigent employers. Public sympathy often leads to public boycotting of exploitative businesses. Employers often bring in scab labor, putting strikers in and scabs in an adversarial setup often spawning violence.

Strikes succeed when the cost to employers and the modern feudal lords at their helms, in terms of lost profits, stock price, and market share exceeds the cost of giving concessions to strikers. Employers will finally compromise with employees, when it becomes better for the bottom line to do so.

Where there are strong, well-organized labor unions and high public identification with striking employees (remember that most people are paid sub-living or barely-living wages), we see real improvements in wages, benefits, working conditions, and the lives of employees in general. We even see laws passed to safeguard the safety and well-being of employees. Strikes are usually aimed improving the lot of employees at an individual company, sector or industry.

Unfortunately, strikes are no longer nearly as effective as they were just a generation ago, for the following reasons:

1) The modern feudal lords, their corporations, and politicians responsive to their interests, have successfully generated propaganda and disinformation portraying strikers and unions in general as criminals, troublemakers, and even "economic terrorists." Such propaganda is often made to look like it comes from organizations that claim to be oriented towards the good of employees.

If you see a pamphlet or public service announcement from, for example, "Workers' Rights Alliance," you are more likely to trust that its output is in support of employees, than if it comes from the Chamber of commerce. It is not uncommon for such names to be covertly used by employers and their government suzerains to deliver disinformation. Amidst typical labor-oriented language, you might see an article claiming that unions, not employers, exploit employees, cause job loss and inflation, and take away your freedom.

This divides employees into pro-union and anti-union, fighting each other rather than the employer and the socioeconomic paradigm. We also see increasing public indifference to and hostility towards strikers, who are blamed for inflation, rather than the businesses which put employees in a position where they need to strike, just to be able to survive; rather than realizing that the real "culprit" is the socioeconomic paradigm which pits employers and employers against each other and always advantages the employer.

2) News media have become inexorably swallowed up into mammoth mega-corporations through acquisitions and mergers. Reporters are no longer expected to uncover the truth and report it, with no preconceptions. Rather, they are expected to tell whatever story their employer, and the feudal lord driving it, want told. If they don't want a strike reported, it won't be. If they want a strike spun as the act of hooligans or bad elements, that's how the story will be told. In the United States, the press is far freer than in China or North Korea, yet media ownership is so concentrated that what the public sees and hears is shaped heavily by what the feudal lords want them to see and hear. 3) Some unions have indeed become corrupt, complacent, and out of touch with their purpose. Some union leaders become self-serving

and unresponsive to real issues, even to the point of colluding with employers at employees' expense. A classic example is when the Teamsters' Union terrorized early organizers of the United Farmworkers, on behalf of growers (Garcia, Gastronomica, 2007). 4) The gains made from decades of employee and public struggles, have led to complacency, a misperception that we've arrived at a good place and that the struggles are behind us. Yet as long as the current paradigm is operating, such complacency guarantees escalating loss of gains. 5) Employers increasingly hire people as contractors, rather than employees, as a way to save money and avoid legal obligations and protections in place for employees. 6) The "right to work" or "at-will employment" concept, implemented in many U.S. states, is a legal framework which allows employers to micromanage and fire employees at will, with few to no restrictions.

Traditional strikes usually involve one company, or at most, one industry. A more effective kind of strike is the general strike, in which people strike across nearly all industries and sectors, shutting down the economy in order to achieve gains for everybody. This is even more effective when people also refrain from buying and selling altogether. Another advantage of general strikes is that they are nonviolent and much less likely to be subjected to violence. This has been especially effective in Europe, Iceland and other places.

Since it involves everybody staying home, there's no large gathering that can be targeted for intimidation, or degenerate from purposeful, concerted action into an emotional "purging" that accomplishes little. The general strike can still be a very good vehicle for nonviolently forcing systemic legal, economic, and policy changes, providing that demands are clearly and concisely presented. This tactic definitely has a place among the nonviolent tactics to be used to bring about the Transition, keeping in mind that some services, such as hospitals and firefighters, might best refrain, while expressing solidarity with strikers.

For the purposes of the Transition, however, the general strike alone will not be sufficient. This is because strikes happen in order to bring about specific changes. Once those changes are achieved, everybody goes back to work under the same current, modern feudal paradigm as before the strike. The goal of the Transition, however, is to completely decommission the current, dysfunctional paradigm and completely replace it with an entirely new one. This is not an overhaul or maintenance. It is total replacement of the paradigm. It's unlikely that a universal general strike could induce modern feudal lords to disband their corporations and relinquish power, financial institutions to shut down, and legislators to abolish currency and make the necessary changes to the legal framework.

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The transition will need to use tactics and strategies that are innovative, nonviolent, aggressive, and free of the limitations of strikes that we've known before. For one approach, think of a reverse strike. The current socioeconomic paradigm cannot be tweaked or fixed to make it viable. It must be halted in order to implement a new paradigm based on completely new operating principles and reinforcing very different behaviors, which will give rise to sustainable, win-win societies where each and all are able to thrive in a synergistic, symbiotic set of relationships between fully empowered and actualized individuals, groups, and the larger community, in which mutual support and reciprocal benefit is the norm.

Enter the reverse strike. It will work something like this:

Via social media, email, and word of mouth, people will come to consensus on a date for the Transition. It will literally happen from one day to the next. The date will ideally be chosen sometime in early spring, in order to minimize the impact of unexpected disruptions. This will avoid having to contend with winter cold or summer heat right away, and allows maximum time to stabilize any outages before the next winter.

On the day of Transition, people will go to work and things will proceed very similarly to "normal," with the following important differences:

1) Production processes will continue as always, except that the chain of command will be ignored. Decision-making will henceforth be made on a peer-based democratic or consensus model. Chains of command will be informed of the change. No demands will be made, and no negotiation will take place. There will be no going back. Any attempts to physically re-establish and enforce the old chain of command will be dealt with physically, but as nonviolently as absolutely possible, with firmness, respect and compassion towards all parties. 2) Banks, stock exchanges, investment firms, insurance companies, collections agencies, and all financial sector entities will be evacuated, physically blocked, and cut off from power and communication in the early hours before the morning

rush hour. 3) In the financial departments of productive operations such as factories, hospitals, schools, power plants, all accounts will be marked paid in full (including currently past-due ones), all billing and all payment will cease. Goods and services will continue to flow.

Meanwhile, software developers supporting production and business software systems will remove all financial functionality from all applications. All genuinely productive functionality will remain: inventory, maintenance, industrial processes, and other essential functionality will be preserved. Payment terminals, toll gates and similar hardware will be removed from wherever they are. If this can be done before Transition and patched into apps during, it would be optimal, though such work will have to proceed in secret.

Doctors, dentists, mechanics, and other service providers will cease charging customers, who will cease to pay. People will no longer pay rent, mortgages, leases, loans or other debts, even if old-paradigm die-hards try to make them. Remember, all financial institutions and departments will be unmanned and without power, communication, or even physical access.

Stores, gas stations and other retailers will still ring customers out, but without taking payment, price modifying all transactions to zero. Very quickly, POS applications will be updated to provide inventory-related functions only. If payment is offered, it will be refused; if demanded, it will be not be given.

4) The chain of command will be shut down. CEO's, managers, supervisors and similar commanders will be the last to realize that their fiefs are running smoothly and efficiently under autonomous peasant control, and that their orders are being steadfastly ignored, their authority is gone.

When the deposed lords and their agents try to reassert their control, they will be informed, firmly but respectfully, that their jobs are eliminated and their former roles no longer exist. Their orders will be ignored. They will be invited to join the rest of the members of the enterprise as respected peers, not as commanders.

When some deposed lords try to use physical force to reassert dominance, we will resist them calmly and firmly, both verbally and physically. If necessary, they will be removed from the premises, but always with respect and care to cause no or minimum possible injury or indignity. If it becomes the only option, we may on occasion have to fight; but always with the guiding principles of minimizing harm and then rendering aid when threats are contained.

When deposed lords inevitably try to leverage the legal system, law enforcement, and even the military to enforce their will, we will be ready to live-stream events to the world. Their only options in that effort would be to try to halt production of goods and services, which will plainly show the world the truth of their priorities. By that time, many police and military members will have realized that the Transition is actually restoring government of, by and for the people as set out in the Constitution that they swore to protect and defend, and that the current modern feudalism has been quietly subverting democracy and supplanting it with feudal oligarchy. Many such people will support the Transition, or at the very least, interpret their task as protecting all parties from harm, keeping the peace. If we are forced to either capitulate or fight and have exhausted all other options, we will be prepared to fight, but only to defend against the re-establishment of modern feudalism, and always seeking to neutralize the threat posed by our adversaries with minimum possible harm to all parties. If government attempts to enforce the will of the defunct lords, we will continue producing and refuse to comply.

5) Some won't know what the Transition is about. Some will try to sabotage it out of fear, ignorance, attachment to the old paradigm, or for other reasons. If we Transition well, then we'll contain and restrain such people with the same attitude and approach that we use to contain and restrain people suffering from dementia, delusions, chemical alteration, or panic. Anybody who tries to cut off services, send or collect bills, or obstruct access of people to goods and services, will be respectfully but firmly prevented from doing so. 6) Many working in the media will already be participating in the Transition, but likely not all. Therefore, we expect coverage of the Transition to be incomplete and inconsistent, some outlets reporting factually, some sympathetically, some antagonistically, and some not at all.

Fortunately we won't be wholly dependent on the media. Every one of us will be a reporter, recording and uploading events as they occur, at every level. If any media portray the Transition as violent, authoritarian, or barbaric, the overwhelming live reporting on the scene will show the country and the world that those initiating the

Transition are peaceful, level-headed, reasonable people bent on keeping the lights on, the trucks rolling, and the flow of goods and services strong. That will put those deposed lords trying to shut the Transition down, into the role of violent, brutal, authoritarian thugs trying to shut everything down out of sheer greed and power lust. The world will see clearly the superiority of the new paradigm over the old, in close juxtaposition.

Unlike in traditional strikes, there'll be no negotiation, no compromise, and no return to a modified continuation of the old paradigm afterwards. Production and distribution will continue undisrupted, while financial institutions and functions will be permanently and completely shut down, never to be revived.

7) As the Transition unfolds, statements will be sent to all electronic, audio, video, printed and other media and shared from person to person presenting, clarifying and explaining what's happening and elucidating its guiding principles, intentions and goals. These statements won't be presented as demands, but as statements of fact. There will be no vilifying of individuals or groups, and no violent or hateful rhetoric.

The statement will explain that the current modern feudal socioeconomic paradigm is untenable, unsustainable, and incompatible with democracy and why it is so. It will explain that we the people are initiating a new paradigm from the ground up, centered on peer-based consensus-oriented models, a win-win paradigm rooted in collaboration, synergy, symbiosis, and psycho-social science, designed to generate a social environment where reciprocating benefits foster a thriving society made up of empowered, thriving, free individuals. We will emphasize that there can be no free and democratic society of, by and for the people, without an economy of, by and for the people.

The Transition will inevitably vary in some ways from country to country with different cultures, institutions and traditions. The statement will also be delivered to all foreign embassies, consulates and other missions in the Transitioning country, as well as to foreign governments.

In the United States, it would be good to start the statement by quoting the Declaration of Independence, where it states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal…" and goes on to state that when governments pursue agendas harmful to the people, that the people have the right and duty to change it accordingly, followed by an assurance that we do not seek to overthrow the government, but only the modern feudal socioeconomic power structure.

Next we'll need to explain how pyramidal socioeconomic paradigm has given rise to an anti-democratic, feudalistic oligarchy or monetocracy which is fundamentally incompatible with, and inimical to, the principles of the Constitution and government of, by and for the people and that therefore it is our right and duty to deconstruct this power structure and replace it with a paradigm that will empower each and every one of us to thrive.

We'll include a message to all who swore an oath to protect and defend the nation and the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic, explaining to them that their oath obliges them to support the Transition, as it is removing a real threat to the Constitution's principles.

The declaration will include multiple explanations and exhortations that our goal is the forceful but nonviolent transition from the current socioeconomic paradigm to a new one, seamlessly and without disrupting the flow of goods and services. We will stress a strong ethical message making clear that nobody should attack, lynch, terrorize, harass, demean, or disrespect another. It will be clarified that nobody will take away anybody's home, personal property, life, or freedom.

The message will also declare that henceforth, each person or social group is the legal owner of their home and other personal property, that currency is obsolete, and that none shall be obstructed or required to pay in any way for rent, mortgage, goods, services, or access to resources, and that all unoccupied dwellings will be open for occupation via legal processes soon forthcoming. We'll reiterate that the rule of law will remain in effect and no violence will be accepted, on anybody's part.

We'll also send out a similar statement to the global community, with a slightly different emphasis. Since there will be global apprehension at such a sudden and drastic change, especially given the traumatic experiences of may major changes in many countries, we'll need to let the world know what to expect, and make sure that our actions support our words.

The international version of the statement will make it clear that we are reasonable civic-minded people who, wherever possible, intend to honor existing treaties, alliances, trade agreements and other international arrangements, with the proviso that corporations and for-profit businesses are null and void in the Transitioned countries, and that facilities owned by for-profit companies in un-Transitioned countries will be owned and governed by all who work in them, and that they will work in equal partnership with foreign home offices, for mutual benefit, but will not be under their control. Likewise we'll reassure employees of now-decommissioned companies in Transitioned countries, that their local laws and customs will be respected and their salaries will be paid. We'll tell the world community that we will not do business with companies or countries who practice systemic human rights violations, environmental irresponsibility, or invade or occupy other countries' people or lands, and that any affected trade agreements or treaties will be renegotiated with the intention of achieving benefit to all parties. And we will assure the world that while we encourage other countries to Transition, we will respect the sovereignty and integrity of other countries and their citizens.

We'll also guarantee that foreign nationals in the Transitioned country will be safe from harm and free to continue about their affairs, with the added clarification that currency will no longer be required of anybody, that smuggling will be intercepted and thwarted, and that foreign employees of Transitioned companies will henceforth be co-owners, co-stakeholders and co-decision-makers in their enterprises.

In this way, we expect to be able to bring about the Transition with little to no disruption of most people's daily lives. In situations where disruptions do occur unexpectedly, they will be short-lived and relatively minor, in contrast to most revolutions and other paradigm-changes that we've seen.

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It will take time for some aspects of the Transition to be completed. Engineers, planners and designers will need to redesign products and processes. Industrial and business software and procedures will change significantly. Today's stores will become tomorrow's distribution centers. New laws will need to be written, others modified and redefined, others stricken from the books.

People who now work in parasitic industries such as the financial sector, insurance, and related occupations will be displaced, because the industries disappear, not because of any failing on their part; but with the disappearance of currency and the need for it, their livelihood and quality of life won't be compromised. Others will be displaced as large-scale farming and power generation facilities are phased out in favor of distributed small-scale ones. In the new paradigm, people who thus find themselves at loose ends will benefit from a massive outreach program meant to support and assist them in finding new niches that match their skills, talents and interests, as well as provide them with psychological counseling if needed and wanted. Many will find that their skills are easily adapted to new niches. Others will find no barriers whatsoever to getting any training or studying any discipline they wish.

All sectors will work together to keep goods and services flowing normally during the retooling, reorganization, and reorientation. If we do it correctly most of us should experience less disruption of our lives than we currently do under the existing paradigm.

Some who are currently accustomed to wealth and power that will no longer exist or be possible, will probably try to restore their status by violent force. If we are to succeed in creating a society with an unparalleled level of empowerment, freedom, harmony and well-being, we must take extreme care not to initiate violence or escalate any violence one bit more than is absolutely unavoidable. We must never become yet another bloodbath in a tragic history of bloodbaths.

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Yet we'd be unrealistic to not be prepared to fight for our lives and our Transition if we have to.

If those addicted to power, wealth, privilege over others, and opulence do put us in a position where our only choices are to let them prevail or fight them, then we must use the minimum level of violence necessary to prevail and never more. Our tactics will emphasize non-lethal and non-maiming weaponry and tactics, wherever practically

possible. Lethal measures are only to be used if all other options for de-escalation and defense have failed. In that case, use of force will end once the threat is gone.

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Whenever anyone is hurt in any confrontation, it will be the duty of each of us to render aid and support, to all who need it, regardless of their affiliation, with respect and compassion. Anyone who has had to be restrained to stop an immediate assault is to be prevented from doing further harm, treated with respect and dignity, and released unharmed, or handed to lawful authorities, as soon as it's safe to do so. We must follow these principles absolutely and rigorously, no matter how emotionally challenging it may be. The very nature of the society that we're creating depends on it. This will create the added benefit of showing everybody at home and abroad, who may be wondering what to expect, that our Transition is well thought out and being carried out by reasonable, honorable, compassionate, considerate people of conscience, and that our actions match the principles that we espouse. This will help to dispel any worries or even propaganda that we may be terrorists, thugs, or autocrats.

We will not disrupt or attempt to overthrow government. Those in government, however, will have to adapt to the new socioeconomic realities. They will no longer enjoy privileged status above other citizens. There will be no more lobbyists or wealthy donors. Some may quit as a result, which will result in special elections in most cases. The jobs or politicians will change some, but will most likely become simpler in many ways.

The coming Transition will not just birth a new socioeconomic paradigm. It will also set a new path and template for the very act of carrying through a necessary change of paradigm, decisively, nonviolently and democratically, one that avoids the brutality, bloodbaths, purges and atrocities that so often accompany revolutions and major socioeconomic changes. No act of change that commits acts of terror, repression, oppression, gratuitous violence, persecution, or revenge can hope to establish a truly thriving, harmonious, society of actualized and empowered people.

Once the first country has Transitioned, the world will see that, contrary to commonly-held cultural myths and misconceptions, the new paradigm is not only practical and in line with human nature, but that it is superior to the old paradigm in nearly every possible way, both practically and in terms of quality of life. This will inspire and engage more and more people in more and more countries to desire their own Transition. Just as happened with heavier-than-air flight, once it's widely known that it's possible, it will proliferate. Desire will lead to intention, which will lead to action, which will lead to Transition and a new Renaissance and golden age in country after country. In this way, the whole world will Transition into the new paradigm and know a level of freedom, fulfillment, harmony and safety previously undreamt of.

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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In order to minimize the impact of any disruptions in the flow of goods and services that may result from sabotage or interference by newly deposed former feudal lords trying to re-establish their dominance through force, it'll be best to time the Transition for early to mid Spring. This gives the longest time for things to stabilize before winter cold sets in, and a reasonable time before summer heat could create hardship. In hotter climates, early to mid fall might be similarly more beneficial. Going into Transition, we'll have to identify at-risk people and populations, and consciously strive to protect them and see to their welfare through the process.

The timing can be coordinated via the Internet through the same means used to organize flash mobs and treasure hunts, as well as by email, word of mouth, and any and all possible media.

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Leading up to the Transition, there's a lot that we can do to strengthen ourselves. Rather than continue living as individual and family islands, we'll become much stronger if we form deeply committed support groups, to strengthen and sustain each other mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, financially, and in every other way. Each group's members will cultivate strong mutual trust and interconnection, ensure that no member is left on their own in the face of calamity, and create a safe space in which all can thrive. Resources, tools, skills, efforts and knowledge will be pooled, counteracting the current paradigm's disempowering default pattern of isolation, separation and alienation. We will carpool, share childcare, plant food, set up small-scale wind, solar and hydroelectric generators, learn first aid, field medicine, household maintenance skills and more.

We also don't need to wait for the full Transition to begin to roll out small-scale distributed food and power generation, though we won't be able to fully implement it until the Transition is done.

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Once the date of Transition is set and committed in any country, we will need to stay clear and laser focused on the goals, principles and purpose of the Transition. We dare not let ourselves be distracted by anger, pain, frustration, fear, obstacles, or engaging with the actions of those who try to oppose the Transition.

The modern feudal lords will almost certainly remote to violence, blackmail, intimidation, slander propaganda and other extreme means to hold on to their power and the status quo. They will portray us as violent aggressors, terrorists, and hooligans. It's vital that we rigorously speak and act consistently with the principles of the Transition at all times, both for the success of the new paradigm, and to not give our opponents any real ammunition for their propaganda. We must remain resolute, compassionate, and respectful, even if we have to fight for our lives. Vengeance and emotional purging must never enter our behavioral vocabulary.

When forced to fight, we must use minimum violence and strive for minimum harm as we neutralize threats. As much as humanly possible, we must strive to disarm rather than kill or maim, contain and de-escalate rather than fight, temporarily disable rather than permanently harm our foes. In truth and in the eyes of the world, we will be the reasonable, level-headed ones striving to keep goods and services flowing, to keep harmony and order, while those trying to suppress us will be revealed for all to see as the terrorists, bullies, hooligans and dangerous parties.

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In order to ensure that the world sees the reality of Transition, every one of us must become a live-streaming reporter. News media must be encouraged to extensively report events.

Traditional strikes, which disrupt production to pressure employers into making concessions, leave strikers vulnerable to being spun as disruptors, “economic terrorists,” and troublemakers, as has happened increasingly and very effectively since the 1980’s in the U.S. Employers are spun as job-creating benefactors devoted to public good.

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In the Transition, we will keep real goods and services running, but shut down all financial activity at every level. No payments will be asked, given, or accepted. This will force our opponents into the role of petty, violent hooligans and disruptors. Remember that goods and services are real, while currency is a made-up thing with no intrinsic value of its own, other than as a means of controlling access to goods and services. Completely eliminating currency will actually speed up the flow of goods and services and make things dramatically more efficient and less wasteful.

In a traditional strike, each side has something that the other side wants. The strike ends when a compromise is reached, and then the same paradigm resumes operation, with minor tweaks. In the Transition, the feudal lords have literally nothing that we want or need. There will be no negotiation or compromise. The current paradigm has proven itself to be toxic and non-viable. We will shut it down and initialize a new paradigm operating on completely different principles. There will be no return to the way things were. We, the players in the field, will fundamentally change the game from the ground up.

When the current feudal lords react badly to seeing their power, privilege, and the socioeconomic power structure that sustained them dismantled, we must treat them with the same compassionate firmness as we would apply to a friend, stranger or relative who becomes violent when suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, addiction, or other disorder. Our purpose is to create a society that empowers and respects all of its members and strives sincerely to foster symbiotic, rather than predatory, dynamics.

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

Always keep in mind that we do not seek to displace those in power and take their place. We will dismantle the whole hierarchical social structure and replace it with an organic, peer based, synergistic one. There will be no positions of power to be coveted or disputed. When all is said and done, we will need to help the former lords to find a niche to thrive in alongside everybody else. This will reduce our dependence on the current paradigm and our entanglement with it.

In the pre-Transition period, we’ll benefit greatly if we work together consciously to deprogram ourselves from the consumeristic responses conditioned into us from birth. It is possible to make ourselves impervious and immune to advertising, marketing, and conditioned urges to shop. It is possible to study and become fully cognizant of the strategies and mechanisms used to manipulate people into mechanistically shopping, consuming, and spending. Thus immunized, our quality of life will already improve and our stress levels decrease.

In talking and writing to people about the new paradigm, we want to focus on the goals, principles of operation, and the impact on quality of life, on the practicalities of what works and what doesn’t. We will not vilify individuals or groups. We must appeal to both the intellect and the heart. We will maintain a strong commitment to unity in diversity.

We will avoid us-versus-them rhetoric. We will not call for violence or punitive action against the modern feudal lords. Remember that their behavior is selected for and reinforced in our societies. Instead of recognising the addiction-like pattern in their drive for privilege, wealth, and power, we have unwittingly played our part in maintaining the same pattern. Both the modern feudal lords, and the modern feudal serfs and peasants, have played a part in perpetuating this destructive paradigm.

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This will change, and those affected will receive treatment to support them in recovering from their addiction.

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In order for word of the Transition to be listened to by the widest possible number of people and sectors, we must be aware of, and scrupulously avoid, the use of culturally, emotionally charged terms. These will vary from country to country and culture to culture. We will need to avoid terms like “bourgeoisie,” “proletariat,” “military-industrial complex,” “liberal,” “conservative,” “class,” the names of specific political parties and many more. The new paradigm is neither capitalism, nor communism, nor socialism. We do not want to trigger landmines of conditioned responses associated with the interactions of those or other past “isms” that have left a strong emotional imprint.

We will not speak in divisive terms of good guys and bad guys. We will speak of systems and principles that work, and that don’t work, factually and matter-of-factly. The new paradigm will benefit every one of us, as we are, and exclude none.

Our presentation of our message must never mislead or manipulate. We will inform, educate, clarify, identify the problems and present the solutions, and explain how to implement them. We will stimulate honest, open dialogue and inquiry.

The truths of how and why the current paradigm is harmful and unsustainable, and the new paradigm is sustainable and beneficial to all, are based on the operating principles and dynamics of each. The issue is how the “game” is designed and is set up to be played. The identity of the players is largely irrelevant. A game that, when played as designed, causes massive harm, must be re-examined, decommissioned, and replaced with one that is mutually beneficial to all. We must never go after the players, the modern feudal lords. They have played the “game” of this paradigm, as it is designed to be played. As have we all. When the “game” reinforces playing brutally, we can’t punish the players for doing so. We must change the game, its rules and goals. When some players object violently to this, yes, we will have to contain and restrain them from doing harm, but not punitively. Instead, we will treat them as we would treat a friend or neighbor caught in a drug, video game, or gambling addiction – with compassion and firmness, and with support that is offered, never imposed.

Any person or group who attempt to bully, intimidate, or harm another will be contained and prevented. It makes no difference whether the individual is trying to force a return to the modern feudal paradigm, or is trying to punish former modern feudal lords for harm suffered from their actions. The new paradigm will be one of inclusiveness, empowerment, and symbiosis. We must always use that as our guiding compass.

This Transition will bring more than just a new paradigm with new operating principles for human communities and societies. It will also pioneer a whole new approach to how to enact a needed fundamental paradigm change, decisively, democratically and without compromise, from the grass roots, without bloodshed or major disruptions. That is why this is a Transition more than a Revolution.

Since the new paradigm will be non-hierarchical and peer-driven, we’ll benefit from beginning that shift, even before the Transition, in how we interact, and avoid creating institutionalized power positions, hierarchies, or asymmetrical deference and respect for some more than others.

A hierarchy with strong leadership may seem to streamline processes, but the disadvantages far outweigh the advantages. Such structures magnify, reinforce, and enforce not just the positive traits, but also the dysfunction, incompetence, biases and weaknesses of leaders, impose them upon the rest of the hierarchy, set them in stone, and suppress initiative and collaboration such is natural in a peer-driven structure. We’ve seen it thousands of times. Human beings’ most destructive traits are reinforced in hierarchies, and their most constructive traits are suppressed.

Hierarchies also suppress the full empowerment of their members in other ways. When a society is conditioned to look to leaders to make decisions and solve problems, its members are thus stunted and fail to develop or express their full creative and productive potential. This gives disproportionate power to leaders at the expense of suppression of the rest of the people. This is built into the very nature of hierarchies.

Hierarchical societies often view leaders as parent-like and citizens as child-like. Even when leaders are well-intended, the paradigm’s flaws far outweigh its advantages.

Having strong, identifiable leaders also creates a strategic disadvantage. Leaders can be assassinated, intimidated, incarcerated, bribed, manipulated, and discredited in followers' eyes through propagandistic disinformation. This demoralizes followers, making it easier for those who are intent on suppressing their goals to shut them down.

It is true that assassinated or persecuted leaders often become martyrs, thus galvanizing followers, strengthening their resistance. Unfortunately, this usually refocuses energy and action on defending, freeing and rallying around the leaders, often in a violent emotional urge to vengeance, and away from the goals, strategies and principles of the movement. Thus even when the movement responds in such scenarios, they have often already lost sight of their values, principles and goals.

In the event that assassination or suppression of leaders is accompanied by swift, brutal attacks upon all movement members and sympathizers, the movement is often broken. We saw this in Nazi Germany, the Mongols under Genghis Khan, and other examples.

If the Transition were to have a strong established leader or leaders who become synonymous with the Transition, then more clever, less brutal opponents might be able to manufacture "evidence" to convince us that our leaders are corrupt, untrustworthy, or hypocritical, using paid "witnesses" and deepfake technology. Such disinformation would not come from sources hostile to the Transition. It would be "leaked" to sources we trust from planted "whistleblowers" or left where it would surely be discovered by people involved in sources that we trust. Such disinformation could also tip people who are unsure what to think about the Transition, towards hostility towards.

Let us also not forget that the very fact of experiencing being in a power position inhibits compassion and empathy to a measurable degree; in experiments, even a small or momentary sense of power has this effect. There would be a very real likelihood that at least some, if not all, of our leaders would indeed become corrupt or lose their compassion and empathy to at least some degree. That would doom the Transition to failure right out of the gate.

Therefore we must remain strongly peer-based up to, through, and after the Transition. As an organic, collaborative association of symbiotes united in our diversity with no central leadership, we will likely be unstoppable.

Conversely, our opponents will be intensely hierarchical. We can exploit their inherent vulnerabilities by aggressively identifying real corruption, abuse, betrayals, and hypocrisies of their leaders, the modern feudal lords, and publicizing them widely. We must only use actual evidence, and never "manufacture" evidence.

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In order to obtain such evidence, we must be prepared to hack, infiltrate, tap, spy upon and use every effective nonviolent, nondestructive approach. The modern feudal lords will not just disclose such information on their own.

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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.

Always keep firmly in mind that we do not seek to punish the modern feudal lords, to avenge ourselves upon them, humiliate them, or beat them down in righteous indignation. Our purpose is to replace the socioeconomic paradigm, the "game" at which they've become master players, with a completely different one with different operating principles, in which there will be no power to abuse, nor any way to control resources that others use or need. They will have no power to wield over anybody but themselves.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

The only reason why we'll probably have to fight at all with those addicted to the current paradigm, is to defend ourselves and the new paradigm if and when they try to forcefully and violently enforce their power. The goal is the non-violently forceful change of paradigm.

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

We must be honest with ourselves and recognize that the only reason why the modern feudal lords have had such power, has been because we have all unwittingly played our parts as serfs and peasants in the game, maintaining their power by working for them for the wages they offered, buying from them at the prices they charged, and giving them further wealth and power by using credit, and in addition, charging and paying each other in currency for goods and services among us. If they've been the quarterbacks, we've been the defensive ends. Our Transition will come about by simply (and not so simply) changing the way the "game" is played, the operating principles and goals of the socioeconomic paradigm, from the bottom up.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Instead of a feudal lord deciding that a corporation will shut down a plant in a town, leaving the down shattered, in this case the people of the town will simply run the plant on their own and inform the feudal lord that their services are no longer needed and their orders will no longer be followed, but that they are invited to become a valued member of the team. Once the Transition is established, we will respond to displaced former feudal lords with the same firmness and compassion that we bring to a friend or family member with any addictive disorder.

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

Our goal is to make it possible for every member of the community to be fully actualized, empowered, fulfilled, and engaged.

Change rarely comes easily. It will be hard on some, and some may have fears and uncertainties. It's vital that we each take it upon ourselves to observe our fellows, our friends, family members, workmates, neighbors and anybody around us and notice anyone who is struggling or in distress. We must make it the norm to support, uplift, encourage, and care for one another, to go the extra mile for one another and to appreciate and never abuse those going the extra mile for us. This is the culture that we will bring about. It must start with us, with you, with me. We must start this immediately and not wait for the Transition. This is part of setting the stage and creating positive social momentum. This is the behavior that we will reinforce.

Both Soviet style Communism and commercial corporations drive, control, and dictate production, consumption, and working conditions by central decree. In the new paradigm, the purpose of a central organization, be it governmental or professional, will be to gather, coordinate, analyze, and display information and make it easily accessible to all. This will allow producers to see actual need and voluntarily adjust production accordingly. It will allow consumers to give feedback and present actual need. Of course, consumers and producers are really the same people – us, in different roles. The function of central organizations will be more like a jazz orchestra conductor than like a commissar or the

board of directors of a corporation. Production and consumption will become a collaborative dialog among all members of the community, participating as equal partners, communicating openly, relevantly and productively.

