

WE CAN DO IT!, II

Just changing our values can give quick, easy, huge savings. Here are some more ways to reduce resource consumption by 90%, while *improving* our quality of life:

- **GROWTH:** Stabilizing growth can totally avoid between 33% and 40% of our total work. Every generation we double the number of our houses, vacation houses, cement plants, electrical generating plants, coal mines, cities, roads, and water systems - and prematurely demolish existing ones. Just to accommodate more people and more "things". What do we gain, anyhow, from more people?
- **INEQUITY:** An equitable society can totally eliminate poverty and support *everyone* at the current median income, using 47% less work, and equivalently fewer resources than our current society uses to maintain poverty and inequality!

Without growth and inequity, every American could live as well as the average American family does now. At the same time, we would save *two-thirds* (67%) of the resources, energy, work, and ecological damage involved.

- **DEBT:** Debt costs represent more than 20% of our cost of living - a cost which can be drastically reduced. Interest costs on home purchases more than double the actual cost of a home. We finance 13 cars in our lifetimes -one automobile after another for 40 or 50 years, gaining nothing out of the process beyond the first purchase. Interest on continuing credit card balances amounts to over \$300 billion per year. We can't buy any more on credit. We just end up *paying* more for what we buy - up to 20% more. Corporate and governmental debt loads represent a similar 25% surcharge.

The three "value questions" above show potential for 75% savings before even looking at the potential for 90% reductions in HOW we do thing.

How about some more opportunities?

- **Eliminate EXCESS.** The European economy is 50% "consumer" loaded. Ours is 70%. Reducing our consumerism of "geegaws" and "stuff" by 30%, we would still live as well as Europeans, and cut work and energy use by 25%.
- **Eliminate CORPORATIONS.** Localize, network, share. Ads add 20%, corporate profit at least 10%, another layer of inefficiency another 10%.
- **Improve DURABILITY:** A car, a light bulb, or a roof on a house that lasts twice as long only costs half as much. A home that lasts 200 years rather than twenty years costs only one-tenth as much. A whole big hunk of our work and energy use is producing things that don't last, break down, and aren't repairable. Durable products mean less work and energy to replace, with a positive impact on quality of life in the process.
- **Track RIPPLE EFFECTS.** If we cut consumption of unnecessary "stuff" by 30%, that can help get us out of debt, reducing energy, financial, and resource consumption by another 20%. Then we can ease our work week to the European

32 hr, 4 day week, have more free time, and also cut commuting energy use by 20%, while avoiding unemployment.

Now think about the "techie" things that have changed in your own home with little notice:

- New toilets only use one gallon of water to flush - an 80% improvement over the 5-gallon flushers of 20 years ago.
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs save 75% of the energy used for incandescent bulbs.
- Refrigerators reduced their energy use by 86% from 1972 to 1997.
- High-speed-spin clothes washers reduce dryer energy use 90%.
- Laptop computers use 90% less energy than older desktops.
- Net-Zero-Energy homes with R-60 roofs and R-40 walls, are being built at lower cost than conventional.

That's a whole other opportunity for huge changes!

Add in the lifestyle pattern changes we talked about earlier, and we've an enormous range of options and choices we can make individually and as a society to make life easier, less expensive, and more satisfying.

It's time to stop thinking big changes are difficult or impossible. Big changes are really doable. And the "feel-good" of knowing it is possible is the first big benefit!