

The Next System – A Road To Peace

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In 1962, John F. Kennedy made a statement that gave America a mission: To go to the moon within a decade. When America was challenged to go to the moon, Americans aligned themselves. Industry leaders, politicians, the public and the bankers rallied together behind a goal, and in 1969 the world saw that anything is possible when we focus and work together. The Next System is our next mission, but this mission is a global one.

As we enter 2017, climate change, deforestation, dying oceans, accumulating waste, decaying infrastructures, massive wealth accumulation, poverty and illiteracy provide challenges like we have never faced. Yet, we are finally equipped with the knowledge, the communications technology, the wealth, and the frameworks to not only deal with the issues of our world, but to truly evolve to a new epoch; one where all humans and our environment are treated with respect; an economy which accounts for more than just profits; and a planet that can be a safe and protected habitat for generations to come.

“The Next System” isn’t an essay, a product or a policy, but *an idea*, a *sales pitch* and a *mission* for where we need to go next. It is a clearly defined challenge to make us rally together to do what is possible if we all work together.

Culturally, nationally, personally, we all have our separate goals. As a planet—as a species—we share a common goal of *survival*. We know we can not continue on the path we are on. We know change is needed. But we are a flock without a shepherd, we are disorganized, distracted, and dissatisfied. We are in disarray.

As we approach 2017, we *have all the things we need* to create a world that works for everyone. Now all we need is the incentive. The faith. The mission.

The Next System will be a social evolution towards a global world that truly treats all humans and life on our finite planet with respect. It will foretell *a* future that is accessible to all people, based on existing ideas and existing technologies, developed over decades, which are ready to *go now*.

Today, there is a greater scientific understanding of our place in nature. We understand the importance of a balanced eco-system, of the effects of down stream pollution, of the effectiveness of education, of our ability to “re-wire” our brains, and even our ability to affect each other’s heartbeats¹. We are more united than ever. We are more alike than ever. We are more connected than ever.

Today, we have more cell phones than people², with over half our planet now connected online³. According to the World Bank, there are more cell phones than toilets⁴. The impact of the Internet and our communication technology has fundamentally changed our world. For the first time in human history, it’s possible to text or email almost anyone else on the planet. Kevin

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Bacon is not 6 degrees away; he is a Tweet away. Nike can introduce a running shoe to over 2 billion people within a 24-hour period. That is a powerful magic to possess. The technology and knowledge that created the Internet has changed everything; an *idea* can now travel the world in milliseconds. A meme can affect millions. A viral video can influence entire generations.

Today, we collectively have *more wealth* than ever before. In 2015, global wealth was estimated to be as high as US\$250 trillion by Credit Suisse⁵, or over \$51,000 *per adult*. We have more food production than ever⁶. We have more knowledge, more experience, more data, more opinions, more arguments, more experts and more ways to waste time than ever before.

Today, collectively, we are the smartest, most enlightened, innovative, imaginative, wealthy, and *connected* group of human beings ever to have walked the earth. Technologies in our homes, our laboratories, and our pockets would boggle the minds of our ancestors just 20 years ago. Globally, we have less war, less poverty, less disease, less isolation, and less ring-around-the-collar than anytime in our history. We have *literally* moved mountains. We have mapped our genome, our oceans, our minds, and our social networks. We have created global communications, global banks, global corporations, and global trade. We have created 3-D printers, quantum computers, libraries of cat videos and running shoes with lights in them. In 2016, we can build almost anything, *provided there's a market for it*.

The Next System will be an idea that consumers, voters, politicians and investors can congregate behind. Branded correctly, it can become the “next big thing”.

Of course, today we also have massive inequity, pollution, waste, racism, sexism, distractions, division, intolerance and carbon dioxide build up. The Next System must, and will, deal with all of these issues.

Now, in order to move our work to The Next System, it is important to recognize that our Current System is a *Thing*; we designed it, we built it, and *we all* maintain and perpetuate it. It is a product of many other Things we have created: Money, Corporations, Religions, Vacations, Happy Hours, Habits and Scandals. Today's System wasn't beamed down from another galaxy, stumbled upon in the night, or conjured up by elites in flowing robes—Today's System was made and is continuously re-made *by all of us*. We believe it is, and so it is. If humans were removed from the planet, none of these “Things” would exist. They aren't real, they are *ideas* that our cultures and societies choose to believe in - Today's System exists because we are *taught* to believe in it.