The new paradigm will be a peer-based synergistic symbiosis, with all individuals, groups, and other social entities supporting each other organically, like the organs and cells in our bodies.

Central databases will update in real time. Fluid goods and services like electricity, water, and Internet bandwidth will be metered so that production can rapidly adjust to actual demand. Solid, discrete goods and services will have passive RFID embedded in them, so that when items are taken out of, or returned to, a distribution center, the database will update automatically. The tags record the movement of goods, never who took them (see the chapter on production and distribution). The central database will facilitate coordination of production and provide an open forum for suggestions, feedback, questions, requests, ideas, discussion, and development.

Chapter 38: More on Infrastructure in Post-Transition Communities

In crafting the new paradigm, we'll need to expand and adapt certain infrastructures to provide access to all members of the society to the means to live and fulfill their lives.

We must come up with a workable understanding of what is truly needed to live a happy and fulfilling life. Some of this is obvious. Some, however, varies greatly from place to place, culture to culture, and time period to time period. It is also constantly changing. This will need to be determined by consensus, not by imposition from "above." We can all agree on food, water, and shelter. In modern times, access to communications media qualifies for most people. On the other hand, nobody needs a private jet, luxury yacht, multiple properties, or servants. Caregivers, yes; servants, no. Between those two poles are a lot of gray areas, which we'll need to work through in a humane, realistic, sensitive, flexible, and creative way.

There are variations depending on climate, culture, geography, historical context, abundant and scarce natural resources. The necessities of life will vary from neighborhood to neighborhood, from city to rural areas, from family to family, and from individual to individual. There may be no absolute definition of the necessities of life that will perfectly apply to everyone. That acknowledged, we can come to consensus on what constitute most of the necessities of life for most of us, while maintaining flexibility to accommodate the inevitable variations. Our infrastructure will need to expand and adjust to ensure access to all resources for all who need or desire them.

No one will be compelled to use all resources available to them. If a person doesn't want to use electricity, they don't have to. If a person wants to live in a tent instead of a house, that right will be respected.

Each of us will have free direct access to living space, food, water, electricity, communication, transportation, education and training, tools, clothing, recreation, entertainment, healthcare and dental care, clothing, professional and skilled services, and more.

We will take full advantage of current and future technology to coordinate with one another and between various sectors. The Internet offers an unprecedented possibility of setting up a universally accessible database and web site(s) that will act in a society much as the central nervous system does in an organism: mediating, coordinating and choreographing the interactions between people in different sectors, and among individuals. Production will adjust to need through direct communication and collaboration. The longer the program runs, the more data and experience is accumulated, the more accurate its heuristic algorithms will become at anticipating fluctuations in need and availability.

This same web space will also be a forum for discussion, suggestions, dialog, feedback, and discourse on practical, technological, scientific, philosophical, artistic, and matters involving just about every area of human endeavor and interest. It will encourage creative, productive interaction between lay people and scientists or professionals, and between all people and sectors, many of whom rarely interact under the current paradigm. An underlying thread will be what's working, what isn't, and how to make things work better.

Designers, planners, legislators, engineers, doctors, and producers of all kinds will find this forum useful in gauging what's needed in their respective areas of expertise, how best to respond to the needs of the people and the society, how to guide the evolution of the new paradigm so that it serves us better, what kind of tweaks or adjustments might improve areas that need improving. This ongoing societal self-examination and responsiveness will make it much less prone to degenerate into rigid, dogmatic, inflexible rules that become oppressive, working counter to the initial good intentions that prompted them.

While this technology is powerfully useful, it is also vulnerable to natural disasters, ion storms, war, sabotage, and other unforeseeable factors. Therefore, we'll need to make multiple redundant, parallel systems constantly updated from the active system, as well as a low-tech fallback system that could provide similar functionality if needed. The architecture of the high-tech systems should be distributed rather than centralized, to further increase robustness and fault-tolerance.

Much current infrastructure software can be integrated into the new system with some adaptations. Inventory, logistics, medical databases and such will remain mostly as is with only changes to enhance interoperability. All financial functionality will be removed, which will greatly reduce complexity, increase efficiency, and reduce errors. Advertising and marketing applications will be retired or modified into apps for education, motivation, public service and information.

With all levels of education and skills training open for all who want and are able to learn, we should anticipate increased demand for colleges, universities, conservatories, and trade schools. This can be done by expanding existing institutions, repurposing abandoned (former) for-profit institutions, and forming new ones where need is greatest.

As discussed elsewhere, power generation, transportation and food production will shift towards decentralized, widely distributed small to mid-sized production. In order to diversify transportation options while reducing congestion and environmental impact, we will build an extensive network of roads and trails for foot, bike and other human and animal powered vehicles, complete with rest stops, food and drink stops, hostels, supply depots, and other amenities. Public transportation will be augmented, both within and between urban centers.

We'll launch extensive projects to reclaim, restore and reforest land ravaged by mining, clear-cutting, industrial pollution, toxic waste dumping, landfills and other currently common destructive processes. As much as possible, waste processing will be decentralized, with promotion of widespread adoption of self-composting toilets, which will provide ongoing sources of fertilizer for home and neighborhood gardening, and reduce the need for central processing centers.

We will create more small hospitals, clinics and mobile medical and dental operations to extend accessibility to currently underserved areas and those far from existing facilities.

What are currently manufacturing facilities of competing corporations, will be folded into unified development and production teams, oriented towards serving the needs of people as best the state the art allows. What are now malls, outlet stores, department stores, and the like will be repurposed as distribution centers for the same kinds of goods and services that they currently sell. New ones will be built where needed, and existing ones may be repurposed for other uses where there's a surplus of distribution facilities.

Neglected, deteriorated infrastructure will receive priority attention to be repaired and upgraded. Housing and public buildings that are currently substandard will be fixed by residents and appropriate professionals in collaboration. It goes without saying that all materials will be directly available.

As the new paradigm's implementation matures, new technologies and social dynamics will develop, needs will change. Without the blocks and barriers of the current paradigm, new technologies and other innovations will quickly be distributed to all who want or need them.

All manner of musical instruments, sporting equipment, scientific apparatus, tools and more will be accessible in every neighborhood. We will greatly increase the number of parks and public performance, sports, and arts venues.

Freed from the chronic stress of having to constantly get money to ransom one's existence that we currently experience, we will be able to turn our attention to true exploration, research, the quest for knowledge, creative and artistic expression and innovation, social and interpersonal mutual enrichment, and the fulfillment of dreams where the win of one benefits each and all. We will see a new Renaissance that will likely be able to continue for a very, very long time.

Chapter 39: How Will Life Change and How Will It Stay The Same 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 are the same regardless of the paradigm. People eat, sleep, form families and friendships, recreate, work, have disagreements and conflicts, act wisely and stupidly, have triumphs and defeats, are born, live, and die. Other aspects of human life are culturally or individually defined.

The new paradigm will vastly reduce and, to some degree, eliminate unnecessary and preventable hardships, conflicts, stresses, and suffering; yet we dare not assume that it will end all human and social problems.

Whenever we embark on a new endeavor for the betterment of life, we naturally, unconsciously tend to set high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations, regardless of whether it's a new job, relationship, religion, or socio-economic paradigm. It's very important that we be aware of these expectations and keep in mind that, while the new paradigm will dramatically improve most aspects of our existence, it won't eliminate all problems.

If we go into the Transition with unrealistic expectations of perfection, then when it doesn't match them, we may abandon it in disillusionment rather than persevering and doing the work needed to succeed. Just how in a new romantic relationship that may be deep and lasting, expecting life to be problem-free predisposes it to disappointment and failure, so it is with a new socioeconomic paradigm. Things will improve greatly, but not all human problems will be solved.

Every personal and social human endeavor requires work, adaptation, perseverance, and a learning curve. This is true of even the best relationships, projects, and undertakings. There will be unexpected challenges, snags, and issues. We'll need to stay with it, work through the challenges, troubleshoot, learn, and improve. Crafting a new socioeconomic paradigm is a huge undertaking. It will include challenges. That does not invalidate it! Yet against the backdrop of aspects of the human condition that are universal, many, many things will change in the new paradigm. A number of sectors, jobs, and industries will cease to exist. There will be no need for marketing, sales, financial services and transactions, credit services, debt collections, insurance, realty in its current sense, billing, corporate law, lobbying, and many other jobs and sectors.

Other jobs and functions will remain but fundamentally change.

One example is accountants. Their skills will still be needed to track, forecast, balance, and track actual, authentic demand and recommend adjustment of the supply of goods and services to meet those demands, to perform inventory functions, to perform load balancing, and monitor use of natural resources and reclamation when necessary. Their skills will also be important in implementing trade agreements with countries still operating under the old (current) paradigm.

The task of engineers and designers will change. Instead of being tasked to arbitrarily keep redesigning pre-obsolescent products to drive the self-devouring cycle as happens now, their mission will be to design and produce the best goods and services, both backwards and forwards compatible, that are practically achievable at the state of the art, and make enough of them to supply everybody who needs or wants them, plus a small surplus to cover unforeseeable wear and tear.

Healthcare professionals will be freed from the dictates and meddling of insurance companies, accountants and administrators, allowing them at long last to focus only on the health and treatment of their patients. The tyranny of the bottom line will end. Time currently wasted on billing and coverage-related paperwork will be freed up for the actual practice of medicine. Burnout will become a rarity.

Out-of-work marketers and advertisers will find new channels for their skills in education, public information, technical writing, performing arts and other fields that will open up and expand.

Legal professions will change fundamentally in some areas, but little or not at all in others. Corporate, landlord-tenant, and the financial aspects of family and tort law will cease to have any relevance. Financial crimes and penalties will cease to exist. In place of monetary fines, rehabilitation and standardized person-hours of community service or in restitution to wronged parties will be levied. Contract, probate, and property laws will undergo fundamental redefinitions and recalibrations in accordance with the operating principles of the new paradigm. Crimes against persons and property will change little. Some behaviors currently defined as crimes will cease to be, while some behaviors currently legal will be criminalized. We can realistically expect the overall crime rate to drop significantly.

Many goods and services, including but not limited to food and fuel production, power generation and distribution, will shift from mammoth centralized, corporate-run facilities to integrated distributed, peer-run small to mid-scale operations at the community, neighborhood, block, and single building level. Home and community gardens, windmills, solar installations, waterwheels and the like will predominate. Composting of both human and plant waste will produce both fertilizer and some portion of fuel for cooking and heating. Self-composting toilets will save water on a large scale. Passive energy building designs will greatly reduce energy consumption. National defence will strengthen as the population is trained in civil defence and national defence, in support of the armed forces in case of foreign invasion or attack, as in Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Norway. Citizens will learn to view arms as tools to be mastered like a car or tractor. Unstable and abusively violent people will, of course, be kept away from all weapons. Eventually we will evolve to the point of not needing to defend ourselves from each other; meanwhile this will strengthen defense while reducing criminal violence.

The quality of all goods and services will improve dramatically to the best attainable, universally durable, backwards and forwards compatible, and easily serviceable. Once all needs are filled, production will dial back to minimal levels needed to cover breakage and population growth. Waste, pollution, and resource depletion will plummet.

After a possible initial period of high demand as inferior products are replaced by the superior ones of the new paradigm, the typical work-week will settle at approximately half to one-third of what is currently. Once everyone's needs are supplied with durable products, production will scale back to the trickle needed to replace breakage and supply small population growth. Stress levels will be minimal. With more free time, people will be able to devote more of their time and energy to diverse, creative pursuits. Quality of life will improve on every level.

People will also no longer have to waste any of their time or suffer stress associated with paying and disputing bills and taxes, sorting out scams from legitimate offers, wrangling with bureaucracies, cutting coupons, or wading through a relentless barrage of advertising, junk mail, pop ups, and other useless sensory clutter.

Quality of life will improve in myriad ways. For example, the current practice of retailers of frequently forcing store employees to spend long hours rearranging merchandise simply because employers know that doing so increases the likelihood of customers buying more stuff, will cease. Items will be placed in ways that maximize ease of stocking, cleaning, maintenance, and consumer access. This one change alone will save a lot of time for store colleagues and for consumers, who will be able to count on knowing where things are.

We'll spend more of our time in gardening, local infrastructure maintenance, and other community activities and projects. This will increase our sense of empowerment, ownership, engagement, and interconnectedness. Isolation and alienation will largely fade away. Well-being will grow accordingly.

Transportation will become much more diverse and less damaging. Fossil fuels will decline to insignificance. Public transportation will expand greatly, as will infrastructure to support more diverse modes of transportation and make them safe and appealing. We'll see more electric, multi-fuel, mechanochemical, maglev and human-powered vehicles, as well as horses, camels, and donkeys. Innovations will be common, with the best ones catching on. Here as well, stress will decrease. Pollution will decrease. The pace of life will become balanced and sustainable. Universal form factors will guarantee that engines, brakes, and other components will be easily interchangeable. All transportation will be available to each and all of us.

The phasing out of fossil fuels will dramatically improve air and water quality and significantly slow global warming. With no profit motive, there'll be no reason to engage in fracking, clear-cutting, strip-mining, or the dumping of toxic waste. On a national and global scale as more countries Transition, this will go a long ways towards undoing the damage that human industrial activity has done to the ecosystem over past decades.

Relentless pressure to meet aggressive production, sales or distribution targets will end, as will dysfunctional hierarchical socioeconomic power structures. There'll be no need to constantly come up with currency to ransom one's continued existence in the face of its default denial. There'll be no wolf at any door. Peers will no longer be competitors for scarce opportunities or resources. Just imagine the unprecedented surge in mental and physical health and well-being, mutually-supportive social relationships, and vibrancy of individuals, families and communities!

Mental illness won't magically disappear. Abusive personalities won't suddenly become benign, though they won't be able to use rank, position, or finance as vehicles of abuse. Bullies will still be bullies. But the overall level of thriving and well-being will dramatically improve.

Those with mental or physical illness will have full, unobstructed access to all treatment options. There'll be no financial or budgetary restraints or barriers. Nobody will have to skip, ration be denied treatment for financial reasons.

There'll be no such thing as "economic necessity" pushing people into occupations that are meaningless or miserable to them, or for which they aren't suited, to survive better or at all. Each of us will be free to pursue our passions and talents, and thus live the most fulfilled and meaningful lives while making our best possible contribution to our communities.

Jobs that nobody wants to do will be addressed in several ways. First, we might ask ourselves, for example, if we really need street sweepers if, instead, each social unit will sweep the street in front of their house or workplace. Some such tasks can be automated, once automation no longer deprives anybody of livelihood. Any remaining such tasks can be treated similarly to jury duty: to be performed by each of us occasionally by random selection. Thus nobody will be forced to do such tasks permanently.

The relentless cacophony of advertising pollution that assails us in all media will cease, once and for all, as will the waste of resources (such as paper for junk mail), work hours, energy, and brain power that generates it. Scams, hard-sells, come-ons, pyramid schemes and other predatory practices will cease and become… impossible. What is basic for commercial survival in the current paradigm will have no reason to be.

All media will be filled with authentic artistic creations, useful and accurate information, lively dialog, entertainment, and meaningful content. Imagine no pop-ups, ads, junk mail, spam, or other forms of advertising! Just the decrease in depletion of our forests, with no paper being used for printed ads, coupled with reforestation projects, will accelerate the restoration of our depleted forests. Without the unending torrent of ads, we'll have much more mental, sensory and emotional space and peace. We'll no longer find ourselves driven by unending, skillfully-programmed "needs." Our needs and desires will, at long last, be fully authentic, fully our own. Here as well, our stress levels will drop precipitously.

Under the current modern feudal paradigm, media are primarily responsive, and responsible, to shareholders, executive boards, and sponsors. Popular content is cut if it offends a CEO or major sponsor. In the new paradigm, media will be only and solely responsible to consumers. Reporters will be free to devote themselves to true investigative journalism, rather than pleasing their employers and telling the story that they're ordered to tell.

Artists, inventors, pure researchers, and other creative and innovative people will no longer have to spend most of their time and energy on making money to constantly ransom their existence. They will no longer have to try to fit in their creative pursuits in whatever scraps of time are left after they go to their job, pay their bills, and de-stress from doing so. We can look forward to a prolific, sustained surge of high-quality performance and other art, technical and scientific innovation and discovery, and a true Renaissance to dwarf the one we study in school.

Media will be freed of the entropic imperatives of the current paradigm. In the absence of profit motive, investors, "the market," and corporate hierarchies, they will become responsive to the public. The arts will no longer be stratified into stars and starving artists. Many world-class artists who, for financial reasons, are never seen or heard under current modern feudalism, will emerge onto the stages of the world, enriching all of us. The privileged status of "stars" will fade away. Former stars will no longer be beset with intrusive fans, paparazzi, and con artists trying to get their money. All artists and inventors will be masters of their own creations.

Freed from "marketability" concerns, artists, inventors and researchers will be unfettered and truly free to pursue their authentic expression and work.

Live venues, galleries, and laboratories will proliferate and thrive.

Under the current modern feudal paradigm, many performance venues book acts using the “pay to play” model. They don’t care how good you are. You pay them their fee; they book you. You typically have half an hour to an hour. If you bring in more than your fee, then you can keep the difference. If you want to record or videotape your act, you have to pay their people to do it with their equipment. Many venues overheat their space, to make patrons thirstier so that they’ll buy more drinks. In the new paradigm, these practices will cease altogether. Venues will rediscover the concept of booking the best acts, once profit motive is extinct.

Current “stars” will find their privileged celebrity status will scale down a lot. They’ll still be appreciated, but will no longer live as a kind of nobility. They will also enjoy the company of many equally excellent artists who never “made it” under the current paradigm.

Those few “stars” whose success has come more from marketing than from talent and excellence will either find other pursuits, or will grow and develop their own abilities.

Under the current paradigm, artists, researchers and other innovators are mostly dominated by corporations, investors, shareholders and the rest of the parasitic financial structure. Though huge profits are generated, innovators and artists themselves are paid a tiny fraction of what they generate, often ten percent or less. Most stars are no exception. Artists are often expected to pay travel expenses and crew salaries out of their own cut.

The severity of the dynamics are reflected in the language. People often don’t refer to “music,” “cinema,” “healthcare,” or “electronics.” They speak of “the <music, movie, healthcare, electronics or other> Industry.” Economics has taken precedence over art, science, or invention, which are seen as means to the default end of profit.

Artists who decline to be guided by profitability or be controlled by corporate hierarchies are basically dismissed as unrealistic and not treated seriously. Art and research, which are fundamental expressions of our humanity, are reduced to products to be mass-produced and marketed, like toasters or skateboards.

Scientists and engineers are treated similarly to artists under current modern feudalism. If you can’t show how your employer can make huge profits from your research, then you won’t be able to do it. If you do prove profitability, then according to your contract or employment agreement, your employer owns the rights to anything that you develop.

Pure research usually gets cut in favor of potentially-profitable research. Now we even see space exploration being subverted from a frontier for humanity, to a playground and exploitable commodity for billionaires whose employees struggle to make ends meet.

Art, in all of its forms, is a fundamental expression of our very nature. It connects, unites, heals, entertains, and enriches us. Science is the honest quest for knowledge and understanding of how the world, and we ourselves, work. It often yields technology that improves our quality of life. Art, science, and human beings ourselves have been chained to the yoke of profit motive for the relentless hyper-enrichment of the modern feudal lords and the consolidation of their power and control, for far too long. That will end.

The current alienation and isolation of people will fade in the resurgence of community-oriented, interconnected activities. From practical forms like community-based agriculture and energy generation, to the stronger emphasis on local production-consumption cycles, to time freed up from shorter commutes and reduced work schedules, to community theater, sports, workshops and other activities, a strong culture of symbiotic interconnectedness and belonging will emerge. Our fragmented society will knit itself back into wholeness, sustainability and continuity.

Populations will most likely decentralize somewhat. Much unoccupied land and all unoccupied living and working spaces will be directly available to those who need them. People in disadvantaged and neglected areas won’t be trapped there by economic “realities,” so many will likely either improve their current dwellings, or move to less crowded, more hospitable areas. Urban centers will become less overcrowded. Quality of life will greatly improve.

Any person, family or other social unit will be able to freely move into any unoccupied dwelling, or build a home on unoccupied land, through appropriate legal pathways of course. Skilled architects, construction crews, electricians, plumbers, carpenters as well as materials will be readily available to make it happen.

We will need laws to ensure that such moves and claims are handled in a fair, safe, and equitable manner. No person will be allowed to bully their way into a home or facility already inhabited or used by another.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Similarly, former landlords will not be able to claim properties being used by former tenants or extort inhabitants in any way, while their right to possess their own homes and production facilities will be protected.

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

We'll need reasonable legal means to settle disputes over land or buildings, and for the filing of claims.

Those who live in slums and "projects" will be free to stay or move. Both will happen. Those who stay will have direct access to materials and skilled professionals to help them to repair, upgrade and improve their dwellings and surroundings. There'll be no economic power structures disempowering them. The conditions that gave rise to the dysfunctional violent, criminal, exploitative subcultures prevalent there, will be removed. Such patterns will steadily fade over time. Some will cling to the old ways, so we'll need to be vigilant in order to curb and contain violent behavior. Former slums will thrive.

In education, most subjects that are taught now will still be taught, with a few additions. The prevailing academic culture will, however, change massively. There will be no such thing as, or need for, funding in order to be able to get things done. Academic inequities will quickly fade. There'll be no need for students to strategize and stress over long-term economic survival strategies, no impending time of being thrown out into the caustic socioeconomic world with its implicit denial of one's right to even occupy space. Stress and pressure will give way to passion for learning and the joy of discovery. Economic survival strategies will be replaced by dream fulfillment. Default denial of one's existence will dissipate in the new default affirmation of the rights and dignity of every individual and group. Destructive competition, toxicity, adversariality, win-lose dynamics will give way to symbiotic, win-win, co-operative, empowering patterns.

From kindergarten to Ph.D, education will empower and encourage, not constrain and indoctrinate.

People will no longer choose a skill or field of study for the money, prestige, or power it confers. Some people will still pursue a field for which they aren't suited, without realizing it until they get into the field. A person who faints at the sight of blood would not be at home as an EMT. If you struggle with math, then electrical engineering might not be a good fit. Any student will have no obstacles to changing their course of study at any time. No one will be prevented from pursuing their dreams, interests, and passions for socioeconomic reasons. Your only limitations will be your abilities, your determination, and your discipline.

Imagine graduating with no student debt, no rent or mortgage to pay, and no worries about how to survive! Imagine being able to go directly from school or other training, to working in your field in a high-engagement, low-stress environment! That's what education will be like in the new paradigm. The very concept of debt will disappear entirely, along with all of the predatory and abusive behaviors arising from it.

There will still be class-work, homework, labs, essays, lectures and such. There may well be competition to be the best; but none of this will impact one's prospects to live and thrive.

There will no longer be a job market to train students to enter. Access, survival, and resources will no longer be artificially scarcified due to lack of funds. Both educators and students will be free to focus solely on the educational process, on the talents and passions of students, and on the real needs of the community. Education will become dramatically more efficient and productive, and accessible to all.

In colleges and universities, innovation, seminal research, and creativity will surge. Primary and secondary education will flourish at unprecedented high levels, with no scarcity of funding to enforce cuts in staff, curricula, and resources. For-profit schools will choose either to reorient themselves in harmony with the new paradigm, or to close. In that case, their infrastructure will be reactivated by new teams.

In the current modern feudal paradigm, the most affordable food is often of poor quality, while higher quality food is out of reach of most wage earners. In the new paradigm, all food will be of high quality, and available to all.

A myth of the current modern feudal society is that poor people tend to be obese and less healthy due to poor eating habits and laziness, when in fact healthier diets cost more (Rao and colleagues, 2013), and time pressure, stress and the food sold nearby all play a part. This resembles the logic of slave owners who forbade teaching slaves, while claiming that slaves were mentally inferior, to justify treating them as beasts of burden.

Healthier foods naturally experience high demand, since people want to be healthy. Sometimes, foods are also marketed as healthy that may not be. The normal operation of the law of supply and demand ensures that healthy foods are significantly more expensive than less healthy foods, following the same pattern as all things medical, dental, and legal. When you're working for $9 an hour and spending a third to half of your pay on rent, you can't afford $25/lb for range fed organic meat. You can barely afford $5/lb for "cheap" hamburger. This contributes to the vast disparity in health and life expectancy between the modern feudal lords and modern serfs and peasants.

Supply is often artificially tightened, specifically to drive prices up. This is the normal functioning of the principles of the current socioeconomic paradigm.

The operating principles of the current paradigm lead to tragic waste and inefficiency. A lot of food is thrown out because it's blemished, considered un-sellable, its packaging is open, it isn't sold by closing time, or it was ordered but not picked up. If underpaid, overworked employees eat it or take it home, they're fired. If anybody else takes it, even from the dumpster, they get run off or arrested. Farmers have even chosen or been paid to limit their harvest or destroy tons of good food, in order to keep prices high. Meanwhile hundreds of millions of people go hungry, and over two billion lack reliable access to enough food (FAO, 2025). Under the current paradigm, it's preferable to destroy some food, than to let someone have it without paying for it. Hunger amidst plenty is an inevitable result of the paradigm.

None of this will happen in the Post transition society. Food will be high quality and universally available to all. There'll be no reason to throw good food away. More food will be produced and eaten locally, reducing damage and loss in transit and increasing freshness. Quality will improve across the board. There'll be no stratification into high-end, mid-range, and poor quality versions of food, reflecting the change in all sectors. Even imported and processed foods will similarly improve in quality.

Under the current paradigm, many areas have laws limiting or forbidding home food production, under the guise of health and safety zoning laws. The real reason for such laws is to keep property values high, as well as to protect the interests of large agribusinesses, whose profits would suffer if most people were growing much of their own food. In the new paradigm, such laws and regulations will be repealed through the community's own democratic process. People will be encouraged and supported to produce their own food, power, entertainment, art, culture and other necessities.

Some people will be more inclined than others to engage in gardening, energy production or other such projects. Nobody will be pressured or forced to do so. Those who do, will gladly share their expertise and produce with their less-inclined fellows. The new shift towards community involvement will reverse most current alienation, engender a sense of connection and mutual support, and belonging. Health and quality of life will grow substantially because of this.

Aging seems to be inevitable, regardless of culture or socioeconomic paradigm. Many traditional cultures venerate and value their older members as fountains of knowledge and wisdom. Under the current paradigm, elders are viewed as a burden on family, friends or society, and treated accordingly.

Where our rights, freedom, options, and the respect with which one is treated are determined by our place on the socioeconomic pyramid, the only seniors who can buy quality of life and respect are those at the top, the modern feudal lords. When the rest of us modern serfs and peasants become unable to bring in money to ransom our existence, we are consigned to a barely minimal existence and excluded from most of society.

It's usually seniors' families who take care of them, with little or no assistance. Some families are able to work together to include and care for their elders. Some families have the will, but not the means. Some seniors have no family, or are estranged from their families. When families do embrace their elders, in this culture of isolation and alienation, stresses often arise that can tear families apart and cause breakdowns. Such societies are harsh to all serfs and peasants, but especially brutal to the elderly.

Modern feudalistic societies are mainly oriented towards youth, primarily because they're at the beginning of their wage-earning and consuming years, especially young families with children. There's more profit to be made from them than from seniors.

When an elder's island-family can't care for them, seniors usually end up in for-profit senior homes. Caregivers are usually poorly paid and treated, physically and emotionally overworked, leading to resentment, poor morale and lack of motivation. Such facilities are businesses, which must minimize expenses and maximize profits to survive. They charge residents the most the market will bear, provide as few services as they can get away with, and pay caregivers sub-living wages. At most needful and vulnerable time, all too many elders are neglected and even abused as a result, except among aged modern feudal lords.

In the new paradigm, this will change dramatically. Finances will no longer exist, and so will no longer determine the quality of care that an elder gets who needs it. The universal standard will be the best care humanly possible. Where there aren't enough facilities, new ones will be built and staff trained.

There'll be no profits, no stock, no currency, and no hierarchy. The principles and priorities driving decisions and policies will be human and community wellbeing, thriving, and empowerment, and long-term sustainability.

You may wonder if there'll be enough people who'll want to devote their time to caring for seniors. It's an intense, physically and emotionally demanding vocation. Not everyone has a compatible temperament or interest. Please keep in mind that under the current paradigm, caregivers are typically paid sub-living wages, treated poorly, and shown little respect, which puts off many who would otherwise be drawn to it.

In the new paradigm, freed from the pressures of having to constantly come up with ransom money to pay the wolf at the door, many natural caregivers who currently can't afford to work in that field, will surely enter it. Those who worked as caregivers just to have a job, any job, and whose hearts aren't in it, will naturally gravitate to pursuits more fulfilling to them. The quality of care that seniors receive will greatly improve as a result.

Currently there are seniors who could physically and mentally live independently, who are forced by "economic necessity" to live in low-end "senior housing". They will be free to find a place of their own or with friends or family. The resources of the community will support and respond to their needs.

The proportion of seniors who need to live in senior facilities will shrink for yet another reason. Families who currently have the will but not the means to care for their elders, will no longer be constrained. There'll be no financial barrier to expanding the house, building a "mother-in-law apartment" or making other accommodations. Professional caregivers, nurses and others will be available when needed or wanted. Increased social integration in the new paradigm will yield the "village" that it takes to care for a child… or an elder. The extended family will likely become more common. No person or family will be an island.

When our natural instinctive social, cooperative and nurturing traits meet and are amplified by the psychological reinforcers of the new paradigm, seniors having no one to care for them will find themselves in a supportive, caring milieu. This could happen to any of us. Heightened social and interpersonal interconnectedness and integration among all generations and sectors will mean that no one will be left out or left to fend for themselves, unless they expressly desire to be. Working together for mutual benefit, caring for each other – these are at the core of our nature as human beings.

No socioeconomic paradigm can reverse the effects of aging or magically heal and restore estranged families. The new paradigm will, however, remove the caustic, alienating financial pressures and stresses that currently strain, break, disempower, and isolate individuals and nuclear families from their extended families and community. All of us will enjoy far less chronic toxic stress and far greater fulfillment. Human dignity will be restored to each and every one of us. None of us, including elders, children, the disabled and the infirm, will be cast aside or resented as economic burdens.

Young people will also see great positive changes. They'll no longer be targeted by relentless marketing and advertising preying on their vulnerabilities, no longer conditioned to be compulsive consumers. As a result, they'll develop naturally into more authentic, empowered, critically-thinking, creative, unique and realistically confident adults than is common under modern feudalistic paradigms.

The preponderance of prepackaged diversions and activities will give way to a resurgence of creative, spontaneous play and activities.

Educators have noted that each generation of students appear to have a shorter attention span and fewer dreams or passions beyond money, consumer goods, and mass-produced entertainments. Creativity, passion, and curiosity about life likewise are declining. Relationships are shorter and more superficial. Social anxiety is widespread. Some of this is due to the shift from in-person to digital interaction. This is not a rant against a generation. It is the acknowledgement of a tragedy, and there is a bigger set of factors involved.

A major cause is also the constant, unrelenting torrent of advertising propaganda, which assails children at all ages. This conditions and predisposes them to feel an insatiable "need" for whatever is advertised, and reinforces compulsive consumeristic behavior. Human connection, creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking aren't reinforced. Getting money and "stuff" is reinforced. What is reinforced, predominates.

Loving parents naturally tend to want to give their kids what they want, as long as it isn't harmful. Sadly, under the current paradigm, this further reinforces children's focus on "stuff." Advertisers learned, over generations, how to exploit healthy parental instincts and subvert them to serve manufacturers' profit-imperative by compulsively buying their products and services. Parents and children are kept in the self-devouring cycle like oxen in a yoke, sacrificing their time, energy and humanity to further enrich the modern feudal lords and their corporations.

