I have more frequently been seeing articles (blog posts, etc.) reflecting on the collapse of civilization that appears increasingly likely. What advice do they offer to individuals who are looking for a path into the future?

For context, my current beliefs are:

* Trends in politics, economics, environment, etc. are such that collapse is probably inevitable. Our civilization will not be able to continue much longer in anything like the present mode, nor will it be able to plan a sensible transition to a sustainable mode. The current ecological overshoot will be followed by a crash, including a dramatic drop in global population. The current institutional arrangements will change radically, becoming unrecognizable, in an atmosphere of increasing conflict (including warfare).
* Technological advances will make differences but will not solve the multiple global problems that are becoming increasingly apparent.
* People across the world will tend to distrust and separate from each other, even while a portion continue to call for universalism (human-centered or not).
* Beliefs about progress, order, standard of living, and “obviously right” ways of doing things will gradually fade, as life becomes much more precarious and unpredictable for the vast majority of the world population. People will decreasingly rely on religion, tradition, education, law, electoral politics, and other cultural components that used to be fairly constant.
* People will increasingly wonder how they should think about the world. Do they have loyalties and moral obligations toward others in a group, or toward all humans, or toward all life? Can they take responsibility for the predicament that becomes clearer every year? Do they have agency as voters, as workers, in mass movements, or otherwise? Do they have legacies? Should they have children? Do they have any wisdom to pass on? Do their lives matter?

For this review I am not considering:

* Discussions about how likely collapse of civilization might be

Whether it can be avoided; whether climate change or other factors are more important or more immediate; whether collapse will be dramatic or will proceed in various places at various paces

* Recommendations for new political and economic systems or reforms of institutional arrangements or policies

Whether socialism or a new form of capitalism is required to avoid collapse; whether democracy or autocracy will prevail; various reforms and new policies; social justice; internationalism and global governance; possible actions at global, national, or more local levels

* Tips for survival as individuals, or how to “prosper”

I am trying to orient my own thought, and I imagine that more and more others are likewise looking for orientations that make sense to them. I am interested in how my ideas are gradually aligning with or diverging from others’ ideas, and my impression is that worldviews are continually shifting without any obvious clear trend. Mine are slowly shifting too.

I describe below some rough ***categories of advice***, numbered in an outline format.For each category I give a short opinion of my own. Then the various authors’ advice is given as quotations from their articles, with parenthetical references to the sources. The references include the author’s name, plus a date if needed to distinguish between multiple articles by an author.

***The sources*** of the quotations are listed after the categories of advice. You may want to look through the author’s article (click on the link), or peruse the portions that I extracted for my review. Those extracts may be larger than what I included for the categories of advice.

# **Categories of advice**

## Demand the truth

I appreciate the advice to not fool others and not fool ourselves; it seems foundational. Sometimes this results in being resented or being outcast—more often, in just being ignored.

### Tell the truth. Stop hesitating from fear, or to avoid scaring others (as a political communications strategy).

“If we climate activists don’t tell the truth as well as we know it — which we have been loathe to do because we ourselves are frightened to speak the words — the public will not respond, notwithstanding all our protestations of urgency. … Our obligation as activists, the first step, the essence, is to part the cultural veil at long last, and to tell the truth.” (Adam Sacks)

“…reminds us of the importance of dealing honestly with reality even when it is frightening, and holding onto our humanity, which is even more important when we’re frightened. Given the severity of the human assault on the ecosphere, compounded by the suffering and strife within the human family, honest apocalyptic thinking that is firmly grounded in a systematic evaluation of the state of the world is not only sensible but an obligation.” (Robert Jensen, August 7, 2019)

“If we are afraid to speak honestly, we suffer alone. Better that we tell the truth and accept the consequences, together.” (Robert Jensen, September 10, 2019)

### Learn to live with the truth: have courage. Seek truth from within, without letting others impose their ideas on you.