Today's System is the latest in an ongoing evolution of ideas humans have chosen to believe in. It isn't static, it isn't unchangeable, it isn't perfect, and it isn't even that old. Most of the “things” we take for granted today are less than 125 years old. Today's system is not here to stay; today's system is simply *here*.

As such, the Next System, like all systems before it, must be an evolution of today's ideas: taught, passed down, believed in, and debated. The Next System isn't a destination – it is a

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journey built from an idea of where we want to go next. But, like many tough journeys, the hardest part is taking the first steps.

Our destiny is primarily determined today by our economy - another “thing” we made up. “Market Forces” and sales forecasts determine the value of ideas. Unless an idea has perceived value to a market of people, it has no worth - or is that the other way around? We have been taught to believe that our economy is the most important thing we have. The Economy is first, everything else comes second. This, fundamentally, is the root of our progress *and* our problems.

Today, we have a world that rewards you if you’re rich, punishes you if you’re poor, and doesn’t understand you if you don’t have a credit rating. Today’s System works wonderfully if you can afford it, otherwise, you’re told, “you just aren’t working hard enough”. Today’s System can not think truly globally, equitably, or rationally because it is duplicitous and divisive in nature; it requires “Us”, and it requires “Them”.

But Today’s System is where we are. It’s great for some, and awful for (most) others, but it is, unarguably, the best system we have come up with *so far*. Today’s System, built on all the systems before it, has given us everything we have. Today’s System has provided, therefore, everything we need to create the *next* system. *Today’s System was what we needed to get to where we are*, and for that, we must give it thanks.

But as we approach 2017, we are aware that Today’s System is outdated. Today’s System was built upon the exploitation of some for the benefit of others. It was built from a short sighted standpoint of European progress, with limited understanding or concern for the environment, indigenous cultures, or future generations. It was built upon scarcity, hierarchy, classism, racism, sexism, and dualism, and it requires continued, infinite growth in order to survive. In short, like all the systems before it, it is temporary.

Today’s System has given us what we need to move on, and it is time to do so. It is time for the *Next System*.

At thenextsystem.org, the Next System Project is described as “... an ambitious multi-year initiative aimed at thinking boldly about what is required to deal with the systemic challenges the United States faces now and in coming decades.” This, with respect, isn’t good enough. The United States is not the world, and its problems are not unique. Solutions aimed at helping primarily America are, in fact, just a new version of *Today’s System*.

When discussing the Next System, we can not help one nation without helping the others.

Unless the Next System works for everyone, we aren’t there yet.

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The 10 Guiding Principals of the Next System must be as follows:

1. The Next System *must* be global.
It must help *everyone*, everywhere. To help a certain class, religion, ethnicity, or nationality above others is Today's System. The Next System mustn't pollute one river to keep another clean, end poverty in one location only by creating it in another, or see the environment as Yours, Mine or Theirs. *We are all in this together*. We share this finite planet, and we must equally share the responsibility, and the opportunities, that will move us forward.
2. The Next System must deal with global poverty.
It must set a goal of providing sustainable shelter, medicine, clothing, food, clean water, and *dignity* to everyone on earth. The Next System must begin at the bottom, and recognize that those at the Top are doing just fine, as they always have been.
3. The Next System must create maximum impact with minimal change.
The Next System must be an *evolution* of today, not a revolution, and must expect to evolve further as the years go by. Our minds and our Market are designed to resist change, so changes must be minimal, while effecting as much as needed.
4. The Next System must be accessible by anyone.
It is not just for the middle class, or the educated, or the technically connected. Anyone wishing to get involved must be given a place at the table and an area to influence, in order to become *viral*.
5. The Next System must not dictate solutions, but facilitate them.
It can never preach, or declare to know what is "good" for everyone. Nor should it discount the effort of systems that came before it. The Next System could not be, if it was not for what has been.
6. The Next System must not punish non-believers, but must protect itself from subjugation.
There are those for whom Today's System works perfectly well, and may resist, perhaps actively, any changes the Next System may require. The Next System may identify these people, but should not punish them, as per Principal #5, but nor should it allow these people to derail its efforts.
7. The Next System must not take from those who have, or punish those who have not.
It must accept, rightfully or not, that those who have everything and those who have nothing both played a part in previous systems. It must learn from the past, but must concentrate on looking forward.
8. The Next System must accept that everything has happened for a reason.
Everything that has happened brought us to today, and it is now time to focus on building tomorrow *together*. Dualism, or "Us vs. Them", is Today's System.

