THE FLAME TREE PROJECT
To Save Life on Earth

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A planetwide 15-year strategy for ordinary people to reduce consumption, increase self-reliance and achieve personal health and ecological security

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To
The memory of Mohandas K. Gandhi
For his visionary leadership and fearless love

Fear of the Truth has led humankind to the brink of extinction
Only the Truth, lived fearlessly, can save us now

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth. The ecological evidence now indicates that human extinction may occur sometime during the period between 2025 and 2050. Or, if extinction does not occur, some scattered remnant human populations will eke out a miserable existence on a devastated Earth. Moreover, we have a very narrow timeframe (until about 2020) to achieve dramatic changes in the way that we live if we are to avoid the tipping points that will make this catastrophe inevitable.

The ecological evidence that points to this future is not presented here in detail because it is readily available in a wide variety of books and journal articles, from concerned scientists and elsewhere. In the box titled 'World on the Brink' on pages 3-4, however, we have given a summary of this multifaceted global crisis. In essence, humankind has travelled 99% of the way down a dead end and it is now time for us to turn around and to make our way carefully and intelligently out of this impending catastrophe.

The Flame Tree Project is a comprehensive and integrated 15-year worldwide strategy to prevent human extinction and to nurture life on Earth. If you are one of the people who already comprehends that catastrophe is imminent, then you are invited to participate in The Flame Tree Project by considering the principles and guidelines outlined below and then working out how to apply them in your own unique situation. If, after reading this document and considering any of the evidence that you wish to consult, you decide that The Flame Tree Project is not for you, then your decision not to participate is deeply respected.

The core of The Flame Tree Project is the action taken by individuals, households and communities in the industrialised countries. Complementary action by farmers, businesspeople, scientists/technologists, governments and community groups in these countries will greatly enhance these initiatives and this project also offers suggestions for individuals involved in these sectors to consider.

The Flame Tree Project is not about lobbying the government to fix things nor is it a 'ten easy ways to change your light globes' approach to saving the world. It is designed to help you think, feel, plan and act for yourself. In a world that is still largely pretending that life will go on as usual, we need to respond to the danger and switch our mentality to 'state of emergency' mode in which, without panic, we consider all of our activities and contributions in light of the immediate priority of planetary, and therefore personal, survival. The Flame Tree Project's suggestions for action are largely very simple, but the number of issues to consider may look daunting at first. If so, check out the 'Getting Started' pages at the end of this document for help. Sitting down with your family, household or some friends to work out your plan may give you the opportunity to talk things through and create a sense of shared aims. Take as many sessions as you want to work out what you want to do. Give yourself time to get used to thinking and feeling differently about things you are planning to change.

The main text of this document focuses on 'what to do'. The explanations given in the boxes throughout the text are offered for those interested in some of the reasoning behind our principles and suggestions. If these are not your style, feel free to skip over them! And if we suggest something with which you do not agree, we ask you to consider leaving this or these things aside and participating on the basis of what does appeal.

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World on the Brink: Key Threats to Our Survival

Use of fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas) has led to global warming and ongoing dangerous climate instability, which is worsening at a rate far faster than predicted and, if left unchecked, will lead to the extinction of most species of life on Earth (and the death of most, if not all, humans) over the next 40 years (to 2050) as lifeforms are unable to adapt quickly enough to radical changes in local climates, natural land and sea-based food chains collapse and agriculture becomes impossible. Governments are afraid to stand up to perverse business interests and possible loss of voter popularity and are therefore accepting a human-induced global warming target of 2 degrees or even 3 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, despite scientists' warnings of devastating loss of life at these levels and the virtual inevitability of 'runaway climate change', in which the planet itself releases massive amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, with many extra degrees of heating likely to cause 'a mass extinction event'. It appears that politicians (like many others) feel safer gaining short-term social approval than responding to genuinely dangerous and non-negotiable physical imperatives. Meanwhile, the current global temperature of .8 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels is already melting the Arctic at a rate 100 years ahead of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predictions with an inevitable rise to 1.4 degrees in the pipeline because of the effect of climate inertia. This may already be enough to tip the balance into climate catastrophe. It has been suggested that a decrease in global temperature to not more than .5 degrees above the pre-industrial level is actually what is necessary to achieve a safe climate, with the Arctic intact, although there is no clear feasible method for humans to reduce the global temperature to this level with any speed. This problem aside, it is considered that we need to achieve a global zero-carbon economy by 2020 at the latest to have any chance of averting climate catastrophe.

Fresh surface and ground water is a limited natural resource which has been chronically depleted, diverted and poisoned by wasteful corporate, industrial, agricultural and urban practices, and water 'starvation' is a reality for an increasing proportion of the world's human communities and ecosystems. Desertification and land salination are increasing globally and unless significant revegetation, local sustainable agriculture and local sustainable rainwater harvesting is introduced globally by 2020, it is thought that global hydrological systems, dependent on plants to save and return water to inland areas, will collapse. With inland areas desertified and coastal areas increasingly flooded by rising sea levels, this will leave an ever-diminishing amount of livable land for the current world population to share. Legal, violent and nonviolent conflicts over water are already occurring all over the world.

The use of nuclear power and nuclear weaponry (including depleted uranium weapons) has led to permanent life-threateningly high levels of radiation in countries such as the Ukraine, Belarus, Iraq, Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia, while countries with nuclear power stations still have no safe way to permanently store nuclear waste or prevent radioactive contamination in the event of accident or deliberate acts of war. Meanwhile, military activities of all types are chronic contributors to environmental destruction and social destabilisation, and weapons manufacturers look upon increasing conflict over 'what's left of the planet' as an opportunity for making 'profit'.

The global industrial agricultural and fishing systems have led to the severe degradation of land fertility, nitrogen and pesticide poisoning of waterways and oceanic 'dead zones', overfishing and destruction of marine food chains and the ongoing destruction of forests. It has also increased risks of epidemic disease through monoculture cropping and the exceptionally cruel practice of the factory farming of animals.

Industrial food processing and the aggressive marketing of unhealthy 'edible products' has led to increasing levels of obesity and chronic disease in industrial countries, an ironic counterpoint to the outright starvation and associated disease of many of the people in non-industrialised countries, where one child dies every five seconds of hunger-related causes.

The belief that money equals security and power and the desperate addiction of many to this 'drug' has led to the development of a global economic system that runs on fear, violence and ever-increasing consumption and wastefulness, as real physical and human resources are turned into money at frightening speed regardless of the cost to individuals, local economies, social fabric and the actual planetary resource base. Meanwhile, the advent of peak oil and the need to end fossil fuel use mean that this global 'anti-economic' system is about to lose the cheap fuel for long-distance transportation that has made it possible, leaving all of us who have become overly-dependent on complex machine technologies and far-away markets vulnerable to sudden deprivation of resources without the skills, infrastructure and confidence necessary to look after ourselves successfully using local resources. Despite many technical promises, there are no genuine alternatives to highly energy-dense oil.

At the deepest psychological level, and to a greater or lesser extent in each individual, fear of feeling our emotional reactions to conflict and traumatic events is causing denial of the dangers, creating a sense of helplessness and paralysing people's will to act sensibly to avert impending catastrophe. The synergistic effect of all of the above leads us to expect economic, social and environmental collapse sooner rather than later – predictions based on studying individual factors, 'all else being equal', are unlikely to prove accurate.

Is it all too hard and too late? Who knows? … but we believe that The Flame Tree Project offers a relatively simple way forward for ordinary people, with a realistic projection of where we need to get to in all relevant areas of our lives to have a genuine chance of saving life on Earth.

The following books and youtube video provide details on many of the issues outlined above:
David Spratt & Philip Sutton *Climate Code Red: The Case for Emergency Action*, 2008
Maude Barlow *Blue Convenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*, 2007
Felicity Lawrence *Eat Your Heart Out: Why the Food Business is Bad for the Planet and your Health*, 2008
Richard Heinberg *Peak Everything* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybRz91eimTg

WHAT CAN INDIVIDUALS, HOUSEHOLDS AND COMMUNITIES DO?
How Does the Project Work?

The core of The Flame Tree Project is that participating individuals commit themselves to reducing their personal consumption of resources by 10% per year, while increasing their personal self-reliance by 10% per year, for each of the 15 years after they decide to join the project.

Thus, in the year immediately prior to your first year of participation (year 0), your consumption would be regarded as 100%. In year 1, your target would be to reduce year 0's consumption by 10%. In year 2 you would aim to reduce year 1's consumption by 10% and so on. At the end of 15 years, you would be consuming just 20% of year 0's consumption but, if decisions are made wisely year by year, the 20% consumption by the end of year 15 will be genuinely workable and represent the 20% of resources that are most valued by you and most relevant to the ecological and economic circumstances of the time. We have included 'Getting Started' pages at the end of the document to help you work out your goals for each year in both reducing your consumption and increasing your self-reliance. These will be an easy reference by which you can monitor your progress throughout, and at the end of, each year. It is not necessary for your 10% targets to be mathematically precise – simply keep in mind that the 10% figure represents a *significant but manageable* number of things to do differently each year. Unless you *want* to move faster, in the first few years you will barely notice the effect of changes on your day-to-day life. Although changes in later years will be more challenging these will be made easier by the fact that you are already accustomed to the previous year's level of resource use.

The ultimate target figure of 20% might seem absolutely impossible: how can you get everything you need at this level? But The Flame Tree Project is not about self-denial: it is about making sure that you identify precisely what you need and then working out how to get all of this through self-reliant individual and community effort while keeping the Earth you need to live on! If 20% still seems impossible, would you be willing to start anyway and see 'how low you can go'? You are free to discontinue at any time.

If you are a committed environmentalist who has already done much to change the way you live, you may wish to focus on areas in which you have not yet made changes or consider yourself starting from year 2, 3 or whatever is appropriate to your situation.

In the text we have given a number of examples of ways to reduce consumption and become increasingly self-reliant. However, the project asks you to be creative in working out your own ways to achieve your 10% targets.

REDUCING CONSUMPTION: When making the decisions to reduce consumption, you are asked to consider making cuts every year in each of the following seven resource areas:
1. water
2. household energy (such as electricity and gas)
3. vehicle fuel
4. paper
5. plastic
6. metals
7. meat

1. Water: An individual who usually showers every day will probably be able to reduce their water use by 10% in year 1 by simply not showering on one day of the week (and, if necessary, by using a damp cloth to give themselves a wash/wipe over on the seventh day). Could you forego two showers per week in year 2? And so on. Or would you save water in some other way? Do you think that you could eventually reach a target of 20 litres per day for all uses except your garden? An easy way to achieve this is to stop using your taps for each water use and, instead, fill a bucket daily and use bottles or cups to pour water when and where you need it. Also consider using less soap and shampoo which take extra water to wash off – adequate hygiene can generally be achieved with water alone.

2. Household energy: An individual or household that usually uses a range of household electrical appliances will probably be able to reduce their energy use by 10% in year 1 by simply not using one or more items at all: would it be possible for you to never use an electric clothes dryer (and to hang wet clothes outside, on a clothes rack or in an open, empty wardrobe)? Would it be possible for you to never use an electric dishwasher, a clothes iron, a microwave oven, a toaster and/or a vacuum cleaner (perhaps by using a carpet sweeper or by removing carpets to allow use of a broom)? Would it be possible for you to not watch television any more or to turn off your air conditioning and/or hot water service (and to heat small quantities of water for specific purposes)? Are there electrical items that you would still like to use but which you could use less? If you still want television, would you be able to watch it for one day less each week? Could you fully switch off or unplug all electrical items when you are not using them? What package of measures would you use in year 2?

