The Necessary Revolution: How Individuals And Organizations Are Working Together to Create a Sustainable World

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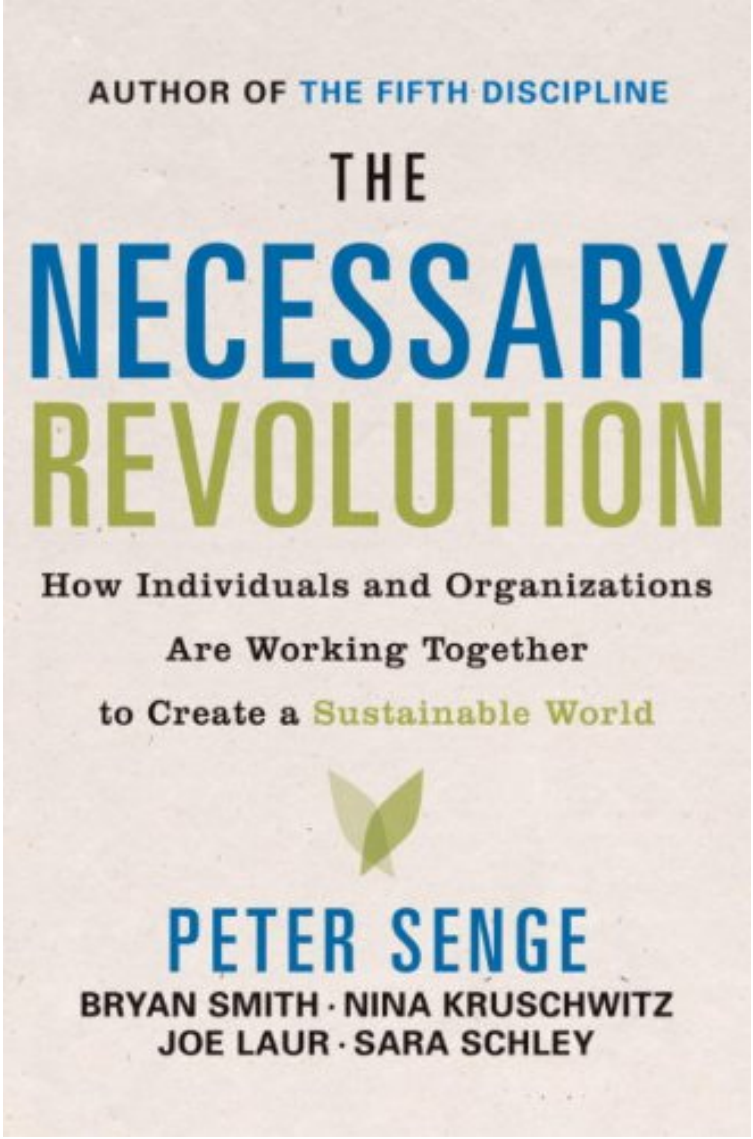

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Peter M. Senge, Bryan Smith, Nina Kruschwitz, Joe Laur, Sara Schley : The Necessary Revolution: How Individuals And Organizations Are Working Together to Create a Sustainable World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Necessary Revolution: How Individuals And Organizations Are Working Together to Create a Sustainable World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An excellent primer on who is working to create much needed change, and how we all can do our partBy drophamiltonPeter Senge is a master thinker about organizational dynamics. In this book, he puts his prodigous abilities to work both telling stories of the good fight being fought and won, and preparing the reader to join the effort. I appreciate his deep understanding of how to nurture positive collaboration, and am just beginning to put his insights to work in my own professional life.Re-engineering all of our human processes to create a biologically restorative economy is the challenge our generation must rise to, as my grandfather's generation rose to meet the Great Depression and WWII. This book is an invaluable guide to how we can rise to the occasion we are faced with.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Must ReadBy LindaPeople are just waking up to Global Warming, population explosion, dwindling resources, and waste, waste, waste. I liked the book because it gives me hope and a more positive attitude about how these challenges can be solved when we all work together. Maybe it takes an approaching annihilation of mankind vs coming together to solve these issues to achieve this, but it's time to face the fact that we all live on planet earth together. Ironically this healing will be lead by big and small business, followed by governments and law, and supported by people all over the world who want to survive.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good beginning referenceBy Christopher FoundasI'm a Supply Chain Management / Logistics consultant, so I bought this book to start to learn more about the impact large companies can have on the environment through their supply chains. As a beginning reference, it works well. The book is well cited, with many footnotes and references provided to the reader so a fair and balanced perspective can be reached. For this reason alone I was extremely pleased.Overall it is a fairly interesting book to read. It contained a step-by-step guide to beginning change within a large organization, and tips on how any business can start to become more environmentally friendly. Although some are more practical than others, I think anyone would benefit from reading this book. It's not as heavy on the doom-and-gloom other works are, and while it won't keep you up at night it will certainly make you think. Of particular interest to myself was the Xerox case study, and the Coca Cola water usage study.