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9. The Next System must use what we have today, not what we wish we had. It must examine our *existing* structures, knowledge and frameworks without prejudice. It must “upcycle” our systems, in new, creative ways rather than attempt to replace what simply needs to be reorganized, as per Principal #3.
10. The Next System must recognize we have what we need to create a better world. It must recognize that finally we can create a world where humans aren’t killed in wars, or from a lack of food, or exposure, or extortion. We now know enough to live in balance with nature, consuming less while producing more. It decrees that we no longer need to pillage the planet for resources to create plenty for some, and poverty for others.

In a word, the Next System is a vision of World Peace.

In the 60’s, there was a growing movement for Peace, which we now know was deliberately derailed by moneyed interests who believed there was more profit in the status quo than in change. World Peace became an inaccessible utopia; a lofty ideal relegated to hippies and pacifists. Today, in modern culture, one can hardly mention World Peace without seeing eyes roll. It is considered so out of reach that it isn’t worth discussing. Yet when pushed, it is a goal that few people disagree with. Most people live peaceful lives, and would never knowingly work to prevent others from sharing the same.

As we approach 2017, I believe it is time to re-introduce this dream. This is not the 60’s, this is an advanced age of global communication and awareness, and a time where peace can encapsulate the solutions to all the problems we currently face. We finally have the technologies, the wealth, the systems, the understanding, and the connectedness needed to reach this lofty goal. In 2016, all we are lacking is the faith – the *belief that it is possible*.

This is where the marketing experts can help. If the term “World Peace” causes eye-rolling and disbelief it must be re-worked, re-imagined and re-branded, just as Bell-Bottom pants were in the 90’s.

Like America’s pledge to land on the moon within a decade, World Peace 2.0, or however it is *branded* is our new goal – a grand, audacious goal which addresses all our modern day struggles: Climate change, global inequity, weapons of mass destruction, war, poverty, racism, and terrorism. True world peace – a world where no human dies for the advantage of another – is not a dream, but a mission that anyone who recognizes the connectedness of our finite planet can get behind.

The Next System is a road to Peace – a banner, a *Brand* under which progressive, optimistic, solution-based organizations, academics, and individuals worldwide can stand. It is the loftiest of goals, and it is, by its pure audaciousness, our next moon landing. It is a direction for us all to roam. Each of us have our “Ikigai”, a Japanese concept meaning "a reason for being" which blends your skills, your passion, what you can be paid to do, and what the world needs⁷. The Next System encourages each of us to find our own place on this shared road, using what we

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have, knowing who we know, and being where we are, and be part of this next global journey. Seen from a distance, consumerism, advertising and social media over the past many years has pulled our herd into doing things that are far more strange, foreign, and unbelievable than this. Good marketing can make us do almost anything!

Let's be clear: World Peace isn't about ending all conflict, picking a religion, or naively trying to make everyone "get along". World Peace is about ending the deliberate massacre of humans, land and animals for the benefit of a few individuals. It is about ending the unnecessary deaths of millions due to lack of food, water, or shelter. It is about ending the *need* for war, a symptom of inequity and greed. It is about stopping the need to manufacture more efficient weapons. World Peace is about providing the essentials and the education to see that conflict should be a last resort, not a career choice.

People can argue about climate change, question evolution, debate "-isms", and deflect the blame until the cows come home, but World Peace, when defined pragmatically, is something everyone can stand behind. If people believe it's possible, then it can be achieved. World Peace will define our next epoch.

So for the purpose of this proposal, the Next System is a system which can take us from Today's System to a globally focused world without inequity, poverty, national self-interest, or for-profit weapons manufacturers⁸. A system which recognizes humans as an essential part of a finite global ecology, and an economy which prioritizes a blended bottom line: economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equity.

The Next System declares the audacious, yet attainable goal of World Peace, which, like the moon landing, provides a road upon which anyone and everyone can find their own path.

The details of *how* we attain World Peace will be hammered out by those who get involved. The broad strokes are self-evident, the details are where individual interests, skills and awareness come in to play.

The moon landing was a goal, not a list of directives. Thousands of corporations, individuals, and academics *came together* and said "How can we get there?". John F. Kennedy didn't publish a list of do- and do-nots, he set a goal, under which those who chose to get involved found their own part to play. Like many already successful social enterprises, those who take part can use the logo, repeat the taglines, and join the community, but defining the activities of those involved must be up to the participants themselves.