Life without a Freezer: As the two crucial planetary freezers, the Arctic and Antarctic, melt away before our very eyes, you may consider whether or not you really need that 'fundamental' of modern technological living, your refrigerator. Frozen and reheated foods lack nutrition and, at the risk of contradicting the world authority Homer Simpson, chocolate ice-cream is not one of the basic building blocks of life! Most people shop regularly enough to make living without a fridge easy and small changes in routine can ensure that more perishable foods are eaten early. If fridge-free living appeals to you, here are some possibilities:
- if being fridgeless in summer seems too challenging, consider the cooler months when cold air is on your side
- evaporative cooling: in warmer times, use damp towels, rewetted when necessary, to keep things cool. For example, hang a damp towel from the top rack in the main part of your fridge and another on the inside of the door against items such as milk. Leave fridge door open somewhat to allow an air current on the towels
- use insulated boxes (eskies etc.) covered with damp towels and place these in the coolest areas of the house, inside or outside
- leave windows open overnight wherever you store fresh food to maximise the impact of cool night air
- store vegetables such as celery, silverbeet and parsley upright in appropriately sized containers with a small amount of water in the bottom to keep them fresh
- grow your own vegetables and herbs that can be picked fresh and require no storage
- if you eat fresh meat or fish, eat this on the day you buy it.

Technology: Simplicity is Strength is Survival

In the modern world sophisticated technology is presented as giving you power and providing you with security. However, consider the true story told in the Australian film *Rabbit-Proof Fence* of three young Aboriginal girls who, having been stolen from their families, crossed hundreds of miles of Western Australian desert alone to return home. As well as great courage and determination, these technologically 'simple' hunter-gatherers had real survival skills that gave them self-confidence in a situation that would have rendered others powerless. Greater self-reliance, and using lower levels of technology, mean being less vulnerable to environmental shocks and economic hardship. Becoming psychologically accustomed to doing things for yourself will decrease your tendency to panic and feel powerless in the challenging times to come. You may have noticed that The Flame Tree Project emphasises technology *reduction* rather than simple transference of all current technology to renewable power sources. There are two reasons for this: 1. for many applications, renewable energy alternatives are either not currently available or are very expensive, and we need to immediately stop paying businesses for their use of fossil fuels even if this is inconvenient to us in the short term, 2. *all* technology has considerable negative impact on the Earth's biological systems so it is imperative not to use more than is genuinely necessary, regardless of the amount of renewable electricity available or how energy-efficient the technology may be to operate. (For example, it takes 400,000 litres of water to manufacture one car and the hi-tech industry is a chronic user and polluter of water.) Here are five principles to consider in relation to the technology you use:
1. does it help you do something you actually need to do? (pretty lights, machines that go 'ping' and innumerable automatic options do not necessarily serve a functional purpose)
2. is it possible to achieve what you want with simpler technology or natural biology? (In most cases, eating healthy food means not needing heart surgery.)

3. how much damage does the technology do to the biological environment that is our most basic survival net?
4. is the technology hardy and/or easily repaired?
5. does the technology weaken you mentally or physically by deskilling you or by doing harm to your body?

3. Vehicle fuel: An individual or household that usually uses a car every day will probably be able to reduce their consumption of vehicle fuel by 10% in year 1 by not driving a private vehicle to work on one day of the week. What are your alternatives? Could you walk (or run)? Could your ride a bicycle? Is there a public transport option available to you? Would you be able to get someone else to drive you on one day and, in exchange, could you drive them on another day? Is hitchhiking a possibility? If driving your car less in relation to getting to and from work is not a realistic option for you, are there other activities in which you engage which might still be undertaken without use of a car? Are there some things you might give up doing to save fuel? And what package of measures might you use in year 2?

4. Paper: An individual or household that usually buys a newspaper every day will probably be able to reduce their paper use by 10% in year 1 by simply not buying a newspaper on one day of the week. If two neighbours participating in The Flame Tree Project cancel their newspaper delivery on a different day, then two individuals or households could share the one newspaper. Would you forego two days of newspapers a week in year 2? Or do something else?

5. Plastic: An individual or household might reduce their consumption of plastic by, for example, declining plastic bags from shopping centres and by not buying food (such as soft drink) that is packaged in plastic. It is more important to eliminate low quality, single use plastic rather than, for example, plastic used to make a high quality durable container. Do you have other ideas that would work for you?

6. Metals: An individual or household might reduce their consumption of metals, for example, by not buying certain consumer items such as clothes dryers and lawn mowers, and by not buying canned food and drinks. There are many products packaged in metal spray cans that are harmful or unnecessary. Can you go without these? Would you be able to repair electrical appliances rather than replace them, go without appliances that break down or buy necessary replacements secondhand? What else would you consider doing?

7. Meat: An individual or household can progressively reduce their consumption of meat by simply eating a vegetarian diet on an increasing number of days of the week.

When considering the ways in which you might make the reductions, be aware of your own preferences. If you like meat and television, hang on to them and consider making bigger reductions in other areas. The Flame Tree Project is based on principles and guidelines and, to be successful, requires each participant to use their own initiative.

Rubbish: Reducing your consumption as above will reduce your rubbish but can you think of ways of reducing it even further? One simple and vitally important way of doing so would be to compost all fruit and vegetable scraps to create the next generation of soil. If you tried, do you think that you could produce no rubbish at all? (Most centralised recycling is energy intensive, polluting and often does not even occur, particularly in the case of plastics. Recycling is therefore not a solution to the overuse and waste of material resources.)

Real Luxury
In modern industrial society the desire for ever increasing numbers of luxuries has overwhelmed people's awareness of their natural, basic needs. A lot of 'little' luxuries add up to an ever-increasing burden on the environment and on your own physical health. The more luxuries you allow yourself, the more they become standard ways of living that no longer give you the relief or 'special' feelings you are looking for. Luxuries are best enjoyed if they are simple, natural and occasional. If you regularly clean yourself with a damp washer, an occasional full hot bath will really mean something! And the best luxury of all is to see the frosty ice crystals glinting in the morning sun, the leafy green of the river bank…. Nature's beauty is genuinely special because it is given to you free.

Is Reduced Consumption *Really* Necessary?
The simple answer is 'yes'. Although it might be tempting to believe that switching to renewable energy will solve all of our problems, greenhouse gas emissions are only one contributor to impending climate catastrophe and the global crisis overall. Also, so far, governments and business are not acknowledging the reality of the emergency we are facing and moving quickly and decisively on the issue of carbon dioxide

emissions, let alone other serious ecological threats such as fresh water depletion, nuclear power, toxic waste or forest destruction. At present, every time you buy a factory-made item you are rewarding someone for using coal, oil or nuclear power to produce it and oil to transport it. China is developing more coal mines to feed the factories that are producing vast numbers of low quality items that maximise 'profit'. The money you hand over for these items will be of no use to investors in a world lacking water and devastated by climatic extremes (drought, floods, hurricanes, wildfires and rising sea levels) but nonetheless the addictive temptation to keep making more money sooner means they do not have the personal power to stop, think and change. A less materialistic lifestyle will be of benefit to you personally, and it will also be the quickest and most efficient way to change business practices that can no longer be sustained by an Earth that has been repeatedly abused and now has very little left to give.

INCREASING SELF-RELIANCE: In addition to making reductions, it is important for an individual participating in The Flame Tree Project to consider ways in which they can become more self-reliant both as an individual and within the context of emerging 'Flame Tree communities' to create a new, positive and genuinely life-sustaining future. Do you think you would be able to become 10% more self-reliant by the end of year 1? The key areas in which individual and community self-reliance will need to be developed, or in which important decisions will need to be made in relation to self-reliance, are the following (but you do not need to work on all of these at once!):
1. health: physical, emotional and psychological, and spiritual
2. food
3. revegetation
4. water
5. soil creation
6. clothing and footwear production
7. technology and toolmaking
8. housing
9. education
10. recreation, holidays and travel
11. communication
12. population and reproduction
13. children
14. economics and finance
15. building community
16. self, community and planetary defence

1. Health: Do you know how to keep yourself healthy without dependence on medical systems that are highly interventionist? Good physical health requires high quality air, food and water, correct posture and movement patterns, and regular exercise. And these all depend on the emotional capacity to choose life-enhancing options. If you need emotional support to make changes, identify someone you trust to listen well and ask them to listen to you in silence while you focus on yourself and talk about what makes changes difficult for you. Only you know how to truly solve your problems: ask the listener to let you do so.

If you need to consult a health practitioner have you considered seeing a homeopath, naturopath, herbal medicine practitioner, Chinese medicine practitioner or an Ayurvedic health practitioner? These health modalities aim to identify and tackle causes while strengthening your own immune system with natural medicines that have no side effects. For posture and movement problems, consider Feldenkrais and Alexander Technique: these modalities help you become aware of, and to correct, your brain's control of movement patterns so as to avoid problems of this type in future. Osteopathy and Chiropractic manually correct mechanical abnormalities in the relationship between muscles and bones while Rolfing corrects distortions in the muscle fascia. Other modalities such as Rosen Therapy and some types of massage encourage talking and/or emotional release in response to physical attention given by the practitioner. And modalities such as yoga and Tai Chi help you learn to be aware of your body in a variety of subtle ways. Finally, Natural Vision Improvement, widely taught by Janet Goodrich, can cure long or short-sightedness and other vision impairments, making glasses unnecessary.

Curing the Incurables: There are many sensible, well documented and scientifically explained dietary therapies for the prevention and cure of what some people consider to be incurable diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, arthritis and addictions. Therapies include those developed by [Max Gerson](link), Rudolph Breuss and those documented by Paavo Airola. The Buteyko breathing method eradicates or dramatically reduces breathing dysfunctionalities such as asthma, and improves many conditions caused or exacerbated by an incorrect carbon dioxide/oxygen balance in the bloodstream. Chlorine dioxide - created and used according to Jim Humble's Miracle Mineral Supplement (MMS) protocols - destroys most pathogens in the body, including viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungal infections, cheaply and quickly without damaging side

effects. MMS has been used to cure AIDS and malaria in Africa and elsewhere. The MMS website is cited on page 23.

Caring for Your Vitals: If you wish to avoid damage to your lungs, heart, liver, kidneys, pancreas, brain and natural emotional functioning, consider giving up the following: tobacco, marijuana, alcohol, caffeine, chocolate, soft drinks and other intense sugar 'hits', as well as other legal or illegal artificially stimulating or suppressive drugs. If you are seriously addicted to these substances, we acknowledge that this will be difficult, although Gerson Therapy should help you deal with the physical aspects of the addiction: uncovering and healing emotional damage that has led to the addiction will also help. Alternatively, you may be able to substitute more physically benign and natural activities to gain emotional reassurance and physical relief (eg. physical activities, reading, music, meditation, and herbal teas).

Giving your nose a break: If you wish to care for your skin and the sensitive membranes of your nose and lungs, consider not using products with concentrated fragrances - perfumes, aftershave, soaps, shampoos, moisturisers, laundry detergents, deodorisers and incense. These items may not smell strong to you but this is because of desensitisation – if you want to smell more, use less! If needed, low or no fragrance alternatives are generally available. Natural body odours are not always pleasant but they are not actually harmful, and covering the toxic smells of car exhaust and furniture polish, for example, with perfumes only adds to the stress on your physical system. The only true 'air freshener' is fresh air!

Household poisons: Many household products are either highly toxic or contain at least some ingredients that are detrimental to your health. Would you be able to forego these products? They include batteries, poisons (such as herbicides and pesticides put on your garden as well as rodent poisons and insect sprays), cleaning agents, furniture polishes, moth balls (a known carcinogen), paints, personal deodorants, toilet deodorisers, hair sprays, skin moisturisers, soaps, shampoos and toothpastes. (For a more complete list, consult your local environment group.)