From a commercial viewpoint, this inadvertent curtailment of children's development is good for profits. Every dictator, alongside advertisers of a few decades ago, would give their eye teeth for the skill and sophistication of modern marketers and advertisers, who have perfected the art of funneling their propaganda into every sensory channel, via all media.

Not too long ago, we encountered ads on radio, TV, on billboards, and in periodicals. It wasn't constant immersion. Now we are immersed in it almost constantly, as mentioned above and also via our cell phones and computers in pop-ups almost every time we click and many times when we don't. Technology with huge positive potential is also subverted to tap our minds and pocketbooks to feed the profit-and-power addiction of the modern feudal lords and their corporations.

Yet another arbitrary stress on kids and teens is knowledge that upon reaching adulthood, they'd better have a good economic survival strategy in place in order to be able to pay the monthly ransom for their continued right to eat, live, and occupy space. Very likely they'll be on their own. Their parents simply probably won't be able to help them much after that. In the U.S., career planning ideally begins in grade school. The current socioeconomic paradigm has inevitably led to the steady decline in public education in the face of relentless, ongoing pressure to privatize education, diverting resources to "charter schools" and other for-profit versions, most of which under-perform relative to public schools (Lubienski and Lubienski, University of Chicago Press, 2013; Dyer, Innovation Ohio, 2013). This leaves most children disadvantaged.

As with all other aspects of life in modern feudalism, the quality of education that one gets is determined by their place in the socioeconomic pyramid. The current laissez-faire trend in the U.S. towards big business and the ultra-wealthy has accelerated the stratification. Most jobs pay sub-living or barely living wages. Better jobs are scarce (by design). Competition is fierce. Very few will "make it." Most will struggle in a lifelong losing battle for survival.

The stress on a grade-school child, knowing that they have to make career and academic choices now that will give them the best shot at making a good living (not fulfilling their dreams) as an adult, that they'll have to out-compete at least ninety-five percent of their peers in order to even be in the running or else be stuck in a bleak existence, is debilitating, traumatizing, disempowering and soul-crushing.

Once you graduate from college or trade school, you face a new set of barriers. Most hiring managers want people with both schooling and experience. You have only schooling, unless you did an internship, which would have meant working for free. Having a job is the only way to get experience. If you are hired, most employers use your lack of experience to justify paying you sub-living wages until you prove yourself, which can take years. Under modern feudalism, employees are disposable, easily replaced, and devalued. You have to convince a skeptical hiring manager why they should hire you instead of any one of hundreds or more other applicants.

Many youths in disadvantaged areas find drug dealing, theft, robbery, gang membership and other criminal careers more appealing than dead-end, sub-living-wage jobs in the food service, retail or hospitality industries with poor treatment and no benefits.

When viewed closely, organized crime and gangs are hard to distinguish from legal, "legitimate" businesses. Both view their moneymaking activities as "just business." Both respond to the ubiquitous reinforcers built into the socioeconomic paradigm, by pursuing the imperative to maximize profits. Both minimize expenditures and maximize income. Both tend to be ruthless against competition, defiance or impeding of their agendas and will not hesitate to devastate lives and communities if it comes to that. To a young person with few options, it may seem wise to consider both. Immediate gratification of conditioned consumeristic impulses takes precedence over all.

In the new paradigm, none of the forgoing will exist. There will be no advertising, no conditioning to feel a programmed "need" for consumer goods. There'll be no need for young people to develop economic survival strategies for a competitive economic battlefield, no threat of any "wolf" at their door. From childhood through adulthood, young people will be safely able to focus on learning, discovering and exploring themselves and the world around them, developing their personhood, talents, interests, dreams and goals, and pursuing them in a setting that supports, encourages, and empowers them.

There'll be no barriers or constraints due to "financial realities" blocking their options or access to education, training, materials, and other resources that they need. Interpersonal relationships will tend to be more authentic than now, since there'll be no socioeconomic stratification to reinforce dysfunctional socialization.

Any young (or any age) person, who wants to play an instrument or sport, explore any scientific, artistic, or other pursuit, will have direct, unrestricted access to all that they need. Go to the nearest supply depot to get materials and tools, find yourself a teacher, and go for it. No parent or school will tell an aspiring student, "I'm sorry, my child, we just can't afford it" or "We cut that program due to lack of funds."

With no onslaught of advertising and no conditioning of consumeristic reflexes, young people will develop their own, unique, authentic aesthetics, passions, and interests. Aside from the challenges of parent and peer relations or puberty, children and teens will experience a time of fulfilling discovery and growth that will continue into adulthood. The extinction of socioeconomic stratification will likewise extinguish most kinds of toxic competition that are reinforced and common in today's modern feudalism. The natural kind of healthy, friendly, good-natured competition that seems to be part of growing up, will take its place. Parents will have more time and energy to share with their kids, since they'll be free from the artificially-inflated workload of the self-devouring cycle, and from the stresses of operating under dysfunctional hierarchical social structures under constant economic pressure.

Work will take much less of our time, as discussed previously. Once everybody's needs are met with durable, high-quality goods and services, most sectors will scale back to minimal production to cover breakage and population growth. Stress will plummet dramatically. Pressures of individual and nuclear family economic survival will no longer create crippling fragmentation. Nuclear families will tend to interconnect into extended families. Families, individuals and communities will naturally spend more time interacting in affirmative, enjoyable ways. Generation gaps will tend to bridge as people reintegrate and reconnect in their communities as is our instinctive nature as humans. Mental, physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing will surge to heretofore rarely seen levels. Endemic fragmentation of families and communities will heal into healthy, cohesive, symbiotic interconnection, once dysfunctional socioeconomic patterns no longer reinforce, or enforce, alienation and isolation. Our core nature as social beings will reassert itself in ways that will strengthen us as individuals, families, and communities.

Growing up in the new paradigm will be much more fulfilling than under current modern feudalism. Healthy, fully-engaged youth will become healthy, symbiotic, fully-engaged adults, living fulfilling lives, making their best contribution to their communities as a result of pursuing their dreams.

Life will improve immeasurably across the board; yet it would be a tragic error to assume, even unconsciously, that all human woes will disappear. They won't.

We'll still go through growing pains, interpersonal issues, aging, sickness, accidents, disappointments, death, natural disasters and more. Not everybody will get along. Some generational intercultural, religious, ethnic or other enmities will probably remain. There may still be bullies, psychopaths, sociopaths and abusers. Cultural or family expectations

may still clash with individual aspirations. One important difference, however, will be the fact that nobody and no group will be able to use hierarchical rank or socioeconomic position to force their dysfunction on others. Rarely will arbitrary pressures, stresses, or dynamics create avoidable tragedies.

Every society and culture will still inevitably go through changes. Every generation in every country will have a different experience than every other. Natural events, new technologies, discoveries and concepts, fads, emergent changes in the zeitgeist and other unpredictable factors will always be with us. This creates some degree of intergenerational stress, which can become a strength, where there's a climate of open, mutually respectful dialog in which all parties learn from each other.

For much of the twentieth century, the trend was that each generation could realistically look forward to better quality of life than their parents. Sadly, in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, young adults confront a world in which they are far less likely than earlier generations to out-earn their parents: about 90% of Americans born in 1940 earned more than their parents did, but only about half of those born in the 1980s do (Chetty and colleagues, 2017). Many face a diminishing quality of life for their efforts. Alienation and fragmentation, driven by the pressures of surviving under the modern feudal socioeconomic power structure, have reached unprecedented levels. If the Transition were not to happen, this trend will only get worse over time. The consolidation of wealth and power into the hands of the modern feudal lords is rapidly approaching a threshold analogous to the event horizon of a black hole. Our future depends on Transitioning as soon as possible.

We will do well to anticipate, as best we can, the vastly different experiences of three specific generations: the last generation to grow up under current modern feudalism, the generation that lives through the Transition, and the first generation to grow up in the new post-Transition paradigm.

In the new paradigm, all generations will prosper. In place of chronic artificial scarcity and inaccessibility of resources, there'll be abundance and universal access. In place of the current every-one-for-themselves toxically competitive culture where even friends can be a potential threat to livelihood, will come a culture of mutually-reinforcing benefit. Our core strengths as social humans will reassert themselves. Subsequent generations will set new standards as to what it means to thrive.

The pre-Transition generations will have a lot of healing to do, a lot of relearning of survival mechanisms and strategies. They may become insecure, disoriented, and unsure of themselves for a time. They will need patience and active, sustained compassion and support from the Transition generation and post-Transition generations. The Transition generation will grow up in a time of massive reorientation and redefinition of many of our most fundamental social dynamics. They will benefit from the experience, wisdom, support and compassion of their parents' and their children's generation. It will be vital that we consciously and deliberately engage in mutually-respectful dialog and support, especially among these three generations. This will also establish a new constructive pattern going forward.

Without toxic socioeconomic factors exacerbating them, we can expect racial, ethnic, religious and similar tensions to de-escalate, at least somewhat.

In both Medieval feudalism and dominant modern socioeconomic feudalism, economic control of resources and currency inevitably creates stark, destructive stratification into feudal lords and their vassals, and the serfs and peasants, with a very small "professional" class in between. Such control has been, and is still being, used quite successfully as a means to exclude targeted groups and individuals from access to everything from living space, to jobs, to education and just about everything else. Targeted groups vary from time to time and place to place across the globe and the millennia.

Where currency is compulsory to constantly ransom our existence, to block or restrict anyone's access to ways to access currency is to block and restrict their ability to thrive or even live. Goods, services, basic needs, freedom, respect and opportunity are kept scarce. It's the inevitable outcome of the core imperative of "the law of supply and demand" integral to the paradigm itself. Such default chronic scarcity gives rise to resentments and blame between just about every impacted group and just about every other. This keeps us divided, conquered, and playing the "game" as we blame each other rather than recognizing that the paradigm itself is the problem, not each other or even the modern feudal lords themselves. The feudal lords naturally encourage and magnify such divisions. They instinctively know that the moment we do unite to focus on the paradigm, the "game" itself, their power and control are soon to be over. They fear a

popular uprising that may involve violence against them. In the Transition, they will have nothing of the kind to fear; but they won't believe that until it's complete. Even when they do understand that they're in no danger from the Transition, remember that many of them are caught in a pattern that works like an addiction, to privilege, power, opulence and control over others. Many will react as anyone caught in an addiction reacts when its object is removed. We will respond with strength and compassion.

In the new paradigm, every one of us will enjoy the right to access all that we need and most of what we desire (some things may be beyond our ability). No person or group will be in a position to block, control, or impede another's access to anything that they themselves don't use directly. Some personalities, ethnicities, religious groups etc. may still not get along; but none will be the other's boss, landlord, or hierarchical superior. Footing will, by default, be equal. There will be no socioeconomic power for anybody to abuse. If any party resorts to physical violence or coercion, they will be charged with the appropriate crime, sentenced accordingly, and offered therapy to help them with their violent impulses.

Under the current modern feudalism, scientific research and technological development are generally expected to justify themselves in terms of profitability, and to orient themselves to that end. Vastly many research and development projects are suppressed and languish from lack of funds, never to be pursued, because they don't meet that primary criterion.

Some research and development is more actively suppressed. In the U.S., the Superconducting Super Collider was cancelled by Congress in 1993, after $2 billion had been spent and 14 miles of tunnel dug, as costs climbed past $11 billion. Pure research with no commercial payoff has few powerful defenders when budgets tighten. The public transit system of Los Angeles, California, was undermined by a combined group of corporate interests. In 1949 General Motors, Firestone, Standard Oil of California and others were convicted of conspiracy: they had bought up transit companies and conspired to monopolise the sale of buses to them, which helped speed the replacement of streetcars by buses. General Motors was fined $5,000. Los Angeles has been utterly dependent on private cars ever since, to the detriment of all residents.

Globally escalating dependence on fossil fuels has brought us to an unprecedented survival crisis due to the impact on the world climate. It also puts oil-producing corporations and countries in a position of unfettered power over most of the world, which is abused routinely. Yet there are a plethora of mature and emergent, sustainable, non-polluting technologies that can easily replace most energy, transportation and other applications now filled by fossil-fuel devices. Many of them would dramatically reduce and curtail environmental damage, neutralize the power of oil producers, increase security, create plentiful new jobs, and improve quality of life for everybody. The petroleum industry has devoted vast resources and spared no efforts to suppress the adoption of these technologies and keep the world dependent on fossil fuels for as long as possible. Recently-developing countries like China and India are still repeating some of the same destructive mistakes of the U.S. and Europe, such as building new coal power, even as China now installs more renewable capacity than the rest of the world combined (pv magazine, citing IRENA, 2025). Profit-addiction overrides even survival instinct itself.

The current socioeconomic paradigm is a runaway mechanism that inevitably consumes everything and everybody in its path in order to generate an inexorable funneling and concentration of wealth, control and power into the hands of a microscopic handful of modern feudal lords and their corporate fiefs. That is the normal functioning of this paradigm. Science, art, engineering, government and all human endeavors are yoked, controlled and to serve that end. After the Transition to the new paradigm, those among the current feudal lords caught in the compulsion to accumulate wealth, power, privilege and control will be free to recover from it, and will be offered compassionate treatment and support, if they want it, to re-empower themselves as peers among peers and find fulfilling niches in the new paradigm. Scientific research and development will at last be free, unrestricted, and able to evolve as the human spirit moves it, expanding our knowledge, improving our quality of life, and, hopefully, adding to our wisdom.

Science is an expression of our instinctive drive to gain knowledge and understanding of how things work. It is intimately linked to our survival and ability to thrive as humans. The most significant developments and discoveries have almost always happened when research was free to proceed spontaneously. When yoked to profit motive, inferior results result; our horizons shrink to encompass not much more than the quest for consumer goods.

The course of pure research often can't be predicted. Discoveries emerge, which usually lead to technological innovations that improve our quality of life. The resulting expansion of our understanding of the universe, of the world around us, and of ourselves, often inspires us individually and culturally, and gives rise to artistic innovation and social progress as well. Our lives are enriched in lasting ways. This almost never happens when research is chained to profits. Look at the difference between the societies of today, versus medieval societies that believed in a motionless earth at the centre of the universe, with the sun going around it, a universe only six thousand years old, and the divine right of kings. Post-transition societies will be to our current societies, as those are to medieval societies.

Astronauts and cosmonauts have reported lasting positive impacts on their lives from being and working in space. The expansion of knowledge, understanding and horizons, driven by curiosity, the drive for understanding, and the desire for life-improving innovations, coupled with the thrill and even pride and satisfaction of discovery, will spark research and innovation, far more effectively than profit motive ever could.

In the new paradigm, choices of which competing technologies to or not to develop will be guided by very different criteria than in today's profit-driven model. The questions to ask will be which line of development will best enhance human happiness, well-being, empowerment and fulfillment? Which is more sustainable, less polluting or environmentally destructive? Which is less likely to involve unsafe or unsatisfying work conditions to produce? The answers to those questions will be drastically different from the answers to questions like which will bring the greatest profits for our company, the fastest, and for the longest time? Needless to say, support for fossil fuels will plummet; air and water quality will improve dramatically, as will our health and quality of life.

Cultural myths in current societies suggest that, without "market forces" to drive them, innovation and productivity would stall. In practice, the opposite is true. The reinforced economic behavior in the current paradigm has done more to stifle inquiry, research and development than any regime since the Middle Ages. The myth "conveniently" keeps us playing the "game," producing and consuming to maintain and fortify the wealth and power of the modern feudal lords, who've become addicted to the status quo. We go on, generation after generation, bearing the crushing weight of the socioeconomic pyramid upon our backs, until we Transition to the new, non-hierarchical paradigm. This dynamic is on display in the behavior of the U.S. government between 2016 and 2020. In the face of overwhelming scientific evidence of the reality and critical severity of human-caused climate change, the government downplayed and denied the facts, withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accords, canceled existing environmental protection measures, took massive steps to increase dependence on fossil fuels, vigorously suppressed even the discussion of climate change in the very agencies tasked with the research, replaced competent scientists with unqualified political operatives, and suppressed any shift to existing, mature alternative technologies while falsely claiming that the shift in technologies would destroy livelihoods, even though in fact far more new jobs would be created than lost. In the new paradigm, currency will be obsolete and such changes won't impact livelihood. The above responses, however, are the predictable behavior of people caught in an addiction-like compulsion (many of the modern feudal lords and their vassals) confronted with the prospect of losing the object of their addiction (wealth, power, opulence, and privilege). As mentioned before, government in this scenario responds primarily to the agendas of the modern feudal lords. We have all unwittingly participated in enabling this state of affairs. We have held them up as success stories and role models. We have played our role as serfs and peasants. We have thus reinforced their addiction rather than recognising it and offering the help we offer people struggling with other forms of addiction.

It is important to see clearly and recognize the psycho-social dynamics and behavior of the modern feudal lords in the context of addiction, rather than to see them as bad actors to be punished or shamed. We must not underestimate the impact of addiction. Many experiments and studies have shown that addicted animals and humans will pursue usually their addictions, even to the direct, serious and immediate detriment of their very survival and that of others. Many modern feudal lords fit the pattern of a behavioural addiction, like gambling (see Chapter 19); this is not true of every wealthy person, and it is not a moral verdict. We will bring the best outcome if we anticipate and respond to the reactions of the modern feudal lords to the Transition, based on and guided by understanding this addiction-like pattern, which in this case has been enabled for generations. Their recovery will be an unusual challenge for them and for those helping them.

Even competition will become more productive in the new paradigm. Instead of taking place between corporations for market share via marketing and advertising, it will occur between researchers, developers and designers competing to create the best design or discovery. Collaboration will expand dramatically, leading to an enormous acceleration of

progress and productivity. With no corporate-controlled “intellectual property” laws stifling collaboration, researchers and engineers will be free to share information to their hearts’ content. The pace and scope of progress will dwarf what’s possible under the current paradigm.

Those who believe in the current feudalistic socioeconomic paradigm strongly oppose taxing the ultra-wealthy or their corporations, and devoting tax money to public education, healthcare, and social safety-net programs of any kind for those who fall by the wayside. They claim and believe that such assistance causes recipients to become lazy, dependent, and settle into a multi-generational pattern of “gaming the system.” This contrasts with actual statistics, which show that only a very minute percentage of recipients stay on assistance longer than a few months to less than five years.

Such people usually resent paying taxes towards helping those who are struggling and down and out, as they think of them as an unwelcome burden. The privileged and well-off believe the myth that poor people are poor because they’re lazy, stupid or otherwise morally defective. Some have come close to saying it outright: in 2017 a U.S. congressman said that letting insurers charge the sick more would help “people who lead good lives” (Salon, 2017). The logic is that anybody who can’t afford health insurance doesn’t deserve it, which is a subtle way of saying they don’t have a right to live. This is yet another inevitable result of the modern feudal paradigm itself, which scarcifies resources and sets up conditions pitting person against person and group against group, where the gain of one always comes at the detriment of the another.

Ironically and unsurprisingly, in the United States the federal government spends about $181 billion a year on aid to businesses (Cato Institute, 2025), more than ten times what it spends on cash assistance to poor families (CBPP), before even counting the tax breaks for mega-corporations and the modern feudal lords driving them, who fiercely object to having any of what little tax they pay, go towards social programs and assistance for those who struggle to survive, and convince many susceptible working people that social safety nets threaten their survival. 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. The fact that this state of affairs isn’t widely known reflects the fact that this paradigm goes against our deepest instincts. Otherwise it wouldn’t be hidden. Yet it is strongly reinforced in the paradigm. Those who know this are mostly the feudal lords and their vassals. On some level, they know that this situation is cause for shame, and don’t want to be universally known as the biggest welfare recipients in their society! Such a society conflicts with our core nature as a deeply socially cooperative, collaborative, mutually-supportive species.

Our species would have died out, if our prehistoric ancestors had operated under modern feudal socioeconomic principles. The stronger would have driven the weaker out of existence, then would have turned upon each other. The last human generation would have ended with one lone survivor, the ultimate “alpha,” alone and extinct.

Yet, it is legitimate to ask what effect social safety nets have on recipients? Do they reinforce laziness and disengagement, or do they empower people to recover and thrive under their own power after only a brief time of receiving aid as intended? Furthermore, how will the demonstrably tiny sector of people who do fit the definition of “generational welfare,” be affected by the new paradigm, and how will their responses impact the greater community?

In a society where one’s options, freedom, and very survival hinge on a constant inflow of a certain amount of currency, there will be a few people who, when given aid, become conditioned to depend on it. Yet actual statistics show that this is a miniscule segment of the population. The argument to the contrary is similar to the myth of “anybody can make it.”

Real-world data show that 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 one 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 disproves the myth that social safety nets reinforce laziness and disengagement. Social safety nets are working as intended: helping people get back up from a downturn.

Among long-term welfare recipients are people who are actually working, but whose wages don't cover living expenses. Under the operating paradigm, a large percentage of employees are guaranteed to be in this situation. Even if every person makes their best possible effort, the pyramidal socioeconomic wealth and power structure will stay the same. What is being reinforced, in this case, is not individual laziness and dependency, but employers paying employees sub-living wages while counting on public assistance to make up the difference.

Under the current dominant modern feudalism, only a small minority can rise far up the socioeconomic pyramid, and upward mobility is far rarer than the myth suggests. If somehow a large percentage did manage to do so, the paradigm would collapse. Resources available to communities, as well as individuals, is determined by their socioeconomic status. People growing up in disadvantaged communities have inferior schools, higher stress, poorer or insufficient nutrition, less confidence, and an uphill battle trying to get education or training to prepare them for well-paying jobs. The few individuals who do "make it," only highlight the multitudes of their equally talented, hardworking peers who never do. Such successes give the illusion of a way out; but in fact, your chances of duplicating your peer's "success" is about the same as duplicating your neighbor's big win at the casino.

What strongly reinforces laziness and suppresses motivation, is being paid sub-living or barely-living wages, treated disrespectfully or even abusively, and driven beyond reasonable endurance. When that describes all of the jobs that you can realistically hope to get, your motivation to work, and to give it your all if you're on the job, is not reinforced. The "welfare queen", the image Ronald Reagan popularised in 1976 of people living high on the hog by scamming welfare, was always a slander on the many people who need help, not a description of them. Offer people jobs that bring a real improvement in quality of life, respect and choices, and nearly everyone will jump at them. 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. Otherwise, don't dare to judge them!

The fact that so many people, at one time or another, need financial assistance of some kind, is symptomatic of the built-in flaws and inherent dysfunctionality of this dominant paradigm.

It is our deep instinct for mutual support as a strongly social species, that drives the existence of social safety net programs in countries burdened under the modern feudal paradigm, in response to the widespread harm caused by human behavior as shaped by the paradigm itself. Instead of blaming folks who receive assistance, we will reinforce working by configuring society so that working is an empowering, affirming, engaging experience that yields a good quality of life. The only way to do this, is to retire the current paradigm and replace it with one what empowers and reinforces the best in us.

This will change quickly in the new paradigm. Those born during and after the Transition won't have any old, obsolete survival mechanisms to unlearn. If you were born before Transition, it'll be easier than you might think, to ease into the ways of the new paradigm. There'll be no money or need for it; so it will no longer be a barrier. Every one of us will have direct access to what we need, and at least most of what we want. No one will need welfare at all, and the slander of the "welfare queen" will lose its target. In the new paradigm, no segment of the population will be a burden on another. Every person will have unobstructed freedom and access to pursue their dreams and goals.

Lack of funds will no longer cripple schools and other infrastructure in currently disadvantaged communities. Teachers will have access to everything they need, regardless of where they are. Students will enjoy a universally high level of education and training. Want to become a doctor? A carpenter? An engineer? A mechanic? As long as you have the necessary ability and discipline, there'll be no barriers or locked doors to block you. We will all be freed of the tyranny of currency-addicted feudalistic socioeconomics. Our unseen, but very real, economic chains will fade away like a bad dream.

Those among us who are long barred from our dreams or even survival by stifling economics, will, for the first time, have direct access to all resources. Some have stopped trying because of a chronic state of defeat, having learned to

think, “What’s the use?” People will very quickly avail themselves of their new freedom and access, once they realize that it’s real.

Ethnic, religious, tribal, and racial antagonism will be harder, and take longer, to resolve and heal. We can expect, however, that such dynamics will diminish. Group will no longer be pitted against group to vie for scarcified resources. In the new synergistic, symbiotic societies, no one will be another’s boss, landlord, or hierarchical superior. There will be no power positions to be abused, and no rank to be pulled. This will work against the institutionalization and setting in stone of prejudice, discrimination, and disenfranchisement.

We will each have our own personal issues and challenges. Addiction or alcoholism won’t magically disappear; nor will mental or physical illnesses, disabilities, impact of prior traumas etc. What will change, however, is that every one of us will have unobstructed access to the healthcare providers and treatments that can help us, regardless of whether we are currently homeless, or a billionaire. The working poor person who currently has little or no help accessible, will, post-Transition have access to the same level of care as the President or Prime Minister. This will inevitably lead to a high level of engagement, empowerment, and fulfillment among all members of the society.

Even those few people who really want to sit around and watch TV all day, will not pose a problem. They’ll be too few to have a major impact on the society, and will pose a burden to no one. In the reinvigorated and re-engaged social climate of the post-Transition paradigm, such phenomena will become more and more rare.

Once the modern feudal paradigm is gone, there’ll be a lot more flexibility and freedom of lifestyle, which will probably result in a proliferation of new and experimental lifestyles and communities. Many may resemble kibbutzim or other past atypical social models, as well as new and novel ones. The new paradigm will be self-reevaluating, actively examining results in real time and adapting or adjusting accordingly. Experimental communities will be encouraged, and will keep track of what works and what doesn’t, in terms of human happiness and thriving in a mutually-supportive dynamic, and share their ongoing observations on the universal social access web site. At long last we’ll form a society that learns from its successes and failures, and adapts accordingly. The longer the new paradigm operates, the greater and deeper will be our understanding of what social paradigms do and do not work. Bullying, exploitation and social power politics will gradually fade into the historical past as anachronisms.

Modern feudalism, by its very nature, suppresses all other socioeconomic paradigms. It must do so in order to survive. Thus we see zoning laws severely limiting how many non-related people can live on a piece of land, and massive tracts of land are off-limits to us peasants and serfs, due to belonging to wealthy modern feudal lords and their corporations. Lack of funds is another barrier to finding a locale for social innovation. In the new paradigm, concepts of property and ownership will fundamentally change in ways that remove almost all barriers to novel, well-motivated social and familial experiments.

New laws and guidelines will be crafted to facilitate equitable resolution when more than one person, family or other social entity want to use the same land. Universal access does not mean “anything goes.” We will need to create reasonable limits on how much land or other resource a person or social entity can own. Such limits will need to be fine-tuned with growing experience, so as to prevent the disproportionate ownership and control of resources by some, effectively depriving others, which would create a new feudalistic power structure. Yet the limits must not be arbitrary, galling, or stifling.

We’ll still need zoning laws, in order to prevent a noisy factory from disrupting the life of a residential community. Many zoning laws, however, will be stricken or changed in major ways.

Realistically, some experimental communities may develop into dysfunctional or destructive forms, such as charismatic autocracy, cult formation, bullying, coercion, forced groupthink and conformity, or encroachment and imposition upon non-consenting people or even neighboring communities. We will need a compassionate legal framework and procedures, with due process and independent review, for intervention to end such dysfunction where it harms or coerces members or neighbours, and to offer therapy, healing, and/or social and individual counseling or guidance, not at all from a punitive or judgmental paradigm, but rather in the same frame of mind with which we would step in to stop a runaway train.

We humans have always tended to adorn ourselves. We have aesthetics regarding clothing, jewelry, music, dance, etc., which vary widely from person to person, family to family, and culture to culture. Under the current modern feudal

paradigm, however, aesthetics are skillfully manipulated by the fashion, entertainment, and other industries via highly effective propaganda called advertising. Our natural aesthetic impulses, as well as our socioeconomically-reinforced personal insecurities, are harnessed and yoked to generate massive profits. Fashions are systematically changed more and more often, in order to induce people to keep buying the latest. Spontaneous, authentic aesthetics, adornments, tastes, and fashions don't develop because of this programming. Add to that the general programming that we all experience growing up, which predisposes us to respond to advertising, peer pressure, and the perception of needing to buy high-end items to appear as high on the socioeconomic pyramid as possible in order to experience better treatment, respect and options in such societies, and we see the almost compete suppression of spontaneous, authentic individual and cultural expressions. This whole dynamic is another example of the modern feudal lords and their vassals gaining yet more wealth and power at the expense of us serfs and peasants. The system is functioning as designed, the nonviable, unsustainable game is being played as it's meant to be played.

Once the current feudalism is left behind, the new paradigm will quickly see the re-emergence of spontaneous, authentic aesthetic expressions, both individually and culturally. In the inner and outer peace that we'll experience in the absence of advertising and marketing, we'll begin to hear and share our own inner voices, tastes, and aesthetics. Expressing them will give us a deeper sense of fulfillment and well-being than was ever possible under the constant multimedia sensory bombardment that we have now. Free of the current yoke of serving profits of the feudal lords, our aesthetic and artistic expressions will diversify dramatically, bringing in a Renaissance that will dwarf the classical one that we study in school. Art, music and fashion will be home and community grown, not mass-produced. Conformity will be much less of a factor, though it probably won't disappear entirely.

We can expect that the norm for human interactions will become more honest and open, since there'll be no pressure or reinforcement to appear more "successful" or wealthy than one is, and no need to constantly fight to counter a default socioeconomic negation of your right to live, occupy space, and function. We will see our fellows no longer as potential competitors for scarcified resources and opportunities, but as potential allies and partners in mutually-beneficial undertakings.

There will still be dedicated and talented designers and artists in all media. There will be lively dialog between creative innovators and the public, to the benefit of both. Pure and genuine, creative aesthetics will replace programmed, molded ones. Freed of the ramifications of current intellectual property laws, people will be free to copy or improvise upon creations of such artists, and vice-versa. Nobody's livelihood will be negatively impacted as a result, and innovators will be acknowledged by their admirers and imitators.

In this environment of the new paradigm, most likely we'll see a proliferation of creative user-customizable accessories, materials, kits, and media. People will spontaneously share and copy expressions that they like. Instead of a set of conditioned consumeristic responses, art, science and fashion will become a vastly enriched, creative personal and social process embodying an unprecedented renaissance. Of course, not everybody is a seamstress or artist, so such cultural leaders will not lose their audience.

Under the current modern feudal paradigm, most decision-making is made and implemented in a strongly top-down hierarchical model. Decisions and policies are made by those at the top of the command structure and imposed on those beneath them all the way down the pyramid. Any who challenge or defy such decisions, will probably be fired, losing their livelihood and ability to survive, and be handicapped in finding new employment by negative references from the defied employer.

This dysfunctional, unsustainable paradigm gives the appearance of efficiency. Decisions can be made quickly by the ones in charge and passed down the chain of command to be immediately implemented and obeyed. There is little to no discussion, other than the giving of orders. Such "efficiency" comes with major prices, however, similar to how the use of meth or cocaine gives the illusion of heightened energy, productivity, and stamina with little or no sleep or food, until the crash occurs and the damage to the body and psyche becomes clear. In both cases, the damage far outweighs any benefits. Regrettably, the most people are conditioned and accustomed to accept this model as "normal" and function within it, according to its operating principles which only serve to disempower them and yoke them to the metaphorical millstone producing even more wealth and power for the people at the top of the pyramid at the expense of the rest of us who produce that wealth. This is how the paradigm works, how it's designed. From us serfs and peasants to the CEO modern feudal lords, the paradigm keeps going specifically because we all keep living our lives and behaving according to its conditioning.

In spite of their illusory appearance of efficiency, all hierarchical social and economic structures have major built-in flaws that far outweigh any perceived benefits.