It is time to give our herd a North Star and use our current, readily-available technologies to share the successes, failures, optimism, and awareness of our progress. We must build global peace-making communities, each with their own subcultures, but which are all part of a larger, common collective.

We must re-examine the system we have created, and retool it for our mission.

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Let's start with the Economy.

Now, I'm no expert, so allow me to generalize.

In Today's System, over the past few decades, we have adopted the so-called "neoliberal" approach of a top-down trickle of wealth. We have a central monetary banking system based on quantitative easing and interest that we can never fully repay. We believe "The Market" will magically differentiate between "good" and "bad", based entirely on the amount of money willing to move from one place to another. There is a growing understanding that this system was never designed with the success of the majority in mind; the majority of people are suffering because of it.

Wealth isn't trickling down fast enough⁹, interest payments are accumulating in the hands of an unreasonably powerful few people¹⁰, and thus the Market is no longer "free". Add in high-frequency trading, and "shorting", which allows investors to profit off corporate losses, and suddenly the "Free Market" is just another manipulated game for the rich. The influence of neoliberal thinking in economic education is staggering, but even top economic minds are slowly admitting that things need to change¹¹.

Our economy, and Capitalism specifically, has created more wealth, opportunity, innovation, and progress than any other economic model we have seen. Whether it is or has been the "best" system is a discussion for academics elsewhere. It is, for the most part, what we have.

We have built an economy which prioritizes *profit* above all other considerations. In America, corporations are legally required to put the fiscal interests of their shareholders above all other priorities. Said another way, it is *illegal* for many American corporations in Today's System to consider their environmental or social impact before their profits. Despite this, the Social Enterprise movement, existing successful co-operatives, and the merger of capitalist efficiencies with socialist values are already on the rise in many countries.

Canada's "Community Contribution Corporations" (3Cs)¹², the UK's "Community interest companies" (CICs)¹³, and the USA's "Low-profit limited liability company" (L3Cs)¹⁴ are all new "blended" corporate models with tax advantages for corporations that utilize a "blended bottom line".

The Next System will promote these economic evolutions. Corporations who adapt to a blended bottom line, who work to equally prioritize their social, environmental and economic performance, will have a shared incentive to crowd out their profit-focused competitors. These "conscientious capitalist corporations" will enjoy a marketing story beyond simply the product they create, by sharing their social mission and social goals. Today, corporations like Nestlé and Monsanto spend millions of dollars marketing to consumers in an attempt to "green-wash" their brands. This new breed of conscientious corporations doesn't have these expenses – their story is honest, and their customers happily repeat it on their behalf.

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Whereas many of today's profit-focused corporations create a race to the bottom—lowering product quality, externalizing risks, decreasing employee benefits, and out-sourcing to cheaper manufacturing just to increase profit margins—this new breed of Social Enterprises is proving that profits can still be healthy, investors can still be rewarded, and consumers can still be satisfied while making products that are ethically, socially, and environmentally responsible.

Under the Next System's banner, consumers will be encouraged to support these businesses and divest from the overly competitive, profit-focused "dinosaurs". In turn, these old fashioned businesses will either have to evolve or be crowded out.

The Social Enterprise model isn't new, but it is finally taking hold as consumers become more aware. We know that businesses need customers more than customers need businesses, and alternatives to profit-focused behemoths are appearing in every sector, including banking. The evolution has begun.

However, profit-focused corporations are still the norm because we, their consumers and shareholders, continue to support them. Corporations move with market demands and consumer confidence so, with the right incentives, corporations can very much become part of the solution.

Let's look at the food industry. Today, millions of people in the world die due to a lack of food, while over half of the food we produce is thrown away¹⁵. Our economy dictates that the market for food production is more important than that of food consumption. We create more because we can sell more, regardless of whether the food is actually consumed. As we evolve our economy to a blended bottom-line model, this will no longer be the case. Fishing fleets will return with everything they catch, farmers will sell ugly fruit and vegetables, and grocery stores will find secondary uses for food that is still perfectly edible a few days after their expiry date. Food choices will become localized, packaging will become sustainable, and "ethical meat" will become the norm as factory farms become recognized for the health and environmental hazards they are.

As organic and "ethical" food availability grows, food production will fall in line with food consumption, and thanks to decades of research and work, the solution to global food shortages will finally be realized.