Sleep: In village Africa everyone is in bed as soon as it gets dark and up the instant it gets light. Your body needs sleep to rest and regenerate. Would you be able to go to bed earlier (and save the energy on electric lighting as well)? You will be surprised how readily your body learns to use the extra rest time, assuming you haven't found something else to do in the dark!

Emotional and Psychological Health: Emotional and psychological problems are rarely solved easily and in one way these are the biggest challenge in life for all of us: our mental state utterly shapes our behaviour in the physical world and human survival is perhaps most dependent on the inner workings of our minds.

The Uncentred Self: Chronic Desensitization and the Denial of Reality

Sometimes psychological disorders are caused by genetic malfunction, physical damage or nutritional deficiency. However, a large variety of common and less common emotional problems, as well as perceptual and behavioural disorders, are caused by the suppression of the child's capacity to feel its natural feelings, pay attention to itself and act out of its own independent, communicative and cooperative 'self-centre'. This suppression may occur as a result of obvious physical, sexual or emotional abuse, but it is also caused by more subtle, and socially accepted, behaviours such as distracting the child from crying in reaction to being frightened, hurt or frustrated, or forcing or manipulating the child into obedience (causing the loss of its independent mind). Fundamentally it is fear that our natural independent selves are somehow dangerous and unlovable that causes emotional, perceptual and behavioural distortion: unconsciously, and in ways specific to each individual, the fear of each human child forces it into conflict with its natural, genetically programmed self, and this creates an unexpressed burden of pain. As the child grows up, this emotional burden manifests in many dysfunctional ways. Sometimes individuals project their negative feelings onto others who are vulnerable and innocent but who make easy targets to blame, some individuals express their powerlessness or self-hatred by 'deliberately' (though unconsciously) 'getting in their own way' and causing themselves unnecessary pain, and some individuals express their fury at having to live life in fear by seeking to violently destroy the lives of others or nature. The unconscious conflict within the individual, caused by genetic and socially exacerbated fear, contributes to increased levels of conflict within society as a whole and with the Earth's natural environment. One particularly debilitating and dangerous outcome of the suppression of natural emotions is desensitisation: children learn that they gain most parental approval (or least disapproval) when they *do not* take in or react to information from the real world independently. Individuals most seriously affected by this disorder are literally terrified to acknowledge reality if it contradicts the cultural norms with which they have grown up. Being frightened of acknowledging the pain of conflict leaves them utterly incapable of recognising and dealing sensibly with real threats (such as those posed by the current global crisis) to their lives and health.

Understandably, many people seek relief from emotional pain and behavioural disorder by using mental distractions (watching television, for example) or, in more extreme cases, psychiatric drugs: these provide immediate relief from unpleasant feelings and difficult symptoms. However, they are not a long term solution as they often cause an increase in symptom severity over time, or cause the symptoms suppressed in one place to 'pop up' somewhere else. In our experience, most emotional, perceptual and behavioural problems are caused by loss or lack of self-awareness, therefore therapies that encourage self-awareness are the most effective in restoring the natural balance of the psyche. Self-awareness is not a particular 'right' way of being. Rather, it means being aware of and allowing yourself to be how you *actually are* - in your weakness and strength; confusion and clarity; pettiness and purity; pain, anger and sorrow; relief and joy. Self-awareness means noticing how all the different parts of you – physicality, feelings, thoughts, memory and actions – link up and relate to one another. It means remembering the things that have happened in the past and understanding how they effect your behaviour in the present. It is a process of natural growth, healing and change, rather than one of enforced 'improvement'. Talking through your experiences, memories and associations is one way to increase self-awareness, as is noticing the way emotional problems are expressed physically in tension, pain and illness. Healing requires time to yourself and safe spaces in which to express feelings, by yourself or with someone capable of calmness or quiet sympathy. Feelings of fear and powerlessness are best dealt with by focussing your attention on them: if you allow yourself to feel these things they will eventually pass, leaving you in a naturally more positive frame of mind. 'Trying' to always be positive is not a good recipe for achieving mental strength and stability: flowing with the ups and downs is a more natural and stronger approach.

Fear and Fearlessness

When you can feel that 'I have done everything that I can'
You know that you have reached the limit set by your own fear
So you now have a choice
You can accept this limit
Or you can *feel your fear* until it fades and you can break this limit
The latter choice requires courage
But it is the only path to fearlessness
And to the realisation of your True Self

Spiritual Health – Connecting with the Whole: At the heart of all spirituality is a sense of being connected to something greater than one's individual living self – to humanity, all of life, a spirit world beyond death, the gods, God, Truth, the universe and its evolution. A positive and self-reliant spirituality recognises that while inspiration and guidance may be gained from the wider world, the spirit of the whole manifests in each individual. This means that restoring and increasing one's capacity to communicate and feel connected to oneself is a powerful route to heartfelt communion with the whole. In addition to more usual spiritual activities, powerfully truthful and inspiring music and art can help you keep in touch with the deeper things in life, as can experiences in the natural world. Can you find ways of listening more closely to your 'inner voice' and feeling your love for the whole?

2. Food: Your health and the health of the planet depend vitally on the food and water that you consume. Healthy food should meet the following eight criteria. It should be:
1. biodynamically or organically grown
2. whole (not unhealthily processed or refined)
3. vegetarian
4. fresh
5. healthily prepared (eg. not cooked in animal fat or vegetable oil, not reheated, not microwaved, and containing no added salt or sugar)
6. appropriately combined (eg. for acid/alkaline balance)
7. in season (to minimise energy used on storage), and
8. locally grown (to minimise 'food miles')

Do you feel able to start (or keep!) changing to a diet based on these principles?

Real, Simple Recipes: Preparing and cooking your own meals from fresh produce will keep you healthy and decrease packaging and energy use. For those interested, here is how to make your own ***'No Knead' sourdough bread:*** (Sourdough bread uses naturally-occurring micro-organisms, instead of yeast, as a raising agent, and is healthier for you.) Create sourdough 'starter' by adding water to a tablespoon of flour to make a paste. Leave this to 'sit' at room temperature for one to three days until it smells fermented. (Don't worry if it smells a bit 'icky'.) Mix starter with three cups of flour (combinations of organic wholemeal wheat, rye and spelt are good) and enough water to make a soft dough. Cover bowl and let dough sit for 12 or 24

hours depending on atmospheric temperature. Mix risen dough briefly with a metal spoon in place of hand-kneading. Scatter flour in a bread tin and on the surface of the ball of dough and then press dough into tin (butter or oil can be used to stop the dough sticking to the tin but flour is healthier). Save a tablespoon of dough to use as starter for your next dough. Do not clean the mixing bowl – simply scrape the sides and add new flour. Bake today's loaf at 160 degrees Celsius for 1 hr 20 mins (or bake the bread 'flat' on a pizza tray for just 45 mins). To save power, use a smaller electric oven or a cast-iron camp oven on a single gas flame. You could also bake more loaves at once for yourself or others in your community. If you are not baking daily, divide a tablespoon of soured dough into small pieces and let these dry out. They will last a week at least and can be used as an effective 'dry' starter for your next loaf. For the *Ultimate Unprocessed Breakfast Cereal* mix together equal amounts of the following unhulled organic grains (unhulled or whole grainseeds, oilseeds, pulses and unshelled nuts are live seeds that have not had their husks removed: they naturally retain their freshness and contain maximum nutrition compared to seeds that have been hulled, split, ground, rolled, shelled, pearled and/or polished!): whole millet, whole rye grain, whole spelt grain and whole barley grain (whole oats and buckwheat are too 'scratchy' to be swallowed comfortably, unless you are a horse, but you may find other suitable softer-husked grains). In a saucepan, place one-third to one cup of mixed grains per person. Add water (two to three times the quantity of cereal) and soak overnight. At breakfast, bring cereal to the boil with added celery leaves if available then switch off heat and let cereal sit for ten minutes. (If you forget to soak the cereal, boil it for a few minutes before turning it off.) Serve and add freshly cracked organic walnuts or your preferred nuts and seeds. Make sure that you drink all of the water in which the cereal was cooked. If you add milk to the cereal, cook it in less water. The cooked cereal centres are quite soft but the husks do require you to exercise your jaw more than usual – we reckon the fresh, nutty taste and genuine fibre are well worth the extra time it takes to eat. 'Slow food' is good food.

To reiterate: if you wish to reduce your dependence on a medical system based on drugs and surgery, it is vital to consider what food you eat and how you prepare it. Also consider eating more raw food (this is not always as boring as it sounds). And finally, cooking food slowly on the lowest possible temperature does less nutritional damage to the food and uses the least possible energy.

Food Production: Do you feel able to start becoming self-reliant in food production? How good are you at growing fruit, vegetables and nuts, and keeping chooks and/or goats? Is it possible for you to establish a vegetable patch in your backyard? Do you have room for fruit and nut trees? Do you have any neighbours who might be willing to remove shared fences to create a larger garden and orchard? Is there a community space that you can use?

You will need vegetables, fruits and nuts for each season of the year and will need to plan your planting and harvesting schedule accordingly. You will need traditional (not genetically modified) seed varieties: for information, see Seed Freedom.   And you will need to start planning how to cool-store fruit and vegetables. For the sake of your health it is vital that you do not use any poisons (such as herbicides and pesticides) on or near your food plants: you might wish to consult a book on growing organic or biodynamic food, or attend a course on permaculture or 'no dig gardens' to learn how to grow healthy food and how to deal with pests and disease naturally. Permaculture will also teach you how to design integrated local food, energy, material resource and housing systems.

Do you think that you can produce 10% of your own food in year 1? Fruit and nut trees take time to establish so it might depend on your capacities as a vegie gardener in the early years.

If it all feels a bit overwhelming, perhaps you can choose one thing and start with that. This is a 15-year plan!

The Self-Reliant City: Putting the Basics First

Relocalisation and renaturalisation of human society will be of key importance in achieving a stable, life-sustaining environment. Local, nature-based economies are certainly not new to humans and there are many inspiring examples even in recent history that remind us that it is both possible and often more desirable to live 'small' and self-reliant. Mass society has led to a pervasive sense of powerlessness amongst individuals who have been taught to be dependent consumers and do nothing to practically look after themselves. Many basic craft and living skills will need to be relearned. But is it really possible for large-scale cities to 'go local'? The principle of cities has always been to suck large amounts of natural resources from elsewhere to maintain them (and 'elsewhere' necessarily suffers increasing damage as a result), and city population levels are massively higher than at any other time in history. Nevertheless, efficient use of city land space for household food gardens, community allotments, fruit and nut orchards, and market gardens can provide a significant portion of city dwellers' food. Local farms surrounding cities will be able to provide extra foods (particularly grains and legumes) and natural clothing and building materials on a sustainable basis if they use organic polyculture, rather than industrial monoculture, methods. In the future, all metals will definitely be precious, but cities are currently full of excess cars that can be recycled into more useful and

necessary products such as gardening tools, bicycles and wind turbines. While The Flame Tree Project sees metal and plastic-based technologies as needing to be seriously curtailed, renewable electrical systems and cooking devices will definitely be needed for the cooking needs of such a large population – neither local forests, local tree plantations nor local biofuel production could sustainably keep up with this demand. Fundamentally, if a larger proportion of city-dwellers, beginning with each individual at their own home, takes responsibility for producing their own food (the most basic resource need) the economic structure of a city gains a firmer base for survival after which we can assess what other activities are both necessary and sustainable by our local and, at most, regional environments. The current global commercial system has created a distorted sense for most people living in industrial cities that there are plenty of resources available and always 'more where that came from'. How could we know differently when the supplies come from so far away? Once we are back living locally, we will be able to see for ourselves the limitations and possibilities of our actual environment to support us. Meanwhile, resources of the mind (such as information, knowledge and culture) that can be profitably shared by all (as opposed to physical resources which must necessarily be used with natural economy) can be shared vibrantly between city regions and within local city communities.