Imagine a world in which the excess energy from one business would be used to heat another. Where buildings need less and less energy around the world, and where ldquo;regenerativerdquo; commercial buildings ndash; ones that create more energy than they use ndash; are being designed. A world in which environmentally sound products and processes would be more cost-effective than wasteful ones. A world in which corporations such as Costco, Nike, BP, and countless others are forming partnerships with environmental and social justice organizations to ensure better stewardship of the earth and better livelihoods in the developing world. Now, stop imagining ndash; that world is already emerging.A revolution is underway in todayrsquo;s organizations. As Peter Senge and his co-authors reveal in The Necessary Revolution, companies around the world are boldly leading the change from dead-end ldquo;business as usualrdquo; tactics to transformative strategies that are essential for creating a flourishing, sustainable world. There is a long way to go, but the era of denial has ended. Todayrsquo;s most innovative leaders are recognizing that for the sake of our companies and our world, we must implement revolutionarymdash;not just incrementalmdash;changes in the way we live and work.Brimming with inspiring stories from individuals and organizations tackling social and environmental problems around the globe, THE NECESSARY REVOLUTION reveals how ordinary people at every level are transforming their businesses and communities. By working collaboratively across boundaries, they are exploring and putting into place unprecedented solutions that move beyond just being ldquo;less badrdquo; to creating pathways that will enable us to flourish in an increasingly interdependent world. Among the stories in these pages are the evolution of Swedenrsquo;s ldquo;Green Zone,rdquo; Alcoarsquo;s water use reduction goals, GErsquo;s ecoimagination initiative, and Seventh Generationrsquo;s decision to shift some of their advertising to youth-led social change programs.At its heart, THE NECESSARY REVOLUTION contains a wealth of strategies that individuals and organizations can use mdash; specific tools and ways of thinking mdash; to help us build the confidence and competence to respond effectively to the greatest challenge of our time. It is an essential guidebook for all of us who recognize the need to act and work togethermdash;nowmdash;to create a sustainable world, both for ourselves and for the generations to follow.

Acclaim for The Fifth Discipline by Peter Senge, Honored As One of The Five Greatest Business Books of All Time by The Financial Times ldquo;A management classic.rdquo; ndash;Boston Globe ldquo;One of the seminal management books of the past seventy-five years.rdquo;mdash;Harvard Business About the AuthorPeter Senge was named as one of the 24 people who had ldquo;the greatest influence on business strategy over the last 100 yearsrdquo; by the Journal of Business StrategyPETER SENGE, senior lecturer at MIT and the founding chair of the Society for Organizational Learning (SoL), is the author or co-author of several bestselling books, including The Fifth Discipline, Schools That Learn, and Presence. BRYAN SMITH, coauthor with Senge of The Dance of Change and two other Fifth Discipline fieldbooks, is a member of the faculty at York Universityrsquo;s Sustainable Enterprise Academy, and president of Broad Reach Innovations, Inc. NINA KRUSCHWITZ, manager of the Fifth Discipline Fieldbook Project, is the editor of Reflections: The SoL Journal on Knowledge, Learning, and Change. JOE LAUR and SARA SCHLEY co-founded the SoL Sustainability Consortium in 1998; Joe is vice president of content for Greenopolis.com, and Sara

is a mentor for the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.1A Future Awaiting Our ChoicesAnyone visiting Australia today cannot help but notice massive billboards in all the major cities encouraging people to conserve water. A natural response would be to think these are the result of recent drought conditions, and indeed they arendash;in a way. But though the signs are new, the drought they were erected in response to has gone on for years and shows no sign of improvement. Across the nation, water reservoirs are at roughly one-quarter of capacity and have been declining for a decadendash;thanks to a combination of subnormal rainfall and rising temperatures widely attributed by leading scientifi c panels to climate change. (1) Starting in 2007, water became the focus of national debates;one popular suggestion even called for the complete elimination of the nationrsquo;s large citrus crop. This sounds drastic, but when there is simply not enough water to go around, hard choices need to be made, even if that means sacrifi cing an important crop in an industry that accounts for roughly 3 percent of GDP. The countryrsquo;s national election in fall 2007 was the first in the world in which climate change was the number one issue(and the candidate deemed most dedicated to addressing it won), a possible harbinger for other countries in the coming years, including the United States.But in addition to conserving resources such as water, innovative Australians everywhere are also seizing the opportunity