Malnourishment is, in theory at least, an easy problem to fix: get the right kind of food to starving people with minimal waste and minimal cost. Now, I'm no expert in food production, but the people at Kraft are - or Dole, or any number of the food manufacturing corporations that we have today. They know how to formulate, for example, an apple flavoured paste, packed with all the nutrients and water a human needs to survive. They might call it "Apple-ease" or something nice and catchy, that is wonderfully branded, sustainably packaged, easily marketed and promoted. Now, to feed the estimated 795,000,000¹⁶ starving people around the world, Kraft would need to create and package the right amount of it. I'm no expert on supply chain management either, *but Walmart is*. Their ability to get the right amount of stock to the right location with minimal waste is second-to-none.

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Given the right amount of public pressure, Walmart and Kraft could produce the perfect amount of Apple-ease for the perfect number of locations as quickly as you could say “Clean up in aisle three.” Of course, the food still needs to be shipped.

That’s where FedEx might step in. FedEx has all the internationally legal mumbo-jumbo in place to ship anything, anywhere to “The World On Time”. Most of us don’t know how to do this, but they sure do. They’ve built a very successful business around it.

This type of commonly-known expertise is the key to getting to the next Next System. While many people would like to *blame* many of these global corporations for the state of today’s world, I would rather we thank them for getting us where we are, and now ask them to shift their priorities. Let’s use their experience to help. Remember, the Next System must be enlightened enough to accept that everything has happened for a reason. These corporations have done good *and* bad things. We, as consumers, shareholders, and, often, employees, are responsible for the acts of these corporations as their executive-level decision makers. If we are to point fingers, let’s recognize that we are all to blame. Moving forward requires that we accept this, forgive, and focus on the new possibilities that could exist if everyone worked together.

With modern breakthroughs in hydroponic and other sustainable food production techniques, automation and miniaturization, global communications and trade agreements, we have the solutions needed to fix starvation – we just need the right incentive, and a shared goal with which to move forward.

With their expertise, infrastructure and resources, Kraft, Walmart and FedEx, and everyone that works for them, could provide every starving human on earth a well marketed, sustainably packaged, basic but nourishing meal by the end of the next quarter. These are obviously only three of many example companies with these means.

It’s important to realize we couldn’t have done this 10 years ago, but thanks to the work of these corporations and all of us who contributed to their success, today we do. Everything has changed.

It’s worth repeating this, because it’s worth celebrating - if you strip away the unhealthy, unsustainable aspects of our corporate models, the *knowledge*, frameworks and wealth our corporations possess are truly extraordinary.

Similar to food production and waste, the clothing industry creates more clothes each year than it knows what to do with. Sub-industries for re-circulating returned, defective and ‘thrift’ clothing are billion dollar industries on their own.

Today, American’s throw away as much as 21 billion pounds of clothing each year¹⁷. With the right corporate incentives, we can not only reduce our waste but could provide all humans on earth with the dignity of shoes, and climate-appropriate body coverings.

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Now what's the point of a new suit, if you don't have somewhere clean to hang it? The opportunities created under the umbrella of the Next System would include creating suitable environmental shelters for as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. Today we have an amazing global collective of builders—we can build pretty much anything out of anything. We have houses *literally* coming off assembly lines. We have experts in all sorts of sustainable building practices, using locally sourced and recycled materials. We have the skills and the materials, we just aren't sending them to the right places.

Again, as we move away from a profit-first economic model towards a collaborative Next System, we would create unlimited bottom-up opportunities to rebuild communities, provide sustainable and affordable social and rural housing, and be able to provide housing for even the poorest regions of earth.

Plastic is arguably one of the most incredible inventions in human history. While we currently throw it away as fast as we produce it, with the right motivation we could have giant rolling machines that poop out 3D-printed plastic houses, with integrated plumbing, staircases, and unbreakable picture windows. Imagine, finally a use for all those empty water bottles!

So let's back up. The Next System would work with the knowledge, the systems and the technologies *we have today*. We could feed and clothe the poorest people within a matter of years, and provide more focused resources for existing global efforts to sustainably shelter everyone who needs it. With economies of scale, focused innovation, focusing on solutions first, and profits third, we could have house-pooing machines, drone reforestation systems, ocean cleanup technologies, desalination and vapour processing plants, and any number of other innovations that are currently being held back in order to maximize the profits for investors of the status quo. The only thing missing, it seems, is the right motivation - but that just comes down to marketing and need. Profit-driven companies seem able to motivate us daily to sacrifice our beliefs and morals in the search for a better life - again, the model is there for us to use.

