

Book Review - Shyr Chui

Book review - Voluntary Simplicity

By Duane Elgin, Harper, 2010

There has never been a better time to hear the message this book offers its reader. Intuitively we already understand that our time as a global human species is under threat, whether from climate change, overpopulation, peak oil, water scarcity or pollution. The earth is closed system and the debt incurred by hundreds of years of “overconsumption” is overdue.

So, what should be our response? Elgin’s classic exhorts us to adopt a different mindset, to eschew conventional materialism and the seemingly insane cult of “more”, exchanging it instead for a slower, simpler, and ultimately more rewarding lifestyle emotionally, spiritually and communally.

Elgin presents very clearly the reasons why humans cannot simply continue living as it has, injecting us with both a sense of urgency and corporate responsibility but rather than leaving us in a state of fear and hopelessness, he offers concrete ways in which we as individuals, communities and nations can alter our course to destruction by adopting a voluntary lifestyle of simplicity.

Chapter headings:

- Cool lifestyle for hot planet
- Pioneers of green living
- Living voluntarily
- Living simply
- The world at the tipping point
- Deep simplicity and the human journey
- Living in a green world

Favorite quote:

“To live *sustainably*, we must live efficiently - not misdirecting or squandering the Earth’s precious resources. To live *efficiently*, we must live peacefully, for military expenditures represent an enormous diversion of resources from basic human needs. To live *peacefully*, we must live with a reasonable degree of equity, or fairness, for it is unrealistic to think that, in a

communications-rich world, several billion persons will accept living in absolute poverty while another billion lives in extravagant excess.”

Recommended?

Definitely. Read it and reset your course. Your future self and descendants will thank you for it.

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