



Book Building a Win-Win World

Live Beyond Global Economic Warfare

Hazel Henderson
Berrett-Koehler, 1996

Recommendation

In her latest respected work, futurist Hazel Henderson calls for a win-win world founded on cooperation, not domination. She provides a rich, fascinating, detailed, and thoroughly researched and cited look at the waning days of our current dysfunctional global paradigm. Then she looks ahead for a peek at the possible future of a new, healthier paradigm. Though it was justly well-reviewed, this book is not light reading. It is written in conversational language, but it has a scholarly depth and reach. It is a book to study, not flip through. Henderson calls for a complete redesign of every societal system imaginable - from economic and political to social and ethical - all with an eye toward sustaining a global economy and a more humane world view. *BooksInShort* highly recommends this book to readers interested in economic, global, environmental, social, political, and ethical issues.

Take-Aways

- An effort is underway to continue the deconstruction of the world's dysfunctional economic / competition / conflict paradigm and to further the construction of new platforms.
- Collisions between the old dysfunctional paradigm and trends toward a new healthier paradigm are occurring in many arenas around the world.
- Externally focused, technologically driven economic warfare has resulted in an unsustainable world. The new paradigm is focused on sustainable human and economic development.
- Mediocracies are "governments" based on the impact of the media, which can be harmful.
- The new paradigm will control population.
- The new paradigm will redesign production and distribution systems so they will not harm the environment.
- The new paradigm will be based on cooperation, not domination.
- The new paradigm will be democratic, with equal access and opportunity for all countries, developed and developing.
- The new paradigm will be economic, social, and political.
- A "win-win" world may not be easy, but it is possible.

Summary

Pathological Paradigms

An effort is underway to continue the deconstruction of the world's dysfunctional economic/ competition/conflict paradigm. The effort includes promoting the construction of new platforms that are not dysfunctional. Although progress has been made, the old paradigm is still in control, and has been for thousands of years. The societal war system - which created our current paradigm - is at least 6,000 years old.

“The good news in sustainable development is that in today's global economy, in spite of some corporate and government laggards, innovations travel rapidly.”

Most of what we are taught about the history of human civilization is essentially just a chronicle of the rise and continuation of "human ego-centeredness, technological ingenuity, and territoriality (as populations and cultures spread), and the inevitable rise of competition, conflict, and violence in general." The work of scholars has enriched our understanding of the past and is vital to our changing view of our future and potential. Society is now at a crossroads. Will the global community continue its paradigm of violence and self-destruction, and therefore perish? Or, will humanity explore new approaches in a new paradigm, and therefore survive?

“Our perceptions will govern our survival.”

Collisions between the old paradigm (the global system of competition and warfare) and the new paradigm (healthier, sustainable development) are occurring in a number of arenas. These include: global population and the bio-sphere, international and global governmental systems; the global society and individual cultures; nation-states, domestic policies, and democracies; global markets, companies, finance, and trade; provincial, urban, and local governments; and individual, family, and community values, ethics, and behaviors.

“Citizens are taking on new peacemaking roles, such as the California-based Foundation for Global Community's conflict-resolution efforts in Armenia and Azerbaijan.”

Externally focused, technologically driven economic warfare has resulted in unsustainable global economic warfare. Now, it is colliding with the future. Grassroots global concerns are emerging as part of the new paradigm.

These long-term, gradual processes often go unnoticed in today's "mediocracies" - the new form of government based on entertainment and event-driven media. Tomorrow's new realities will come from today's clash of the two global paradigms, old and new. A more visible media "wide shot" of this conflict could expand humanity's ability to respond effectively and creatively, and to steer the crisis toward the new, healthier paradigm.

Government by Mediocracy

Our lives are inundated by media information. Public opinion and the governmental decisions are more affected by the media than by anything else in the world. While much of what you are exposed to via the media is drivel, or simply an attempt to sell you a product or service, some content is quite important and useful. Jacques Cousteau made a new generation aware of pollution, over consumption and over population through his televised adventures. In Information Highway: Mental Pollution, published in Calypso Log (August 1995), Cousteau wrote that people's minds were now so flooded with information that they were growing increasingly confused. He urged people to get off the information highway and back to life's side roads.