With all this innovation would come a groundswell of jobs, investment opportunities, and local, effective technological advances. We would be well on our way to at last deliver real dignity to the poorest people on the planet. As money is still a part of the system, those of us working for these enlightened new companies would of course still be earning incomes to buy fancier food, nicer clothes, and more interesting houses. We would likely work closer to home, drive less, enjoy more trees, and begin to think we live inside a futuristic Star Trek movie.

With the help of today's corporations, under financial and political pressure of their customers and shareholders to align themselves with the Next System, our manufacturing, financial and corporate frameworks would make quick work of the problems that too many people today find overwhelming.

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Now while we're at it, The Next System will need to deal with medicine. *Collectively*, we know more about keeping people healthy and alive than ever. Since wars began, we can heal people in the worst of conditions. How well we can heal is simply an issue of available resources. In Today's System, resource allocation is driven, again, by maximizing profit, not maximizing health. As long as there is more profit in treating sick people than in healing them, we remain in Today's System. The Next System is, again, simply a matter of shifting our priorities.

Inventing medicine takes time and money, but creating medicine is quick and cheap. Imagine the effectiveness of separating research and development of new medicines from the manufacturing and distribution of existing ones. Again, we know the solutions; we just lack the incentive.

Now for clean water.

We have enough fresh water on the planet for everyone, but will we allocate, preserve, and recycle it efficiently enough to provide it rightfully for all humans, or will water become the next war-driving planetary resource? If profit is the priority, water will become scarce, and privately controlled. We're already trundling down that dark road. If providing water, not wealth, was the priority, then water would be recognized as a human right worldwide, and our innovations and knowledge would prevail.

Water is expensive to ship, especially in single-use bottles, but systems for creating fresh water and capturing it from the driest desert air are being created and tested throughout the world¹⁸ today! It's Exciting stuff.

Again, a lack of clean water isn't an issue of lacking technology, it's an issue of lacking the willingness to pass up profit.

Electricity.

No Next System would be complete without solar energy. To power the planet, we need the equivalent of 6% of the Sahara Desert to be covered with solar cells¹⁹. Spreading the solar arrays around the equator would mean we could shut down every fossil-fuel and nuclear power station within a year. Technology is not the problem, but creating a truly global power grid rubs politicians and National Sovereignty idealists the wrong way. The oil & gas lobbyists aren't too keen on it either.

In 2016, we have seen a dramatic increase in the implementation of solar arrays, solar roads, and now, solar roofs. The technology is here, but some energy giants are working tirelessly to prevent localized home-based power production²⁰. The short-sighted drive for maximizing profits, once again, holds back a truly *global* innovation.

As we enter 2017, we have the technologies, infrastructure, and know-how to provide clean water, basic food, clothing and electricity to everyone on the planet that we didn't have 100

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years ago, or even 10 years ago. We also now have the international communications system to text everyone and tell them about it.

As people are lifted from poverty, education becomes the next essential piece of the humanitarian puzzle. Education creates awareness, and awareness creates understanding and change. The Next System will have to facilitate a means to get educational materials and qualified, enthusiastic teachers and staff out into the world. We already have amazing organizations placing teachers in all corners of the earth, many just require more funding. Scandinavian countries lead the world in education, so, again, the solutions exist. Getting children to want to learn isn't the problem, despite what Mainstream Media tell us.

We are inundated with that Mainstream Media message which suggest that public education systems are failing and (well funded) private schools are the solution. This seems like just another attempt to privatize and monetize what should be recognized as a publically accessible human right. There is much research and practice that tells us what makes children thrive, how to encourage adults to explore new ideas, and how to spark imagination - the driver of learning. Examples of intelligent education are everywhere, what's usually missing is aggressive support from the top. And funding.

One only needs to look at the current political situation in America to see the dangers of a poorly supported public education system. Conspiracy theorists suggest this is deliberate: Poorly educated masses can't critically question the top-down narrative of elite power structures. But this isn't a conspiracy, this is Capitalism. There is more profit in private schools than public ones.

Education, like water and clean air, must be available and affordable to everyone in the Next System.

Now, I'm no expert. I don't have a fancy degree, or years of training, wealth, or status symbols. The examples above may seem naively optimistic, or poorly researched, but they are just meant as illustrations, not proposals. I attempt only to illustrate that in almost every case, we have the knowledge, technology, and understanding. Today, as we approach 2017, we have the "Things" we need. What we lack, generally, is a unity of the masses to force those with the resources to implement them.

We also lack a global recognition that the solutions already exist. As long as we maintain the notion that our society should prioritize profits above all other considerations, we will never move away from Today's System.