to rethink and re-create their lives and the infrastructures that govern them. They are working together in communities across the country to come up with renewable energy solutions, and beginning to consider sweeping changes in energy and water industries. Business, long dominated by mining and minerals industries, has become a vocal advocate for investment in innovative alternative energy technologies, such as wind and solar.Half a world away, Sweden has parted ways with other industrial economies to completely sever their dependence on imported oilndash;and the vulnerability that goes along with it. Under former prime minister Gouml;ran Persson, a commission was established in 2006 that laid out a fifteen-year plan to cut fossil fuel use to zero by 2020. This momentous shift was, in fact, the outcome of decades of work by remarkable networks of public and private sector leaders committed to making northern Sweden the worldrsquo;s first ldquo;bioregion,rdquo; in which all energy needs are met from sustainably produced biofuels.Similar changes are occurring in businesses the world over. In response to the turmoil of world oil markets and oil-producing regions, DuPont, one of the largest and oldest companies in America, has set itself on a course to shift its product line from petroleum-based to bio-based feedstocks. Like many companies around the world, DuPont has worked for years to reduce waste, including carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. But it now sees that the real innovation opportunities lie in the creation of new products that break the companyrsquo;s dependency on conventional oil and gas entirely. Similarly, Nike has reduced its ldquo;carbon footprintrdquo; by more than 75 percent. But, again, by looking for the truly innovative opportunities for the future, the company has declared its intent to achieve zero waste, zero toxicity, and 100 percent recyclability across its entire product line by 2020. ldquo;Our company and our customers care about health; our products and ways of producing them should embody this,rdquo; says Darcy Winslow, former head of the womenrsquo;s footwear division. ldquo;But to do this we are having to completely rethink how we design, produce, and distribute those products and how we recover them at the end of their lifetime.rdquo;There are many types of revolutions. History talks mostly of political revolutions, dramatic events that all too often represent little real change over the long term: The cast of players in power shifts and new political philosophies come into vogue, but when it comes to the daily realities of most people, little changes. But occasionally something different happens, a collective awakening to new possibilities that changes everything over timendash;how people see the world, what they value, how society defines progress and organizes itself, and how institutions operate. The Renaissance was such a shift, as was the Industrial Revolution. So, too, is what is starting to happen around the world today.Perhaps surprisingly, the most visible signs of this new revolution are a mounting series of environmental and social crises. While Australiarsquo;s water situation may seem extreme, it is hardly unique. Both the southeast and southwest regions of the United States are facing a similar need for rationing and possible permanent cutbacks. In developed countries around the world, previously taken-for-granted aspects of daily lifendash;food, water, energy, predictable weatherndash;seem less and less reliable.Each of the last several summers has brought record heat waves to much of Europe, as well as other strange occurrences such as extreme flooding, crops that come to season a month early, and the appearance of mosquito-borne diseases previously known only to the Southern Hemispherendash;events that scientists have linked to global warming and increased atmospheric CO2. (2)In the United States, there have been repeated scares about contaminated food imported from Asia and E. coli outbreaks from crops grown in our own backyard, recent warnings to parents about the rapid spread of poison ivy caused by higher CO2 levels in the atmosphere (which both speed the plantrsquo;s growth and increase its toxicity), and a historic shift in the politics of energy. Even former protectors of the oil-fueled economic statusquo now recognize that Americarsquo;s energy consumption (we consume 25 percent of the worldrsquo;s fossil fuels with only 5 percent of the population) cannot continue. (3) Our rampant consumption and protect-the-source foreign policies no longer offer a reliable path for the future. As President Bush admitted, ldquo;America is addicted to oil.rdquo;While environmental crises get most of the headlines today, the simple fact that the wealth of the 200 richest people in the world exceeds the combined annual income of the worldrsquo;s 2.5 billion poorest people should give anyone pause, as should the knowledge that almost half of the worldrsquo;s population lives on less than $2 per day while the average American earns $130 per day. (4)