3. Revegetation: The place in which you now live was once a self-sustaining ecosystem. Of course you are now here and that has meant great changes. Apart from planting food plants, would you be able to find out what indigenous plants were in your area originally, and then track down seeds or seedlings to restore some of the original vegetation? This will attract indigenous insects, birds, mammals and reptiles as well. (And these will also fair better if you forego having a cat or dog.) How would your garden and the street look now? Different but natural and no grass to cut!

4. Water: Your body functions best on pure water. In today's world it is very difficult to access pristine water for drinking. Bottled water is not necessarily pure and is an environmental nightmare in terms of plastic use, transport and depletion of limited groundwater sources; surface water is increasingly contaminated by sewage, toxic waste from industrial agriculture and manufacturing, and by the deliberate addition of carcinogenic chlorine and fluoride, ostensibly in the interests of public health. Household water filters may be a short-term solution to some types of water pollution but these cost money, use energy and create extra waste. Large-scale filtration systems for recycling and desalinating water are highly problematic. Recycled water still contains toxic industrial substances and pharmaceuticals while desalination plants require vast amounts of electrical energy to run, create lethal toxic waste which is dumped back into the ocean and fail to treat any sewage that has already contaminated the sea water being desalinated. Also, large dams and diversions (such as pipelines) are energy, health and ecological disasters. ('Big' technical solutions create profits and/or socially lauded heroes but do nothing to help ordinary people to look after themselves using sensible, sustainable solutions!)

Collecting rainwater for drinking and cooking off a cleanable surface in your backyard may give you the healthiest water available in a city context. Otherwise you can achieve improvements in fresh water availability in the future by doing the following: 1. Conserve as much water as possible. Installing a rainwater tank and relying on your own tank water is the best way to encourage yourself in water economy. 2. Minimise or stop buying the products of industrial agriculture and manufacturing, all of which chronically waste and pollute water. 3. Never buy water (bottled or otherwise) if you have a choice – profit-making companies seek to waste water by increasing demand and providing what is left only to those who can pay. 4. Use sewage treatment that doesn't involve the use of water, such as composting toilets. 5. If you need to disinfect drinking water, use chlorine dioxide (by adding sodium chlorite solution – $NaClO_2$ - to the water) as a safe alternative to chlorine. 6. Resoil and revegetate as much urban landspace as you can, replacing the roofing, concrete and asphalt 'umbrella' with water porous earth and plants that contribute to the formation of local rain. Revegetation might include roof gardens and the reclaiming of roads for nut and fruit orchards: in the short term, suburban streets could easily be transformed into single lane roads without making vehicle access more difficult. 7. At the community level, reforest and revegetate your regional watersheds to ensure regional water supplies.

The Trouble with Concrete: The Disappearing Land-based Fresh Water Cycle
When we went to school we learned that water evaporated from the oceans, leaving its salt behind, and formed clouds which were blown inland which then fell as rain and flowed as fresh water back to the sea. However, more recently, the 'other half' of the hydrological cycle has been more fully understood – much fresh water is absorbed by trees and plant-rich soils, then recycled back into the atmosphere and local watersheds through transpiration and evaporation. This water does not naturally return to the ocean and is vital for the survival of much life on land. The Amazon Rainforest is known to create most of its own rain, and will collapse from drought, never to return, if deforestation continues past a certain point. At the more local level for most of us, increasing urbanisation creates a non-porous roofing, concrete and asphalt 'umbrella'

which directs fresh rainwater into drains that flow into the ocean and this water is permanently lost to the local freshwater cycle. The quicker we resoil and revegetate our cities, particularly by dramatically reducing road and car park space, the more chance we have of saving the fresh water we have left and restoring regular reliable rainfall over increasingly water-starved cities.

5. Soil Creation: You have two excellent sources of replenishment for the soil in your garden: composted fruit and vegetable scraps, and your own composted shit. (There seems little point being polite when the future of the world is at stake.) Since the advent of the environmentally disastrous flush toilet and the scientific discovery of 'germs', many people have come to fear shit as an unhygenic disease carrier and have lost their awareness of it as an important natural resource. If handled intelligently shit is not dangerous and its smell can be easily minimised or eradicated. In our experience soil made from fully composted shit is safe for growing vegetables, otherwise it can be used to fertilise fruit trees and other plants. If you wish to change your toilet arrangements to create your own soil there are five preliminary issues worth considering:
1. If taking responsibility for your own shit is impractical in your context (or beyond your capacity to contemplate emotionally at present), urine has an exceptionally high nitrogen content and can be placed on your vegetable scrap compost heap or diluted for direct use as a fertiliser.
2. Safely composted shit is that which has been magically transformed by natural processes from unpleasant, smelly brown stuff into clean, healthy soil. This process generally takes nine months to one year – you can trust your own eyes and nose to judge when the composting has been completed.
3. It is important that you separate composting shit from land-based drinking water sources (wells, streams, rivers, lakes) to avoid contamination. Avoid the 'burying' options that follow if you have drinking water sources close by.
4. For postural reasons, squatting to shit is preferable to sitting, as long as you can squat flat on your heels to avoid knee injury. An alternative to squatting in the following options is to use a portable camp toilet seat or a seat you construct for yourself.
5. If you use recycled toilet paper, collect and compost this separately for options a, b and c as it takes much longer than shit to break down; also consider using water or leaves to clean yourself (water is used throughout South Asia, for example, and some Africans use a stick!)

Here are four soil-creating toilet options, using different levels of technology:
a. *'Au Naturale'*: if you have space and privacy from possibly offended neighbours, dig narrow trenches over which you can squat and progressively fill, immediately covering each shit with soil. If there is any sign of animals digging up what you have buried, work out a way of preventing this. Leave any 'composting' area for nine months prior to planting with your preferred plants.
b. *The 'Flower Potty'*: indoors (with sensible precautions) or outdoors, shit into medium-sized earthenware or plastic plant pots and then store them on grass or dirt, so that worms can enter via holes in the pot and speed the composting process. Cover the stored pots thoroughly to eradicate smell, insect breeding and animal interest. Alternatively, use larger buckets with lids and drill some holes in the base to let the worms in.
c. *Bucket and Bury or 'Bin'*: shit into a manageably sized bucket with a lid, or under an enclosed toilet seat structure, and bury the contents in the garden when the bucket is full, ensuring no animal interference. Alternatively, empty your bucket into a compost bin (open to the ground but with no airholes) rotating to a second bin when the first is full.
d. *Commercial 'Waterless' Composting Toilets:* these cost money but are fully contained and can be installed in houses (preferably on a verandah) or in backyards that do not have garden space where simpler options can be applied.

It is possible that there will be laws that disallow soil creation in these ways. We encourage anyone who feels able to take the minor risk involved to act on the safe environmental truth. We encourage governments to remove unhelpful laws and offer rebates to those willing to install commercial composting toilets.

6. Clothing and Footwear: The great Indian prophet and political leader, Mahatma Gandhi, was an inspiring example of self-reliance and, among other things, made his own clothes (which might be one reason why he always looked like he was dressed in an oversized nappy). However, there are many different possibilities for increasing self-reliance in clothing, from easy to more challenging, some of which are listed below. When thinking about how many clothes you need, consider the time, effort and physical discomfort of those who make them for you. A few well-made and cherished items sewn by someone who is happy to do so is preferable to a wardrobe of cheap items produced in a noisy factory by someone sewing twelve hours a day.

How to change your clothes – some options:
- do not buy any new clothes for the next three (or five) years
- buy most or all of your clothes secondhand
- pay a local tailor to make the few clothes you need from top quality materials

- ask for the few clothes you need as gifts (for birthdays etc.) from friends or family who can sew
- creatively design and sew your own clothes using quality materials
- use a manually operated sewing machine
- sew by hand
- repair damaged clothes rather than buying new ones
- spin your own cotton, weave your own cloth and sew simply designed clothing a la Gandhi
- knit or crochet your own jumpers and blankets
- find someone who is happy to teach you how to knit, sew, crochet, spin or weave
- air your clothes out whenever possible to minimise washing. Never use a clothes dryer. (Washing and artificial drying cause clothes to wear out quickly.)
- investigate leatherwork and make your own repairable shoes
- wear bare feet whenever possible and toughen up your natural renewable leather

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Have I Got Time to Do It for Myself?

Less convenience and doing things for yourself means bringing home the cost of things to you personally and directly and this encourages genuine economy. If you switch off your hot water system and heat water for each use you will soon discover when you *really* need it; if you rely on hand-crafted items (e.g. clothing, woodwork, metalwork) you will have less but value them more. Manual work does not have to take more time overall if you only do what is actually necessary. Using your own initiative to create simple routines can save you time, and less sophisticated technologies mean less time wasted in the frustrating task of repairing and returning faulty equipment and in the time you must spend working to pay for it.

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7. Technology and Toolmaking: To achieve the greatest level of self-reliance in your use of technology, consider solving technological problems in the following order. 1. Is there a simple, intelligent, non-mechanical solution? (e.g. good food, exercise, enough clothing and bedding, and/or windows that catch winter sun may mean that you don't need any heating device; a broom can easily replace a gasoline-powered leaf-blower!) 2. Can your problem be solved using a mechanical device that uses renewable energy? (e.g. direct wind, water or peddle power) 3. Where you do require electricity, can you get this from renewable sources and use the most energy-efficient technology possible? 4. Where you must burn fuel can you make sure that these fuels are produced locally from genuinely sustainable sources? (current biofuels for vehicles, for example, are sourced from greenhouse gas emitting industrial agriculture and often by taking vital food crops from people in non-industrialised countries) 5. Lastly, consider whether the technology options you choose can also be used by the majority of the world's population without causing unsustainable damage to the ecosystem. For instance, while people may use different options for renewable energy depending on their local possibilities (Iceland uses geothermal power to heat houses, for example) we believe that small scale windpower is the most genuinely equitable and least destructive, on a global scale, of electrical energy systems currently available. Conversely, solar photovoltaic panels are energy and resource intensive to produce, could not possibly be provided to the entire global population and include a toxic product, silane, which becomes a problem on disposal.

If possible, resist the temptation to buy new 'green' technology just because it is offered to you. Think about your genuine needs and consider whether you can solve the problem without money or unnecessary resources.

Are you a skilled craft worker? Do you have or wish to develop skills in metalwork, including blacksmithing, and woodwork? These skills can help you create basic tools for yourself and your community in the future. Do you think that you would be able to make your own gardening and other tools? In the short term, you might decide to buy an appropriate set of the highest quality hand tools (ones that do not require a power source other than your own effort).

8. Housing: Given the future that is now unfolding, is where you are living now the best place to be? If not, what is the best alternative? Do you have building skills? Would you like to develop these skills, including those related to building 'alternative' accommodation such as straw-bale housing? If you have room in your house to accommodate others, would you be willing to do so? If you do not own housing, do you know someone who might be willing to provide you with accommodation, perhaps in exchange for some work in establishing and/or maintaining their vegetable garden?

9. Education: Current education systems are generally geared towards society as it is now, as if our current form of economics and civilisation will continue indefinitely. Self-reliant education means thinking for yourself about realistic possible futures and the future you would like to create for yourself, family and community. What skills, knowledge, resources and processes do you and your children need to create and live well in such a future? How can you develop these things? What help do you need? Do you have relevant skills, knowledge, resources or processes that you can offer others in your community to support positive change?