Between corporate profits, executive bonuses, household income, tuition fees, holiday sales, and charitable donations, when the rubber hits the road, *money* is our first priority. Everything else comes *second*.

Historically, money began as a means to reward and store work-energy and facilitate trade. As we evolved, money and trade was seen as a means to encourage peace – clans and cultures

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who traded together were less likely to attack each other. As trade grew, so did the concentration of power and wealth. As power and wealth grew, so did the greed and the need to hoard. It is basic human nature to provide for one's family, and competition is an evolutionary trait that has kept us alive. It was *natural* that our world became separated in to "us" and "them".

From our days in the cave to our days before air conditioning, our need to shelter ourselves and our families from the elements of nature and neighbour have led us to the self-absorbed, inward facing global anti-community that is revealing itself today. This should not be a surprise to anyone – today's world is a product of our historical reality; a selfish, individualistic need for survival. That is as true today as it was when Jesus protested against the rich when he turned over the money lenders' tables at his county fair. We are a product of our historical need for self-preservation.

And now it's time to forgive ourselves.

Financial success is a matter of perspective. We are all guilty of self-preservation, of putting our families first, of putting money (income, job-security, profits, dental plans...) above the wellness of others. Western culture demands it, and mass media promotes it.

Capitalism, or at least today's version of it, requires that we sell as many Things to as many consumers as possible – continual growth is required, or the entire system collapses.

To sell something, one must first persuade another that they 'need it'. "Inadequacy Marketing"²¹, as author Jonah Sachs calls it, says "you aren't good enough unless you own this," and thus, to drive growth, we must continually drive feelings of inadequacy. We must insult, divide and separate each other in order to keep our economy growing. Pretty basic stuff.

Perhaps, without the need for Things, we would see that people are actually fairly similar. Almost everyone has a friend or a loved one somewhere - we have all earned the respect of *someone*. How "nice" we are to others is usually limited by our sense of scarcity, while our generosity is limited by our sense abundance.

So what happens if we put the economy *second*?

More specifically, what would happen if money was no longer the first priority?

What if profit was *third*?

The Next System would promote World Peace as the first priority. As discussed, under the guise of World Peace, we would prioritize human dignity, a balanced and healthy eco-system (i.e. dealing with climate change, reducing waste, consumption, war, and poverty.) We would recognize human's rights to clean water, basic food, clothing and medicine, and control over their own body, mind and sexuality.

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To facilitate this, the second priority would be a personal choice of one's *social mission*. Their *Ikigai*. A personal priority, based on their skills, interests, and privilege, which they, or their enterprise, believe would make the world "a better place". Some people will focus on their home lives, others their community, others may start a Social Enterprise, while others may focus on exposing the powerful minority who profit from today's conflicts and status quo and work actively to prevent change. This is a personal "mission" that brings meaning *to their life*, and may or may not be an occupation. *Ideally*, a social mission would also support their family, but in today's world, that's not always possible.

Profit, or personal income, job security, a dental plan, etc, would come third. For now, while we transition to the Next System, people still need to pay their bills and feed their kids.

As you likely realize, the Next System will fail if it attempts to dictate and preach to over 7 billion people. We can't tell people what to do, we can only hope to guide them. The vast majority of people on this planet aren't evil, aren't preventing progress, and aren't desperate to hurt other people, despite what the for-profit, corporate owned, "if it bleeds it reads" Mainstream Media would lead us to believe. When people believe World Peace is possible, they will find their part to play. As witnessed after catastrophic incidents, people like to help people in need and corporations find the social and economical incentive to join in. Those that would manipulate this new approach for their own selfish good are the minority – and their actions, and their exposure on social media, would identify them as being part of the problem – that's already happening today.

With a single, audacious global goal, suddenly our herd of humans have a collective sense of direction. Those walking against the herd will be easily identified, and encouraged to turn around.

One of the remaining obstacles, especially during the early phase of a transition to the Next System, is funding. If money were no object, the Next System could be implemented immediately, but for now, how can we pay for all of this?

Collectively, our planet has more wealth than this world has ever seen, estimated to be as high as \$250 trillion in 2015²². Money, in fact, isn't scarce, except in its distribution. Reallocation of wealth, or attempting to steal from the rich to give to the poor, will fail. With 85 people having as much wealth as half the people of the planet²³, the concentration of media ownership, and the deathly potential of the media-military-industrial complex, taking from the top would be a suicide mission – politically, if not physically, for anyone who attempted it.