The belief that economic growth alone will solve the problems of poverty is simply not borne out by the facts. And the drive to satisfy legitimate ambitions for material progress is forcing developing countries such as China and India toward unprecedented rates of fossil fuel consumptionndash;a poignant reminder that our social and environmental crises are joined at the hip.But the real problem is not these crises per se but the likelihood that our responses will be completely inadequate.If we see each problemndash;be it water shortages, climate change, or povertyndash;as separate, and approach each separately, the solutions we come up with will be short-term, often opportunistic, ldquo;quick fixesrdquo; that do nothing to address deeper imbalances. Take the recent frenzy in the U.S. over ramping up production of corn-based ethanol as an alternative to imported oil. The number of ethanol plants is expanding rapidly (therewill be almost 200 by the end of 2008) and vast amounts of corn are being grown to supply them.5 Not only is this driving up food prices around the world, but ethanol from corn arguably takes us in the wrong direction in terms of reducing greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gas emissions from using corn ethanol in cars do not differ substantially from emissions from using gasoline in cars. The net effect of using corn-based ethanol may even increase greenhouse gases due to land-use changes, as farmers worldwide clear forests and grasslands to grow corn in response to higher prices and demand.6 More sustainable alternatives such as cellulose-based biofuels from forestry and crop wastes are being developed, but the search for a quick fix, as opposed to creating a truly environmentally sound energy system, has put the attention on corn ethanol.Fortunately, more and more people are beginning to sense that the mounting sustainability crises are interconnectedndash;symptoms of a larger global system that is out of balance. As soon as people understand this, their view of the problems shifts. They start to see the extraordinary opportunities for innovation that can occur when we abandon fearful, reactive mentalities. They start to realize the deep problems we face today arenot a result of bad luck or a greedy few. They are the result of a way of thinking whose time has passed.All ages endndash;from the Iron Age to the Bronze Age, from the age of the Renaissance to the Reformation, from the rise and reign of empires such as Romersquo;s to more modern empires such as Britainrsquo;s. No erandash;no matter how influential or how far-reachingndash;lasts forever. The Industrial Age, which has shaped our lifestyles and our worldview for generations, is no different.To many, the term industrial itself seems rather quaint, since most of us in the developed nations appear to live in a world dominated by bits and bytes, not smokestacks and coal mines. Seventy percent of the American economy, for example, is driven by the spending of consumers, people who for the most part work in service or white-collar industries.7 Relatively few Americans work in factories today, fewer still in mines or on farms.But immediate circumstances can be misleading. In fact, the last quarter century has seen the most dramatic increase in industrial activity the world has ever known. The number of automobiles in use in the world has grown from about 50 million in 1950 to about 800 million in 2008. The annual growth rate in the global production of automobiles (over 6 percent) is now at least four times the growth of human population in percentageterms. (8) Since 1980, annual steel production worldwide has almost doubled. While U.S. industrial production grew by only half a percent in 2007, China posted a 13 percent increase in industrial production in 2007, Vietnam 17 percent, and India 10 percent. (9) More coal is mined than ever before. As customers and consumers, we are tied to industrial production for our computers and PDAs, cars and trucks, and fl at-panel televisions. And we are dependent on the energy required to make them work, over 70 percent of which comes from burning fossil fuels, as it has for the past 150 years. Yes, products and industrial processes are far more information-intensive than ever before, but such shifts in the mix of dominant technologies, such as the move from gaslights to electrifi cation or from mainframe computers to the Internet and personal computing, have been a recurring feature of the Industrial Age, not a signal of its demise.But something important has happened in this last stage of the industrial era that sets it apart from the past: Globalization has brought a level of interdependence between nations and regions that has never existed before, along with truly global problems that also have no precedent. This includes environmental crises such as increasing levels of waste and toxicity (which often spill over from one country to another) and growing stresses on a host of fi nite natural resources, but also the widening gaps between the wealthy and the poor and alarming political reactions to these imbalances in the form of global terrorism. Just as the Iron Age didnrsquo;t end because we ran out of iron, the Industrial Age isnrsquo;t ending because of the decline in opportunities for further industrial expansion. It is ending because individuals, companies, and governments are coming to the realization that its side effects are unsustainable.Ages do