

It's Time to Improve the End by Jim Grapek

Well, so far, the data coming in for 2009 conservatively shows that more than 20 percent of Americans experienced a 25 percent or greater loss of household income - without a financial cushion - over the prior year.

Put another way, for the first time – and I'll like you to think about this for a minute - a huge number of Americans are in deep trouble. I'm even seeing this here in Washington, DC, which means it's pretty bad. And I don't think the evening news or the media is conveying the true gravity of what's happening. Yet, you can feel it. More and more families are now facing utter economic ruin; out of money, no jobs or savings, their retirement accounts gone and no relief in sight. In other words, they have no way to earn a living. I contend there's no need for things to be this way.

If I may digress for a minute, if you look into the etymology of the phrase, "earning a living", it turns out that it is really shorthand for "earning the right to live?" Yup. This lovely phrase comes to us courtesy of feudal times. Because the truth is, it wasn't too long ago when only the nobility were entitled to eat regularly - and all others were expected to die prematurely because they couldn't "earn the right to live". Kind of reframes things, doesn't it?

So why are we still thinking with a feudal mindset?

Jumping back in history for another moment, if I may, part of the reason this mentality came about – apart from the general callousness and arrogant ways of that class - can be traced back to early science and the Royal Society's Great Second Law of Thermodynamics. I'm serious. This law demonstrated *entropy* – and stated that all energy machines in the world eventually ran down. Thus, the scientists of the time erroneously concluded that energy wealth and life support were continuously being depleted and would eventually run out. This 'lack' mentality came to permeate society... and was the cause of many wars and countless deaths.

Anyway, we need to change this "lack" mentality for a number of reasons. First, nobody should have to "earn the right to live". Aren't we all born with that? And second, today we understand that entropy is only half the equation. In truth, there is no true shortage of energy or anything else. There is – or at least there can be if people demand it – more than enough for everyone. Buckminster Fuller first proved this more than fifty years ago – and then scientists who came after him. What everyone needs to understand is that scarcity and lack are contrived – they are political tools designed to benefit a few. Guess which few? <LOL>

In his book *Spaceship Earth*, Fuller also points out that mass production only works if you have mass consumption. And while the two have indeed improved our quality of life – they're far from the Holy Grail they've been touted to be. Why? As futurist Alvin Toffler told us, you cannot advance technology without doing the same to the society and giving proper consideration to the human and cultural elements. For the most part, since the industrial age began, there's been a tremendous focus on mass produced technology

while the human element has been sorely overlooked – and that’s especially true today. For example, a trillion dollar cell phone industry has insisted that their phones, antennas and towers are completely safe – never mind that brain cancer is now the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in kids. Yet, any of the world’s serious research scientists will tell you that it’s NOT safe to undertake a study on their safety; they are pressured not to do so or face losing their jobs or funding. So far the pressure has been working. As recently as 2008, there was not even one safety study being done in the United States. (I would like to add – what I don’t get is that don’t all of the management people and executives live in this world, too? Don’t they have families and friends they care about?)

To wrap up, I would like to share a remark Henry David Thoreau made some 100 years ago when asked what he thought of technology. I think it still holds up today. “Technology”, he said, “is but an improved means towards an unimproved end”. Hits home, doesn’t it?

So how about it? Are you ready to join me in improving the end? I mean seriously... if we don’t do that soon, tell me -- what's the point?