Attempting to steal from the rich also suggests the rich deserve to be punished, which is a dualistic notion, and has no place in the Next System. As per the Principals of the Next System, punishing the past will simply perpetuate the existing system.

That said, neoliberal policies, over the past 50 years, have concentrated wealth and written rules to protect the wealthy at the expense of the poor and working classes. Changing these policies will require confident, unadulterated politicians who will rely on a groundswell of

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support from the majority of their constituents. Put simply, without a unified movement from the masses, these policies will never change, and thus, central to the success of the Next System is the unifying of voters, consumers and constituents.

There is a growing movement of the “99% vs. the 1%”, another dualistic and reductive theory suggesting that all wealthy people are part of the problem. This is simply untrue, as Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffet’s Giving Pledge have shown²⁴. According to these three billionaires, the richest people on the planet would be happy to donate their money to help, provided they know the money will be used wisely.

As any good fundraiser will tell you, success in sourcing funds is based primarily on having a clearly defined purpose. Under the connected, collective banner of World Peace, the Next System will attract entrepreneurs, crowd- and traditional-funding experts, economists, and granting agencies. Landing on the moon wasn’t free – funding was handled by those who excel at finding money, just as the engineering of a landing craft was handled by those who excel at physics and gravity.

The money is out there – and there’s plenty of it. *Collectively*, we have access to more wealth than this planet has ever known. *There is nothing we can’t afford*. 85 people have as much wealth as half the planet, and all 85 of them know each other, have an email address, and understand the change potential of their wealth.

Has anyone *seriously* asked them to pay for a plan that could send Apple-ease to all the poorest people on the planet? I’m being facetious, but the wealthiest people on earth will respond to well thought out goals – especially popular ones.

Looking for the Next System indicates a belief that the current path we are on will lead to our own self-destruction, otherwise we wouldn’t need a ‘next’ system! Be it a year or a century, our current system is unsustainable. Whether or not climate change is man made, this planet will not allow us to continue to punish it as we do. Timelines can be argued, but ecological indicators are warning us to change. Taking some cars off the road isn’t enough, reducing our fishing quotas isn’t enough, banning the ivory trade isn’t enough. The problems we are facing are systemic, driven by a (relatively new) idea that a continually growing economy can outlive an ever decreasing ecology. Hmm.

We are on a finite planet. Period.

There are those for whom Today’s System works just fine; many of them have worked hard to create the system, others have just taken advantage of it, while others have outright stolen, cheated and destroyed to get where they are. Some of these people work hard to maintain their place in it, while others will literally kill to maintain their positions. Luckily, these people are, by far, the minority.

As a species, the rest of us are a wandering herd, distracted and hopeful, lacking direction, and lost in our own short sighted needs for fulfilment and short-term survival. We lack a shepherd

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– a bright star to follow, a direction to face. Where we used to fight nature for survival, we now have creature comforts that have separated us from our food, our community and our purpose. The desire for wealth, fame and power have driven some of us to lead, create, and explore, while the rest of us shuffle along, consuming one thing after another, cat video after cat video. We are the problem, but *we are also the solution*.

The Next System is a call to action – it will place the star for all of us to see. The goal of World Peace will be a road we can all gather on. The parts we play, the skills we use, the personal missions we focus on, will be chosen individually, but will grow collectively. As each of us, in our personal and professional lives, demand the active prioritizing of peace and a social mission before profit and income, we will empower others to do the same.

We know the Next System won't come from the top because the top has little need for change, or little time to find solutions worthy of their investment. The Next System must be driven from the bottom, where change is most needed, and led by the middle, where access, education, and a steady income allow the privilege of choice.

On May 25, 1961, John F. Kennedy challenged the world to land on the moon not because it was easy, but because it was hard; because that goal would serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we were willing to accept, one we were unwilling to postpone, and one we were intent to win²⁵.

The Next System will be our next big challenge – a challenge for all of us to create a better world, to market it like a brand new pair of running shoes, to promote it like the latest best seller, to encourage celebrities, news anchors, business leaders, and anyone with an audience to challenge their followers to stand up, find their place, and get involved.

Nothing is impossible, and anything can become viral. The bigger the idea, the more audacious the goal, the more unlikely the success, the better the story.

Together, finally, all of us can come together under a banner of peace, under a banner of survival, under a banner of change. Everything that exists today exists because we believe in it – and when we believe in World Peace, when we believe in creating a new, Next System, we can make it a reality.

As Walt Disney once said, “All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.”

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