Attention for Whom and What?
A primary reason for the current ecological crisis is that human beings have lost the capacity to pay focused and intense attention to themselves: education systems play a vital role in forcing children, adolescents and young adults into putting their attention 'outside'. The child is born with a natural capacity for a high level of self-awareness enabling it to identify its own needs and to use genetic programming to guide it in meeting these needs in a socially cooperative context. By forcing the child to put its attention outside itself and not letting it feel and express the fear, pain, anger and sadness that this causes, the child becomes addicted to a range of distractive activities and resources. This is disastrous for the individual, for society and for the Earth. Your attention is for yourself.

10. Recreation, Holidays and Travel: Have you ever aspired to play a part in the creation of a new and higher phase of human civilisation? Now might be your chance! Recreation can take many forms: do you feel able to forego the hi-tech versions (ones that use energy and technology, such as television and cinema, to entertain you) in favour of those that require a more active role on your part? Simple forms of activity and sport will help to keep you healthy and fit. But what about quiet contemplation, spending time deep in your feelings, carefully observing and imbibing nature, writing poetry or music, pondering and discussing philosophy, history and even the meaning of life? Does this all sound boring? We have all been desensitised by massive over-stimulation. Do you feel able to have a go at resensitising yourself?

If you are a musician, can you use acoustic rather than electrical instruments? If you are a visual artist, can you learn how to use local, non-toxic natural materials for self-expression?

If you want to go on holidays, do you feel able to identify a destination close to home? The less you travel, the more energy you save. Would you be able to progressively reduce and ultimately eliminate all forms of air travel?

11. Communication:

Does Anyone Ever Listen to You?
We have found listening to be the rarest of commodities. And yet 'everyone' seems to expect *you* to listen. Listening isn't easy, usually because it triggers an emotional reaction that needs to be expressed. This is why, when you are talking, you often find yourself being interrupted and required to listen to others. Or perhaps you are so familiar with this form of 'communication' that you no longer even notice the interruptions!

We reckon that it is important to develop communication skills ranging from learning to feel more clearly what you actually need, learning how to express this need clearly and concisely, and learning how to listen more intently to others, perhaps including reflections of how they feel as part of this. Most of these aspects of communication are best developed while either being by yourself or with just one other person. In any case, we invite you to consider ways of observing and, where necessary, altering your communication patterns.

Being in the presence of just one other person with whom you are communicating allows a deeper form of communication to occur: this involves eye contact, body language and other more subtle signals to be detected (if attention is being given to these). Writing and receiving letters, telephone calls, faxes and emails allow a substantially reduced version of this complexity but still have the advantage of being 'person-to-person'. Once a communication extends beyond two individuals, it gets very complicated and dramatically less meaningful very rapidly. And forms of communication that are all 'one way' from one individual to a large audience can be a nightmare, allowing an enormous variety of manipulative and coercive measures to be introduced. This is why paying attention to the dominant mass media is so damaging: it shapes public perception by reporting some things and not others, and by 'skewing' the presentation of virtually all 'news' to create a particular outcome. When, for example, is the last time you read a newspaper article, watched a television report or heard a radio broadcast that seriously tried to analyse why it is that human beings are so violent and destructive that life on Earth is now under threat? On the other hand, you have probably read, watched or listened to a phenomenal variety of trivia dressed up as 'news'. There are many reasons why the mainstream media functions the way it does and critiques of it are readily available in the scholarly literature on the subject.

In summary, accurate and meaningful communication is difficult and rare, both because most people have trouble clearly identifying what they really need to say (and end up talking about anything just to get the attention) and most people find it difficult to listen carefully. Secondly, the more people involved in a communication, the more likely it is to go wrong in a variety of ways, ranging from simple misunderstandings

to the suppression of 'inappropriately' intense feelings. And, finally, mass media often deliberately distorts communication to achieve specific and socially undesirable outcomes. What can we do about these problems? We invite you to consider the following: 1. Deeply search your conscience and feelings and try to find the courage to live out what they tell you. This includes saying what you truly feel, no matter how unpalatable it might be to others. 2. When you listen, try to listen quietly with all of your heart: the other person needs it (although you will need to remain aware of whether your listening is helping rather than just allowing someone to talk meaninglessly to dysfunctionally get your attention), and 3. Decline to give any more attention to the mainstream media than you feel you must and, for a better chance of getting the real news, check out the grassroots media (such as 'alternative' radio and magazines) instead.

12. Population and Reproduction: We ask couples participating in The Flame Tree Project to carefully consider how many children they have. The Earth needs time to recover from the onslaught of industrialised human activity and the children of Africa, Asia and Central/South America need all of the resources that we are now taking from them to restore some security to their lives. But, as with everything in The Flame Tree Project, it is still your choice.

For the sake of your own health and the health of the environment, could you consider using condoms and/or the Billings Method of natural birth control (which teaches women how to know when they are fertile) rather than the contraceptive pill? Well-designed cloth pads for menstruation, which can be washed and reused (one set will last at least ten years), are an excellent alternative to expensive, disposable tampons and pads and will probably be advertised in your local self-reliance magazines.

The conventional medical system and many 'civilised' cultural inhibitions encourage women to fear birth and this fear leads to interruptions in the release of hormones that make the birth process relatively easy. Expensive drug and surgical interventions to birth have become the norm in many hospital systems, with doctors recommending these on the slightest of pretexts, rather than holding them as the last resort for genuinely life-threatening cases. If you would like to develop a more self-reliant and self-trusting alternative, consider getting support from those women and organisations in your local community who have experience with natural and home birth.

13. Children: Like individuals of all ages, children are welcome participants in The Flame Tree Project. We encourage parents to allow their children to choose *if* they want to be involved and *how* they want to be involved wherever this is possible and practicable. (Willing participation is most likely if children's own choices and individual interests and ideas are respected.) Consider how you might help your kids develop greater self-reliance – some possibilities are:
- allow them to wear bare feet as much as possible and encourage them to sit and squat on the floor by changing seating and table arrangements (explaining that chairs are only necessary for those of us suffering inflexibility and bad posture!)
- allow them to play in natural environments – nature is the most fascinating 'toy' of all
- let your kids play nearby and copy you as you work in the garden or do other self-reliant tasks
- give minimal, practical presents and keep toys simple to encourage imagination and avoid desensitisation through over-stimulation
- explain what The Flame Tree Project is about and why self-reliance makes you safer even if it doesn't always seem as easy
- consider options other than conventional schooling which allow your kids more independent learning in the real world (See box 'Attention for Whom and What?').

14. Economics and Finance:

Money: Fact or Fiction?
Far from being a 'hard fact' of life, money is actually just a bunch of numbers held in the imagination – a symbol of being allowed to do things, regardless of whether or not they are good for you; a symbol of being allowed to have things, regardless of whether or not they are what you need. You cannot eat, drink, breathe or make clothes or shelter out of numbers and if no-one else believes in the value of your particular numbers they have no power to achieve anything at all. A bag of oranges and a t-shirt have no equivalence in function (you cannot eat a t-shirt or wear an orange), although they may be valued equivalent financially. Certainly, neither of these is equivalent to a similarly priced six-pack of soft drink, which has no positive biological function at all. Numbers in your bank account are not a reliable resource for survival. If you desire security, it makes most sense to live in the real world with genuine economy.

The most self-reliant and self-sustaining economy is one where each individual feels powerful enough to take what they need for themselves for survival, care about and cooperate with others to make sure that all people's basic needs are met, and remain mindful of the needs and limitations of the living environment that

sustains human life over the long term. This economy is based on trust, truth and balance and does not require money for its successful functioning. Working against this ideal is the human propensity for fear and paranoia (the unconscious remembering and inappropriate projection of fear) and the dysfunctional behaviours that arise from these: unnecessary hoarding and the use of violence to steal resources in excess of one's actual needs from those who are deprived of basics. Over the course of human history, and particularly since civilisation, lack of self, community and environmental trust appears to have been intensifying, leading to the situation today where people have no land of their own and are forced to work as obedient 'slaves' for money in order to buy back the basics they need for survival, and (if they are lucky) the entertainment they need to distract themselves from the pain of this unloving and unjust system. In the current economic system, money has value and people are intrinsically valueless unless they gain money via self-denial, legalised violence (e.g. war) or legalised trickery (e.g. advertising). The problem with a non-trust based economy is that it is self-reinforcing – the more insecure people feel, the more unethically, violently and desperately they behave, increasing everyone else's insecurity. Distrust and panic have a tendency to spiral and spread. So, what are some of the conscious actions you can take to rebuild (or perhaps create for the first time) an economy of trust that helps everyone feel secure? These are some of our ideas:

1. Use your current excess money to buy resources, set up technologies and gain skills which will allow you to produce/collect the food, energy, water and other resources you will need in future without further use of money.
2. Look for ways in which you can contribute to others' basic needs and receive what you need without the use of money. (e.g. swapping or giving produce from your vegie garden when you have more than you need).
3. Consider helping people with specific needs when they ask you and asking for specific help when you need it, rather than simply giving or accepting impractical or untimely gifts on the basis that 'it's the thought that counts'. Symbols can make you feel good, but gifts that meet real needs are more functional.
4. Work voluntarily on projects that feel worthwhile to you and ask for donations of money or appropriate material resources to support you.
5. Consider working for enough money to provide yourself and your family with basic needs only, rather than luxuries, and think creatively about how to make your life vibrant and interesting without the use of money.
6. Lend your excess money within your local community without asking for interest.
7. If you are renting, try negotiating a rent reduction with your landlord on the basis of your contribution to saving the planet (for their benefit as well as yours).
8. Run a local business for no profit.
9. When you use money, support businesses owned and run by members of your local community. As far as you can, boycott major chainstores. A few large retailers are fast becoming the wealthiest companies in the world and are doing phenomenal damage to the mainstream economy, local communities, poor people and the environment by relentlessly squeezing all of their suppliers in order to provide an endless succession of artificially cheap products to 'addicted' consumers. Increasingly, workers are being more heavily exploited and the cheap labour of illegal immigrants, who live in appalling conditions, is being used by primary and secondary producers in a desperate attempt to prevent their own bankruptcy as they compete to sell their products to the ruthless companies that control the retail market. Also, the quality of goods is sacrificed again and again as manufacturers fear to lose the edge on competitive pricing. This insanity stops with your decisions as a consumer (and local producer) however. All 'big' business relies on the contribution of each and every 'small' consumer. If you invest your money and energy in self-reliant production, local business and the trust economy, you remove the financial power of 'Bigism' to do harm. Buying only what you really need makes it easy to boycott supermarkets and other chainstores – these retailers mainly provide unhealthy and unnecessary products anyway.
10. Be prepared to pay more for the minimum you need of local, quality goods. Global 'cheapism' is artificial and, in the end, everyone is paying.