Though this has already been covered, it bears repeating since it flies in the face of what's considered to be normal and natural in all cultures living under these paradigms. Humans in positions of power, even limited power, tend to become corrupt. The degree varies from person to person; but the trend is overwhelming. The exercise of power takes on a life of its own and becomes a goal unto itself. This behavior is strongly reinforced in the current paradigm, while there is little or no reinforcement for contrary behavior. Being in a position of power has been shown to inhibit compassion and empathy to a measurable degree; in experiments, even a small or momentary sense of power has this effect, and it tends to ease when power is relinquished. Exercise of rank and position becomes its own end, independent of any intended functional purpose of the hierarchy.

Every hierarchical social structure includes the imperative principle that the chain of command must be respected, period. This guarantees that, when there is abuse, corruption, incompetence or dysfunction at any level in the hierarchy, it will be institutionalized, set in stone, codified into policy, defended, replicated and set in stone going down the hierarchy. The social environment becomes rife with distrust, antagonism, backstabbing, frustration, fear, resentment, fragmentation, de-motivation, destructive forms of competition, abuse, exploitation, and bullying. Such paradigms have been shown to be at odds with human nature, reinforcing our most destructive potentials while suppressing our most constructive ones. To continue using such paradigms is futile and dangerous.

The new paradigm will completely replace hierarchical socioeconomic social structures with peer-based ones. Realistically, we'll go through a period of adjustment as we unlearn survival mechanisms formed in the current paradigm and learn the necessary skills to operate in the new paradigm. This is to be expected. Change is often challenging. We will need to be patient with ourselves and with each other as we learn how to operate and function as peers. It may seem daunting at first; but the needed skills can be learned and mastered. We are fully capable of mastering them. We'll learn to function effectively with no command structure, and be much better off for it socially, functionally, individually, and in terms of quality of life.

Each of us will be empowered to make our fullest contribution. We will all benefit from being able to speak freely without fear, knowing that we are heard and listened to.

The new paradigm is based on ones that have already been shown to work better than the hierarchical ones that now dominate the world. There'll be no rank for anyone to pull, no way for any of us to impose our ideas upon our fellows. When two or more competing visions or ideas are proposed, they'll be examined and discussed by all participants. Those still on the table will be implemented in prototype or proof-of-concept form and then re-examined. Those that remain will be those that are the best solutions. This will stimulate innovation at new levels of excellence.

The current hierarchical paradigm is heavily driven by the visions, ideas and goals of those at the top of the pyramid. Initiative and input from those down the command structure are suppressed by default, more strongly so the further down one is on the pyramid. Initiative from above always overrides that from below, while the ideas of those at the top usually don't go through the kind of thorough critical examination that would catch flaws or drawbacks. We end up with a stilted, crippled, maladaptive environment and process that produces inconsistent results that fall far below the level of quality and consistency that will become the norm in the new paradigm.

In the new paradigm, each of us will be able to freely express ourselves, with no fear of being written up, censured or bullied by a superior, or losing livelihood.

Hierarchical social structures are antithetical to, and incompatible with, any form of free and democratic society governed synergistically and symbiotically of, by and for its people for the good of each and all. The authoritarian, dictatorial nature of the current paradigm is quite visible at this time in history in the United States, where trends over decades have created a socioeconomic and legal environment where employees can be fired by employers for nothing more than displeasing the CEO or any superior, regardless of their job performance. We can be fired for expressing, on our own time, political or other views that our employers don't like, or even for aspects of our personal lives that in no way affect the performance of our job. At this time, "religious liberty" is being stretched to give those who control jobs growing room to act on their religious beliefs at the expense of the people who depend on them. 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 (*Billard*, 2024). The religious freedom of employees has been protected far less: the law requires employers to accommodate a worker's faith, but for 46 years courts let them refuse whenever it cost more than a trifle, until the Supreme Court raised that bar in 2023 (*Groff v. DeJoy*). In Medieval feudalism, the feudal lords likewise held the power to exclude, persecute, exile or otherwise act against any in their realms whose religious, political, or other beliefs or affiliations they didn't like. Modern feudalism is functionally no different. Tyranny is tyranny, whether it's a government, an army, a religion, or a corporation imposing it.

Once we have climbed the learning curve, the new paradigm will empower us to more closely approach a truly free, democratic, empowering and symbiotic society than has ever been even remotely possible under any variations of the current paradigm.

Every one of us will have free and unrestricted access to all media, from newspapers, to radio and television, to the Internet, to communications. There will be no advertising of any kind, though when appropriate, there will be public service announcements. The technology will rise to the best standards possible according to the state of the art.

Content originating in un-Transitioned countries will still have ads; but they will fall on uninterested eyes and ears. Why would anyone living in a country where currency is obsolete and there's universal open access to all superior-quality goods and services, have the slightest interest in any content from any ad? Transitioned viewers will have little patience for commercial-infested content. On the other hand, un-Transitioned viewers will naturally tend to prefer content from Transitioned countries over their own country's commercial-heavy content. Transitioned content will naturally tend to out-compete un-Transitioned content among consumers.

How will we find goods and services that we need, you may wonder? The central database and Internet portals will have easily-searchable databases, using the combined best features of the search algorithms from all software houses, where we'll be able to find out what's available and where to find it. Specifications will be purely factual, not "spin." New technologies, developments, innovations, weather events, and anything else concerning the public will be broadcast on all media as they occur. We will miss out on literally nothing in the absence of commercials. The Internet will become host to a public discourse of unprecedented benefit and productivity, giving rise to an unparalleled, sustained Renaissance.

A few problems and challenges may not be solved in the new paradigm. Social media, video game, and TV addictions will probably still persist to some degree. Addiction has its own psychology and physiology, regardless of socioeconomic system. Also, the trend among younger people to interact more through their screens than in person, may still continue. The solutions will most likely be quite challenging and not simple.

Yet such phenomena will most likely decrease quite a bit. The current paradigm generates a highly stressful, adversarial, predatory, disempowering, dehumanizing, toxic social environment. The new paradigm will generate a dynamic, empowering, life-affirming, synergistic, symbiotic society. Most likely, this will encourage and even reinforce such addicted people to re-engage with their fellows and their communities in mutually-beneficial ways. The need to "escape" from a dysfunctional world will be gone, as will the advertising that currently conditions people to believe that they "need" things that they'd never need otherwise. And fewer people will almost certainly fall into new addictions. But we need to be ready to give support to those among us who still struggle with addiction, in every possible effective way.

Functions of inventory management, accounting, load balancing and resource management will still be relevant, though they will have no function involving currency. Such functions will address real, physical issues such as how much or many of something there is, where it is, and how much or many need to be produced to satisfy known demand, with a small reserve to accommodate the unforeseen. In the event of actual shortage, the goal will be to resolve it in the most compassionate, equitable way, involving the participation and cooperation among all affected parties.

To support the new production and distribution models based on fulfilling the real needs of all of the people, we'll do well to use the universal Internet portal to track and coordinate demand, production, distribution, and consumption of all goods and services, as a direct real-time communication channel between users and producers and distributors. The longer this system will run, predictive algorithms will learn and get better and better at anticipating need and other variables, bringing greater and greater efficiency.

The self-devouring cycle will end for good. In the new paradigm, production will proceed at levels needed to support real need due to breakage, immigration, and population growth and maintain to-be-determined small balances on hand to cover unanticipated needs that may arise. Once just about everybody has what they need of any product, service or other resource, its production will dial back to the minimum needed to keep small reserve supplies replenished.

The same online forum will also be a channel of contact between service providers, such as doctors, plumbers, and construction workers, and those who need their services. This will not function as an organ of central control, but rather, as digital choreography for the logistics and coordination between providers and clients.

The work-week will decrease significantly for most of us, especially once the equilibrium between need and production is as closely reached as possible. Quality and longevity of goods and services will universally soar. With the end of the self-devouring cycle, waste and pollution will be dramatically reduced, to the tremendous benefit of our efforts to mitigate the current ecological and meteorological crisis. Built-in obsolescence will become a thing of the past.

Air and water quality will surge as polluting, damaging technologies are replaced by sustainable ones. Landscapes will see a great decrease in litter and waste.

With the entropic drag of enforced societal currency dependence out of the picture, lack of funds will no longer be a real thing, much less a barrier to pursuing projects. No scientific, engineering, artistic, social or other research or creative project will be quashed for lack of funding. The question of likely profitability will have no meaning. We will see a world-changing increase in scientific, artistic, technological, medical, social and other innovation. Pure research will surge once again. Back in touch with our primal drives and proclivities, we'll see increased originations in space and underwater exploration, medical innovation, constructive social and organizational experiments, and artistic expression. New goods and services will emerge as well. Our collective and individual hearts and imaginations will be fired up, inspired, and infused with optimism and anticipation of wonders and benefits yet to come.

Under current modern feudalism, the age of art, science, and exploration for their own sakes and for the benefit of humanity has been subsumed and yoked to generate profits and power for the modern feudal lords. We've been conditioned to shrink our horizons, dreams and aspirations to focus on the constant stream of stuff for sale. Human relations have also suffered from the primacy of focus on what can be bought and sold. We have nearly ceased to dream or even experience curiosity spontaneously. In the new paradigm, we will awaken from this cultural and social catatonia, rediscover our passions, our curiosity, or interconnectedness, our creativity, and our indomitable heart and spirit. We will once again yearn to explore the stars and most likely we will go on to do so! This is most certainly worth committing to bring about and doing all that's necessary to making it a reality.

Chapter 40: Challenges and Pitfalls in the New Paradigm: How to Encounter Them and What to Watch Out For in Ourselves

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:

The Transition will end the current dysfunctional modern feudal hierarchical socioeconomic power structures and replace them with symbiotic collaborative, democratic, and consensus-based social mechanisms. Yet we've all developed habits, conditioned response patterns and expectations that we've needed to survive in the current dysfunctional hierarchical environment. For a while, those old patterns and expectations will probably persist until we develop and master new responses and expectations appropriate to, and reinforced by, the new paradigm. There will be a learning curve. We'll need to be alert to catch ourselves and each other thinking in terms of initiative or solutions coming from "above," and gently remind ourselves and each other, as often as needed, that processes have changed, until the new patterns become second-nature.

We'll do well to draw upon experience from known non-hierarchical social structures, such as kibbutzim and a number of other intentional egalitarian communities, countries, social experiments, and cultures. We'll also learn from current psychological and sociological research and build upon that knowledge with fresh observations and ongoing experience and vigorous new research. As our knowledge and experience deepen, broaden and strengthen, it will generate new content in all levels of education, in order to best equip upcoming generations to thrive.

When more than one hypothesis or view arise and remain after thorough open analysis, they will be implemented temporarily on a small scale until we can see which, if any, work best. When more than one approach work well, they'll either all be viewed as options, or the ideas will be integrated into models that include the best features of the various successful models.

We will transition from a static society, changing and evolving mainly through unconscious random events, fads, actions, reactions, and shaped by the imperatives of the socioeconomic paradigm, to a dynamic society, growing and evolving through honest, objective, conscious self-observation and regenerative feedback.

Challenge:

Going into Transition, we will do best if we strive to anticipate which human responses will likely strengthen and which could weaken us in setting up the new paradigm, and act accordingly.

Change is inevitable and often, as now, necessary. Yet it rarely comes easily. One part of us resists change and clings to the familiar, sometimes even when the familiar is toxic or harmful. This is equally true of us as individuals, and as groups and societies.

Another part of us seeks and embraces change. Both urges evolved over eons and serve us best under different circumstances.

Change demands more of us, and introduces more uncertainties, than maintaining the status quo. When how we do things is serving us well, empowering us individually and socially, yielding mutually-beneficial relationships and a norm of thriving and high human happiness and well-being, it's best to keep doing the same, only refining and tweaking it to improve it. Resistance to change is an asset in that case. It's worth exerting great efforts to resolve issues that come up in the society or in the relationship.

When how we do things is toxic, harmful, disempowering, destructive, dysfunctional, and causing us harm and unhappiness, the drive to bring change serves us well. It is what motivates us to repair what's broken, to invent new

ways of doing things that are likely to make things better, abandon the dysfunctional ways and make whatever efforts are needed to replace them with ways that serve us better.

Modern socioeconomic feudalism is harming us egregiously, doing potentially irreparable damage to our planetary home, and producing a norm of dysfunction, unhappiness, functional bondage for all but a very few, discord, strife, scarcity, unnecessary stress, waste, callousness, and misery. We must encourage and reinforce that in us that seeks change, and consciously, deliberately not encourage or reinforce the urge to resist change. If we ever find ourselves discouraged, doubting the Transition, or yearning for the old ways, we must be prepared to remind ourselves and each other, of how damaging modern feudalism is, reaffirm our ability to succeed in the new paradigm and our commitment to do the hard work needed for it (as with any change) to work. It will get easier with time, and it will be worth it. We will not be like an abused partner who escapes, only to return to their abuser when things get difficult. We will not turn back. The stakes are too high!

Challenge:

Under the current paradigm, we've long been divided against each other along ethnic, religious, national, economic and other lines, as groups and as individuals. Such resentments, rivalries, and animosities have been reinforced for so long that they have a life of their own. Some go back generations. They've kept us divided and conquered, blaming each other rather than the socioeconomic paradigm, the "game" we're forced to play to survive, for the stresses, injustices, traumas, and disempowerment that we've endured. Once we've freed ourselves of modern feudalism and initiated the new paradigm, at lease some of those animosities will tend to continue by sheer momentum.

All such groups and individuals have suffered violence, exclusion, disempowerment, abuse, deprivation, and other injustices by one another to one degree or another. This is one way that the modern feudal lords of the corporatocracy have kept their power over us: by creating chronic scarcity in a socioeconomic environment where the gain of one inevitably comes at the expense of another, disempowering us by keeping us scrambling against one another for the crumbs thrown into our midst. We have complied by playing the game as intended, unaware that we've been complicit in our own subjugation. We've struggled group against group, person against person, instead of uniting to fundamentally change the "game," the underlying criteria, principles and guidelines that determine how we perform the interactions and processes that produce and distribute what we desire and need.

In the new paradigm, post-Transition, all individuals and groups will be able to thrive. The gain of one will benefit all. Every person and group will be empowered. We must be vigilant to recognize and choose to discourage and not reinforce or accept any and all perpetuation of interpersonal and inter-group animosity that carries over out of inertia. If we fail to, then we will lose all for which we will exert ourselves. The new paradigm will embody the principle of unity in diversity. None will be excluded or barred.

We must consistently remind ourselves and each other that the resentments and blame that we feel for one another, over past real and perceived wrongs, are really the chafing of the invisible psychological and sociological chains that have bound us in this old paradigm, programmed into us systematically through skillful manipulation by the lords of the corporatocracy to keep us compliant and playing the game driving their enrichment at the expense of our disempowerment. Rather than even look for blame, let us think in terms of learning from our mistakes, understanding them, and doing better.

Many of us have suffered, struggled, been disempowered, and otherwise been harmed under current modern feudalism. We may naturally feel an urge to go after the feudal lords who used, abused, took advantage of, and otherwise harmed us, to get revenge or payback. We absolutely must not! Modern feudal lords and modern serfs and peasants, have all been perpetuating the game by playing by its operational principles and rules. We've embodied the behaviors that are reinforced in this paradigm, in our ignorance and unawareness of the actual nature of the socioeconomic paradigm that we've operated under. We all share responsibility for keeping that dysfunctional paradigm going: us for playing the role of peasants/serfs and the modern feudal lords and their vassals for playing their roles. It takes quarterbacks, halfbacks, linebackers, defensive ends and all of the players in all of the positions, to make a football team, to make football happen. Any social, political, or socioeconomic paradigm or system is no different. The problem is not the players; it is the game that, by its very structure and operating principles, defines the roles that we've played. Who plays which role is irrelevant. There is no blame, which is itself a destructive, counterproductive concept that does far more harm that good in human affairs. The game is destroying us. The solution is to retire the game and initiate a new one.

The new paradigm aims to empower every person to thrive in dignity, freedom, empowerment and fulfillment, and to establish a social environment that reinforces lifting each other up. Every person, including the former peasant, the former feudal lord, and the former vassal, has value. If any are oppressed, excluded, marginalized, or disrespected, then we all are. We will safeguard former serfs and peasants from former CEO's and other feudal lords if they try to reassert their privilege and power by force. We will safeguard former feudal lords from former peasants trying to beat them down. We will rigorously forge a culture whose norm is to respect the humanity and dignity of every one of us, regardless of what role we played under modern feudalism.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Most modern feudal lords are addicts, addicted to wealth, privilege, opulence, and power over others. We can expect many or most of them to react badly, like any addict, to being deprived of the object of their addiction. We will not allow them to re-establish their lost positions or harm others; but we will treat them with the same firmness and compassion as we would treat a dear friend or family member with any addiction, providing therapy, rehabilitation, support, and counseling, while firmly but compassionately restraining them from harming themselves or others during their withdrawals.

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

Please keep in mind that, in the new paradigm, former modern feudal lords will have no means of lording it over or exploiting anybody. No good can be gained by persecuting or harassing them. The Transition and the new paradigm must never carry out or tolerate any kind of purge, ethnic cleansing, lynching, scapegoating, discrimination or other abuse of any person or group, by any person or group. We may not be able to prevent all people from such acts. Societies in the new paradigm must treat such behaviors as criminal behavior, an under no circumstances sanction, tolerate, initiate, or support it. Even if we are forced at some point to physically defend ourselves against immediate assault, we will use only the minimum force necessary, with respect for the humanity of our opponents, and treat them with dignity if we must restrain them.

Challenge:

Going into a new undertaking is often daunting and challenging; yet if it's initiated for the best of reasons, we humans can fall into a mindset of "once this is done, everything will be glorious and wonderful." This is true for a new relationship, job, religion or socio-economic system.

We must stay always aware that this very natural mindset is unrealistic. Realistically, the new paradigm will vastly improve our lives in many ways, individually and socially, and solve many problems that have plagued us for a long time. We must, however, keep in mind that enacting the new paradigm will require a lot of hard work, patience, problem-solving, growing pains, learning curves, self-examination and perseverance mentally, emotionally, physically, socially, and individually. It won't happen automatically like magic. It will take time to settle in, for the new normal to stabilize in day-to-day life and become second-nature to us.

The strategies of the Transition are intended to keep goods, services, and the functions of daily life flowing smoothly through the paradigm change and to minimize disruptions; but we can be sure that it will take us out of our comfort zones, just like happens with a new relationship, starting a family or business, or moving to a new location. We must anticipate this and embrace it, knowing that it will yield quantum improvements in every aspect of life that will more than justify the challenges involved. When the familiar is toxic and harmful, improvement and resolution necessarily mean venturing into the unfamiliar.

Let us go into the Transition and new paradigm with eyes wide open and prepared to experience feelings of uncertainty and strangeness, as we move from what we've known to what we're creating. There will be mistakes made and learned from along the way, re-evaluations of some things, advances and setbacks. Let us ride them out and keep going until we settle into daily life in the new, empowering, symbiotic, thriving paradigm. It would be fatal to let the challenges and uncertainties discourage us into giving up or trying to go back to the old ways. Let us respond to those moments by redoubling our determination to succeed in replacing dysfunctional modern feudalism with an era of the greatest level of fulfillment, creativity, prosperity, happiness, quality of life, peace and harmony that humanity has yet seen in

recorded history. The new paradigm will be self-re-evaluating and equipped to evolve into ever-better forms; this will become part of the culture. As with most worthy undertakings in life, the Transition and setting up the new paradigm will probably not be easy, but definitely worth it.

Challenge:

In the new paradigm, huge portions of our infrastructure will be restructured and reoriented according to new principles and criteria. Most functions such as food and power production and communications will shift from massive central facilities to widely-distributed small-to-midsized operations at the single dwelling, block, neighborhood, and regional levels. Community engagement and involvement will be key.

Some functions aren't well suited for distributed small-scale implementation for practical reasons. Many factories, mines, foundries, and kinds of research, such as space exploration and high-energy physics, require larger, centralized facilities. Under current modern feudalism, most such facilities are run by huge corporations, competing with one another for profits and market share. In the new paradigm, once conversion has been enacted by democratic law, after the conditions set out in the Roadmap are met, such business entities will cease to exist or function. The people in them will remain and carry on with what they were doing, but with important changes. People and teams currently blocked by corporate rules and nondisclosure agreements from sharing information and expertise to collaborate across company lines, will unite into larger collaborative teams, which will reorganize themselves according to practical, functional considerations. All information, processes, and other technical expertise will be shared freely. Decision-making will be done by vote or, better yet, by consensus of all designers, engineers, assembly-line workers, cafeteria workers, and all other persons directly involved. All operations will be fully transparent and easily accessible to everybody online and by other means, and will be subject and responsive to public scrutiny, dialogue and feedback.

The priorities and design principles driving research, development, and production of goods and services will drastically from what they are now. Developers, engineers, researchers and others will be actively encouraged to share all of their knowledge, designs, skills, and processes. Their goal will be to combine the best features of what their former competing corporations produced, into lines of products that embody the best quality, durability, ugradeability, use-serviceability, customizability, robustness and user-friendliness of which the state of the art is capable. Instead the current inefficient, bewildering morass of competing inferior products and hype, we will enjoy one high-quality line of a given product type, including models and versions that actually match our expressed and observed needs. Environmental considerations will play a strong part as well; any environmentally damaging technology or designs will be dropped in favor of ones that are neutral or beneficial to the environment.

Members of the public will be able to use the public web sites to express their ideas, requests, preferences, needs, desires, suggestions, and feedback to production teams, who will do their best to produce goods and services that meet those needs, preferences and desires. All goods and services. The alienation between producers and consumers, and between employees and employers, will fall by the wayside. After all, generally speaking, we are all both producers and consumers!

The number of different models will decrease. Brands, of course will cease to exist. We won't have choose between brands, but only between models, according to what we need and want, knowing that the quality will be the highest possible. There will be high flexibility to support customization. Products and protocols will be backwards compatible and easily upgradeable by using universal form factors and design standards. Carry-over models and specs from pre-Transition companies will be supported as well. Nobody will be pressured to give up or replace valued possessions; but when they do decide to replace them, they will get the highest quality.

New devices will have to be designed and built to be easily reparable, serviceable and upgradeable and inter-compatible as much as the technology allows. Industrial and commercial software will be modified to eliminate billing and all other financial functions, leaving only inventory management and tracking, logistics, load balancing and distribution monitoring functionality.

Production will be geared to supply the real needs of the people, plus a small reserve to cover breakage and population growth. Former retail stores will become public distribution centers for the same kinds of products that they currently sell.

People in government will have to be informed from the bottom up, to help and guide them in understanding the new parameters of the new environment of the new paradigm. They will have to learn to operate in the absence of corporate lobbies (or even of corporations) and of currency itself. There will be no stock market. The most basic concepts of "the economy" will change completely. Politicians' jobs well become much simpler: to serve the will and well-being of their constituents and communities. Lawmakers will have their work cut out for them, redefining a lot of legal definitions and concepts, repealing now-obsolete laws, modifying others, and devising new ones to support the new democratic economy. Funding and budget will no longer be an issue, a bone of contention, or an obstruction. If the physical means exist to do a project, and it's decided that it's beneficial to do so, then it'll be a simple matter of doing it. The only shortages will be actual, physical shortages, not the kind of artificial shortages that we see today.

With so much change and restructuring, some people will be "displaced" as their jobs will no longer exist. This includes anybody in the financial, insurance, real estate, and advertising industries, among others. This may cause anxiety, worry, or depression in some. However, in contrast to the current paradigm, affected people will see right away that displacement won't negatively impact their survival, quality of life, well-being, degree of freedom or options. Education and re-training in new skills will, of course, be free. Occupationally displaced people will have wide-open options for finding new niches and vocations.

Yet losing or leaving one's job can have unexpected psychological and emotional impacts, even when survival and quality of life aren't impacted. Many people's internal identity and sense of self are linked to their jobs. It can involve a sense of belonging, knowing what one's role is in the one's environment, and engagement with the larger community. Therefore we'll need to ramp up support infrastructure for affected people, including counseling and therapy, advisors to help choose suitable new directions or adapt their existing skills to new environments. It's important to establish a culture and norms of making sure that every member of the community feels and knows that they are valued, appreciated, and that their contributions are acknowledged.

These outreaches must start immediately with the Transition. It'll take time to get them up and running, and more time to connect to people who need support, understand their needs and learn how to meaningfully help them to make the Transition and paradigm change as smooth and quickly as possible, with as little stress and anxiety as possible, in a supportive, not coercive or judgmental, milieu. We must ensure that no person is left behind or excluded.

Different sectors will make the paradigm shift at different paces, with different challenges. When we face those among us who will resist, reject, or even try to sabotage the Transition and new paradigm, we must respond with firmness, compassion, respect, and humanity. To disagree, argue and campaign against the Transition is their right. Acts of sabotage are conduct, and such acts can't be allowed to impede the Transition; but even then the people involved must be treated with respect and dealt with through lawful, transparent process. We'll need to seek the balance to make sure that we neither become insensitively gung-ho and intimidating, nor allow acts of sabotage to block the Transition and new paradigm on the other hand.

Challenge:

The new central Web forum will integrate databases, social media, blogs, vlogs, online apps and more. It will build upon existing digital infrastructure and expand upon it. It will be open-source, and will serve functions of public dialog and discussion, suggestions, feedback, coordination of production to meet real demand, information dissemination, functioning as a kind of central nervous system in post-Transition societies. It will respond to all of us, not as an organ or control, but as an organ of communication and coordination.

This will be a huge project. We'll need to encourage developers, programmers, and engineers to put major efforts into scaling and expanding existing and new digital infrastructure to be up to the task on a national and even global level.

This Webspace will have to be individually adaptive and easy to use for non-technically-oriented people, yet powerful enough to be useful for our most technically-talented citizens. Since development will follow the Open Source model, it will benefit from a vast pool of developers and evolve quickly, adapting easily to different countries and changing conditions.

Servers will follow a widely distributed, redundant model, rather than centralized server farms. All data will have multiple backups. This architecture will make the system robust in the potential event of natural disaster, sabotage, or other damage. Hardware will be "hardened" to resist solar storms and manmade electromagnetic pulse sabotage or

accident. If you are a developer or engineer, you are invited to begin working on this as soon as possible before the Transition. If you're not technical, don't be concerned. We each have our contributions to make to our communities, and yours just doesn't happen to be technological.

In case of an unforeseeable catastrophe, we will need lower-tech backup systems in case of catastrophic failure of the primary infrastructure and its redundancies.

Challenge:

The rest of the not-yet-Transitioned world will be apprehensive, confused, worried and distrustful during and after the Transition. Some treaties, alliances, and trade agreements will remain as they are; others will have to be reexamined, altered, and renegotiated according to the principles of the new Paradigm. This will require the utmost of sensitivity, openness, consistency, and wisdom.

We will stand utterly firm in our new paradigm principles, but perform negotiations in as non-confrontational a tone as possible. For example, we will not accept partnerships, agreements or treaties that involve supporting exploitation or abuse of people, environmental damage, or corporate control of enterprises in Transitioned countries. When we state our position, we will do so in a matter-of-fact manner, and offer suggestions and assistance to other parties willing to accept it, to negotiation partners who express difficulty in implementing our principles. We will strive to emphasize how working with the Transitioned country will benefit all parties.

We'll need new procedural and operational implementations to facilitate trade between Transitioned countries and pre-Transitioned ones, designed to benefit all parties involved.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Facilities in Transitioned countries that are currently under foreign corporate control, will be freed and autonomously operating under control of all persons involved in their operations. We will not compensate such corporations with currency, nor will we apologize or negotiate a return to previous control. We will, however, strive to negotiate new protocols to enable former corporate feudal masters and former serfs to work together for mutual benefit. Remember that the former parent company will now be able offer superior products at drastically reduced prices in their own countries due to zero overhead in the Transitioned facility, giving them a strong competitive advantage.

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It will be crucial that we express our principles and intentions clearly and consistently on the world stage, for all to see, and scrupulously align our actions with those principles. The world must see that we are respectful, stable, reasonable, and good for our word; we must demonstrate that we always seek the mutual good, rather than advantage over the other party.

Almost every country has enemies, who may see the Transition as a moment of weakness and vulnerability to be exploited. Defense forces will have to be on high alert during and immediately after the Transition. The Transition must not be allowed to become a distraction to them. They must be given to understand that the nation, its Constitution and institutions are intact and unperturbed.

Once the Transition is complete and the new paradigm is stabilized, the population will be trained and organized for civil defence and national defence, on the total-defence model used in Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Norway. Any invader would have to reckon not just with the military, but with the whole citizenry. Such a population will not be easily subdued or controlled. Local bullies will find it difficult to intimidate people.

Potential Pitfall:

Under modern feudalism, a common myth is that if you work long and hard enough, you will ascend the socioeconomic pyramid. It's largely a myth, of course; but like the myths of every place and time, it serves to keep people engaged in perpetuating the dominant paradigm. In the new paradigm, most people will experience increased motivation and

engagement; but some will experience the opposite, since there'll be no socioeconomic power structure to climb, no hierarchy, and no possibility of having power, or enjoying a higher standard of living, over others.

Since the quality of life will dramatically improve for almost all of us, most people will quickly realize this and respond with high engagement and enthusiasm.

Some, however, will cling to the old paradigm and find it hard to find a place in the new one. They will probably become depressed, unmotivated, discouraged, and hostile. We must respond to such people with patience, compassion and respect. We will need to develop new therapeutic modalities to help those who want such help, drawing upon existing knowledge and therapies for grief, loss of identity, PTSD, and other traumatic experiences. We must never let such treatments become any version of the "re-education camps" infamous in dictatorships around the world.

We must never judge, disparage, or condescend to such people. We will strive to find new forms of positive feedback to replace the scarce, illusory "rewards" of modern feudalism without re-enacting that paradigm.

Don't worry that these people's disengagement will have a strong impact on our productivity or well-being as a society or as individuals. Most people will quickly take to the new paradigm as they experience its advantages. Their sustenance will take nothing from anybody. The workload of all sectors will decrease drastically with the end of the self-devouring cycle. Nobody will be working double shifts because of the disengaged.

Under current modern feudalism, those who don't thrive are ridiculed, marginalized, disenfranchised, disrespected, and labeled as "losers." In contrast, in the new paradigms, it'll be vital to establish a culture of inclusiveness and empathy that enthusiastically acknowledges individual and group contributions to the community. That includes those who find it hard to adjust to the new paradigm. They will need our understanding, compassion, wisdom and patience.

Potential Pitfall:

Hierarchical social structures sometimes respond more quickly to some situations than the peer-based ones that will replace them. Decisions are made at the top and implemented reflexively down the chain of command. Peer-based processes may take longer, especially in the beginning when we're all learning the new modes of interaction and decision-making. More dialogue is involved.

In some emergencies, especially in the beginning, this could be a difficult challenge.

In the new paradigm, we'll have no arbitrary, artificial deadlines or made-up "emergencies" as we experience under the current modern feudalism with it's self-devouring cycle. There'll be no "market forces" generating chronic stress and pressure.

Yet there may still be a very few situations, such as natural disasters, fires or military aggression, that may not allow the time needed for peer analysis and decision-making. There are a few options in such cases.

One option is for all members of fire departments, squadrons, platoons, EMT's, police, and other emergency responders, to drill until they become fully comfortable performing every function and develop such strong team bonds that no command structure is needed. This is achievable, and often happens spontaneously. The necessary level of mastery is greater than in a hierarchical structure. We will study and create conditions that reinforce this process.

If some situations truly and unavoidably require a hierarchical structure for practical reasons, then temporary hierarchical structures will be created with a clearly and narrowly-defined purpose and duration, and will be closely monitored. All members will master all positions in the command structure, and will frequently rotate roles to prevent concentration of power and other dysfunctional social dynamics. There will be no privileges or "perks" based on rank. Such provisional hierarchies will have no life of their own. Once their purpose is fulfilled, they will be dissolved.