“Western and other industrial societies provide few resources to researchers or organizations to identify the social and environmental costs of private technological innovations.”

Many activist scholars and experts have warned of the dangers of media violence and its impact on the minds and behavior of adults, as well as children. "Mass media are almost beginning to replace political parties in our system of government. They have informed and misinformed our citizens on national issues on an unprecedented scale, but in a largely unplanned manner." People look to the

mass media for cues about what we should want, how we should want to live, how others live, what we should think is important, and what the latest trends are.

“Most humans are motivated by perceptions of reality that are quite limited in space and time. A majority are too concerned with tomorrow’s food supply for their immediate family to worry about next week or their neighbors.”

While the media can educate, it can also skew your perception of reality. When the needs of advertisers furnish the primary reasons behind media decision-making, that’s just another form of government - but not one that is of the people, by the people, and for the people. The advertiser’s need for the largest possible audience "naturally conflicts with the needs and interests of the minority audiences." In this context, the word minority does not refer to race, gender, religion, or culture, but to those groups of people who are not necessarily interested in mass appeal material aimed at the lowest common denominator. Just because wrestling, teen movie stars, diet fads, and car wrecks are popular media fodder doesn’t mean everyone is interested in them. This "largest possible audience" approach also hampers the development and dissemination of new or controversial ideas, which must break out via the mass media if they are to make a large-scale impact. In the United States, coverage in the mass media provides "the only means of gaining a day in the court of public opinion."

“Today, many of the world’s countries have gone from feudalism to mediocracy without ever having passed through the stages of industrialism and democracy. This new type of accidental government by media concentrates political power in ways unexplored by political scientists.”

Individuals and groups have to resort to public spectacle to get media coverage, since a mere press release is usually ignored. "Now to get the media’s, and therefore the public’s attention, one must hold a college dean hostage, dance naked through the streets, throw a rock, or start a riot." The news media has been "rewarding" and reinforcing destructive behavior by almost requiring it for coverage. The media makes national figures out of those who have learned to get on camera, make their cause known and become famous.

“The expressions of such drives as the material acquisition and over-consumption...is a floating phenomenon associated with a relatively brief two-hundred-year span of industrialism.”

Quiet constructive behavior on the part of those who continually work "to build and heal society" is punished by the act of being ignored by the media and therefore never getting society’s attention. The battle over the public’s right of access to mass media is the most important constitutional issue facing people in the United States in recent years. The issues affect every segment of society.

The Old Paradigm Breaks Down

"Increases in population affect resources and the environment in many significant ways." This includes a greater demand for food, water, energy, sanitation, health care, and housing. How will the demand for these goods and services be met? How will crises of unsustainability - massive cuts in health care and social services, higher crime rates, economic problems the world over - be resolved? Nations are now too small to solve the big global problems, and too big for their own local problems. Governments everywhere are corrupt.

“All countries seek new mixes of markets and rules to guide their development.”

As it emerges, the new paradigm will create ways to control population. People will clean up the toxic and hazardous conditions that have been created by unsustainable forms of industrialization. Manufacturers will redesign production and distribution systems so they will not harm the environment and will be sustainable over the long term. And people must do all of this, as equitably, honestly and, therefore, as peacefully as possible.

“Today, we are rediscovering that values, far from being peripheral, actually drive all economic, technological, and social systems.”

Economic crises abound continuously in marketing, banking, investments and national budgets. Middle classes are shrinking as a wider gulf emerges between the affluent and the poor. The new paradigm will stress economic cooperation, standard setting, and regulation. Technology’s unfortunate consequences will be dealt with honestly in the new paradigm. The current consequences range from humankind’s ability to destroy the planet with nuclear and biological weapons to the environmental disruptions. These

consequences include the individual alienation and sense of diminished power and control that so many people now experience. The new paradigm will focus on broadening options through citizen participation, imaginative problem solving, and honesty.