A Psychosocial Definition of Money

In psychosocial terms, money is social permission to control physical resources and other people's behaviour. It is sought to avoid facing one's fear that one is worthless (not worthy of existence), powerless (not able to act to defend/support one's own existence) and unloved (not going to receive willing help from others to sustain one's existence). Money is therefore a *substitute* for self-worth, self-power and communal care and does nothing to decrease the individual's sense of insecurity. This is why it functions as an addictive drug, promising security but only delivering momentary delusionary relief from fear followed by a resurgence of the underlying anxiety and the repeated craving for more. Those who suffer this addiction most intensely are not satisfied with *any* level of monetary gain, but seek more money regardless of their capacity to use it for any practical purpose in their own lives (or even their own lifetimes), regardless of the means they use to gain it (e.g. false advertising, corruption and violence) and regardless of the effect of their behaviour on the physical environment and the people around them. It is difficult to get money addicts to

perceive that their behaviour is damaging to themselves and others – they have a mental screen in place that denies the reality of any information that contradicts their false belief in the drug. Money addicts promote their drug as being 'the real thing' partly to justify their addiction to themselves and partly to con others into cooperating with, rather than providing impediments to, their addiction. This has led to the unfortunate situation where those who collect and hoard the most money are seen by many people as the most successful, competent and well-adjusted members of society, rather than being recognised as deeply insecure and in need of social and psychological help to deal with their emotional problems more functionally. Ultimately, an economic system that uses no money at all is indicative of the greatest emotional strength and psychological health of its members, showing a level of self-trust and trust in others which is sadly lacking in modern society where money has become the basis for almost all human interactions.

15. Building Community: A vital aspect of The Flame Tree Project is the focus on community: we need to rebuild local communities that allow us to meet some of our individual needs cooperatively. But these communities will be different from those of the past. At the more traditional level, the communities will allow opportunities for cooperation in everything from food production to cultural activities (singing, music, dancing, theatre). But, unlike many communities of old, Flame Tree communities will need to develop cooperative decision-making processes (such as consensus, demarchy and policy juries: for explanations of these consult the relevant literature), utilise a variety of needs-based conflict resolution processes (again, explained in the relevant literature) and utilise a variety of modern alternative technologies, particularly those related to energy (for example, windmills or small hydro pumps if your community has water running through it: the literature on alternative technology will provide inspiration and instruction). A Flame Tree community is about living and working together to help each person to get what they need. As groups of neighbours become local communities, it will be possible to make decisions on a larger scale; for example, when will the bitumen road be removed to create more space for food gardens, ponds, revegetation and recreation?

Self-Authority is True Nonviolent Governance
Self-reliant authority means referring to your own feelings, conscience or what Gandhi termed your 'inner voice' as the final arbiter on how you behave in any situation. This is directly at odds with the social institutions of authority, which use force or manipulation to gain control over the individual, on the basis that the individual's judgment and behaviour are intrinsically untrustworthy and must be controlled for their own or others' good. However, it is obvious that forcing people to do anything makes them afraid and angry, and while they may unconsciously suppress these feelings and appear 'obedient' there will always be a bubbling undercurrent of pain, powerlessness and resentment which then manifests itself in many undesirable individual and social ways. Self-authority does not mean believing that you 'know everything about everything' or that you never decide to trust another's judgment, but it does mean not automatically obeying someone playing a particular social role (such as parent, teacher, priest, doctor, lawmaker, magistrate or law enforcer) as if they have the functional right to control your behaviour and know better than you do what you or society needs. Self-authority requires a degree of fearlessness in being able to 1. question and critically analyse others' opinions and behaviours, 2. question yourself by searching your feelings and conscience, 3. be aware of the pain associated with allowing your fear of others to control you, 4. calmly stand up for yourself against the risk or actuality of punishment, and 5. support others to use their own self-authority to guide *their* behaviour, rather than trying to control their behaviour out of your own fear. Self-authority requires you to make mistakes from which you can learn: it is more important to be yourself than to be right. Those who compulsively demand control over the behaviour of others are fundamentally very frightened: they are both powerless (fearful that they will not be able to retain control over their own behaviour to defend themselves) and paranoid (frightened that *all* people are threatening them and cannot be trusted to cooperate with them for mutual benefit). Authoritarian individuals and institutions are fundamentally paranoid 'hoarders of authority' who scaredly demand that they must always be obeyed without thought or question, rather than being able to offer their own feelings, information and judgments for others to consider in a free exchange leading to independent and/or genuinely willing collective action. Authoritarianism stifles individual capacities and potential, and deprives the individual of its functional role in contributing its distinctive Self to the overall program of planetary existence and evolution.

16. Self, Community and Planetary Defence: There is much you can do to enable you to live well and save life on Earth without coming up against serious opposition, particularly as more and more people get the message that we are in deep trouble and can see the necessity for positive change. It would be foolish, however, to imagine that individuals, groups and governing elites with fearful, controlling and aggressive mentalities are simply going to 'go away' or have a miraculous change of heart to see that cooperative, trusting effort is the only effective means of planetary (and therefore individual and community) survival.

Those who use violence and threats (including 'legal' threats of punishment) to interfere with life-sustaining activities are suffering from a distortion of perception which makes them believe that they are genuinely

acting for their own survival. They can be frightening to deal with because their violent actions against you are real but it is empowering to realise that these people are neither 'evil criminals' nor 'rightful authorities': they are simply terrified. Yes, terrified. (See box 'Love Denied: The Psychology of Materialism, Violence and War')

How can we best deal with those individuals and institutions whose fear makes them use violence, threats and manipulation to interfere with our capacity to care for ourselves and the planet?

The way to defeat fear is to not be afraid of it. In our experience, and the historical evidence supports this, individual or collective nonviolent actions which are based on the relative fearlessness of the participants are the most effective way to defend against threats and violence in any context. In summary then, although it manifests physically, violence is fundamentally a mental problem and it is most effectively fought at the mental level. The person or group behaving violently is not defending a true need and can change their behaviour without harm to themselves if you calmly stand up for the truth for as long as is necessary for them to withdraw. The key, however, is to do this in a way that is *strategically effective in the circumstances*. In simpler words: consider whether an issue is really worth fighting for and, if it is, then work out the most effective (nonviolent) way of fighting.

Nonviolent actions take many forms. Fundamentally, they demonstrate your determination to keep behaving sanely, conscientiously and calmly to meet your own needs and those of your community and the planet, *regardless of the pressure exerted on you to give up*. To reiterate, *nonviolence is, essentially, a psychological process* (although not a manipulative one). Although your opponent may have far more physical power than you do, fearless truth is a far stronger mental state to be acting from than fearful aggression, and gives you a power that can transcend the simple rules of physical force. At a more pragmatic level, nonviolence recognises that those in powerful social positions are only there by the consent of those 'below' them and it is possible for ordinary people to remove the pillars of support of destructive individuals and organisations through a variety of means, including those using protest, noncooperation (including acts of civil disobedience) and nonviolent intervention. For example, boycotting unnecessary and environmentally damaging consumer goods will, sooner or later, mean that they are no longer produced (companies will stop producing goods that do not sell). If enough ordinary people boycott their damaging products, even unethical businesses will have no choice but to find another way to make their money (or just accept that there are other more valuable things to achieve in life!) More powerfully still, boycotting supermarkets and chainstores in favour of shopping at locally-owned/operated small businesses will play a part in regenerating a more localised economy while compelling the unethical 'monster' corporations to discontinue a variety of violent and exploitative practices, which adversely impact on farmers and small producers (whose incomes are 'squeezed' by corporations with sufficient buying power to control their supply network), workers (who are paid minimal wages and often forced to work in appalling and even dangerous conditions) and consumers (who are conned into paying for poor quality and often unnecessary products) alike. Another simple example of nonviolent action is to plant indigenous plants on your nature strip or in a local grassed area, even when this is 'not allowed'. (For an 'endless' list of ideas for nonviolent action in 198 categories, see Gene Sharp *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 1973.)

Nonviolence also has the advantage that it minimises the risk of violent retaliation by one's opponent (for instance, it is difficult to retaliate against a population that refuses to buy environmentally-damaging products). Violent defence, by comparison, escalates levels of violence and inhumanity on both sides. Another popular way of trying to achieve change is lobbying but simply asking one's opponent to change their behaviour (rather than changing your own) leaves all the power in their hands.

But nonviolent action against exploitative corporate and government practices might not be enough. It might also be necessary to defend against military violence initiated by the government in your own country, by the government of another country or by a paramilitary or guerrilla force. There is a modest but adequate literature on nonviolent defence and needs-based conflict resolution processes, which are explained in the book by Burrowes cited in the box 'Can We Afford the Military?'

Love Denied: The Psychology of Materialism, Violence and War

To
the memory of **Robert Burrowes**
prisoner of war on the *Montevideo Maru* torpedoed off Luzon on 1 July 1942
and **Thomas Burrowes**
shot down over Rabaul on 14 December 1943.
The two uncles that I never knew but have always loved.
'There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover…'

Violence is simply an extreme form of attention-seeking behaviour. The individual who uses violence does so because they are very frightened that one or more of their vital needs will not be met. In virtually all cases, the needs that the individual fears will not be met are emotional ones (usually the needs for listening, understanding and/or love) and the violence is simply a dysfunctional attempt to have these needs met. The individual who uses violence is never aware of these deep emotional needs and of the functional ways of going about having these needs met (which is not to say that this is easy to do given that listening, understanding and love are not readily available from others who have themselves been denied these needs). Moreover, because the emotional needs are 'hidden' from the individual, the individual (particularly one who lives in a materialist culture, for example) often projects that the need they want met is, in fact, a material need. This projection occurs because children are routinely denied one or more of their emotional needs but offered material items to distract them instead. The distractive items become addictive drugs. This is why most violence is overtly directed at gaining control of material – rather than emotional – resources. The material resource becomes a dysfunctional (and quite inadequate) replacement for satisfaction of the emotional need. And, because the material resource cannot 'work' to meet an emotional need, the individual is most likely to keep using violence to gain control of more material resources in an unconscious and thus utterly futile attempt to meet unidentified emotional needs. Governments that use military violence to gain or attempt to gain control of material resources are simply governments composed of many individuals with this dysfunctionality, which is very common in industrialised countries that promote materialism. Thus, cultures that unconsciously allow and encourage this dysfunctional projection (that an emotional need is met by material acquisition) are the most violent both domestically and internationally. This also explains why industrialised (material) countries use military violence to maintain political and economic structures that allow ongoing exploitation of non-industrialised countries in Africa, Asia and Central/South America. In summary, the individual who has all of its emotional needs met requires only the intellectual and few material resources necessary to maintain this fulfilling life: anything beyond this is not only useless, it is a burden. (For a more complete explanation of why human beings are violent, see Robert J. Burrowes *Why Violence?*)

Can We Afford the Military?
Military attacks are launched for one purpose: to kill or terrorise fellow human beings (either domestic or foreign) into surrendering control (usually over one or more resources). Military violence is also used to defend against this aggression. Whether to attack or to defend, however, the world military uses a phenomenal amount of energy (both fossil and nuclear), a monumental quantity of natural resources (including minerals, trees and water) and a staggering amount of human labour. It also destroys ecosystems, produces vast quantities of greenhouse gases and prodigious quantities of waste, including the radioactive waste from its use of nuclear power and nuclear weapons (such as those using depleted uranium) that will kill innocent human beings and ecosystems for countless generations to come. And what is the monetary cost of this military activity? Globally, it is more than $US2,000,000,000 *each day*. As Spaceship Earth heads for a crash landing that could kill us all, the question 'can we afford the military?' is worth urgent reconsideration. 'But we need some type of defence in case others do not disband *their* military forces', you might say. Yes, and fortunately there is one. A strategy of nonviolent defence is strategically sound and historically proven to be extremely effective at defending communities and nations against military violence. What does an ecologically benign nonviolent defence require? Like a military defence, it requires just three things: courage, commitment and sound strategy. For a comprehensive description of how to plan, organise and implement a strategy of nonviolent defence, see Robert J. Burrowes *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach*, 1996.

WHAT CAN FARMERS DO?