not end abruptly. Everyone does not just wake up one day and say, ldquo;This isnrsquo;t working. We must change.rdquo; Quite the contrary. When faced with challenges of this magnitude, the vast majority of people and institutions try harder to maintain the status quo. As neuroscientists say, the brain ldquo;downshiftsrdquo; under stressndash;in other words, we revert to our most habitual (and more primitive) modes of behavior. Societies are no different. Fortunately, societies are not monolithic. At the same time that many companies resist change to outdated methods and technologies, governments refuse to implement needed regulations, and individuals resist change to their established lifestyles, others wonder instead about what could be. What would an economy look like that operated entirely on ldquo;our energy income rather than our energy capital,rdquo; as the pioneer systems thinker and inventor Buckminster Fuller used to say? Or that embraced the natural systems principle, as articulated by William McDonough and Michael Braungart, that ldquo;all waste equals food for another systemrdquo;? Or one in which Marshall McLuhanrsquo;s image of the ldquo;global villagerdquo; was not merely a

clever metaphorndash;but a principle for a world of interdependence, where the unilateral pursuit of ldquo;national securityrdquo; is like chasing a shadow; none of us is secure if all of us are not secure?Endings are also beginnings. The Industrial Age has brought extraordinary improvements in public education, human rights, and material wellbeing, but it has also destroyed ecosystems, swallowed up traditional cultures that had thrived for centuries, and created a way of life that cannot continue for much longer. With regard to each of these interconnected problems, the same fundamental choice exists: Do we protect the ways ofthe past or join in creating a different future?People and organizations around the world are already planting the seeds for new ways of living and working together. Yes, they are a minority. No, they are not part of the mainstream, either within their industries or usually within their own organizations. But, unlike previous periods of profound change, it is unlikely these seeds will take centuries to mature and spread, because in todayrsquo;s interconnected world, the problems are global, and the changes will be as well. Pressures for change are building rapidly, and solutions and opportunitiesndash;and news of what works and how to build on itndash;are spreading equally rapidly.CREATING THE FUTUREAmid all the uncertainties, three guiding ideas stand out as essential forcreating a more sustainable future:1. There is no viable path forward that does not take into account the needs of future generations. The term sustainability is widely used to express the need to live in the present in ways that do not jeopardize the future. When a process is sustainable, it can be carried out over and over again without negative environmental effects or impossibly high costs to anyone involved. The belief that we can attend only to our own needs andgoals is tantamount to discounting the value of the children, families, communities, and businesses who will inhabit that future. Businesses can no longer expect to compete in the future without taking into account the larger problems that stand between now and then.2. Institutions matter. Todayrsquo;s world is shaped not by individuals alone, but by the networks of businesses and governmental and nongovernmental institutions that influence the products we make, the food we eat, the energy we use, and our responses to problems that arise from these systems. No one person could destroy a species or warm the planet no matter how hard he or she tried. But that is exactly what we are doing collectively, as our individual actions are mediated through the web of institutions that interconnect the world. It is folly to think that the changes needed in the coming years will not involve fundamental shifts in the way institutions function, individually and collectively. Ironically, despite increasing interdependence, most institutions are more consumed than ever by short-term thinking, frenzy, and opportunism. The gap betweenthe need to think and act interdependently and our abilities to do so sits at the heart of all the most difficult problems we face today. Still, as you will see from the stories below, the leadership needed to close that gap is now emerging from business and non-business organizations alike, and often in partnership.3. All real change is grounded in new ways of thinking and perceiving. As Einstein said: ldquo;We canrsquo;t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.rdquo; While institutions matter, how they operate arises from how we operate, how people think and interact. In short, to shape a sustainable future, we all need to work together differently than we have in the past. And that is what we will be describingin the pages ahead. In The Necessary Revolution, we will talk about the challenges we face in three interconnected areasndash;energy and transportation, food and water, material waste and toxicity (what we make and discard)ndash;and the consequent imbalances that result when too many resources are concentrated in too few hands.