Slow-Motion Good News: Road Maps and Resources for Rebirth

The prime elements of the new, healthy paradigm include:

- Grassroots global activism.
- Citizen organizations challenging the status quo.
- A post-Cold War framework devoid of militaristic mindsets.
- A citizen organization that can emerge as a leader.
- The maturation of human behavior and global citizenship.
- A revolution against high consumption.
- Acceptance of cultural diversity, cross-cultural communication, and debunking of racist myths.

“Today’s abstracted world trade/global competitiveness model has alienated financial markets from the real economy of Main Street.”

"All of these dramas are being played out on a global stage," and they will not be resolved overnight. Partnership, rather than domination, is the key to solving the world’s problems in the new paradigm.

Building a Win-Win World: Breakthroughs and Social Innovations

Information has become the world’s real currency. Strict win-lose strategies in economics are actually hindering and limiting economic growth. Local citizens and leaders are acting to solve their own economic problems. These breakthroughs, and many others, herald the first steps to the new, healthy, partnership paradigm.

“As we humans prepare for the twenty-first century, we can grow markets that serve our highest aspirations and our deepest beliefs.”

For democracies to survive, wealth and progress must be redefined, sustainability must be assured, and more feedback must be achieved. Citizens want to set priorities. They do not want to be at the mercy of politicians who have selfish interests, hidden power agendas, or loyalties to special interest groups. Citizen movements have grown and continue to have an impact upon the political process. Nearly everything has become politicized: shopping, investing, banking, corporations, education, religion, and popular culture. Politically correct designations, campaigns, and boycotts now affect talk shows, music, the movies, sports, and lifestyle choices. Personal computers and the Internet have given ordinary citizens access to a wealth of global information quickly and at the touch of a button.

“Human beings must make a quantum leap to enable us to manage our now accelerating global affairs.”

Today’s information age networks "function best on win-win principles, but they are still dominated by the global economic warfare paradigm." This must change. The old paradigm must be replaced. The ultimate challenge is to cooperate. This may sound simple, but it is an alien concept to the old paradigm, which runs on domination, not cooperation. The new paradigm will have new rules and social innovations, which better suit a global village where everyone must cooperate to survive.

“If we succeed in freeing our mass media from some of its past patterns of operations, we can decide what needs to be communicated and how to use communications to build our future. First, we must have faith that new information, properly communicated, can change human perception of reality, and therefore our attitudes and behavior.”

In 1995, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development accelerated its projected schedules for implementing Agenda 21, a unique and important document signed at the 1992 Earth Summit by 172 governments committed to shifting to the new paradigm. Agenda 21 presents a cooperative agenda for sustainable development that includes:

- Reducing and writing off unpayable debts.

- Addressing inequalities in the structure of the global economy.
- Cooperating in the implementation of environmentally sound technologies.
- Making those technologies available to every nation, including developing countries.
- Improving domestic policies.
- Making sure that banking and world-wide economic systems do not cause further social and environmental damage, and are applied fairly to all nations, developed and developing.
- One of the biggest paradigm breakthroughs around the world will be reframing international taxation, which would have an impact on every aspect of the global village economy.

“Like individuals, a society needs confidence in itself, and its ability to cope with its problems. We must know of human love and courage as well as our hates and fears.”

A win-win world will not happen overnight, and it won't be easy to achieve, but it is possible.

About the Author

Hazel Henderson is an independent futurist, a worldwide syndicated columnist, and a consultant on sustainable development. She is also the author of *Creating Alternative Futures*, *The Politics of the Solar Age*, and *Paradigms in Progress*, and the co-author of *The United Nations: Policy and Financing Alternatives*. She has served on the boards of many organizations and commissions, and on editorial boards. She taught at the University of California.