Potential Pitfall:

Food and power production, and other processes as well, will shift from massive centralized plants to widely-distributed small-to-midsized operations. Community involvement will soar, empowering individuals, strengthening community cohesion and solidarity. But not everybody is a natural farmer or technician or is interested in becoming one. We don't

want to force anybody into jobs that they don't want to do; but this fact could cause some neighborhood facilities to be poorly maintained.

Training in every skill and field will be open to all. If you want to learn home gardening or how to operate and maintain your home or neighborhood water wheel or solar farm, there will be classes in your community, or even one-one training with skilled professionals.

There will be hotlines and web forums where you'll be able to consult with skilled professionals on issues that occur beyond your level of skill. They will also be on-call to come out, do the necessary repairs or maintenance, and explain procedures to residents. In most communities, we can expect that there'll be enough people inclined and able, that little outside intervention will be needed.

This same model can be adapted to other sectors and functions. Volunteers will have access to specialized training in a manner and role similar to that of Barefood Doctors in China, for a wide range of skills and scenarios, especially in their local areas.

Challenge:

Regardless of the paradigm in use, the human psyche is vulnerable to a range of harmful dysfunctions. Dogmatism, inflexibility, arrogance, complacency, apathy, inertia, rigidity, and fanaticism have derailed many well-intentioned movements and revolutions, turning them inhuman and oppressive.

In the new democratic, empowered, synergistic paradigm, there'll be no reinforcement for behaviors based on such mindsets. Yet we will be wise not to assume that "it can't happen here."

In the unlikely event that the new paradigm ever becomes repressive, disempowering, socially toxic, rigid, inflexible, stifling, or harming people's happiness, symbiosis and well-being, then it will be their right and responsibility to stand up for the principles of the Transition and the new paradigm, and forcefully but non-violently return to the core principles of the paradigm in all aspects of life.

No institution or system should ever be above honest examination, scrutiny, re-evaluation and conscious evolution in terms of how they affect people's happiness, prosperity, and well-being. The new paradigm will be no exception.

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).

There's no one and only form for the Transition. Each country and culture has its own unique starting point. Do your best to be clear on where your country lies in the spectum.

Some countries may need only minor adjustments. Some countries are in urgent need of Transition socioeconomically but enjoy democratic governance that will strengthen and come into its own in the new paradigm. Some countries suffer under both socioeconomic and governmental dictatorship and will need both socioeconomic Transition and a nonviolent political Revolution led by their own people.

Countries like the United States, Canada, Australia and similar examples have a democratic Constitutional governmental system paired with an under-regulated, deeply-entrenched parasitic feudalistic socioeconomic oligarchic power structure that undermines and subverts it. Such countries will need full Transition as described in this book, in order to ever become free and democratic societies. The hierarchicial socioeconomic power structure must be decommissioned and replaced with a democratic, symbiotic, peer-based self-governing structure with no concentrations of power or control.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Government must be respected and unmolested, except to whatever extent they respond as enforcers and vassal-agents of the feudal lords attempting to reassert their control and dominance. I that case, government forces must be ignored, defied, or fought against, only as necessary to protect and ensure the Transition and initialization of the new paradigm.

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 Transition is done and the new paradigm is operating, government will continue unmolested, but will have to adapt to the new socioeconomic environment. All forms of currency will be obsolete and irrelevant. Motivations and means for corruption will be vastly reduced. There will be no parallel feudal power structure, no lobbyists, corporations, or modern feudal lords to lure, pressure, manipulate, bribe or otherwise influence lawmakers, executives, or judges. No time will be wasted wrangling over funding issues. Lack of funding will no longer be a barrier to needed works. Taxation will become unnecessary.

The only voices there for politicians to hear, will be the authentic voices of the people themselves. These voices will often disagree among them, often vehemently. Public discourse will be much more focused on genuine issues and concerns. Discussion and debate will be as challenging as ever, full of give, take, and compromise. The age of "money talks" will end. Political and socioeconomic democracy will thrive hand in hand.

Some social democratic countries, such as Norway, Finland and some others may need little change. In any country, if any, where there is no socioeconomic modern feudal structure of power, wealth and control, only minor adjustments may be needed. Where such structures exist, but are less extreme than in laissez-faire market-driven societies, Transition will be needed but will require a much smaller effort with far fewer complications or conflicts, and with more pathways to effect changes from within existing political mechanisms.

Some countries, such as Vietnam and the People's Republic of China, are steeped in the rhetoric and cultural myths of communist ideals and may even retain constitutions originally based on democratic and communist principles. In practice, they are state-directed capitalist economies with sharp inequality and one-party rule, where the business elite and the members of government are as intertwined as were the Medieval European Church and royal families.

The myth of equality and a “classless society” in China, and the myth of freedom and “anybody can make it” in the United States, serve a similar purpose: to plant widespread, unquestioned belief in the justice and beneficence of the society. Americans, however, still have free elections, courts and a free press with which to push back.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

In such countries as China, Vietnam and North Korea, both the government and the socioeconomic power structure must be overthrown and replaced with the new paradigms. If there is a Constitution with strong humanistic, empowering, synergistic principles which has been long ignored or misinterpreted, along Marxist or other lines, then new government can be formed around its principles, which can be strengthened, clarified, expanded and widely published.

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Some changes will be needed, of course. Religious freedom will need to be specified. The concept of a “revolutionary vanguard” will need to be left behind. State as controller will become state as coordinator. Democratic rule, in one form or another, will need to be encoded if it isn’t already. Just as in “Western” countries, many laws will have to be rethought, rewritten, reinterpreted or stricken and replaced.

Tactics used to achieve both Transition and Revolution in such countries will still succeed best if they follow the same guiding principles as set out for the Transitions in countries such as the U.S. and Canada. Purges, blood baths, and reigns of terror will never lead to a free, democratic, thriving society peopled by free, empowered, fulfilled, symbiotic residents!

Some countries, such as Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Myanmar are pure dictatorships where little or no pretense is given of prioritizing the happiness, well-being, dignity, freedom or will of the people. Some do, and some don’t, have even primitive humanistic foundational ones. Social myths tend to be centered on nationalism and the absolute authority and power of leaders.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Such countries will need a complete overthrow of all political and socioeconomic power structures. There may be weak or no foundational documents, so new ones will need to be crafted and ratified, based on successful existing ones.

This kind of scenario is one of the two most tricky, perilous ones in terms of bringing both Transition and Revolution using purely nonviolent or minimally-violent tactics and strategies. Yet we must always make doing so one of the highest priorities and do the best we can under each circumstance.

Each such country will have to develop the details of its specific tactics, strategies, and methods. In the meantime Transitioned and social democratic countries can put pressure on such countries’ power structures via embargoes, refusing trade, trade agreements, or alliances with them, clearly spelling out the reasons. Their rulers will find themselves increasingly isolated on the world stage.

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Transitioned countries will not supply arms, invade or intervene in the internal workings of such countries as both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were fond of doing during the Cold War. We will, however, support aspiring Transitionaries in such countries in a variety of ways.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

We will airlift and smuggle in satellite phones, camcorders, miniature data storage, communication equipment and practical manuals on the skills needed for Transition. That will empower Transitionaries in such countries to

communicate and livestream events in their country to the whole world, regardless of their rulers' shutting down of their cellular networks, media, or Internet. We can further support Transitionaries in such countries by providing the supporting bandwidth, cloud storage and other needed infrastructure to ensure that these brave people are not silenced. We will also airlift and otherwise deliver basic resources such as food, clothing, and medicine if needed, without going through the power structure.

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If such situations become humanitarian crises, the U.N. and humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent and Doctors Without Borders can step in to mitigate disruption and protect civilians, while the international community isolates and pressures the dictatorship: refusing to recognize or cooperate with it, applying diplomatic pressure, and acting to prevent atrocities against the people. Once their Transition is complete, upon their request, all Transitioned countries will stand ready to recognize their new identity, form alliances and trade agreements, and render material as well as advisory assistance.

Through all of this, it is vital that we maintain our commitment to our principles of nonviolence, with force used only in self-defence against immediate physical assault, and then only the minimum necessary, and of compassion and honoring the dignity of every person.

The biggest challenge will probably be in countries suffering under theocratic dictatorships, for several reasons.

Among the core principles of the Transition and new paradigm are respect for, and honoring of, religious, cultural, and personal identity and expression. Yet when cultural or religious traditions or tenets thwart the empowerment, thriving, freedom, full realization, and well-being of any or all people in them, changes will have to be made, just as in countries where the socioeconomic system is the sticking-point.

Such changes will have to come from within, without negating or invalidating the entire religious or cultural context. As much as possible, Transitionaries within such countries will base such systemic changes on aspects of the same cultural or religious context, rather than drawing upon external or foreign sources. Practices such as ritual mutilation, enslavement, animal cruelty, "honor killings" and even nationalistic "ethnic cleansings", will all have to be stopped. Fortunately, every culture and religion includes teachings, principles, customs and practices that can be, and often are, used to justify just about everything and its counter-postulate. We will leverage all existing teachings and customs that support the principles of the Transition and new paradigm, to support altering practices and customs when necessary.

Religious persecution is not the failing of any one faith: followers of nearly every religion and ideology have both persecuted others and been persecuted themselves. Wherever it happens, the most effective challenge comes from within the tradition itself. For example, where religion is used in a Christian community to justify persecution of gay people or people of other faiths, such practices can be challenged on the basis of Jesus' teachings on non-violence and non-judgmentalism. Where Hindus and Muslims are set against each other, Hindus can be reminded that the Muslim they might harm could be the reincarnation of a dear family member or friend, and Muslims of the Quran's teaching that to kill one innocent person is like killing all of humanity. Such an approach will be much more successful than trying to invalidate the whole native context and saying that "we should be more like" some other culture.

We can take a good example from how the Allies treated the Japanese after World War II. The victorious allies largely respected the Japanese culture and people, even to the point of allowing the Emperor to retain his position, while making fundamental changes to democratize, rebuild and modernize the country in a way that its people would accept.

To invalidate or suppress any culture, ethnicity or religion is an act of brutality and inhumanity that's completely against the principles of the Transition, besides only serving to trigger covert resistance and backlash, benefiting no one.

Therefore, when approaching Transition where there are cultural or religious beliefs, practices or norms that harm the happiness, well-being, freedom, or thriving of any of its members, the challenge must be met with deep understanding of, and respect for, the overall culture and/or religion. Transitioned countries will send advisers to assist Transitionaries in not-yet-transitioned countries and advise them in planning and preparing their own Transitions. If you are such an adviser, please make sure to study and gain a deep understanding of your host's culture and religion. Strive to help your

local peers to identify aspects of their religion and culture that are in harmony with the principles of the Transition: universal empowerment, the dignity and freedom of all, peer-based rather than hierarchical social structures, and assist them in using those aspects to form the basis for abandoning harmful norms. Think of it as cultural Jiu-Jitsu.

Transition will have a different flavor in each country and culture. Our best results will come from neither blindly retaining, nor blindly discarding, all facets of our cultures, ethnicities, and religions. We must never impose one culture upon another, but learn from one another.

Core principles of the new paradigm includes respect for every person and culture, government and economics of, by and for the people, equity, peer-based rather than hierarchical social structures, distributed rather than centralized production facilities, universal access to all resources, symbiotic rather than conflictive interaction models, and thriving societies of thriving individuals. Our strength and success will flow from our unity in our diversity, and in our ability to implement Transition in adaptation to, and embodiment of, that diversity. Think of a composer adapting a classical piece to rock, country, jazz, and other genres.

Chapter 42: More Thoughts on the Transition to 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).

On Business

Under the current paradigm, "It's just business" is routinely used to justify and explain all manner of policies, practices, norms, and actions that harm employees, clients and customers, communities, whole countries, and the environment in order to maximize profits, market share, and stock prices, the holy cows and trinity of business. This concept is accepted as unassailable logic, though in fact it's an unexamined article of faith. Similarly, "It is written" has been used in theocracies to justify atrocities in the name of religion, and "I was following orders" has been used to justify countless atrocities under various dictatorships. Many times, those using those justifications actually believe these cultural myths, as they've been conditioned to.

We must therefore ask ourselves, if "business" is something that necessitates harming, abusing, oppressing, parasitizing, disempowering, and otherwise hurting people and the environment, then wouldn't we be better off without it? If we substitute "heroin" or "cocaine" for "business," it becomes much clearer.

– "Why did you rob and kill your victim?" – "Duh! I just needed heroin."

Both drug addiction, and addiction to power, privilege and wealth, are treatable conditions. Enabling any addiction is disastrous. Enshrining it in cultural mythology is suicidal.

Any sport or activity that routinely, when played as designed, resulted in death, injury and other harm to participants and spectators, would be shut down in short order, by popular demand. Such a socioeconomic paradigm should be treated no differently, especially since, unlike a sport or recreation, socioeconomic paradigms are inherently binding on all residents.

On strikes

Strikes have been deprived of much of their traditional effectiveness for a number of reasons, including:

1) Many labor Unions have gradually lost touch with their purpose and reason for being, taken on a life of their own aside from these, and become corrupt to the point of failing to protect the rights of their members. Some labor Unions have even allied with employers to suppress other unions. This has the added side-effect of alienating members and losing their confidence. 2) More and more large employers have found creative ways to side-step the effectiveness of unions. These include hiring employees at just under the number of weekly hours that would make them eligible for union membership, hiring people as "contractors" rather than employees in order to avoid respecting rights and benefits legally due to employees, actively interfering in efforts to unionize, and keeping hidden negative performance reviews on employees that can be used as justification for firing them, rather than laying them off. Lobbying by mammoth corporations has generated a plethora of "at-will employment" laws which give employers the ability to fire any employee at any time, for any reason, with our without cause. While it's illegal to fire someone due to race, creed, gender and other protected categories, proving such motivation is notoriously difficult for the broke, unemployed victim confronting the permanent legal army of a former corporate employer. 3) Lawmakers have proposed bills treating disruptive protest as "economic terrorism" (a 2016 Washington State bill, which did not pass), and more than a dozen states have made trespass or interference at "critical infrastructure" a felony (ICNL). In the event of a strike, employers publicly portray strikers as lazy hooligans, misfits, and malcontents and themselves (employers) as the benevolent guardians struggling to protect the public good, a spin that's increasingly dutifully repeated by the press lately. This results in declining public support for strikers or understanding of the real issues. 4) Traditional strikes are based on the assumption that the existing paradigm will continue, after Labor and Management hash out a contract that both are grudgingly willing to work with.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

The new strategy of the Transition and new paradigm, will be forceful but non-violent employee takeover of enterprises, neutralizing the current chain of command and replacing it with peer-based governance. Deposed managers and officers will be invited to remain as part of this peership. Current shareholders will, of course, lose their investments; but in the new paradigm, this will in no way compromise their survival, freedom, or ability to thrive or access resources.

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

On Corporations

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Corporations will, of course, cease to exist as entities at the time of Transition. The modern feudal lords in charge of them will likely resist the change. We expect them to try to sabotage their own enterprises rather than relinquish control. Therefore, on the day of Transition, we will need to quickly, forcefully, and as non-violently as absolutely possible occupy all corporate headquarters, facilities, records and other resources and gain immediate access. All records will be opened for public scrutiny.

When we encounter physical opposition by the feudal lords and their vassals whom we'll be deposing, we will probably have to fight them. We must do so with a strong ethic of seeking the minimal harm possible to all combatants, always respecting the humanity and dignity of ally and opponent alike, and immediately rendering aid to any injured as soon as the situation is secured.

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Where it is found that corporations and other businesses have engaged in criminal or harmful activity, such as price gouging, suppressing scientific knowledge harmful to their profits, bribery or blackmail of public officials, use of sweatshop labor or doing businesses with those who use sweatshop labor, interfering in other countries' internal affairs to further their own business interests, toxic dumping and pollution, exploitation of employees or customers, prioritizing profits and economic growth at the expense of human or environmental well-being, and other similar acts, then individuals responsible for such acts, wherever those acts were crimes under the law in force when they were committed, will be charged with the applicable crimes, tried by due process and, if guilty, experience the legal consequences. This includes instances of crimes against humanity. Guilty parties will no longer be protected by "corporate personhood," or by wealth or privilege, though they will, of course, have the same rights to due process as any accused person.

The jurisdictions of such trials will be appropriate to where and how the crime occurred. Crimes committed in other countries will be tried in those countries once domestic trials are complete and extradition is performed. Some crimes, where they fall within its jurisdiction, will lead to trial in the International Criminal Court. Evidence and proceedings will be kept prominently publicly visible. Trials will be conducted with dignity and equanimity – there will be no kangaroo trials, and all verdicts will be based on actual evidence. The world will see in clear detail the inner workings the newly-defunct corporations, and thus recognize, on a deeper level, why the paradigm that powered them was itself dysfunctional, toxic, and unsustainable. This whole set of proceedings will also show the world that the Transition and new paradigm are strongly rooted in reasonableness, humanity, compassion, honor, and equity.

The intention will be resolution and healing. The current paradigm has reinforced the behavior leading to such crimes. The new goal will be to make sure that no person is ever in a position in which such behaviors will be reinforced. Sentences will focus more on restitution and reconciliation, and less on punishment. The Norwegian prison system is a good model to study, with its well-established balance between quarantining people who are a potential threat to their fellows, and offering therapy and rehabilitation.

Inventions, innovations and technologies that have been withheld or suppressed to protect profits, will be made public and freely accessible. In Transitioned countries, currency will cease to exist or have any function.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Assets in offshore and other accounts currently used by the feudal lords and their corporations to evade paying taxes, will be seized and converted to resources needed for infrastructure, development, or to be added to currency reserved for use by citizens traveling abroad, and in the context of some trade arrangement with pre-Transitioned countries. If feudal lords want to retrieve currency from their domestic accounts, they will be able to do so, but it will have no use and no function other than sentimental attachment.

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.

On Family

In the current paradigm where we all must constantly come up with currency in order to hold off the relentless default denial of our right to occupy space, eat, drink, or access any resources, finances figure heavily in many people's choice of mates and family planning. Under these conditions, a tragic percentage or people choose a mate (or friends, for that matter) for their financial attributes, rather than due to love and compatibility. Some choose their mates almost exclusively based on fiancés.

Financial stresses are one of the biggest stressors involved in the breakup and sundering of domestic partnerships, friendships, and familial relationships. When each of us is putting in our best effort, yet it's still not enough, it's predictable that we may begin to resent each other and each feel that the other isn't pulling their weight. This keeps us further fragmented, divided, controlled, conquered, and playing our roles as serfs and peasants, squabbling among ourselves instead of joining together to focus on the source of the problem, the modern feudal socioeconomic paradigm, and act together to undo its capture of our lives, without compromise, and replace it with a more viable one that will empower all of us to thrive.

Post-Transition societies will be freed of all financial issues. Rights and access will be affirmed by default, rather than denied. All stresses stemming from financial issues will, of course, disappear. This doesn't guarantee that all partnerships and friendships will succeed, or that everybody will get along. We can, however, foresee that the overall longevity, success rate and quality of all human relationships will improve dramatically.

On Choreography and Logistics

To reach the maximum level of efficiency of coordination of need, production, and distribution, a centralized but distributed database and web forum will be developed, accessible to all. This will prevent over- or under-production or consumption.

Wherever practical, products will have embedded passive RFID chips. When they move from factory to warehouse, warehouse to distribution center, and from distribution center to consumer, interacting systems will be able to automatically track, coordinate, and learn to predict with increasing accuracy, the flow of goods and services. To respect people's privacy, these chips won't be linked to individuals. Targeted inventory levels will be adjusted according to heuristic algorithms interacting with human users.

The intention here is to facilitate mutual responsiveness between producers, distributors and consumers, not as a means of totalitarian control as seen under Soviet style communism and under corporate hierarchies. In this context, automation will enhance our efficiency and quality of life in every sector, with no harmful affects such as displacing people and, in so doing, depriving them of livelihoods.

On "commission work"

Commission work is another word for a form of disguised near-slavery. Another related term is "performance-based" pay structures. Like players in casinos, commission workers are kept motivated by the prospect of big payouts when (and if) they make sales, maintain high business volumes, or meet other metrics all translating into how much money

they make for their employer. No matter how much time and work you put in, if it doesn't yield a sale, you are basically working for free, or for sub-living or barely-living wages, in between successful sales. In some industries, failure to meet metrics can quickly lead to termination.

This setup creates an environment that strongly reinforces closing sales. This generates a hard-sell culture where customers are routinely pressured, misled, rushed and tricked into signing on the dotted line. It's the only way for such employees to survive.

Examples abound. At Wells Fargo bank, not long ago, unrealistic sales quotas led to widespread fraud, with accounts opened in clients' names without their knowledge or consent (Smith and Reiners, Duke FinReg Blog, 2017; Tayan, Stanford Closer Look Series, 2019). At many home-improvement and custom-closet companies, designers are paid by commission only, as employees of Closet World report (Indeed; Glassdoor): you drive to clients' homes, spend hours taking measurements, making drawings and calculating costs, and if the client doesn't sign, you have worked for free, no matter how much time you spent. Even if the client accepts the proposal and later cancels, your employer takes back what it paid you, a "charge-back". This is also common in the insurance industry. If a client buys a policy, then later cancels it, weeks or even months later, then your commission is charged back. Door-to-door selling can be worse still: in Massachusetts, twelve distributors of Kirby vacuum cleaners were cited for misclassifying their sellers as independent contractors and for minimum-wage and child-labor violations, after complaints from the salespeople themselves (WorkCompCentral); in Connecticut, recruits sued a Kirby distributor, saying they were promised pay and then told they were independent contractors with no guaranteed wage (New Haven Independent). I know this from the inside. I once answered an ad offering "$750 a week" for cleaning carpets. It turned out to be a recruiting meeting for Kirby. The $750 came only if you met sales quotas that meant visiting three or four prospects a day, six or seven days a week, across Southern California, with the newest recruits getting whatever leads the veterans left behind. After the driving, the gas and the hours, the real pay would have been below minimum wage. When my car broke down, my trainer threatened to sue me if I didn't return the demonstration kit immediately.

Another form of commission work is the plethora of multi-level and network marketing companies. You are lured in with the prospect of being your own boss of your own business with an impressive-sounding title. You hear true testimonials of some of the very few people who make a good living at the business. You are paid only when you sell products and/or recruit more people into the business. Many have minimum sustained business volume requirements. In order to continue being paid, you must continually make more sales and recruit more people. Here again, if a recruit or client drops out, expect a charge-back. You may also be paid when people whom you signed up make sales or recruit. In fact, however, most participants earn little or nothing: in one national survey, nearly half lost money and about a quarter only broke even (AARP Foundation, 2018).

Valets and restaurant servers are other examples of another kind of commission work, especially in the United States. Such jobs usually pay, and are legally allowed to pay, less than the minimum wage. These employees are expected to supplement their wages with tips. In Oklahoma, some of these employees are allowed to be paid two dollars an hour. Restaurants frequently commandeer tips and either keep them, or distribute them as they see fit.

Incidentally, in Oklahoma, some students, farm and ranch hands, railroad workers and others are also allowed to be paid two dollars an hour, in roles where tips aren't in the landscape.

In the new post-Transition paradigm, these scenarios of strongly-reinforced exploitation will completely disappear. Such schemes will literally become impossible.

A Better Way of Live, Versus Payback and Revenge

During and after the Transition, we must absolutely never focus our energies on vilifying, brutalizing, or extracting revenge on the modern feudal lords at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy. It is crucial that we focus on the paradigm and the systems it generates, on the game rather than on the players. As much as it may feel and look otherwise, this is not an 'us-versus-them' situation. Feudal lord, vassal, artisan and peasant alike, we are all in our roles due to the inevitable functioning of the paradigm in which we live, work and operate. Change the paradigm, and the dynamics will fundamentally change.

The new paradigm is intended to give rise to a socioeconomic environment where each and every one of us can thrive in dignity and make our best contribution to our communities while fulfilling ourselves as unique individuals. If we are to

avoid a dark age that could last for thousands of years and the possible extinction of most life on earth, we must Transition soon, and we must make certain that it does not come in a bloodbath or reign of terror. If it does, then all of our efforts will end tragically in vain before it gets started.

On Taxation

Under the current paradigm, governments are as controlled and limited by currency as are private citizens. Lack of funds has killed countless government works and undertakings that would have dramatically benefited everybody. Governments are forced to prey financially upon their already struggling citizens.

The new paradigm will sweep this dysfunction away like a bad dream. Where the will and the means exist, there'll be nothing stopping beneficial projects from happening. The only limitations will be real-world ones, such as safety, availability of resources including workforce, and environmental impact. Such projects will not take anything away from any of us who today are called 'taxpayers.'

On Initialization

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Strategically, we'll have to decide on a day to initiate the Transition, which will have to be communicated widely among Transitionaries both in the affected country and globally. Choice of date will ideally come through a large-scale consensus process, mediated over the Internet and other communications media, while hidden as much as possible from government and the feudal lords. It will be most successful if we act all at once.

At around mid-day on Transition day, we'll release the Declaration, which will clarify what's going on to those who don't know and are feeling anxious and confused, and reassure any who are fearful.

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

On the Perceptions of Life, Work and How they Fit Together

Under the conditions of the current paradigm, our lives and perceptions have become destructively, artificially fragmented and alienated in ways that negate and stunt our healthy, natural engagement with the processes of living, with each other, with our communities, and with ourselves. Work becomes an odious burden that we're forced to bear in order to ransom our lives every month, often stressing and draining us physically, mentally and emotionally, leaving us little time and energy left over. This triggers a motivation to avoid or reduce work as much as possible, in order to have time and energy for the things that have meaning to us. We're only too conscious that, with few exceptions, employers only care about how much we produce in financial terms for them. Our well-being and happiness doesn't enter into employers' thinking, beyond what the law may mandate. Our physical survival is set at odds with our mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being under this colossally dysfunctional paradigm.

This perceptual division of human activities into obligatory 'work' and desirable 'play' is arbitrary, capricious, and damaging, without contributing anything positive to the human experience. Children are eager to engage in 'adult' activities, from cooking, to chopping wood, to driving, to going to a job. When they get the chance, they enjoy doing them. The dynamics of the modern feudal paradigm lead to us 'learning' the work-play dichotomy, usually starting in adolescence.

In contrast, in many hunter-gatherer and other societies very different from the dominant paradigm, hunters don't experience hunting as a burden to bear; nor do weavers, fishers, craftspeople, herbalists, or potters. They experience pride of workmanship, a sense of accomplishment, and are strengthened by a sense of belonging to a community whose members work together to support each other and the community. Taking on adult responsibilities is a badge of honor and an affirmation of a young person's worth. It is a positive, empowering experience.

This is strong empirical evidence that the modern feudal socioeconomic paradigm is not inherent in human nature or an inevitable human condition or predisposition. We have a much wider palette of possibilities, from which we can choose, rather than perpetuating what we inherited out of inertia.

How the work-play distinction arises is a bit complex. One of the biggest factors is that, in adult life, the norm is that we come to associate 'work' with being driven, stressed, disempowered, devalued, and exploited while doing tasks that have little or no meaning, interest or enjoyment for us. Towering in the background is awareness of the "wolf at the door," ready to deny our lives if we fail to make the rent or pay the bills. In a well-intentioned effort to prepare their adolescent children to survive in this environment, many parents insist that they do chores, framing it as an obligation and a way of defending their worth against an implied default negation, rather than framing it as a greater engagement in life, an empowerment, a symbiotic act in a supportive organic whole. Punitive religious and cultural concepts of original sin, and the attitudes that arise from them, also contribute to this destructive mental construct.

So how do we organize and form norms for the interactions, activities and processes of our societies and communities, including those currently defined as 'work'? That is entirely up to us. If we observe the results of human experience under monarchies, dictatorships, Medieval and modern socioeconomic feudalism, and other strongly hierarchical paradigms, it becomes clear that they are immensely harmful. They reinforce our most destructive potentials and suppress our most constructive ones. They just plain don't work. Trying to keep trying to make them work is one definition of insanity.

In the new paradigm, the perceived distinction of 'work' and 'play' will fade to insignificance, as we each become empowered to pursue our greatest passions and talents, and in the process, making our best contribution to our communities. Work will no longer be experienced as a burden imposed by the need to appease the wolf at the door. Even work that no one wants to do, will be shared among everybody who's able, and will deepen the shared social bond and connection as members of a profoundly social species.

On the Evolution of Systems

Our transition from hunter-gatherers to modern technological societies has mostly been slow and haphazard. Major innovations and discoveries that positively and negatively revolutionized human existence have come about spontaneously and randomly.

Once our forebears realized the power of our observational and analytical abilities, and of our ability to widely share information as a social species, our rate of innovation and change accelerated exponentially. We've gotten to a point where our rate of change and innovation has begun to exceed our ability to adapt to the technological and lifestyle changes that we ourselves have brought about.

We've mastered our ability to problem-solve and innovate in the physical world. We have the same ability with respect to social systems and as individuals, which we have not fully grasped to nearly the same degree. Some innovations have been implemented, such as communism, democracy, social democracy, capitalism, and theocracy among others.

For the most part, however, we tend to treat our social and cultural systems as though they were physical realities beyond our control. In that regard, our awareness is comparable how our Bronze Age ancestors viewed the physical environment. It is time for that to change. We have thousands of years of experience and observations from thousands of different social models and paradigms. We will only begin to thrive when we sift through that experience to identify which paradigms work and which don't, which spawn the most thriving human beings and communities, and which don't. Based on that understanding, we are fully capable of designing and implementing social paradigms designed to maximize individual and community well-being, thriving, safety, empowerment, fulfillment, peace, and sustainability, just as we would design a better airframe based on growing aeronautical data. It is imperative that we do so as quickly as possible, since the current dysfunctional paradigms are destroying us, putting us in a position where we must metaphorically devour each other in order to survive. For a species whose core survival advantage is our cohesive social nature, such a paradigm is species-suicidal.

Though the new paradigm resembles socialism in some ways, it also differs from it in important ways. In socialism, the State oversees the distribution and deployment of resources, in order to ensure equitable access. In the new paradigms, most resources will be owned and controlled by the people or social entities using them, with clear legal limits placed on how much one party can control, and guaranteeing access for all. Many resources will be held in common, similarly to the concept of the "commons." The role of government will be more to prevent abuses and excesses by any party, and to facilitate the flow of information and coordinate efforts among innovators, producers, distributors and consumers, all of whom will be treated as the same human beings playing different roles, to ensure maximum efficiency, well-being and

sustainability. Some resources, those that require large-scale facilities and operations, such as national defense, space exploration, some medical research, high-energy physics research, infrastructure, and national parks will be administered by government, under conditions of strict transparency and accountability to the population. Government will have a role similar to an orchestra conductor, and sometimes a referee, but not ruler over the people.

On Compulsive, Obsessive Growth

Under the current modern feudalistic socioeconomic paradigm, businesses must be profitable and have the highest possible stock price and market share in order to survive; but that isn't enough. Profits, stock price and market share must, also grow, and the rate of growth must accelerate. This inevitably gives rise to the massively destructive and dysfunctional self-devouring cycle, which is utterly unsustainable.

To see this clearly, try a thought experiment. Imagine an industrial process that starts out using a pint of water to produce an ounce of product and a pint of waste, per day. The product is one that gets used up every day, like a beverage. The manufacturer must keep growing their profits, which means increasing production and making products with short lifespans, forcing frequent replacement. Six months after going into production, the company is using a gallon of water to produce a pound of product and a gallon of waste, every day. If the eight billion people in the world bought a gallon each, we would see eight billion gallons of water used every day to produce eight billion pounds of product and several billion gallons of waste. The current paradigm compels open-ended growth and expansion for a business to survive. It is easy to see that such a situation would sooner or later exhaust the world's water supply and overwhelm us with waste.

This is literally what is happening in just about ever sector, regionally and globally. If we don't fully phase out this paradigm and the systems it engenders, and Transition to a sustainable, life-affirming paradigm, as quickly as possible, then the current modern feudalism will ultimately break down anyway, due to the impossibility of sustaining endless growth and expansion. In that case, instead of a Transition to a successful paradigm, there would be a descent into chaos, mass starvation and privation, the rise of local warlords, and a brutal, bleak dystopian landscape. We're looking at a civilization-threatening catastrophe if we continue using the current paradigm.