Farmers who decide to join The Flame Tree Project have a vital contribution to make. Because the food that farmers supply will be vital in helping individuals to become more self-reliant in their healthcare, because the natural material resources supplied by farms will be necessary to replace current oil-based materials, and to achieve the greatest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, farmers are asked to consider converting their farms (if they have not done so already) in the following four ways:

1. start, as soon as possible, to base all food production on biodynamic or organic farming principles (guidelines for these can be obtained from the relevant certifying organisations in your country),
2. progressively phase out any form of meat farming and convert to the farming of non-meat products (whether it be grains, legumes, fruit or vegetables, or non-meat animal products such as wool and milk), and
3. convert from drug/luxury crops (such as alcohol, sugar, tea, coffee and tobacco) to crops that meet genuine human needs (such as food, fabric, paper and building materials).

WHAT CAN BUSINESSPEOPLE DO?

Businesspeople who decide to join The Flame Tree Project also have a vital contribution to make to enhance the capacity of individuals and communities to progressively move to a higher level of self-reliance.

We acknowledge that the principles outlined below will seem laughably unrealistic to many businesspeople in the short term. However, with each new environmental disaster, the audience accepting the need for profound change will grow larger and this will help to create a new and different business environment in which our shared destiny (or lack of one!) will provide an ever more pressing incentive to think and act differently. Hence, we ask you to consider these principles in that light.

As circumstances allow, companies involved in the manufacturing sector are asked to consider adopting the following principles in their production processes. Produce products that:
1. meet a genuine human need
2. require the least amount of the Earth's natural and energy resources
3. have no adverse impact on the Earth's natural processes for replenishing high quality air, water and soil
4. require zero toxic inputs
5. are not toxic
6. produce zero toxic waste
7. are of exceptional quality
8. are incredibly durable
9. are easily repairable by the consumer
10. rely on human or mechanical power (such as a windmill that manually turns a grain-grinding device) in preference to fossil fuels or electricity, except where electricity is absolutely necessary (such as for an electric stove and oven)
11. are not individually packaged or labelled or, if packaging is absolutely imperative, are minimally packaged without use of plastic
12. cost the consumer as little as possible.

In addition, companies are asked to consider adopting three additional principles:
1. phase out all resource extraction and production processes located in the non-industrialised countries of Africa, Asia and Central/South America
2. value any person involved in the production process as a unique individual of immense importance
3. make minimal or, if possible in particular circumstances, zero profit.

As The Flame Tree Project gathers momentum, many industries will need to be phased out. These include the weapons industry; the repression technology (including torture equipment) industry; the space industry; the nuclear power industry; the uranium mining industry; the fossil fuel (oil, coal and gas) industry; the petrochemical industry; the toxic products industry; the aircraft industry; the advertising industry; the insurance industry; the gambling industry; the alcohol and tobacco industries; the pharmaceutical drugs industry; the food processing, confectionary and soft drink industries; and the cosmetics industry (you are beautiful just as you are!). Many other industries will need to be transformed. These include the building industry, the vehicle and vessel industries, the electrical goods industry, the furniture industry, the clothing industry, the tourism and travel industry, and the mass media industry.

Businesses that join The Flame Tree Project early will have the best opportunity to convert their production or services from those no longer required to those in tune with the needs of the future. For example, there will be a need for high-quality small-scale renewable energy technologies (such as improved versions of solar, wind and micro-hydro power units) that allow collection/production and distribution of energy at neighbourhood level. There will also be a need for small-scale technologies that rely on human effort only: manual sewing machines, hand tools of all types, peddle-powered grain-grinding devices and so on. But there will also be a need for some larger scale technologies such as vehicles of various sizes from bicycles with trailers of various types to peddle-powered 'cars' able to carry a few people or a small amount of freight. It might be possible to design and build solar or wind powered lightweight vehicles that travel on a road, tram or train track and which can transport many people and/or significant amounts of freight. It will also be useful to design and build sailing ships that can carry significant numbers of people and/or significant amounts of freight.

Apart from these technologies, it will be useful to design and build a variety of technologies that use renewable energy and that have many applications; for example, neighbourhood windmills that alternatively or even simultaneously manually drive a grain-grinding device, power a cloth-weaving apparatus and pump

water up into a holding tank, as well as provide electricity for cooking to a few nearby houses. (Would it be possible to convert existing electricity poles into windmills?)

In addition, there will be a need for much environmental restoration and revegetation work, as well as businesses that assist local communities to remove bitumen from side streets (is there a use for old bitumen?) and assist with landscaping for indigenous revegetation, food production, ponds and recreation.

There will be a role for businesses that recycle the metal and other components of millions of vehicles and vessels as they fall into disuse.

And there will be other opportunities for Flame Tree businesses with initiative (the literature on alternative technology and economic conversion provides many other ideas).

But What About Jobs?

All living beings need to do activities to keep themselves alive and make their lives rewarding and satisfying. All living beings are naturally programmed to perform these activities – they do not need to be forced to work but 'work' naturally out of love for their own life. The human organism is genetically programmed to act physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually to meet its own needs – but how much of modern work, particularly the work done for money, allows people to use all of these capacities in an integrated way that is truly fulfilling? Most modern work is highly specialised and done under the direction of others. On a small scale, specialisation makes for more efficient cooperation – in a family, for instance, someone who is better at or more familiar with one task may do it more often or exclusively, while others perform different tasks depending on their ability and interest. Clearly, however, it is to the benefit of the family for everyone to be basically competent in a wide range of activities – this allows flexibility to cope with contingencies and to keep life interesting for all family members. In contrast, most modern work requires extreme specialisation – people work as tiny 'cogs in the machine' performing limited tasks for many hours a day, many days a week, and this applies to well-paid professionals as much as low-paid factory workers, labourers and shopworkers (just ask a dentist how much genuine interest they have in looking in 16 open mouths a day!). Modern work for money is often boring, always exhausting and often physically harmful – factory workers, for instance, may be exposed to poisonous chemicals, have their hearing damaged by constant noise or develop other physical injuries from the robotic unnatural tasks they perform. If everyone dramatically reduces their consumption of unnecessary factory-made items people *will* lose their current jobs, but this does not have to mean that people will be left destitute. The loss of exhausting, unhealthy, robotised work that is contributing to the destruction of the planet's ecology simply provides an opportunity for people to think on a smaller scale about alternative activities that genuinely 'work' *for them*. Is sacrificing one's self and life for work worth it? Changing the way we work, for the true sustenance of life, seems a much better way forward.

WHAT CAN SCIENTISTS AND TECHNOLOGISTS DO?

Scientists and technologists that join The Flame Tree Project have a crucial contribution to make in enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to become more self-reliant. Hence, we ask scientists and technologists to devote their talents in ways that allow initiatives within The Flame Tree Project to flourish. For example, local communities are going to need renewable energy technologies that are simple and that conform to the principles outlined in the section for businesspeople. Is it possible for you to design these for us? And there is one hi-tech solution that would be genuinely desirable: can you find a **safe** way to **neutralise** all of that radioactive waste please?

WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS DO?

Governments – whether national, provincial or local – that join The Flame Tree Project can make a substantial difference to the capacity of local communities to become self-reliant. Again, as noted in the business section, we acknowledge that many of the ideas below will seem utterly fanciful, especially in the short term. However, we simply ask governments to monitor environmental setbacks and to recognise the emerging political space to respond imaginatively to the global crisis as it continues to unfold.

Thus, as circumstances allow, governments are asked to consider adopting and implementing the following policies:
1. cancel all national debts owed by non-industrialised countries in Africa, Asia and Central/South America
2. encourage, and provide incentives for, people to learn individual, community and national strategies of nonviolent defence by attending workshops and/or by reading the relevant literature. Progressively demobilise all military forces and intelligence agencies redeploying willing personnel for large-scale environmental revegetation (using indigenous species of plants) and restoration projects, as well as for community development projects

3. discontinue, as soon as possible, the space industry (including the militarisation of space)
4. discontinue, as soon as possible, all logging and burning (including 'burning off') of forests, as well as the destruction of other remaining natural ecosystems
5. provide incentives for the development of household and neighbourhood forms of renewable energy collection/production and distribution, as well as the installation of these, allowing/encouraging access to existing electricity grids until these are no longer required
6. progressively convert all educational institutions (from pre-schools to universities) into community resource and learning centres which offer books and other learning resources as well as courses on everything from animal care and permaculture to nonviolent defence and yoga, to all members of the community irrespective of age. Also encourage people to 'learn for and from life' by participating in community activities. Redeploy willing personnel from the education system to staff community learning and resource centres. (See box 'Attention for Whom and What?')
7. discontinue, as soon as possible, the fluoridation/chlorination of water supplies, switching to use of non-toxic chlorine dioxide for disinfection if necessary
8. discontinue, as soon as possible, road and freeway building
9. discontinue, as soon as possible, all poisoning programs (such as spraying herbicides on weeds in public places)
10. progressively convert all healthcare systems and centres into ones which emphasise individual responsibility for health by eating healthy food, learning appropriate posture and movement patterns, and by getting regular exercise. And encourage healthcare systems that nurture the individual's own immune system and capacity to correct posture and movement dysfunctionalities. Retain some small emergency surgery hospitals.
11. progressively reduce all forms of taxation
12. repeal all laws, as soon as possible, that might impede implementation of initiatives in the Flame Tree Project (such as laws that would impede the composting of shit on site)
13. establish and develop community based conflict resolution processes that emphasise meeting the needs of the individual and that, as an outcome of this support, nurture a sense of caring for others in the individual. (There is a substantial literature on needs-based conflict resolution processes that can be consulted.) As these become operationally effective, progressively dismantle all police, legal and prison systems and redeploy willing personnel from these systems for community development and conflict resolution work. (See box 'Law and Order?')
14. as soon as possible, arrange for street lighting to be turned off at midnight (or earlier)
15. as soon as possible, arrange for overnight lighting in/on unstaffed government buildings to be turned off
16. phase out rubbish collection as it is no longer required.

Law and Order?

The common phrase is 'Law and Order' but does the legal system deal with dysfunctional social behaviour in ways that genuinely keep society safe? At birth the human organism is genetically programmed with emotional, intellectual, physical, behavioural and material needs. The organism is also genetically programmed to seek to meet these needs, either individually or cooperatively in a social context and in a natural environment, to achieve self-fulfilment. And it will go about doing this with intelligence and consideration if given the opportunity to do so. However, if socialisation processes and social processes – such as parental treatment, social customs, school rules and societal laws – interfere with the capacity of the individual to meet their genetically programmed needs, then the individual will develop emotional, intellectual, physical and/or behavioural dysfunctionalities. If these dysfunctionalities are inappropriately socially endorsed – as, for example, chronic over-consumption is socially approved in industrialised countries – then the individual dysfunctionality is not even recognised or regarded as a problem. In contrast, if certain dysfunctionalities are inappropriately labelled as 'wrong' or 'criminal', and if police, legal and prison systems are used to threaten, intimidate and/or punish the individual who 'breaks the law', then this socially endorsed violence can only cause further dysfunctionality or exacerbate existing dysfunctionalities in the punished individual. **This is because violence, and the fear it causes, can never restore functionality.** The only way to assist a dysfunctional individual to restore functionality (assuming the individual is not one who is genetically or physically brain damaged) is to listen to the individual for what might be very many sessions over a very protracted period while they slowly unravel the emotional damage that caused the dysfunctional behaviour in the first place. One vital feature of The Flame Tree Project is its identification of dysfunctional socialisation and social processes as the primary cause of individual dysfunctionality and to invite us all to create a society that is more in tune with the genetically programmed needs of the individual. The individual cannot be moulded beyond a very limited extent without causing phenomenal dysfunctionality. In contrast, society is infinitely malleable simply because it is not organic and can be created in any number of ways to meet the needs of the individuals within it while taking into account the needs of the natural environment in which the society is located.

