

## Consumption Addiction

"The energy we need" is capitalism's biggest con. Even the most rabid environmentalists are looking for alternatives to "the energy we need". As we discuss the multitude of problems to be solved, almost no one mentions the 20 ton elephant; consumption addiction. Easily 2/3 of our economy has nothing to do with real need. It's about comfort, convenience, fashion, fun, and waste, but there's nothing comfortable, convenient, fashionable, or fun about the droughts, floods, fires, famine, and disease that are the consequences of our consumption addiction.

The energy and vitality that come with cocaine are great, but I can look at the experiences of others and see that the eventual price is misery and an early death, so I find other ways to achieve energy and vitality or I do without. On an individual level, we can see the results of the various addictions within the community, but on a level of civilizations, we've nothing to tangibly compare it to so we don't see it, and we're flirting with the death of this civilization. Will we become aware of the deadly consequences of our consumption addiction and have the brains and guts to get past it, or will we poison ourselves to death?

When you're jonsin for a fix you 'need' a fix. Unfortunately, if the fix for our consumption addiction is finding ways to consume more efficiently, every fix just takes us deeper into the addiction. All our advances in the efficiency of consumption mean nothing if it just lets us consume more.

We're rapidly burying ourselves in plastic, we're filling our environment with a wide variety of toxins, we're continuing to fill the atmosphere with greenhouse gasses, and we're rapidly cutting down the last of the carbon sink of our forests. Environmental toxins turning genes on and off during gestation are the single greatest cause of autism. Ikea is the largest single consumer of wood on the planet. Government has little to do with this. It's about billions of individual choices and the wisdom, courage, and responsibility to put the car keys back in your pocket, forgo our addiction to fashion, turn the thermostat down, and do without the easy convenience of plastic and a thousand other toxins made by our addiction to consumption.

In the U.S. we call ourselves a democracy, but our system of government is actually democratic capitalism, and we call ourselves consumers. Your money is the vote that counts. What money buys is energy, resources, and pollution. To grow the economy is to increase energy and resource consumption and pollution production. The ludicrous idea that we can continue to grow the economy is suicide. If we are to survive, we need to rapidly shrink the global economy. I realize that this is heresy, but heresy is often reality.

The new generation growing up in the digital age hold great promise, but they're facing immense obstacles, most of which very few in the community are aware of. They've grown up in an age of consumption that's deeply ingrained in our culture. When I see millions of people protesting in the streets, I'm wondering how their gardens are. I'm wondering what their overall environmental footprint is. I'm wondering what kinds of jobs they have. I'm wondering what their individual contributions are to the sustainable sustenance of civilization. I'm wondering how much they actually know about the physics of climate change. I'm wondering how much they know about the multitude of toxins we're pumping into our environment. I'm wondering if they understand the true urgency for adaptation to the immense changes soon to be upon us and the true need for austerity in the face of overwhelming consumption addiction. All the good intentions in the world ain't worth two dead rats. It's not enough to know what needs to get done; we need to actually get it done, and we need to get it done now.

"Wisdom without action is daydreaming. Action without wisdom is a nightmare."