The Danger of "It Can't Happen Here" Thinking

In a country that has some degree of freedom, prosperity and democracy, it's natural and common to believe that dictatorship, totalitarianism, normalized brutality, genocide, ecological collapse, and other similar catastrophies "can't happen here." Such a mindset is as dangerous as watching TV while driving, because you're sure you know the road like the back of your hand. Such atrocities aren't unique to any one country, people, time-period, religion or political party. They represent the escalation and enshrinement of the most destructive potentials on the spectrum of human motives and behaviors. They aren't who we are, but they are there on the dark side of our palette of potentials. Our best defense is to be highly aware of that potential, aware of how to recognize the signs and symptoms in one's self and others, and to remain vigilant. If or when such patterns appear, we must recognize it and de-escalate it before it ever has a chance to metastasize and become endemic and institutionalized.

It's just as dangerous to slip into an "It can't happen here" mindset with respect to the possibility of Transitioning to the new paradigm that will embody and reinforce our most positive potentials

In countries culturally and socioeconomically shaped by the dominant modern feudalism, such as but not limited to the United States, a majority of people are aware that their society is broken. Yet when you point out them the benefits of things that work well in other countries, such as universal healthcare or no-cost higher education, many people vehemently say: "That could never work or happen here!" We see similar reactions to any description of a peer-based, non-hierarchical society with no need for currency. Some of this reaction is due to residual echoes of Cold War propaganda, and some of it is due to an inability to think outside of one's familiar cultural context.

This response is akin to a sick person who declines treatment because "That won't work for me" or a person in an abusive relationship who stays because they believe they couldn't survive on their own, a pattern psychologists call trauma bonding. It is like a person who wants to be a dancer but believes that they can't learn to dance, and so never makes the attempt. This kind of "it can't happen here" mindset is utterly destructive in this context, as it curtails even trying. In order to counter this phenomenon, we will need to learn from all that is known about trauma bonding, system justification and learned helplessness, and adapt that knowledge to heal ourselves and each other, and to offer support

to anybody held back by “It can’t happen here” mindsets who wants it. The bad news is that worst-case scenarios can happen anywhere. The good news is that best-case scenarios can also happen anywhere. In each moment, the choice is ours.

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) We are capable of a wide variety of social structures. Millennia of experience has shown that hierarchical socioeconomic structures always become dysfunctional, oppressive, and incompatible with human happiness and well-being, reinforcing our most destructive traits while suppressing our constructive ones. Abuse of power is amplified and institutionalized. Recent research has shown that being in a position of power inhibits compassion and empathy to a measurable degree, and that even a small or momentary sense of power has this effect. Therefore it's clear that we must abandon hierarchical social systems in favor of peer-based, cooperative, symbiotic ones.

Yes, we are capable of living in cooperation and symbiosis. Each of us has unique contributions to make to our community. Given our strongly social nature, it is reasonable and logical to postulate that our diversity evolved, or was created, to give us the optimal range of abilities and personality types needed to maximize our ability to survive and thrive, just as the organs and cells in an organism's body work symbiotically to sustain themselves, each other, and the being whom they comprise.

2) When you hear the terms "Free enterprise" and "Private Enterprise" they probably call up connotations of mom-and-pop shops and the freedom of individuals to live their lives and pursue their livelihoods freely. Sadly, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the terms in practice refer to the dominance, interests and affairs of the modern feudal lords and their corporations.

The epitome of this reality is embodied in the concept of "corporate personhood," that pernicious legal fiction that grants corporations the same rights as human beings in many legal settings. Thus, "private enterprise" in practice means the enforcement of the "rights" and will of employers, especially corporations, over the rights of employees, clients, small businesses, and any real human person who wishes to live outside the socioeconomic system. It also shields individuals within corporations from consequences if they cause harm.

The misperceptions inherent in the cultural myths for these phrases, the belief that they express individual rights and empowerment, serve to reinforce a population to be docile and compliant. We see this clearly in the United States, with the trend of recent years to redefine "religious liberty" to mean the "right" of those in positions of power and control, such as employers, lenders, landlords, and service providers (including healthcare providers) to deny service to, fire, refuse, exclude, and otherwise discriminate against and harass any individual who has any trait that the person in the power position claims is against their religion. Yet there is no parallel trend of laws and interpretations upholding and protecting the religious liberty and rights of the individual with respect to the power-position entity. When push comes to shove, the feudal lords are allowed to enforce and inflict their views and agendas on us serfs and peasants, in almost every case. Corporations have usurped and co-opted the inalienable rights of human beings, leaving us increasingly under their thumbs.

Constitutional and other legal protections for human beings are, through legal sophistry, wrested from us, redefined, and repurposed to enforce and enshrine the power and "rights" of the modern feudal lords and their corporations. We are disempowered in the process. It also sidesteps separation of church and state, since corporations aren't government and in their "private" domain are given free reign to impose their agendas with little to no likelihood of legal consequences.

The current "religious liberty" trend is in reality a face put on a move to further consolidate power and control into the hands of the modern feudal lords and their vassals while stripping us of our rights and protections. This power consolidation is disguised under patriotic and religious rhetoric and the liberal use of symbols and terms that trigger strong conditioned positive, sympathetic visceral responses in many people.

The use of "religious freedom" or "religious liberty" is especially effective at gaining support; after all, who would oppose religious liberty? It's very important to thoroughly research and question any such terminology on the lips or pens of legislators. When you hear "Religious freedom," "religious liberty," "pro-life," "national security," "defending Western

civilization," "family values," "at-will employment" or any similar kinds of phrases, please dig deeply and identify their real intentions and effects. Many people hold the values behind these words sincerely, which is exactly what makes them such effective cover.

Such terms are used by highly skilled propagandists to disguise the real intentions and effects of draconian legislation by linking them to relatable and sympathetic-sounding buzzwords. This is nothing new. Dictators throughout history have done the same. It little differs from the "doublespeak" from the book 1984 where people are brainwashed to believe that "war is peace" and other contradictions. As initiators of the Transition, we will need to resist the appeal of such humanistic, patriotic sounding terms and look at what lies behind them in any particular context and openly refer to them by accurately descriptive terms.

3) Repeatedly repeating the same actions while expecting a different result is one popular definition of insanity. Yet we humans have a side of our nature that resists change, that clings to the familiar, even if it harms us.

The current dominant socioeconomic feudalistic paradigm has shown itself countless times to be inimical to widespread human happiness, harmony, empowerment, and thriving. Many attempts have been made to tweak it so that it promotes human happiness and well-being. All of them fail sooner or later, because the paradigm, by its core operating principles, cannot be made to promote anything but a modern feudal socioeconomic structure. That won't change, any more than a fish can be adapted to live on land. It is dangerous to keep trying. The only solution is to completely replace the current paradigm and replace it with one designed to promote and reinforce thriving, harmonious, symbiotic, dynamic societies of empowered, free, fully realized, and highly engaged members.

4) Under the current dominant paradigm, fewer and fewer people gain control over time over more and more resources. This miniscule segment of the population comes to largely control land, food, water, healthcare, and more and to determine how much we're paid and how much we're charged for goods and services.

The modern feudal lords exert more power and control than government in many key areas, are not answerable in any way to the people, and increasingly control and influence the people in government, even when government is constituted to be responsible to the people.

Greed and arbitrary exercise of power are the norm in those strata, accepted as reasonable. The socioeconomic paradigm strongly reinforces this behavior, and does nothing at all to limit or discourage it.

This behavior reaches staggering extremes. Examples abound. For example, pharmaceutical companies have been observed openly cornering the rights to long-existing medications that they didn't develop, and then raising the price thousands of percent, putting them out of reach of most people. Some offending CEO's show no remorse when interviewed, expressing their belief that their moral duty is to provide maximum profits and value to their (wealthy) shareholders, and nothing beyond that. Providing effective medication, easily available, to those who need it, does not come into the equation. These people decide which medicines to develop, and which not, based on profitability, not benefit to human beings. Their decisions cause untold, avoidable harm, and yet they aren't charged with any crimes, because the paradigm strongly reinforces such behaviors. One only has to read the writings of Milton Friedman to appreciate how deeply this doctrine is ingrained in the socioeconomic canon.

Massive corporations routinely slow production to raise prices as high as the market will bear. This tiny group of modern feudal lords control vast and vital resources as their "private property," that impact every aspect of society. This gives them tremendous leverage and influence over people in government. The feudal lords can threaten to cut production, or to flood the market, or to move their operations overseas, putting politicians in a position such that they have to "play ball" in order to prevent massive harm to the public good. The feudal lords are also able to bribe, blackmail and manipulate those in government. Thus they exert far more influence over the functioning of government, than the people, the electorate to whom those in government are officially and theoretically responsible.

Those at the top of the socioeconomic pyramid have the power to blackmail both the government and the people, by causing outages, shortages, and effectively blocking any measures taken by government that displease them. The feudal lords and their corporations also make massive contributions to the campaigns of politicians, and pay lobbyists to manipulate and influence lawmakers to support their agendas.

In societies where one's rights, freedoms, access, options, quality of life, and the respect one is given are almost entirely determined by one's place on the socioeconomic pyramid, the modern feudal lords of the corporatocracy often don't even need to resort to blackmail, bribery or manipulation. Their very position in the hierarchy causes most politicians to defer to them by default, putting their interests over those of the people.

This socioeconomic paradigm cannot help but give rise to some version of a modern feudal corporatocracy, where a handful of modern feudal lords rule with an iron hand over the rest of us, in direct contradiction of the Constitutionally established government of, by and for the people. Even the most carefully defined democratic government will inevitably become subsumed to the feudal lords and their corporations, if it coexists with this socioeconomic paradigm. Therefore, this socioeconomic paradigm is functionally and operationally incompatible with, at cross-purposes with, and inimical to any kind of free and thriving society of thriving individuals with government of, by and for the people. 5) Under the current modern feudalistic paradigm, high stress, anxiety, anger and even rage are chronic and rampant. Tragically, we tend to look for someone to blame, go after, punish or avenge ourselves upon.

For generations, the modern feudal lords have finely honed and perfected their skills at advertising, marketing, and other forms of propaganda to reliably manipulate us to serve their agendas. That's why people gather at stores in the middle of the night to score this year's hot item that's (predictably) in short supply. That's why we feel pulled to buy things that we'd never, on our own, feel the need to have.

These same manipulative skills are used by the modern feudal lords to lead us to focus our pent-up anxiety and anger upon one another, fanning and magnifying existing fires of ethnic, religious, national, generational and other inter-group fear, resentment, blame, and destructive competition. We are encouraged and led to see ourselves as opposed groups with a strong, irrational "us vs them" mentality, where "they" are to blame for our struggles and injustices. Thus we are kept divided and controlled. It doesn't take much for violence to erupt. We're kept dependent on currency to access all of our needs. Currency is kept scarce, with not enough to go around. It's easy to keep stirring the pot so we fight each other rather than focus on the paradigm that is behind the inequities in order to decisively change it forever for the better, which would deprive the modern feudal lords of the power, privilege, opulence and control to which many of them are, in effect, addicted. Like anyone caught in an addiction, they react reflexively to any threat to it.

Thus divided, we remain disempowered, controlled, and compliant to supporting the modern feudal power structure. It's an age-old strategy used by despots and dictators since ancient times. Under oppressive conditions, people will feel anger, fear and resentment. The feudal lords channel those emotions to set us against each other. Sometimes there is an out-group upon whom most of society is focused. Sometimes it takes the form of mutual antagonism between various groups. It's a great way to keep us from realizing that responsibility for our oppression rests in the socioeconomic paradigm under which we're operating. This strategy has worked well for despots as far back as we have historical records.

We who intend and plan to create a truly universally empowering society where every one of us can thrive, and where the benefit of one becomes the benefit of their fellows, must consciously resist all temptation to blame or resent one another for our plight. We must put aside mutual resentments, commit and act in concert to nonviolently but decisively end the oligarchic capture of our lives by the modern feudal socioeconomic power structure, through democratic law and without compromise, and supplant that structure with a new, peer-based, symbiotic paradigm that will enable each and every one of us to be empowered, to thrive, to live up to our fullest potential, and to reach our greatest fulfillment while making our greatest contribution, and work together with mutual respect to build a society where human dignity, empowerment, thriving, harmony, and freedom are the norm.

Let us always remind ourselves and each other, that those who are like us and those different from us are all our peers and fellows, all potential allies and comrades in a worthy undertaking, all worthy of respect, dignity, quality of life, access to resources, and more. When you look at the person ahead of you in line at the grocery store or sitting next to you at a sporting event, learn to think of them as a potential friend, ally, and benefactor, no matter how they look, speak, worship or dress. That's the only way that we'll be able to change the socieconomic world we live in so that we can all thrive in mutual benefit, in peace. As long as we're struggling against each other instead of taking control of the paradigm to change it, we are freely enabling the power of the modern feudal lords and enforcing our own disempowerment.

5) The modern feudal socioeconomic paradigm under which we live is structured so that, regardless of how hard we work and apply ourselves, only a small percentage of us can ever "make it." Yet we keep "playing the game," dutifully playing our assigned role as compliant, hardworking serfs or peasants. We've been steeped in the cultural myth and propaganda that "anybody" can "make it" if they work long, hard and diligently enough. This myth is treated as though it were in the same category as gravitation, electromagnetism, and the speed of light, even though it is demonstrably untrue and applies to a human-created construct that only continues to function for as long as people consent and cooperate to keep it going.

We are programmed to believe that if we just work harder and longer, we'll achieve the ability to be confident that we can easily constantly ransom our existence without stress or worry about insufficiency. This is what's called "financial freedom."

As mentioned before, this myth bears little meaningful relationship to reality. The psychological mechanisms that keep us playing the "game" are identical to those that keep some gamblers playing in casinos while losing. In both cases, there are a few dramatic examples of people who "made it big" playing craps, roulette, or the loyal-hardworking-employee game. The actual likelihood of any one person "making it big" in either context is vanishingly small. In the mainstream socioeconomic structure, there simply isn't room that high up on the wealth-and-power pyramid for more than a very few to make it. In practice, the likelihood of achieving "financial independence" by being a loyal, hardworking employee is, in practice, miniscule. Yet belief in this myth may cause some to resist the Transition due to believing they'll "make it" if they just keep playing long enough.

Alongside this cultural myth are other myths that interact with this one to keep people compliant. One such pernicious misconception is the carry-over Cold War myth that modern feudalism equals democracy and freedom, and that therefore anything that isn't modern feudalism is Communism or dictatorship and tyranny of one kind or another. Because this began as propaganda, very few people are aware or knowledgeable of what the concepts of Communism, Socialism, Democracy, Capitalism, and theocracy actually mean. People often react out of conditioned responses without questioning or understanding the assumptions behind their actions and decisions.

Realistically, the dominant socioeconomic paradigm creates, reinforces, and amplifies wolves in sheep's clothing. As an analogy, in The Wizard of Oz, once Dorothy knows the truth, she only needs to click her heels together to return home.

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In our case, once we know the truth, we can free ourselves by simply changing the way the "game" is played from the bottom up, which involves matter-of-factly ignoring the socioeconomic chain of command (in every context) and eliminating all forms of currency from all forms of transactions. We will need to be determined and committed, and be prepared to resist by all necessary means, any attempt to intimidate, coerce, seduce, or trick us into returning to the modern feudal system.

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

We grew up soaked in the socioeconomic myths and propaganda. We must be constantly diligent inside ourselves and amongst us, to reverse the effects of those beliefs, to teach ourselves to consciously recognize, ignore, and tune out the myths that have kept us compliant and complicit in our own enslavement and supporting the socioeconomic pyramid on our backs for many generations.

Self-awareness is vital. Changing any habit is a challenge. Many people in abusive relationships choose to remain in them, both from fear of the unknown, fear of the abuser, and a sense in futility. The Biblical story of the ancient Israelis' liberation from Egyptian slavery includes a passage where they seriously consider going back, rather than face challenges of the unknown. In our case, as with these other cases, our best prospect is to stay the course, to be undeterred and committed to advance into the new paradigm, no matter how daunting it may seem.

The former feudal lords will certainly try to seduce and cajole us back into compliance with their dominance, by playing upon every human vulnerability within us. We must be ready to recognize, identify, and immunize ourselves against all such appeals from within, and answer those from without openly, with facts.

7) Some of us have been led and programmed to believe that any departure from the current dominant modern feudalistic socioeconomic paradigm will bring privation, oppression, dehumanization, and misery. The reality is just the opposite.

This comes from Cold War propaganda, reinforced by horror stories from so-called "communist" countries whose implementations were deeply distorted, just as is the implementation of "democracy" alongside modern feudalism in other countries. Many people react with horror at images of bleak East German cities or the Cambodian killing fields; yet do not react similarly to images of equally bleak U.S. cityscapes or scenes of murdered and tortured victims of the Pinochet regime in Chile, which seized power in 1973 after a deliberate, well-funded U.S. campaign to bring down Chile's elected government, and which the CIA then actively supported, even paying the head of its secret police, to protect the interests of powerful corporations (National Security Archive; CIA, 2000). Atrocities are atrocities, regardless of who commits them upon whom, in the name of what.

In fact, many "communist" countries' interpretations formed starkly class-stratified societies in sharp contrast to the classless societies envisioned by Marx and Engels. Those countries were just as broken as the class-stratified "Western" countries, arriving from a different starting point. In the People's Republic of China, that cognitive dissonance is so extreme that their behavior is starkly similar to that of the United States economically, while their rhetoric pretends the opposite.

In fact, only a fundamentally synergistic, symbiotic, peer-based, egalitarian socioeconomic paradigm can be expected to generate a society of universal thriving, empowerment, quality of life, freedom, peace, and human dignity. Both Eastern Soviet-style communism and Western U.S. style socioeconomic feudalism have repeatedly and consistently shown themselves to generate a predatory society in which all prey upon all and a tiny minority engorges itself upon the lifeblood of everybody else.

Like opiates and stimulants, the dominant modern feudalism offers the illusion of bliss and prosperity, a few brief highs followed by a losing battle to just stave off feeling sick. Just as the life of a person with an addiction comes to be dominated by getting the next fix, our lives under modern feudalism are dominated by getting the next fix of currency to ransom our existence against the unrelenting default denial. Unlike a person with a drug addiction, whose condition is recognized as treatable, we modern serfs and peasants are forced by the very paradigm under which we are born, to live like people caught in a drug addiction, in thrall to the drug of currency with no option of rehabilitation, unless we boldly and unyieldingly choose to non-violently bring about a change, to refuse, together and by choice, to use the drug of currency in any capacity. Think of the Indian Salt March or the Montgomery bus boycott, in a different way. When we utterly discard currency in all forms, it can no longer be used by some to control others' access to resources.

Real economics of, by and for the people, coupled with government of, by and for the people, will usher in a new, unprecedented era of universal thriving, prosperity, well-being, empowerment, peace, fulfillment, and freedom exceeding anything we've ever seen, a Renaissance to dwarf all prior Renaissances. To get there, we must identify our illusions and become utterly impervious to them.

Chapter 44: Topics for Research and Exploration

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) The new paradigm will be symbiotic and peer-based. Hierarchical social structures will be discontinued. Yet we need to avoid absolutism. It would be a good idea to do research to learn, if possible, which people are most likely to become abusive and despotic in positions of power, and which are highly resistant to such responses. While we know that being in a position of power inhibits compassion and empathy to a measurable degree, even when the power is small or momentary, the effect probably varies among individuals. We also will want to identify who is vulnerable to becoming submissive in a hierarchy. Identifying predictors, if they exist, would allow us to develop training and support for those who are overly attached to being in dominant or subordinate roles in a hierarchy.

We humans are, of course, complex and dynamic. We are not deterministically predictable automatons. Yet there may be a combination of factors that may predispose some to seek and abuse power, and others to seek to be led by someone in power. If such factors can be identified, it will be most beneficial, though we most emphatically do not want to catalog and categorize people in an attempt to dictate or limit their options!

If, in spite of the new deeply peer-based nature of the new paradigm, circumstances arise that necessitate a temporary hierarchical social structure to deal with them, then we would naturally want to staff them with people who are the most highly resistant to domineering or submissive responses.

In the unlikely event that need arises for hierarchies at all, it will be minimal, limited in scope, and temporary. In such cases, such hierarchies must be clearly defined as to very specific purpose, scope, and temporary duration, and never allowed to take on a life of their own. As soon as their purpose has been accomplished, they will be disbanded immediately. Such temporary hierarchies will only be formed if, after careful consideration of all options, they are found to be the best solution for the greatest good.

Other strategies may also further minimize the risk of authoritarian degeneration of any such hierarchies. They should be as small as practically possible. In such social structures, every involved person will be trained to fulfill every role in the hierarchy; roles will rotate or reshuffle frequently enough that the inhibition of empathy that power brings can ease before it takes hold, and emergent dysfunctional personality traits do not become entrenched.

Another important measure will be to make it clear that any member of such a hierarchy will be free to leave at any point with no negative repercussions. There will be no coercive or punitive mechanism of enforcement within the hierarchy. If authoritarian abuse occurs, then roles will immediately be reshuffled, with no penalizing of any parties. There will be no system of status, perks, privileges, immunities or lack thereof associated with any level of the temporary hierarchy.

2) We must accept that we are unlikely to ever achieve perfection. It is problematic or impossible to even define it, much less to attain it.

Our guiding principles must be to constantly work towards greater and greater universal empowerment, well-being, thriving, and symbiosis. At the same time, we must be wary of absolutism. The noblest, best-intentioned ideologies and principles become oppressive when applied and interpreted blindly, insensitively, mechanistically, inflexibly.

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.

For example, individualism is positive and beneficial when it supports and promotes us to be authentically empowered, expressive, and to make our best contribution to the world. It is destructive and harmful when it pits us against each other, isolates us as islands in an abrasive social ocean, and makes it hard for us to form trusting, symbiotic, caring relationships and support systems and act in concert to any large degree.

Similarly, strong teamwork is a positive thing and fundamental to our humanity. Yet when taken to extremes, in any culture, it suppresses individual empowerment, initiative, and expression and becomes oppressive.

The principle of equality is fundamental to our new paradigm; yet in more than one context, it has been interpreted and implemented in a way that demands absolute conformity and expects people to try to become identical. It becomes oppressive and negates its own purpose.

Any principle, even the most compassionate and loving one, becomes oppressive and harmful if interpreted and applied insensitively, inflexibly, or brutally without common-sense, without accommodation to the wide variation between people, communities and circumstances. The moment any concept or principle is treated as being above people's happiness, well-being and quality of life, it is being mis-applied to the detriment of the people.

We will most likely not see a lot of this kind of issue in the new paradigm, due to its very operating principles; but if we do encounter it, our response is crucial. In such cases, we will need to re-examine and reformulate our implementation of the principle as needed, and not abandon the principle itself, unless the principle itself is determined to be erroneous, in which its replacement must be formulated with the goal of maximizing human happiness, fulfillment, empowerment, peace, harmony and well-being as well as environmental sustainability.

3) Compared with some of the other issues mentioned, this one may seem insignificant, yet it is an important aspect of the mindset that we develop going forward. Many movements tend to form their own jargon. When there are no existing words to describe important concepts or phenomena, new terms are needed. It's all to common, however, for unnecessary jargon to unconsciously emerge that isn't really needed, except to identify the speaker as a member of that group. When this happens, it is often accompanied by a trend towards rigid, automatic mannerisms and thinking, and groupthink. This happens in many cults and autocratic movements. It becomes part of a mindset that divides people into us and other that goes against every fiber of the Transition and the new paradigm. A form of arrogance can arise in the process.

Such gratuitous jargon is also alienating to many people. Whenever there is an existing term that already expresses something, then use it. If there are multiple terms that apply, then choose carefully, to avoid triggering conditioned responses in listeners. New terms must only be coined when truly needed, and be well thought-out. We will be much more successful in every way, if we internalize this concept.

4) As already stated, there are a plethora of unknown, undeveloped inventions, discoveries and innovations languishing in patent offices, corporate files, and the basements of undiscovered inventors that could be of tremendous benefit to us all. These treasures span every field, from medicine, to electronics, to psychology, to energy generation and more.

All, or nearly all, of the reasons why these gems are untapped, can be traced back to the operating principles of the modern feudal socioeconomic paradigm. Some never saw the light of day because their inventors were too poor, and lacked business and marketing skills or connections to bring them to market. Even if such an inventor got the product to market, they couldn't compete with the vastly greater resources of the producers of established products.

Some innovations were deliberately suppressed by corporations who perceived them as a threat to their profits, stock prices and market share. Some inventors have approached a company with an invention, only to be given a lump-sum payment for all rights, only to see their invention disappear into corporate file storage. The amount offered was significant enough to the inventor to be irresistible, but insignificant to the corporation, and fatal for the invention itself. Conversely, sometimes the inventor sees their invention rejected or bought off cheaply, only to watch the corporation make huge profits from it while the inventor retains no legal rights to develop it.

When the Transition ends the current modern feudalism, it will be a priority to devote significant resources to uncovering forgotten, suppressed, mothballed, or otherwise untapped inventions, innovations, and discoveries and bringing them to light, to be developed where appropriate.

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It might be prudent to send people into corporate facilities during the Transition, to prevent the spiteful, willful destruction of such information and other resources, as some corporations will likely attempt.

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'll also make public invitations to inventors and other innovators to come forth to share. Whenever the information is available, the actual inventors and innovators who actually created them will be publicly acknowledged and credited with their work, and widely celebrated for their contributions. The benefit to all of humankind from this alone is vast and incalculable!

5) Beyond unearthing existing untapped inventions, we'll benefit tremendously if we foster a culture of active research (both pure and applied), exploration and innovation in science, engineering, and the arts.

While no avenue of research will be suppressed, we will emphasize sustainable technologies that have zero or minimal damaging environmental or human impact throughout their life cycles. Our guidelines will be to focus as much as possible on technology that is sustainable, non-damaging, long-lived, user-friendly, easily serviced and upgraded, and that has a positive impact on our quality of life.

A product or medicine that you can make at home from reasonably simple instructions, is preferable to one that requires large, polluting, intrusive industrial infrastructure to produce for he same purpose. Goods and services whose production is environmentally damaging or harmful to human beings, will be rapidly phased out and replaced with equivalents that do not have such unacceptable effects.

Some things won't practically be downward scalable, physically requiring large centralized facilities to produce them. Airplanes, cars and ships are examples. We can, however greatly mitigate their harmful aspects. We will transition from fossil fuels to nonpolluting, renewable alternatives, including electric, electromechanical, artificial muscle, and other novel kinds of engines. Public transportation will be greatly expanded.

Products will be manufactured for extreme longevity, easy serviceability and upgradeability, interoperability, and user friendliness. In place of intentionally inferior, short-lived, frequently-replaced versions currently made to feed the self-devouring cycle, we will have versions that will last long and rarely break. Technical advances won't mean getting a new car, but only a new part installed to replace an old one, from the engine to the hubcaps. Production and consumption will be driven by physical and human reality. With no self-devouring cycle driving runaway compulsive production and consumption, the rate of natural resource depletion will fall to a tiny fraction of what it is now, as will pollution and waste. Production facilities will run part-time, just enough to keep pace with breakage and population growth. Work hours will scale down, with no negative impact on livelihood. We will all enjoy quality of goods and services currently only enjoyed by the modern feudal lords, and better. There will be no down-side.

In the new paradigm, we'll also emphasize and encourage research in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and related fields. The better we understand our own inner workings individually and socially, the better we can tailor and fine-tune our operating principles to better reinforce and enhance our individual and shared empowerment, fulfillment, actualization, happiness, well-being and thriving.

We have barely begun to understand our potential, how we tend to respond under what conditions, and why. We've long persisted in trying to force ourselves into non-viable paradigms that contradict our nature, causing untold human suffering as a result.

This will change dramatically in the new paradigm. We will stop making arbitrary rules that clash with our nature, and trying to force each other to live them. Instead of punishment-reward, we'll have operant conditioning. Hierarchical social structures will be replaced by peer-based ones. The self-devouring cycle will die a much-deserved death, leaving our global human activities much more sustainable.

In case you're wondering if this will involve mind-control or brainwashing, the answer is quite the opposite. Up until now, we've experienced mind-control and brainwashing AKA advertising and more. That will finally end.

Every social environment reinforces some attitudes or behaviors and not others. Until now, this has happened haphazardly most of the time, and designed to perpetuate the control of some people over others the rest of the time. We have been conditioned to work and consume in ways that feed and reinforce the power of the modern feudal lords,

to fill the role of modern peasants and serfs, bearing the crushing weight of the socioeconomic wealth-and-power pyramid upon our backs.

The reinforcers of the new paradigm will be set up based on a deep, broad scientific and empirical understanding of how we work individually and socially, designed to reinforce our potentials that most strongly foster our empowerment, happiness, well-being, thriving, and fulfillment in a reciprocal, mutually-strengthening framework.

6) We will benefit tremendously if we dedicate major resources and efforts to exploration of space, the deep sea, particle physics and other frontiers. Such efforts have always reliably yielded massive benefits in many aspects of our lives.

Such efforts always lead to technological innovations in medicine, technology, transportation, engineering and more, that directly benefit us individually and as societies. Imagine the benefits in our daily lives spinning off from interstellar exploration or breakthroughs in our understanding of the nature of matter, time, and energy!

Having active frontiers being explored has been shown to have a tremendous positive cultural and social impact by inspiring, invigorating, and uniting generations of people worldwide. Under modern feudalism, that core human drive to explore frontiers and knowledge, has been subverted and redirected into an insatiable appetite for ever more consumer goods.

After the heroic drive to reach the moon and similar efforts, such as Jacques Cousteau's work, to explore deep sea, we've largely settled for commercial and military satellites, with comparatively modest exploration in space, such as robotic rovers and space telescopes, and in the ocean we've devolved into cruise ships, vast rafts of floating debris, and offshore drilling platforms.

Curiosity, inspiration, passion, and the urge to reach beyond have been replaced with addictive fascination of things, wealth, and status. This spawns the current culture of greed, materialism, cynicism, alienation, destructive competition, callousness, robotic conformity, apathy, inhumanity, inauthentic relationships and living, and disempowerment. Instead of aspiring to reach beyond and exceed ourselves, we're conditioned to aspire to mediocrity as a value.

Modern socioeconomic feudalism fashions a hollowed-out society, embodying a soulless addiction to acquisition and status, living in an endless loop of scripted, parodied actions and interactions poorly mimicking authentic living, endlessly feeding and enabling the wealth-and-power addiction of the modern feudal lords, reinforcing their enslavement to the pursuit of ever more wealth and power. There are no winners in this paradigm, which could well lead to our own extinction if we don't change it soon.

Chapter 45: What Are The Goals And Purposes 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 our goals in this Transition. What is our purpose?

It is most definitely not to replace one ruling group with a different one, to avenge ourselves upon the modern feudal lords who have come to power under the current dysfunctional system, or to transfer wealth from one power elite to another. All of us, from unemployed and working poor to CEO, have all unwittingly, unknowingly perpetuated this toxic paradigm.

It most definitely is to replace pyramidal, hierarchical social structures with flat, peer-based, symbiotic, collaborative ones, to eliminate the possibility of concentration of power, control or wealth into anybody's hands, which measurably inhibits the compassion and empathy of whoever holds it.

The current socioeconomic paradigm was originally thought to be the embodiment of enlightened, democratic, free society. This has not proven to be the case. In country after country, we've seen it spawn the same dysfunctional pattern: the formation of a socioeconomic feudal elite, eternally driven by the operating principles of the paradigm to consolidate its control over all resources and its influence on government, ruling over and engorging itself on the fruits of the efforts of an ever-expanding majority of disempowered modern serfs and peasants.