The Ecological Economy

The Flame Tree Project envisages a future based on the ecological economy. It is ecological in the sense that it is concerned with nurturing and restoring the Earth's natural ecological processes. It is economic in the sense that all economic activity is of a type and at a level that is easily within (rather than beyond) the capacity of the Earth's ecological processes to withstand without any adverse impact whatsoever on their capacity to regenerate. In the ecological economy, all forms of energy (such as human labour, windpower and solar energy) will be renewable and any other resource (such as timber) that is used will be renewable on a human (not geological) timeframe or, in the case of minerals taken from the Earth's crust, will be used incredibly sparingly and considerately. Most importantly, materials that are toxic in any way or which produce toxic byproducts will never be produced or used. In the ecological economy, there will be no exploitation of non-human animals for labour or as food (although well cared for free-range animals might be asked for their milk, eggs or wool while alive and their leather once dead, and a sustainable number of land and sea creatures may be hunted in the wild by those indigenous peoples who still live a hunter-gatherer lifestyle). Finally, the ecological economy is based on the production of goods that meet a genuine human need, are of the highest quality and that are either given freely or traded directly, preferably as locally as possible. Money distorts value and distribution, and while it will remain important for a considerable time yet, it must ultimately fade out in favour of more direct forms of commercial transaction.

WHAT CAN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS DO?

Community organisations such as religious bodies, trade unions, charities and service clubs are invited to participate in The Flame Tree Project by orienting an increasing proportion of their work in ways that will enable Flame Tree initiatives to flourish. For example, apart from their existing activities, they might provide a service to assist individuals to develop personal plans to participate in The Flame Tree Project.

THE NON-INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES OF AFRICA, ASIA AND CENTRAL/SOUTH AMERICA

We invite the wealthier individuals of these countries to participate in The Flame Tree Project on the same basis as people in the industrialised countries. But for those individuals who struggle to survive, we acknowledge the contribution that you have made already, by leading very materially simple (and, in some cases, poverty-stricken) lives. We trust that The Flame Tree Project will play some part in freeing you of the burden of exploitation by industrialised countries and thus free you to pursue a more meaningful life in less impoverished circumstances.

Where genuine traditional cures have been forgotten or local natural cures do not exist, we encourage the peoples of Africa and elsewhere that suffer under the burdens of malaria and AIDS to use chlorine dioxide - created and used according to Jim Humble's Miracle Mineral Supplement (MMS) protocols - to cure these diseases. MMS is very low-cost and highly effective compared to high-cost, ongoing pharmaceutical treatments that provide 'management' without cure. (Jim V. Humble *Breakthrough: The Miracle Mineral Supplement of the 21st Century* available in hard copy and e-book: MMS)

WHAT ABOUT DIFFICULTIES AND SETBACKS?

Increasing participation in The Flame Tree Project will cause difficulties and setbacks: we are not pretending that there won't be problems and some of these will appear to exacerbate problems that are going to occur anyway, such as declining levels of employment as the world financial economy contracts. However, The Flame Tree Project is designed to minimise dislocations by defining a graduated series of adjustments over 15 years which includes using increasing self-reliance as a buffer against outside shocks such as loss of employment. In a sense, The Flame Tree Project is designed to organise a bumpy emergency landing (it is too late for a smooth landing) in order to avoid the ultimate crash.

If you need to feel sadness, despair, frustration, anger and/or pain about difficulties, we encourage you to feel them: after feeling these valuable reactions to setbacks, a new way forward might present itself to you. If you are able to identify someone you trust to listen to you, share your feelings with them. 'Feelings are healing.' Feelings are evolution's way of helping you survive and deal with adversity. And we need this power more now than ever before.

There are many issues and problems that we have not discussed in this document. For example, what about the particular problems of a resident on the 15th floor of an apartment building in a densely populated city? We have not discussed everything because we don't know all of the answers. We simply trust that local people will emerge who can apply the principles and guidelines in their unique context. In short, Flame Tree participants are invited to use their intuition, creativity and courage in tackling problems as they arise,

because you know your local situation the best. And, of course, you always have the option of discussing a problem with other participants.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE FLAME TREE PROJECT

If The Flame Tree Project appeals to you and you wish to raise awareness of it, here are some suggestions for you to consider:
1. mention The Flame Tree Project to people who you reckon are likely to be receptive. If you find that someone is not receptive after all, and you have the inclination to do so, do your best to listen to them tell you why they 'don't like it', 'it won't work', it is unnecessary', 'it is unrealistic' or even that The Flame Tree Project is responsible for all of their problems or the problems of the world! Listening often provides the space for people to change; arguing with them tends to 'lock' them into their existing perspective. Of course, if you don't feel like listening you can quietly excuse yourself and leave! We prefer not to 'market' The Flame Tree Project, but to give people an opportunity to change. Time and ongoing environmental disasters will provide the 'leavening' for more people to join
2. place a printed copy of The Flame Tree Project or the advertisement for it (at the end of this document) on a public notice board
3. place a printed copy of The Flame Tree Project advertisement in the letterbox of each house in your street as well as neighbouring streets
4. arrange to have The Flame Tree Project document (which is not copyright) or the advertisement for it published in a book, journal, magazine, newsletter, newspaper or as a pamphlet
5. arrange to have The Flame Tree Project discussed on television, radio or in a public debate
6. send a copy of The Flame Tree Project or the advertisement for it to someone who might be receptive in a non-English speaking industrialised country (such as China)
7. translate The Flame Tree Project document into a language other than English.

Fighting for Our Life:
A Biological Argument for the Power of the Individual
They say 'everybody wants to rule the world' and it is tempting for even good-hearted people to feel that if only they had control over the whole world system they could fix it to work properly. Certainly, most people feel they have little or no power as one small individual to achieve change. However, it is worth remembering that in your own living body, no one single cell has control over the functioning of the entire body – rather, each cell performs its own independent function, in communication and interrelationship with other cells, to keep the whole self alive. If each cell gave up its independent function on the basis that it did not have full control, the whole self would quickly die. Similarly, if potentially healthy cells gave up their functioning simply because other cells were ravaged by cancer or other disease, the body would have no hope of healing and recovery. In the natural world death is a reality that must eventually be faced by all – but each cell in the living body fights for life and health until the very end. By doing whatever you can to make yourself and your local patch of Earth a healthy 'cell', you can contribute the *most* to the overall health of the living planet.

A FINAL REQUEST TO VISIONARIES

Human history is dotted with visionaries: ordinary individuals who could perceive how the world should be and who lived their lives in an effort to create it. Some of these visionaries are exalted by history; many others, particularly those who lived in obscure times or places, are simply not known. Looking back, it is easy to mistake what their lives entailed: it was rarely one of ease and glory. If we asked these visionaries about their lives most would tell us about being criticised, derided, ostracised, imprisoned and, in some cases, killed. But, whatever the outcome for each of these visionaries personally, we all live in a richer world because of them. More now than at any time in human history, we need visionaries: people who will take sensible risks to change things so that we can nurture ourselves and life on Earth. So, we ask you to consider one final question as you contemplate The Flame Tree Project. However you might have conceived yourself to be up until this very moment: Are you a visionary?

CONTACT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Flame Tree Project is an outcome of the ongoing Jarakis Project conducted since 1996 by Anita and Robert. The Jarakis Project is an independent intensive investigation of the deep psychological causes of self-destructive human behaviours including those that threaten the continued existence of life on Earth.

We acknowledge with love and appreciation the unfailing love and support of Beryl and James Burrowes who have made both the Jarakis Project and The Flame Tree Project possible. And we also thank, with heartfelt gratitude, those other individuals - Anahata Giri, Dave Keenan and Thomas J. Burrowes - whose substantial contributions at critical times made 'impossible' hurdles manageable.

The Flame Tree Project was launched on 1 July 2008 with great love for, and faith in, humankind.

True power comes from conscientious personal action in the face of impossible odds.

Related websites:

The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World
Why Violence?
Anita McKone (Songs of Nonviolence)
Robert J. Burrowes

An advertisement for The Flame Tree Project follows.

Are you aware of the global
state of emergency?
climate * water * food * energy * biodiversity * conflict

We have until the year 2020 to make dramatic changes in our
- consumption of all resources
- water use
- energy use
    if we are to avert water and climate catastrophe

Leading scientists say it may already be too late…

'People of Earth, we have a problem…'
We need to bring spaceship Earth down with all life on board

Are you ready to do <u>everything</u> you can?

The Flame Tree Project
To Save Life on Earth

is a framework for action

- to allow **ordinary people** to take control of the situation
- to **help you** with an ongoing personal plan for change to achieve personal, community and ecological security

http://tinyurl.com/flametree

For local information and support contact:

The Flame Tree Project   **Getting Started: Reduction**

What level of resources are you using now?   **Date:**
Under the following headings, **list all the ways you use each resource** in your home and private life including an *approximate* quantity used per week or year (eg. tissues, 4 boxes per year; showers, 280 litres per week)

Water (drinking, cooking, bathing, laundry, garden, others?):

Household Energy (gas, electricity, wood, liquid fuels, candles, fuel for garden equipment, others?)

Vehicle Fuel (list places you drive/fly and how often, as well as an estimate of how much petrol/gasoline, diesel, LPG, biofuels and/or electricity you use for driving overall):

Paper (toilet paper, tissues, serviettes, packaging, newspapers, books, magazines, printer and photography paper, notepads, others?):

Plastic (food packaging, drink packaging, other packaging, plastic bags, cling wrap, hard plastic items, others?)

Metals (food tins, drink cans, spray cans, whitegoods, electrical and garden equipment, others?)

Meat (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

What resources will you cut and/or find alternatives for?
In each category, **underline the items** that feel the least vital to you.

What would you like to do differently in the next year to achieve your overall 10% resource cut? (If you can't cut the activity that uses the resource, can you identify alternative resources that will be more efficient or longer lasting? e.g. use cloth hankies not paper tissues) **List these changes** next to the headings below:

Water:
Household Energy:
Vehicle Fuel:
Paper:
Plastic:
Metals:
Meat:

The Flame Tree Project   **Getting Started: Self-Reliance**

Date:

In the following list **mark those areas that interest you most** or seem easiest to change. Refer to The Flame Tree Project document to see the kinds of things involved in becoming more self-reliant in these areas.

1. health: physical, emotional and spiritual

2. food

3. revegetation

4. water

5. soil creation

6. clothing and footwear production

7. technology and toolmaking

8. housing

9. education

10. recreation, holidays and travel

11. communication

12. population and reproduction

13. children

14. economics and finance

15. building community

16. self, community and planetary defence

Mark the areas that you would like to focus on this year. Next to each of these headings, **write what you would like to do this year** to increase your self-reliance in this area. You may decide to do a lot in one area (eg. plant out your whole back and front yard with organic fruit and veg; switch to a 100% organic vegetarian wholefood diet; get rid of your car; stop using all major chain stores and shop locally) or some smaller things in a number of areas (eg. grow some herbs, buy secondhand clothing, learn to cook some vegetarian wholefood recipes, read some books and magazines or check out internet sources on the state of the world or on self-sufficiency, try out an alternative health option, and go to bed earlier) to reach your estimated 10% self-reliance increase.

Important point!
Your lists are there to remind you of things to do differently. If you forget, or occasionally find it all too hard to 'bother', this is fine. No-one is telling you what to do – letting yourself be yourself will lead to genuine heartfelt progress in the quickest time that your mind can adjust itself to change.

Reduction and Self-Reliance Review Dates: ………………..(6 months)   ……………….(1 year)

Have you done what you hoped to do?
If not, what got in the way?
Do you need help of any kind? If so, how can you get this help?
Is there a different way forward that will help the process of change work better for you?