We've been doing the same thing over and over, while expecting different results, for far too long. It's time to admit that this paradigm isn't working and never will. It's never even come close to performing as advertised! Like any failed concept, it's time to toss it on the scrap heap of experience, learn from it, and come up with a better one.

We're taught to be fair, honest, compassionate, considerate, and caring. The socioeconomic reinforcers in our society, however, reinforce dominance and the acquisition of wealth, power and status, which is directly at cross-purposes with the values we're taught. Very few laws limit how far one may go in pursuing those ends. There are few to no socioeconomic reinforcers for working together or being honest, compassionate, considerate, or caring. We often need new laws as band-aids to curb new, innovative predatory abusive strategies among businesses and the wealthy that circumvent old laws. Many crimes against humanity committed by corporations and the modern feudal lords are not only not prosecuted, they are legally protected.

Psychologically speaking, reinforced behaviors predominate; non-reinforced behaviors tend towards extinction. Admonishments, exhortations, or punishments cannot overcome this dynamic. It's unrealistic to think that telling our kids to share and support each other will out-create a socioeconomic environment that strongly reinforces the opposite.

We will design the new post-Transition paradigm to strongly reinforce the best in us, behaviors such as mutually-respectful collaboration and cooperation for mutual benefit, empathy, compassion, effective communication, and social choreography. Mutual benefit will replace the benefit of some at the expense of others as the norm. To do this, we'll have to carefully consider what reinforcers we build into the new paradigm. Let's go over the core goals of the Transition:

1) To replace the current win-lose-lose-lose-lose socioeconomic paradigm with a win-win-win-win-win paradigm, designed to reinforce reciprocity, collaboration, symbiosis and mutual benefit among individuals, subgroups, and society at large.

This will involve finding optimal balances between individualism and collectivism. Extreme individualism isolates and alienates us, suppresses supportive interpersonal bonding, and fragments society. Extreme collectivism suppresses individuality and innovation. Both are oppressive. Like intellect and intuition, individualism and collectivism are both necessary, integrated in optimal balance, for us to reach our full potential as thriving individuals in thriving societies.

The relationship between individuals, groups and society don't have to be conflicted as they are under the current paradigm. We will craft societies that recognize that the good of each, benefits all and vice-versa, where individuals are embraced and appreciated for their unique expressions, innovations and contributions. We will replace "one man's loss is another man's gain" with "One man's gain benefits all; one man's loss diminishes all." This is a major, necessary change in our core mindset.

There will be no hierarchy punishing or rewarding us. We will have nothing to fear from making a mistake (from which we will learn), nor from the success or recognition of another. Each of us has our unique talents and passions; in pursuing them, we contribute one another's benefit, like the cells and organs that make up our bodies.

We will work to become a highly-informed, critically thinking, self-realized people who, freed of hierarchical tyranny, appreciate each other's contributions. We will become a civilization of mutually-supportive co-workers, co-decision-makers, co-stakeholders, co-problem-solvers, and co-innovators, thriving in an unprecedented Renaissance. Social dynamics will be choreographed to reinforce working for mutual benefit, and to not in any way reinforce mutually predatory or destructive behaviors.

We must take to heart what we've learned about hierarchical social structures and apply it learned to every facet of our social interactions. Hierarchies reinforce and enforce dysfunctional traits of those at the top, and all the way down the command structure. The cliché "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is borne out by research. Individuals vary widely in their susceptibility to this. Not everybody would become a Hitler or a Stalin; but very few, if any, are completely immune. We see it at every level, from the military dictator of a country, to the clerk, functionary, shift supervisor and office manager who can't resist flexing their power, which psychologically compensates them for what they suffer from those above them in the hierarchy. Hierarchies are like magnets that pull up our worst potentials and deposit them in the driver's seat.

Rank and position become sacred. The organization almost always backs up those in power, even when they're abusive or incompetent. This further reinforces these behaviors and sets them in stone. In a society where disempowerment is the norm, most or many find release in abusing any power they have, no matter how minor, in pulling rank and throwing their weight around. This culture of abused power also suppresses initiative, motivation, engagement, and honesty among those low in the power pyramid. It is hard to imagine a more dysfunctional, non-viable societal paradigm!

What's reinforced (except for those at the top of the command structure, who are unilaterally and unconditionally enabled) is avoidance of punishment and censure from, and pursuit of favor with, "superiors." Those in neither the top nor the bottom position, are reinforced to please and appease those above them and to lord it over those beneath them, including taking credit with superiors for underlings' innovations and shifting blame for their own mistakes and failures to their subordinates. Those at the very bottom are reinforced the same with respect to their "superiors" as those in the middle; but as there are none beneath them, they are reinforced to engage in cutthroat competition among them, creating a toxic, mutually predatory culture at he bottom.

If there were a competition for how to create the most dystopian, dysfunctional society, the current modern feudalism would be a top contender for the prize. The new paradigm will work to create a flat, peer-based, egalitarian social structure without power positions, that reinforces and empowers us to innovate, engage fully, collaborate, take responsibility, communicate effectively, and make decisions by consensus or, less preferable, voting. Be prepared for this to be a challenge at first, for us who have been conditioned to survive in the dysfunctional, hierarchical modern feudalistic societies; but it is a challenge that we can master, as others have mastered it before us in various times and places.

Prior examples include egalitarian foragers such as the San (Ju/'hoansi) of southern Africa and the Hadza of Tanzania, who have lived for generations without money or fixed rulers, sharing food widely and leveling anyone who boasts or tries to dominate (Woodburn 1982; Wiessner 2005), and the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy), who governed themselves through councils that sought consensus, with clan mothers choosing chiefs and able to remove them. These and other cultures are living, durable proof that such a society is possible for us.

The kibbutzim of Israel are another example of a socioeconomic paradigm coming close to approximating the new paradigm in many ways, and there are numerous other examples. In making the Transition and initializing the new

paradigm, we must be ready to encounter challenges and obstacles in ourselves and in our shared spaces. Most of us have grown up in cultures with mythical beliefs that any society based on equality, cooperation, and symbiosis is against human nature and doomed to fail. Therefore we may sometimes be discouraged or tempted to give up. We need to go into this great undertaking, consciously knowing and reminding ourselves, and each other, that this cultural myth is based on ignorance, that it is only a myth.

Alongside that myth, let's look at some facts about the current modern feudal paradigm. About fifty percent of new small businesses fail within five years. Sixty-five percent fail within ten years (SBA Office of Advocacy, 2012). Approximately fifty percent of marriages and other domestic partnerships end in dissolution (DePaulo, Psychology Today, 2017). In multi-level and network marketing businesses, the percentage of participants who make a good, steady living at it is slightly lower than the percentage of people who win big at games of chance. Yet in the societies in which we grew up, people are generally encouraged to start a business, get married, join that multi-level marketing company. We're not told to abandon the idea because such projects are against human nature and doomed to fail. In fact, we're told to persevere, take the risk, try and try again. Yet if we propose setting up a society based on equality, cooperation, symbiosis and mutuality, we're discouraged with a fire hose blast of cultural myth. Ignore that! We must apply the same perseverance, commitment, and determination to crafting and implementing the new paradigm, as we would bring to a new business venture, domestic partnership, or having children.

Over 270 kibbutzim have formed in Israel since 1909. These communities were founded by people who, like us, grew up in both the traditional and the modern forms of hierarchical feudalism and were adapted to it. Like us, those founders had no experience with the egalitarian, democratic paradigm that they were creating. They succeeded, and though they were never more than a few percent of Israel's population, they supplied a far larger share of its political and military leaders and of its farming, and one of its Nobel laureates.

The recent privatization of many kibbutzim does not signify the failure of the paradigm. It is the result of the inability of those enmeshed in the modern feudal paradigm to tolerate, or coexist with, any other paradigm. In Israel this pressure was concrete. After the Likud came to power in 1977, government support for the kibbutzim waned and hostility became open; in 1981 Menachem Begin derided kibbutz members as millionaires with swimming pools. When the 1985 economic stabilization plan sent interest rates soaring, many kibbutzim were left with crushing debts, and the settlements that followed pushed them to sell land, bring in outside investors and managers, and eventually adopt wages. The kibbutzim did not fail; they were pressed, over decades, to conform. This dominant paradigm has become dominant in the same way as a cancer metastasizes, spreading throughout the body of the patient, destroying healthy tissue and eventually killing the patient. Privatized kibbutzim are by no means the only victims of modern feudal socioeconomic metastasis. Many cultures similar to the new paradigm have been violently crushed, forced-assimilated, and otherwise killed by the cancer of the modern feudal paradigm. That is why, alongside our strong ethic of respect for all life and never initiating violence, we will need to be well organized to protect democratic change through open, lawful means, and prepared to defend ourselves, with the minimum force necessary, against any who try to suppress us by physical violence. Modern feudal socioeconomic paradigms must be left behind by humanity and prevented from ever recurring, if we are to survive and have any hope of being able to thrive!

Every human undertaking involves risk, uncertainty, obstacles, challenges and the unexpected.

Any social paradigm works best if it strongly reinforces the behaviors and attitudes upon which it's based, and avoids reinforcing contrary ones. The new paradigm is no exception. Please remember that reinforcer is not the same as enforcer. Reinforcement means that selected behaviors tend to bring positive results, while unreinforced behaviors do not bring positive results. Enforcement means using force, intimidation, manipulation, or coercion to induce desired behaviors. The two approaches give rise to extremely different social environments. It's crucial that we implement the new paradigm in ways that ensure that there'll be strong reinforcement for working together symbiotically for mutual benefit for each and all.

In a society where options and access to resources are systematically scarcified by a few who control them, cutthroat competition and the pursuit of immediate gain or advantage are strongly reinforced; working for mutual and long-term benefit are not reinforced. That's what we have now. In a society where resources are as accessible as the physical environment allows, and where concerted effort for mutual benefit is reinforced and brings the best results for each and all, collaborative, cooperative, symbiotic behaviors will predominate.

For example, imagine two scenarios in which there's only enough food for one person on the table, but plenty for all present is out of reach, up in a high cupboard. In one scenario, a few people control access to the out-of-reach food. In that scenario, what's reinforced is currying favor with, and not offending, the ones who control access. If those who control access are very restrictive in granting it, creating an enforced shortage, then destructive competition is reinforced. In a different scenario where nobody prevents access to the food cache, where all have direct access to it, what's reinforced is working together to get at the food to bring it out where all can eat.

In a peer-based workplace, if I think of a way to do twice the work with half the effort in half the time, sharing it with everybody benefits all of us, and I gain the appreciation and high regard of my peers. Sharing for mutual benefit is reinforced. In a hierarchical workplace such is common in modern feudalism, sharing my idea may work against me. My manager may shut it down, or more likely they or a coworker will take credit for it publicly and with their superior, resulting in increased production quotas. In such an environment, I'm better off keeping my idea to myself so that I'm producing twice as much in half the time than my coworkers, making me a lot more likely to be promoted than my peers when a promotion is available. Getting an advantage over one's peers, AKA competitors, is reinforced. The scarcer the resources and opportunities, the more dog-eat-dog the norm. When a promotion means the difference between forever fighting a losing battle to survive, versus being able to actually thrive some, "looking out for Number One" is the reinforced norm.

In a typical business under current modern feudalism, decisions come from the top and are propagated unquestioningly downwards throughout the command and power pyramid. If an initiative or change were decided and implemented from the bottom or middle of the hierarchy, and propagated laterally as well as up and down from there, Management would treat it as a threat to the their authority, as insubordination, and would swiftly suppress it. The idea would most likely be rejected out-of-hand, simply because of how it was introduced. Even if the innovation were adopted, whoever came up with it would most likely be fired, demoted, disciplined, or at the very least sternly lectured on the sacred imperative to "respect the chain of command." Even if the idea proved to bring tremendous benefit to the employer in that case, those benefits would not be passed on to the employee who originated the idea. Most of the benefits of such an innovation would go directly to wealthy stockholders, and to whatever manager claimed credit for the idea after it was adopted.

Which kind of work environment would you prefer? We have the power to choose, and change, how we do things. We've done it before. What we're doing now clearly isn't working, as we see literally more each day, as we see looking back generations in the past and see the same pattern duplicated every time. It is time for us to make an historic change in the fundamental operating principles that guide our choices, actions, logistics, and interactions as societies.

We are aiming to form symbiotic, compassionate, empowering, dynamic, evolving societies where every one of us can thrive and have the best achievable human experience, and to maintain it in sustainable ways that don't damage our environment and the ecosystem that sustain us.

Some folks who criticize egalitarian, cooperative socioeconomic models, claim that they stifle individual expression and initiative, generate a culture of lazy mediocrity lacking reinforcement for innovation or productivity, and cause socioeconomic stagnation or even regression. People who think that way, like to cite educational philosophies that emphasize validating every student for who they are and what they can do. They ask, what good is it to tell every student that they can be anything they want to be, and give them A's and B's for C, D, or F work, thus setting them up to fail in college, trade school or the "real world," by giving them unrealistic expectations? They say that such an approach also hurts students who really do A or B work, who may feel devalued and unmotivated. These questions are valid and deserve relevant answers.

One factor concerns the relationship between the individual and the community. When individualism becomes too extreme, community fragments, alienation, distrust, and adversarial dynamics proliferate, and it becomes ferociously difficult for people to work together cohesively. When the community becomes to rigid, conformist, and inflexible, individuals are oppressed and suppressed; the community stagnates for lack of engagement and innovation from its socially strait-jacketed members. The new paradigm will require finding balanced dynamics between individual and community, such that we all are supporting and strengthening each other, consciously working to empower each of us to thrive, and, in reaching our full potential though living our passions, make our greatest contribution to the community. In such a paradigm, self-actualization and contribution to one's community go hand in hand. The community and the individual are pulling mostly in the same, rather than opposite, directions.

The principle of equality is crucial to strive for when constituting a democratic, free, empowering society governed of, by and for its members. Any kind of hierarchy, castes, classes, or disparity is inherently arbitrary and directly, functionally in conflict with such goals. They generate and normalize the most destructive behaviors in all castes, precluding any possibility of forming a free, democratic, empowering, and thriving society. It makes no difference whether castes are defined and enforced by financial, hereditary, occupational, racial, political or any other set of criteria and means. The result is always the same: a stilted, maladapted society populated by crippled, maladapted individuals displaying their most destructive behaviors.

Since equality is centrally important, we must have a clear understanding of what it means and how we interpret and apply it. There are many possible interpretations.

One interpretation what we need to discard from the start is the one that strives to make ourselves into identical copies of each other, the "one size fits all" approach. This approach dehumanizes us, suppresses our individuality and subjugates all of us to an arbitrary abstraction of what makes a "perfect human being." We all know of attempts to apply this interpretation that have failed to evolve into the intended thriving communities, which are popular ammunition among defenders of modern feudalism, who cite them to imply that they prove that all egalitarian, cooperative societies follow those negative examples. They couldn't be more seriously mistaken!

Another flawed interpretation of equality is the one that pits a 130 pound school teacher against a 250 pound professional boxer in the ring, or a minimum-wage employee against their massive mega-corporation of an employer in a court of law, and pretending that they are contending as equals.

We are richly varied in our personalities, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and other traits. Each of us makes a unique contribution to our environment and finds fulfillment in a unique way. One serious flaw in the current socioeconomic feudalism is that it only reinforces only a very narrow range of behaviors, abilities, traits, and personalities, which effectively coerces each of us to try to fit those moulds as best we can. Those who are best at fitting those templates, become the modern feudal lords and their vassals. Those of us who don't, become the modern serfs and peasants. Ultimately, all of us develop into lopsided, distorted caricatures of our authentic selves.

Most of us end up chronically disempowered, stressed, and unfulfilled. Our societies fail to benefit from our best contributions, stilting our existence individually and collectively in a vicious cycle. The only behaviors that are strongly consistently reinforced are those that lead to getting money, wealth, and power. How well we do this, determines our options, freedoms, quality of life, and the amount of respect that we're given. Regardless of official or cultural ideology, all such societies are impoverished and anemic, both individually and as societies.

A case in point is current cultural concepts of beauty in the United States and much of the world. Thin body types and a narrow range of facial features are exalted as standards to follow, a mould for all to strive to fit. Few naturally fit it naturally. Some who do, become celebrities solely or partially on how perfectly they personify this cultural concept of beauty. They are also pressured and reinforced to develop only or mainly those specific traits, at the expense of developing other traits as well, to become a well-rounded person. Those who don't naturally fit that mould are disadvantaged socially and economically, feeling pressure to jam themselves into the mould, resulting in epidemic eating disorders, serious and unnecessary health and psychological damage, and meager hard-earned pay spent on fashion and status products. None of this scenario really benefits anybody, not even those who naturally fit the mould.

Multiple parasitic industries exacerbate this dysfunction by reminding people of the "need" to fit the mould, and offering goods and services for a (high) price that they advertise as ways to fit the mould. The cosmetics, fashion, cosmetic surgery, and the weight-loss industries are a few examples. The higher they can manipulate the demand, the higher the prices they can get away with charging.

This creates an environment that demoralizes and marginalizes those who don't, or don't easily, fit the mould. These vulnerable people are "collateral damage" in the obligatory quest for profits. A chubby, short person who truly feels good about who they are, just as they are, won't likely see any reason to pay for designer clothes, expensive cosmetics, or plastic surgery. An insecure, demoralized person is a much more profitable crop, to be perpetually harvested and milked as much as possible, "fertilized" by being kept perpetually insecure and self-doubting.

This set of arbitrary cultural concepts of beauty, directly impacts survival. Regardless of laws banning discrimination based on physical characteristics, countless studies reveal that overweight people are less likely to be hired than thin

people (Flint and colleagues, Frontiers in Psychology, 2016). Other characteristics are also disadvantaged for hiring, housing or business loans, and advancement: skin color, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age (old and young, for different reasons), and gender identity are common examples. Even where such discrimination, which isn't even always conscious, is illegal, it is ferociously hard to prove in court that it occurred. The burden of proof is on the plaintiff, who is most likely unemployed or underemployed and unable to afford a good enough attorney (if any) to go up against an army of top-notch corporate attorneys on retainer. Most employers' attorneys have already advised them on how to make it impossible to be sued, whether or not discrimination occurred. Arbitration clauses in employment contracts may even make it legally impossible to sue.

To reiterate, even those of all genders who naturally fit the culturally defined mould of beauty, do not escape serious negative effects of these constructs. They are strongly reinforced and pressured to emphasize only their physical attributes. Attempts to focus on other areas of who they are, are not only not reinforced, they are actively discouraged. Such conditioning engenders dysfunctional behaviors and traits such as manipulation, egotism, arrogance, bullying, and superficiality. They may even feel insecure, since their "success" is based on narrow traits that may change over time. They may feel like they aren't "good enough" or appreciated for who they are, but only for their face or body. What if that changes? Then what?

Other demographics also experience this kind of stress: people with "marketable" talents and abilities, such as outstanding singers, dancers, athletes, mathematicians, and others may similarly feel the pressure to develop into lopsided versions of themselves. Keep in mind that this kind of cultural pattern could still appear outside of the modern feudal paradigm, which certainly amplifies it and codifies it dramatically. Any culture can develop concepts and attitudes that result in some characteristics being selected for or against in the cultural behavioral model. Such constructs usually develop unconsciously. Regardless of which paradigm we're living in, for best results, we must always be alert to identify disempowering patterns and correct them when they occur. Under modern feudalism, however, this phenomenon directly impacts our survival, options, quality of life, access to resources and opportunities, and how we're treated. This translates into vastly, endemically, systemically enforced and perpetuated damage to the health, vibrancy, and viability of a culture or society and the people living in it.

How to counteract or manage the social dynamics involved in this phenomenon outside of modern feudalism is best covered in a separate work, written by specialists in psychology, sociology, anthropology and similar fields. It is mentioned here, primarily to illustrate the damage caused by strong reinforcement for only a narrow range of traits.

The current modern feudalistic socioeconomic paradigm most strongly reinforces making money. Those who excel, rise on the pyramid, depending on how well they excel. Those who aren't good at making money at what they do, are disempowered and marginalized, no matter how great their talents and abilities, no matter how much they contribute to their fellows and their community. If you can't find a way to make money at it, then you will not be reinforced, you will not be rewarded, and, in fact, you may find it difficult or impossible to survive. Only a very tiny subset of the population, actually excel at making money. The rest of us are, by design of the paradigm, out of luck.

Our implementation of the principle of equality in the new paradigm, must strive to benefit from our rich, vast diversity by reinforcing and empowering each of us to find our best niche in our community, where we can authentically express our talents and passions in ways that are fulfilling to ourselves and beneficial to our fellows and our communities. The new paradigm must be designed to be adaptive, dynamic, and flexible enough to empower individuals and communities, regardless of wide cultural and individual variations. We must learn, adopt and normalize attitudes that foster this.

By analogy, think of the vast diversity of the cells and organs that make up your body. Other than sharing common DNA, heart, brain, lung, bone, skin and all other cells are far more different from each other, than we are from each other. Each cell acts according to its nature. Each organ acts according to its nature. The biological choreography of your cells and organs, is what makes up your unique existence as an organism, as a person. Neither you, nor your cells and organs, could survive by preying upon each other. Such a condition would be fatal. If we cast our societies along similar lines, symbiotically interacting organically as our authentic selves, then our societies will become thriving social organisms comprised of thriving human beings and sub-communities.

Under current modern feudalism, countless numbers of us are never able to fulfill our passions and potentials and make our greatest contribution to our community. If we don't quickly find a way to make enough money at our passion or talent, then economic pressures force us to make a living at whatever we find that we can get paid to do. Usually, that

means we end up surviving by doing something that is meaningless to us, and for which our abilities are mediocre. This inevitably produces an oppressive, lackluster society of unfulfilled people, a living incarnation of mediocrity and futility at every level. We are even seeing the vast, unexplored frontier of space being devalued into a tawdry near-earth playground for the wealthiest modern feudal lords while meaningful research and humanity-driven exploration is fading and billions of people are barely surviving.

Once we render all forms of currency unnecessary, all persons will truly be, both theoretically and practically, guaranteed the rights to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and access to all existing resources necessary thereto. There will be no money-barrier, no toll booth, no paywall blocking access. None will control resources that they aren't directly using. We will all be co-decision-makers, co-stakeholders, co-beneficiaries, co-responsible-parties. Most likely some variations on the new paradigm will emerge spontaneously. We will thrive best, however, if we consciously steer ourselves in the direction of symbiosis, mutual respect, mutual benefit, effective communication, and collaboration.

If you're afraid that the new paradigm will be some version of a state-controlled monopoly, that your home and other possessions will be taken away, then be assured that the home you live in and the personal possessions you use will remain yours. Personal autonomy and ownership of resources will be respected, more strongly than now, though some concepts of ownership will be redefined.

Each of us will own our home, car, clothes and other resources that we personally use, though reasonably flexible limits will be placed on how much one person, family or social entity can own, in order to prevent hoarding. You'll have direct, unobstructed access to electricity, water, Internet, and all other utilities. You'll be able to get anything you need or want from the nearest distribution centers. Hospitals, schools, and similar facilities will welcome and treat or teach you directly with no obstructions. You won't need money! It will be obsolete.

Coworkers at any production, distribution, research, or other facility will jointly own and operate it as co-equal peers. A universally-accessible web site will allow "producers" and "consumers" to coordinate supply to meet actual demand. The quality of all goods and services will be the highest possible at the state of the art.

Public lands and other resources will be held in common by all people in the community or country. Non-public lands and other resources will be available for habitation or other use by any who need them, subject of course to reasonable zoning and environmental considerations, and with legal mechanisms in place to sensitively and fairly resolve any disputes. Nobody will have to be homeless, shoeless, hungry, or thirsty.

No person, social entity, or governmental entity will be able to own or control any resource used or needed by another, or to restrict access to, or hold hostage such access, of another.

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If you are currently a landlord, you will lose ownership and control of your rental properties, and you will keep your home that you live in. Your current tenants will legally own their residences. Don't worry that you'll be hurt by the loss of rental income. You won't need currency, any more than your former tenants will.

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

Anybody will be free to move when they wish, via public web exchange and physical bulletin boards where people will be able to exchanges home, with legal mechanisms in place to facilitate the process. New homes will also be built, and old ones torn down and replaced if they are unlivable or beyond repair. Unoccupied dwellings will be available for claim, via an orderly, simple, and accessible legal process.

The sanctity of the individual, family, and other social entity will be upheld and respected to a degree impossible under current modern feudalism. It may be hard for you to imagine a society that functions without currency of any kind, and without any kind of hierarchy. There are, however, multiple examples of societies that have functioned along similar lines: Israeli kibbutzim (and some Moshavim), egalitarian foraging peoples such as the San (Ju/'hoansi) of southern Africa and the Hadza of Tanzania, some of the cultures in the Americas before European colonization, with its genocidal campaigns, and numerous examples around the world at different times have thrived with no currency and no

hierarchy. You cannot dismiss them as “primitive.” Not all of them would fit the definition, which is an arbitrary one at best. (Which is more primitive, for example: a technologically sophisticated culture that practices slavery and accepts casual cruelty and brutality as normal, or a technologically simple culture where mutual respect, collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, and an accepted norm of empathy, compassion, and mutual support are central?) If you don’t know of such examples, it’s because, like most or all cultures, your culture teaches you that it is the highest, best, most superior human society and paradigm. Your history naturally features cultures similar to your own. Modern feudalism goes even farther: it not only promotes its paradigm as the pinnacle of human endeavor, but it utterly invalidates and devalues any society that’s fundamentally different from it, to the point of justifying the violent suppression and destruction of those societies in order to turn them into markets and workforces to be exploited for the profits of the modern feudal lords.

Consider the following:

Under current modern feudalism, land is highly concentrated: worldwide, the largest 1% of farms operate more than 70% of the world’s farmland (International Land Coalition, 2020). The rest of us must pay them, directly or indirectly, for the “privilege” of occupying space.

The current paradigm, in practice, makes it impossible to live without constantly coming up with a steady flow of currency. Money acts, not as a medium of exchange, but as an instrument of control by which access to everything from space to occupy, to food, to medical care is blocked and held hostage by feudal lords and their vassals who control them. If you don’t pay, and keep paying, then, by default, you have no access, no options, and no rights. Money doesn’t facilitate the flow of goods and services; it obstructs them.

You may live a life of service to your fellows, contribution to your neighbors and community, and uplifting all of your surroundings; but if you don’t find a way to make good money doing so, then you are automatically denied respect, access, options, and liberty. Under modern feudalism, you are branded a “loser.” Conversely, you may live by destructively exploiting your fellow man and the environment, bullying, and manipulation, leaving a wake of suffering, misery and ugliness; but if you’re making good money at it, all doors are open to you, as long as you avoid provably violating any “inconvenient” laws that may try limit your excesses. Under modern feudalism, you are validated as “successful.”

The earth, the land we live on, and the sun were here log before we came along, and will be here for a very long time, until the sun consumes the earth in a few billion years. Virtually all energy on earth, comes from the sun. Neither the earth, nor the sun, has ever charged us for rent or utilities. They never will.

By biological, physical, chemical and technological means, energy from the sun becomes food, electricity, habitable temperatures, and more. To build or do anything, for life to function, work must be done. Action must be performed.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

Now, picture that on an agreed-upon day, at an agreed-upon time, in any country, money gets taken out of every equation and transaction by people working in every sector, industry, and endeavor. Rent an mortgage will ever be paid again. Crops are being watered, tended, and harvested. Power continues to be generated. Factories keep producing their products. Trucks, trains and planes continue to go on schedule. But from this day forward, nobody will charged for any goods or services, and nobody will pay. If anybody offers, or demands, payment, they’re firmly but respectfully informed that payment is obsolete and won’t happen. Those whose jobs under modern feudalism are to bill, pay, collect, cut services or repossess, are re-tasked with marking all accounts as paid in full and keeping all goods and services flowing unterrupted, at least until software developers have had time to remove all financial functionality from all business software, and effort which will have begun before the Transition in order to simplify the logistics.

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Where necessary, systems are hacked to circumvent all financial functionality. Destruction of all financial records, in all media, begins immediately.

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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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When people from up the chain of commend, from managers and all the way up to CEO's, show up to object and reassert their dominance, they're respectfully but forcefully informed that they're no longer in control, that the operating principles have changed, and that they are invited to find a new niche in the new paradigm. Every one of us has our cell phones and camcorders ready to record and stream events to the world. If the deposed feudal lords and their vassals, or police on their behalf, try to forcefully, violently restore the old hierarchy, the whole world will be watching. The whole world will see that the Transitionaries are the reasonable, productive, civic-minded party intent on keeping life flowing, and the feudal lords and their minions are the terroristic thugs trying to shut things down.

In the wee hours of the morning of Transition, all financial institutions: banks, credit card companies, insurance companies, collections agencies, stock markets and the like are physically blocked by massive vehicles, their power and communications cut and jammed, and any nighttime personnel respectfully evacuated. A Declaration is sent out to literally everybody, via every medium, explaining that's going on, and calling upon all in the military and law enforcement who swore an oath to uphold the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic, to protect and defend the people, urging them to support and not oppose the Transition, as it is in fact removing an unconstitutional, anti-democratic power structure that has been subverting democracy for generations. They are informed that it is literally their duty to support the Transition, and why.

Unlike during a traditional strike, goods and services keep flowing, work continues as normal; but all financial sectors and functions are forever shut down. Coordination and consensus was arrived at via the Internet, person to person, and through all media, virally, until enough people are on the same page and a day is chosen to put the Transition into action. The modern feudal socioeconomic wealth-and-power hierarchy totally depends upon most or all of us voluntarily playing our part as serfs and peasants, obeying the chain of command, collecting our pay and paying what we're charged for everything. Once we change our behavior, change the game, cease to behave within the parameters set by the feudal paradigm, that paradigm will crumble like the house of cards that it is.

We employees, modern serfs and peasants, outnumber the modern feudal lords and their vassals by millions to one. As we change the way the game of daily life is played, they cannot prevail over us. Unlike traditional strikes, which have become much less effective than they were decades ago, the Transition does not involve disrupting production or distribution, does not initiate confrontation or conflict, and does not inevitably involve hardship, danger or privation.

Also unlike in traditional strikes, we Transitionaries aren't assembled in large groups that can be easily targeted for suppression. We are dispersed throughout every sector, every workplace, every part of every industry and every community. Those who seek to suppress us, cannot corral us, single us out, or paint us as malcontents, disruptors of society, criminals, or terrorists. Since our agenda is to keep the processes of life working, freed of the toxic entropic drag of currency and modern feudalism, there'll be no groups confronting each other in the streets.

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Even where our opponents infiltrate us with spies and fifth-columnists, the social dynamics of the situation give them little or nothing to do to undermine us. We easily recognize such people and contain them.

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Our strong ethic of nonviolence contains not only the violent deposed former feudal lord trying to reclaim their lost authority, but also any among us who try to lash out violently at those deposed feudal lords. The world is seeing the "players" for who they are. Images of Transitionaries at their jobs, focused and disciplined, respectful and helpful, are already streaming to newscasts around the world, contrasted with some isolated but dramatic images of deposed feudal lords and their vassals acting like the thugs and jonesing addicts that they are, viciously attacking people who are just doing their jobs, only to be matter-of-factly restrained, contained, rendered aid when necessary, kept out of the way, and treated with humanity and empathy. The "optics" speak for themselves. Most media are themselves corporations, or are owned by corporations who resist the Transition; so we cannot count on them to report events honestly. We must continue to be our own reporters, at least until the Transition is complete among those who work in the media. Once the Transition is complete among the media, they will become reliable, accurate channels; but it may take a few days for this to stabilize.

The chain of command, which is also the chain of our disempowerment and subservience, is forever broken. The deposed feudal lords of the Corporatocracy make some furious efforts to put out propaganda painting the Transition as something nefarious and dangerous; but livestreaming facts speak more loudly, and the propaganda fades as media workers cut their mics and cameras, take down their content, and contain them.

The only way the out-of-work feudal lords could re-impose the old chain of command, would be to violently shut down every factory, truck, hospital, office, airport, and farm, and to arrest literally millions of people. Such a reign

of terror would very quickly work against them, however. The entire world would see their brutality, criminality, and inhumanity and would side against them. Logistically, there is no way for a few hundred or thousand people to control hundreds of millions who are determined not to cooperate with them. It's unlikely they'll try it on any large scale.

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Of course, when physically attacked, we are prepared to defend ourselves and others, and won't hesitate to do so. In that case, our goal is always to stop the immediate danger, with the absolute minimum of harm to any and all, and to render aid to all who need it, once the situation is de-escalated or contained.

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We may also need to employ some degree of civil disobedience, nonviolent demonstration, and similar tactics where people in government try to support the power of the deposed feudal lords. We may need to disrupt communications or logistics in come cases. We are prepared to use "soft" guerilla tactics such as misdirecting and disinforming our opponents, hacking their computer systems, and obstructing them.

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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. We need to put our heads together to come up with creative solutions to countering attempts by the deposed feudal lords to regain control, and all solutions must be in harmony with the principles of the Transition and the new paradigm. Our task is to decommission the current modern feudalistic hierarchical socioeconomic paradigm, while simultaneously implementing the new peer-based, symbiotic, win-win paradigm designed to empower each and all to thrive.

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.

Our goal is both to establish a new, democratic, synergistic socioeconomic paradigm of, by and for the people, but also to embody a new set of guidelines and approaches for how to carry through a paradigm shift, decisively and without compromise, by nonviolent and democratic means. One such principle is to empower each and all to thrive in a society of mutual respect and benefit. We absolutely must refrain from, and resist all urges to, acts of revenge, vigilantism, lynchings or anything of the sort. Former serf, former vassal, and former feudal lord must learn to respect each other in a new context, where none is a threat to the other. The slate is wiped clean. It is a new beginning. Let us not drag the demons of the past into the present and future that we're building.

To reiterate: we must never initiate violence. When we must defend ourselves, we must always use the minimum violence, causing the minimum harm, necessary to restore a safe situation. The modern feudal lords probably expect us to come after them to brutalize them, as has happened in many historical revolutions. This is what they would do to us if they were to regain power, and they expect the same from us. They are afraid and resentful. They are convinced of their superiority to the rest of us. Remember too that many of them are caught in a compulsion that follows the pattern of an addiction, and have just lost its object: power, wealth, privilege, and opulence. Like anyone in withdrawal, they may fight desperately to get it back.

Once we have disarmed any who attack us, we must scrupulously, rigorously act according to our principles of compassion and respect for all, including our opponents. We must treat those we have disarmed with the same respect as we treat each other, restraining them only while they remain an immediate danger, in the same spirit with which we

would restrain an impaired coworker from trying to drive, and leaving any question of their conduct to lawful, transparent process. That must inform our words and our actions. This sets our society, in the new paradigm, on a course to a future of unparalleled peace, prosperity, empowerment, quality of life, and thriving. The rest of the world will see this and will want the same for their own societies. We will show all of humanity that the only way for government of, by, and for the people can truly thrive is when the economy is of, by and for the people as well. Our living incarnation of the new paradigm will inspire the people of the world, by virtue of the superior human experience that it fosters. One by one, humanity will Transition to the new paradigm and experience an unprecedented Renaissance!

Chapter 46: Guidelines for the Declaration to be Disseminated at the Time of 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).

The long version of this book contains a detailed suggested text for the Declaration that will be disseminated over all media accompanying the Transition, in a form oriented towards the United States of America. The Transition is not, however, intended to be restricted to any one country. Each country and culture will perform their own Transition, and will have to produce a Declaration drawn from, and addressing, their own unique, culture, history, and legal framework.

The Declaration should address all citizens and residents of the country in Transition, but be shared globally.

A good intro will cite and reference the strongest Constitutional, foundational, legal, cultural, or other documents, traditions or stories that express or codify the principle of government of, by, for, and responsible to and for the people. If none exists, then references can be borrowed from foundational documents and traditions of other countries, or from internationally-recognized figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, or Noam Chomsky. This will form a familiar and relatable anchor for what is to follow. If reference exists to resisting autocracy, it should also be referenced, and a statement made that we are currently in just such a situation, requiring action for fundamental change.

Emphasize that the threat to the freedom and well-being of the people comes not from without, but from within and not from a political power structure, but from a socioeconomic one. Point out that the economic power structure co-opts and strongly influences politics and politicians, skewing laws and policies strongly to the benefit of the feudal economic lords. State that those feudal lords aren't accountable to anybody in practice.

Point out that under the guise of a free market, mega corporations and the ultra-wealthy who control them have become de-facto feudal lords, inexorably expanding their wealth and power at the expense of the life, liberty, dignity, well-being and quality of life of the vast majority of the people. Illustrate how the overall socioeconomic structure is identical to that of a pyramid scheme. Emphasize how the modern feudal lords influence lawmakers and executives through their lobbyists, ability to disrupt society via abuse of their control of resources, and through far more direct personal access than other members of society have.

If this is the case in your country, mention how increasing cultural and legal norms have increasingly allowed employers increasing dictatorial power over employees that goes far beyond the workplace, even as far as cutting off employees' livelihood if their boss doesn't like their religious, political, cultural, or personal beliefs or traits. Mention that negative references following a fired employee, seriously cripple their ability to get a new job. In a society where one's right to access the necessities of life are denied by default if one cannot ransom it continually, this effectively gives employers the power to destroy an employee's life, just because their boss dislikes their lifestyle or beliefs. This is utterly incompatible with any kind of democratic, free society.

State it explicitly: under the current socioeconomic paradigm, all persons are by default denied the right to occupy space, eat, drink, study, seek medical care, exercise their rights, or live their life unless they constantly pay for it. Highlight the fact that it is the same tiny ultra-wealthy sliver of society, the modern feudal lords, who functionally determine how much we're paid, and how much we must pay for everything, exactly like the old company towns. In this case, it affects not a town but the whole country. Point out that the widespread economic disparity rivals, and by some measures exceeds, that of Medieval times.

State in stark terms that without empowerment, equality, and an economy of, by and for the people, there can be no free, empowered, thriving, democratic individuals, society or government.

Declare that the current socioeconomic system is a direct threat to any free and democratic society. It generates an increasingly despotic socioeconomic wealth-and-power structure that is answerable to no one. It stratifies us, fragments us into subgroups and sets them against each other, sets us all at odds with each other, to survive.

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Call upon all who have taken oaths to defend the people and its democratic principles against all threats, such as those in the armed forces, law enforcement or government, to point out that, since the current socioeconomic system actively undermines democracy, it is their duty to support and join the Transition, and not to oppose or try to suppress it. Call upon them to contain and oppose all attempts to re-establish the old, newly-defunct, socioeconomic hierarchy.

Emphasize to your serving countrymen that the government will not be disrupted, but only the economic structure will be re-cast in a new mould. It is their duty to defend and assist those who are bringing the Transition. The new paradigm will be one designed to empower every one of us to thrive, enjoy excellent quality of life, and fulfill our dreams, structured so that this will yield a thriving, dynamic society of actualized, fulfilled people. Our serving members must be made aware that their duty is to the people and the new paradigm, not to the modern feudal lords, vassals, and hierarchy.

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

Unless your country is an exception, make the point that, for decades, more and more people have had to work longer and longer, and harder and harder, for steadily diminishing freedom, options, dignity, and quality of life, while a very few have gained in wealth and power to where they are above the law. If your country has the legal abomination of "corporate personhood," decry it and make the case that it pits overworked, underpaid employees against mammoth corporations with more wealth and power than some countries, like pitting an unarmed half-starved civilian against a fully equipped platoon of Navy Seals (or whatever your equivalent is).

Reiterate that under this socioeconomic paradigm, our rights are functionally denied by default, unless we pay and keep paying for them. Our rights, options, the degree of freedom and respect accorded to us, quality of life, and access to resources are rigidly dictated by our place in the socioeconomic pyramid.

Call out your local version of the "anybody can make it" myth, and elucidate how it's misleading, since the economic paradigm cannot function if more than a very few "make it." There just isn't room that high on the pyramid for many people. A very few will "make it," but the rest cannot "make it," no matter how hard they work and apply themselves. State that this goes directly against the spirit and intention of founding documents asserting the equality, dignity, and rights of all people. Point out the ongoing trend for lawmakers to increasingly support the power and "rights" of big businesses and the wealthy, at the expense of the rest of us. Make it clear that you are not disrespecting the framers of your country, but that challenges have arisen that they had no way to foresee, and that it is our duty to restore all people to their rightful state of empowerment, liberty, mutual support, and fulfillment.

Declare that, under the guise of democracy, your country has become a de-facto corporatocracy, a feudalistic dictatorship of the ultra-wealthy and their corporations, which makes it incumbent upon us to reverse this capture, nonviolently and through democratic law, and to replace this paradigm, without compromise, with one designed to reinforce and empower our most constructive, mutually-supportive, creative potentials rather than our most destructive and predatory ones.

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Drive home the message that it is imperative that we non-violently but unequivocally force a change of paradigm.

Call upon every person (with a few exceptions), from this day forward, to continue to work at their job, with the following changes: Ignore and don't obey or take into account the business hierarchy, the chain of command; govern your enterprises by peer consensus and make your operations transparent to the public. You who are involved in production of goods and services, are now the co-owners, decision makers, and responsible parties of your enterprise. Do not charge or ask for payment for anything, and do not offer payment for anything whatsoever. If you are in accounting, mark all accounts paid in full. Software developers, your mission is to modify all business software to eliminate all financial functionality and facilitate the unobstructed, coordinated flow of goods and services. All forms of currency are null, void, and obsolete.

If and when managers, bosses, and others from up the business hierarchy try to re-assert their power and the old paradigm, inform them respectfully that their services are no longer required and invite them to find a niche to stay as a peer among peers. If they get physical or even violent in trying to assert their dominance, then, together, use the minimum force necessary to contain them, then escort them as unharmed as possible from the premises. If any among you try to attack your former bosses, contain them as well. If anybody is hurt, then compassionately render aid as soon as it is safe to do so.

Call upon everybody to keep their cell phones, camcorders and other recording devices charged and with available memory, and to act as reporters, recording and streaming events to the country and the world as they unfold. If the deposed feudal lords and their vassals use force and violence to get their way, or to try to stop you from producing, then steadfastly resist them, defend yourselves and resist physically if necessary, with the minimum possible violence and harm, and let the whole country and world see that the Transitionaries are the level-headed party working to keep things running and the former people in power are the irrational, disruptive ones trying to disrupt the processes of life. When in a position of necessity, if you must use violence, use the minimum necessary to achieve safety and with the aim of causing the least possible harm to all parties.

If members of the military or law enforcement attempt, on behalf of the deposed feudal lords, to force us back into the old paradigm, then refuse, respectfully but uncompromisingly and forcefully if necessary, to comply. Remind them that their duty is to the people, not to the socioeconomic ruling elite. We will keep goods and services flowing at all costs, thus demonstrating to our own people and the people of the world, that this is quite possible and practical with neither currency nor a hierarchy. This will put outdated, disempowering cultural myths to rest.

If the deposed feudal lords try to re-assert their dominance directly by force, then respectfully but forcefully resist. Let's keep our cell phones, camcorders and other multimedia devices recording and streaming at all times. Thus will the world see that we Transitionaries are the peaceful, reasonable, productive parties committed to keeping things running, while the deposed feudal lords and their would-be enforcers show themselves clearly to be the ones trying to disrupt all sectors by violence, intimidation, and thuggish behavior. The dynamics will speak for themselves.

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

Our purpose is to initiate a socioeconomic paradigm where every person is empowered, free to thrive, fulfill their dreams and purposes, and live in dignity, freedom, and fulfillment at a high quality of life. The current paradigm is toxic and oppressive, by its very operating principles. When the game is harmful, we must literally change the game itself, rather than punish or purge the players. We absolutely must discipline ourselves to not engage in any acts of vengeance, payback, brutality, or purging. Such actions and attitudes have no place in the new paradigm. Let us engrave this ethic deep in our hearts and minds!

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To all of you who work in the various industries of the financial sector: Do not go to work, unless it is necessary to do so in order to mark accounts paid in full to keep services turned on. Work with other Transitionaries to use large vehicles and other physical means to block access to all banks, credit companies, insurance companies, stock exchanges, realty offices and other financial entities. Respectfully evacuate any persons who are inside. Cut and jam power and communications to such facilities, to render them inoperable. If you work in billing, then mark all accounts paid in full. To all software engineers: one of your vital contributions to the new paradigm is to write billing and all financial functions out of business software, while leaving production, distribution, quality control, and inventory functionality fully operational.

To all engineers, designers, and developers in all sectors and industries: now is the time to reach out to your counterparts at all other formerly-competing companies to mutually grant access to, and to openly share, all information and data systems. Your goal is to integrate all of your knowledge, technology, and processes, in order to produce goods and services that combine best of all of your formerly-competing products and services. New goods and services must be compatible with old versions, must be designed to be easily serviceable, and as durable as the

state of the art permits. Develop unified form factors, in order to allow straightforward upgrading of products with new technological developments. Thus a new, improved engine will easily replace the old one in an existing car, and a more advanced motherboard will easily replace the old one in a computer. No need to replace the entire product.

It's also vital that you lock out your former managers and directors from all access to your systems and facilities, and take steps to protect information from possible sabotage attempts by former bosses. Take this to heart: you are no longer employees, and you no longer have bosses. You are now co-decisionmakers, co-stakeholders, co-workers, and co-owners of your workplace and its enterprise. If your former bosses try to force you into submission, resist with the minimum force necessary, with respect but no compromise. If they wish to remain in the enterprise as peers among peers, then welcome them, though observe them for a time to verify that they are sincere and not engaging in deception.

Some of us will find our jobs have gone away. Do not panic. You will no longer need a paycheck to survive. You now own your home, car, and all other items that you use directly and personally. All forms of currency are obsolete and unnecessary. All debts are null, void, and irrelevant. You will have unlimited support and minimal stress in finding new niches, many of which will fit you better than your current ones.

To all who work in advertising and marketing: These functions are now obsolete and unnecessary. Your talents and skills, however, can be repurposed into the fields of education, public service and informational communication, motivational and morale-boosting applications, and the performing arts, among other fields. From today on, our country is shutting down the current hierarchical modern feudalistic socioeconomic paradigm and initiating a new, peer-based paradigm based on operating principles compatible with, and conducive to, a free, democratic, symbiotic, empowered, thriving society of free, empowered, thriving people living at a high quality of life.

To repeat: all debts are hereby null and void. All forms of currency are abolished.

Henceforth, all hierarchical social and economic structures will be eliminated, except in specialized contexts where they are absolutely necessary, in which case they will be minimized, de-emphasized, with their mission narrowly and clearly defined and publicly visible, to prevent destructive, dysfunctional dynamics from forming. All participants will learn all roles in the hierarchy and will rotate roles frequently; any signs of abuse or power-driven dynamics will trigger an immediate rotation. All perks and privileges associated with rank will be strictly eliminated.

All production and distribution processes shall be driven by consensus-based and democratic processes including all involved persons, and responsive to genuine need or demand and public feedback.

Let it be clearly understood that this is not an overthrow of our government. It is an overthrow of the feudalistic socioeconomic power paradigm and structure that has, for too long, undermined and countermanded democratic institutions and governance, and disempowered increasing numbers of people, effectively blocking us from exercising our inalienable rights.

To all who work in government: This transition is not a threat to you. Please go about your normal work activities. Be informed, however, that the dynamics of corporate lobbies, financial special interests, and wealthy individuals wielding disproportionate influence in the halls of government, will be gone. We, the people, are abolishing them from the ground up. From now on, you serve, and are answerable to, only us, your constituents. Please act accordingly. Your jobs, however, should now become simpler and less stressful.

We call upon our government to protect, seize, the records, assets, and technology of all large businesses and corporations and make them readily accessible to the people of our country and the world. We call upon you to do impartial investigations into any policies, norms or practices of such businesses that harmed employees, clients, or the environment. Where such behaviors willfully and knowingly occurred, then the responsible individuals must be tried and sentenced if found guilty, for their crimes. Let those found innocent be free to go on with their lives. Any who carried out behaviors that rise to the standard of crimes against humanity or the planet, will be referred to The Hague for trial.

We must all commit to treat each other with respect and dignity. If anybody, including former CEO's, managers, wealthy people, demands to be treated with special deference or accorded special privileges, ignore them. Don't

take them into account. Neither obey, nor dispute with them or with any other bullies. Don't reinforce such behavior. If anybody becomes violent, contain or de-escalate them firmly but compassionately, and handle them with due process under law.

To those in law enforcement: Times of great change such as this, sometimes bring some panic, rioting, looting, and other lawlessness at first, due fear of the unknown, insecurity, and exacerbation of existing tensions. Therefore, peacekeepers should be highly alert and ready to respond. We call upon you to emphasize and strive for de-escalation. Only use force if all other options fail. Always treat members of the public with respect and dignity, under all circumstances. When physical force is unavoidable, use the absolute minimum necessary to keep everybody safe. Initiating violence, intimidation, or bullying on anybody's part will not be allowed, regardless of who does it to whom. That includes peace officers. The intent here is not to punish, but to protect and maintain the safety, well-being and dignity of all 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.

To those in our armed defense services: Our nation has enemies. Some of them may misperceive this Transition as a time of weakness, and try to exploit it by attacking us. If so, they will be sorely mistaken. Let all armed forces and intelligence agencies be on high alert, ready to deter, repel and defend against any attack or invasion attempt. Once the Transition is complete, let all citizens and other residents be trained and organized for civil defence and national defence, on the model of Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Norway. If any enemy, foreign or domestic extremists, ever does attack and overcome our military, the whole population will be prepared to resist. If such a tragedy ever does occur, we must, even in war, always be mindful of and guided by the principles of the Geneva Convention and respect for all life.

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From this day forward, every person, family, and other cohesive social unit legally owns their dwelling, vehicles, and all items that they personally use. All mortgages, loans, and rental agreements are null and void. All workplaces are the shared legal property and responsibility of all people involved in the enterprise, to be run by consensus or democratic process, transparently to the public to ensure accountability. No person, family or other social entity may own or control any resource that they don't directly use either personally or in their work. No person or social entity (A) may obstruct or hold hostage in any way, another's (B) access to any resource that they (A) don't personally, directly use, nor make a claim to any resource used and owned by another. To lawmakers: We will need clear and accessible legal mechanisms and channels to facilitate resolution of any disputes that may arise regarding ownership.

All currently unoccupied or unused land and other resources (such as dwellings, schools, or industrial facilities) that are not national parks, preserves, or other public lands, are available for occupation, through fair and impartial legal processes. If you're homeless, then you have the right to claim land or a dwelling and live on it. Please, though, follow legal procedures, to avoid unnecessary disputes. There are tens of millions of unoccupied living units in the United States alone, which is far more than the number of homeless people. There is now no reason for anybody to be homeless, hungry, or missing needed medical treatment, unless they choose to be, in which case it is our responsibility to respect their rights, dignity, and humanity in every way.

To lawmakers again: We will need legislation and, where applicable, Constitutional amendments setting forth and codifying every person's right to a home, food, water, medical care, education, tools, utilities, communication, transportation, clothing, and all tools, technology and other resources currently necessary to carry on with a reasonable quality of life for the time and place. In this case, the paradigm change initiated by the people from the bottom up, must be corresponded and supported with legislation supporting this momentous, vastly beneficial new socioeconomic paradigm. We urge you to rise to the occasion.

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Our Declaration will also include a message specially addressing the modern feudal lords, intended to assuage their fears and assure them of their safety. Here are some general examples:

To all billionaires, CEO's, landlords, managers, stockbrokers, and other ultra-wealthy people, who are the modern feudal lords, and those who live by doing and enforcing their will and interests: You are probably worried for your safety. Many revolutions and regime changes have brought purges and blood baths. This will not happen here! Yes this Transition is being forced upon you, albeit nonviolently, by us over whom you have long ruled as bosses and resource owners much as the Medieval feudal lords ruled over the serfs and peasants of their time. The paradigm under which we've lived has kept us disenfranchised and disempowered to support and fuel your accelerating hold on resources, wealth, and power. Our country is little different from a company town of yore.

Based on the historical record, you're worried and afraid that you'll be vilified, attacked, spat upon, humiliated, imprisoned, tortured, killed, or exiled. This is our commitment and promise, with our nation and the world as witnesses, that such atrocities will not happen, and that you are in no danger. We invite you to understand that the new paradigm that we're bringing, is intended and designed to empower every one of us to thrive in dignity and freedom, in a framework of symbiosis, collaboration and co-operation where we uplift and support one another. This includes you!

Fundamental to the new paradigm is the guarantee to every living thing of life, liberty, access to life's necessities, safety, dignity and empowerment. Violence, vigilantism, and bullying are contrary to every principle of this paradigm, and will not be allowed by any party, except in defense of self or others. If anybody tries to attack, threaten, harass, or otherwise abuse or violate a former CEO or billionaire out of a misguided sense of revenge, they will be restrained and subjected to appropriate charges and due process. If any former wealthy, powerful person tries to attack, threaten, harass or otherwise abuse or violate someone as a way to try to reclaim your their former power position, the same will apply to you. The safety and dignity of all persons will be protected and upheld. Transgressors will be guilty of crimes, just as they would have been before, and will be processed accordingly. No one will receive discriminatory treatment, positive or negative.

You, former wealthy, privileged and powerful people, will live among us all in peace, liberty, well-being and dignity. You will no longer have special privileges, power over others, wealth, opulence, or access to resources denied to others not in your class. You will no longer own or control any properties, facilities, or resources that you don't personally, directly use. Your stocks and other financial assets are now worthless and meaningless. You will no longer be treated with special deference or preference over others. To you, this may feel like you're being treated unfairly, that you're being wronged. Some of you may feel that you've built your socioeconomic empires with long, hard, dedicated work, which for some of you may be the case. But we remind you that everything that you built and accomplished, you didn't do it alone. Hundreds or thousands of others built it with you, with their long, hard, dedicated work as your employees. Yet under the paradigm that we've been living in, you have gained wealth and power beyond any Medieval monarch, while your employees have been steadily disempowered, marginalized, and broken under the strain of holding up the socioeconomic power and wealth pyramid on their backs.

Yet we don't blame you or seek to harm you for the inequities and injustices that have occurred under your command. Literally all of us have, unaware, been party to perpetuating and propagating this dysfunctional modern feudal paradigm masquerading as free enterprise. We have played the part of the serfs and peasants, while you have played the part of the royal rulers. In the process, you have become literally addicted to wealth, power over others, privilege, opulence and all that comes with them. We have all enabled your addiction, even encouraged it and held you up as success stories to be emulated. You are, however, addicted to these things. Some of the fear and anxiety that you're feeling is fear of a violent purge, which is based on other times and places and will not happen. Some of your fear and anxiety, however, is simply withdrawals, just like any addict goes through, be they addicted to drug, alcohol, gambling… or privilege and power. Your "drug of choice" is gone forever. You will have to go "cold turkey." Your feeling of being treated unfairly is typical of any addict when denied the object of their addiction. Your fellow citizens do understand, and we intend to support you in getting through your withdrawals and finding a good niche to live a fulfilled life, if you will let us. There are a number of treatments for addictive disorders, some of them very effective. All healthcare, including rehab, are now free to all. We encourage you to avail yourself. No one will try to

force you. But your former wealth and power is gone forever. You have no risk of relapsing; but the withdrawal will be smoother if you do take advantage of available treatments.

You will find life in the new paradigm very different from what you imagine or fear. With your life of wealth, privilege and power, came horrendous stresses that you just got used to. You've been the object of cons, sycophants, manipulators, cutthroat business practices of competitors, and other people demanding or wanting something from you. It's probably been hard to know who you can trust. In the back of your mind, you probably felt some concern that the hundreds of millions of disenfranchised people might some day come against you. What you'll experience in the new paradigm is a degree of simple safety and security that no amount of hi-tech security technology and bodyguards could give you. You won't have to wonder who your friends really are. You've adapted to a reality in which you come to view most of your fellow human beings are potential rivals, enemies, con artists, users, and other people who can't be trusted. In the new paradigm, most of your fellow human beings will be potential friends, allies, and support systems. You'll learn that money, power and privilege aren't needed in order to be safe, at peace, happy, respected, fulfilled, and empowered!

To those of you former wealthy feudal lords who are unable or unwilling to give up heaving wealth, power over others, and privilege above others, we regret the distress that you're experiencing but we offer no apology. For generations, we have enabled your addiction to power and privilege, unknowing and unaware, causing untold billions of people suffer, starve, labor, be disenfranchised, disempowered, exploited, enslaved, and oppressed. How much blood has been spilled in how many wars as a result?! We have played serfs and peasants to your kings, queens, viceroys, suzerain, and samurai. Now the very future of life on earth, and of human civilization, is at grave risk due to the inevitable side-effects of your addiction and our enabling of it. We're have no grudge against you. You have merely excelled at the behaviors most strongly reinforced by the operating principles of our society, winning at the game that we've all been playing. We all share responsibility. Just as we would restrain an impaired person from driving a car or flying a plane, we will not allow your addictions to shape and dictate how we operate as a society or as individuals. We cannot afford to enable your addictions any longer.

As a group, you ultra-wealthy modern feudal lords have shown little to no care, empathy or compassion for how your actions, behaviors and lifestyle affect the rest of us. All too often, your policies, decisions, and modes of operation have devastated more people than you can imagine, and damaged the environment that is our life support in ways that are becoming more apparent every day.

It's time to end this dysfunctional, unsustainable socioeconomic paradigm and relegate it to history's accounts of failed social experiments, alongside Medieval feudalism, Soviet communism, theocracy, company towns, slavery, and outright dictatorship. Fear not, for you'll be treated with far more compassion in the new paradigm, than you ever showed to those whom you considered to be beneath you under the old paradigm. We who bring this Transition are committed to forging a society where every person is empowered to thrive, where neighbor helps neighbor, where one person's gain benefits all, and one person's loss is felt by all. You will be treated as equals, no less, no more, as valued human beings whose dignity, freedom, and happiness matter and are respected by all. Alongside government of, by and for the people, we are instituting an economy of, by and for the people. All are included. All will be treated with respect, support, and compassion, regardless of your socioeconomic status before the Transition.

If any of you have, in running your businesses, committed crimes against humanity, our nation and people, or the environment, you will be subject to prosecution under due process of law. If you have knowingly and willfully used or supported sweatshop or slave labor, damaged the natural environment, coerced, manipulated, or bribed lawmakers to serve your interest to the detriment of the people, abused your power and position to victimize or control other vulnerable people, price gouged, supported or strengthened governmental regimes that practice human rights violations, or taken actions that harmed, disenfranchised, marginalized, or oppressed innocent people, then you will have to stand trial for your crimes, just like any criminal. You will, however, have a fair and impartial trial. From now on, literally no one is above the law. If you never committed such crimes, then you need not worry. No one will come after you with made-up charges.

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

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From now on, there will be no advertising and no marketing. Instead, a public information network, web site, call center, and other media will show where and how to find all goods and services.

To all designers, developers, and producers of all goods and services: Until now, you've worked for competing companies. You've been prevented by intellectual property laws, employment contracts, and nondisclosure agreements from sharing your knowledge and from collaborating. That has now changed. Your task now is to form yourselves into larger teams to collaborate to create goods and services that combine and integrate the best features of your formerly competing products, to create the best goods and services that the state of the art permits. Make enough so everybody has what they need, and then scale back production to just enough to cover breakage, population growth, immigration, and natural disasters, with a small reserve supply to cover emergencies. Make your products as durable, easily serviceable and upgradeable to new technology, and user-friendly as possible. Distribute your goods and services via the appropriate supply depots, into which former retail outlets will be repurposed. In many cases, you'll be shipping to the same place as you were doing under the old paradigm; but the nature and substance of the interactions and transactions will be vastly simpler for all.

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

To other countries: Know that we will honor our treaties, alliances, and agreements, except where doing so would make us party to human rights violations, environmental destruction, abuse or harmful exploitation of animals or humans, belligerent aggression against other countries or minorities within your country, or any other behavior that runs counter to our ethics and values. Our commitment to these principles allows no compromise that enables their negation. In such cases, we will invite the other parties to negotiate new arrangements that will benefit and be acceptable to all parties. If any problematic party fails to work with us to improve their social and environmental modes of operation, then we will terminate any agreement with them with a clear statement of why, and an open invitation to revisit the dialog when the other party is ready.

Know also that we will respect the sovereignty of other nations and peoples, including indigenous peoples and other minorities within our own country. We will not attempt to invade, coerce, harass, manipulate overtly or covertly, bribe, or violate the sovereignty of any other country, by any means.

SUPERSEDED: FROM THE ORIGINAL OVERNIGHT-TRANSITION PLAN

To our country's enemies: Know that this time of Transition is not a time of vulnerability or weakness. If you try to move against us in any way, we will respond with whatever force is necessary to defeat you.

To foreign businesses who have facilities in our country: From now on, all facilities and resources that you own in our country are the shared property of the people who work in them, to be run democratically or by consensus. They are no longer your employees. They are now an independent facility under their own control. We will defend this new paradigm with our armed forces if necessary. You no longer control them. You are also now relieved of paying them wages or benefits – they will not be needing them. Neither you former owners, nor your former employees, owe the other anything. That does not, however, mean that your production must be compromised. You are sincerely, cordially, and eagerly invited to sit down with your former employees in our country in order to work out new agreements, arrangements, interfaces, procedures and protocols to empower you, and your former employees in facilities in our country, to collaborate and work together to keep production running. You will find that entering into such new kinds of arrangements with your former facilities in our country, will give your companies major advantages relative to your competitors not so engaged: you operating costs will go down significantly, and you will be able to offer superior products for far lower prices and still make a handsome profit.

To overseas facilities and employees of parent companies based in our country: The businesses or companies that have, until now, owned your workplaces and been your bosses, are now defunct. But fear not. These facilities and the people in them are still here and operational. What's changed is their organization, operating principles, and priorities. We therefore encourage you to continue with business as usual. You won't lose your livelihood. While we have eliminated currency and the need for it, we respect that your country still uses currency, which you need to

survive. Your paychecks and benefits will continue. Your compensation, working conditions, and treatment will improve significantly. Teams from the parent entity will work with teams from the daughter entity to create interfaces to ensure smooth, efficient, and well-choreographed function between parent and daughter facilities. The parent entity will still direct operations, for the most part. We will not require your operations to imitate our own, unless you wish it. We will, however, require that your operation maintain, and create if necessary, a workplace culture and norms that are in harmony with our principles of respect among all people, empowerment of all people, and the dignity of all people. Any managers or other leaders who can't or refuse to adapt accordingly, will be fired respectfully and replaced from the rank-and-file. After working agreements are reached, you will immediately cease any aspects of any operation that have until now been contrary to our principles with respect to treatment of employees, customers, other businesses and the environment. This is non-negotiable. If your leadership finds it difficult to adapt, we will happily provide peer advisors and other resources to assist and advise you in doing so. We encourage such overseas facilities to adopt our model of non-hierarchical, peer-based, egalitarian operations and culture, but we will not pressure or force you.

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.

To all foreign nationals legally within our borders: Be at peace. You are free to go about all of your legal business, academic, or recreational activities. Your safety, dignity and free passage within our country, as well as into and out of it, are guaranteed. While you're here, you have the same access to goods, services and resources as citizens and permanent residents. You are also subject to the same laws. We invite you to observe the new paradigm in operation and, if you feel so inclined, to take it home with you and share it with your families and friends. You will see it working here, and you'll see its advantages. It can work in your countries as well. It's up to you.

To all foreign nationals within our borders without legal status: We invite you to come forth and apply for legal status. Your applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and will be granted unless you're engaged in criminal activity, harming others, or attempting to profiteer by scooping up bunches of products that are open to all here, then selling them in currency-using countries for profit.