“Facing all this is not easy. Being human has always been hard, and it will be harder as we come to terms with our collective failures.” (Robert Jensen, August 7, 2019)

“The prophetic tradition’s calling out of injustice requires not only the willingness to confront the abuses of the powerful but to acknowledge our own complicity. To speak prophetically requires us first to see honestly—both how our world is structured by systems that create unjust and unsustainable conditions, and how we who live in the privileged parts of the world are implicated in those systems.” (Robert Jensen, August 7, 2019)

“We cannot permit fear of pain or humiliation stop us from participating in life. There is strength in pushing through that which makes us uncomfortable. There is power and energy in asserting that we’re not going away. Life exists in the moments we show up. To shy away from these experiences is to miss the essence of being alive. So, we must be brave. We must take chances. And we must commit to being the main character in each of our lives.” (Aimee Lewis-Reau and LaUra Schmidt)

“Unless we’ve undergone an intensive process that forces us to seek truth from within ourselves, rather than having “truth” pushed on us, any action with regard to our collective problems will perpetuate the same social, political, and economic systems that are failing us.” (Aimee Lewis-Reau and LaUra Schmidt)

### Have the humility to realize that there is no single right approach—or perhaps no right approach.

“In dealing with multiple crises on all fronts -- economic, political, cultural, and ecological failures that pose a significant threat to human life as we understand it -- it’s folly for any one of us to imagine we figured out the right approach, or that there is a single right approach, or that there is any right approach at all.” (Robert Jensen, July 8, 2010)

## Follow spiritual advice

This category of advice is common to various spiritual traditions, and has been repeated in one form or another through the ages. None of it is particularly easy to follow, since it usually conflicts with our habitual thought patterns and culturally developed worldviews. (“Demand the truth” is an example above.) While this advice is generally useful even without the impending collapse of civilization, but it may be particularly useful as we face great uncertainties and changing ideas.

### Awaken from delusions of separation, and help awaken others.

“Awakening from our delusions of separation with nature and each other is a wonderful thing to do. Liberating ourselves from political, monetary and economic systems that structure those delusions of separation is also a wonderful thing to pursue.” (Jem Bendell, April 10, 2019)

“To be successful in society means one is having affirmed, daily, the illusion of the socially-respected agentic separate Self. Instead, our climate chaos invites us to see that we aren’t separate, we aren’t in control and our stories of self-respect and meaning were always made up. We must let our deepest assumptions and stories melt away to find what else can emerge.” (Jem Bendell, July 7, 2019)

“Help awaken others and encourage them to reconnect and envision new ways of existing.” (Aimee Lewis-Reau and LaUra Schmidt)

“… if we’re able to get to the root of this central issue, the questions change. … Tamera believes too [that] at the root … of capitalism is fear. … Charles Eisenstein has talked about this too, this idea that the very base level of the story of separation is that the orientation towards the Other, towards the planet and towards the universe, is fear, that it’s out to get you. And if you don’t have enough to protect yourself, to be safe, then you’re in danger or you’re facing oblivion, which is really another way of saying a deep phobia of death, of nonbeing. The shift that’s needed, where so much of our current institutions in this dominant culture, economic particularly, are based on this idea that others are to be feared. The core binary shift is from fear to trust. Because what happens when you start with trust … there’s something completely different happens ...” (Ian MacKenzie in conversation with Patrick Farnsworth)

### Open our hearts. Allow grief.

“…There is plenty to grieve about in this unfolding catastrophe—it’s a valid and essential part of our response to mourn the losses we’re already experiencing.” (Jeremy Lent, April 4, 2019)

“We need to open our hearts to the agony of the truth that we’re facing—to the loss of our living earth, to the devastation already being wrought on millions of climate refugees around the world.” (Jeremy Lent, April 11, 2019)

“… will we be able to allow in the profound sorrow over what has become of us, this wondrous, creative, intelligent species, and of this planet with its awe-inspiring beauty and diversity of life?” (Peter Russell)

“The unhealed trauma we are carrying is narrowing the capacity of our imaginations to imagine a transition into a more beautiful world. To reconnect to the vastness of our imaginations, we must journey through the initiatory threshold of grief.” (Shante' Sojourn Zenith)

“Unexpressed grief is often sublimated into anger and blame. It is easy to get angry at the corporations, the politicians, the wealthy, the Church, the military, the terrorists, or anyone else we think is to blame for our predicament. They may to be blame for particular situations that have arisen, but ultimately there is no one to blame for the overall unraveling. It is the inevitable exponential development, with all its consequences, that has brought us to this point. We'd have ended up in a similar situation whatever path we took.” (Peter Russell)

“… if we don’t grieve, we stunt our ability to love in the future. Grieving allows us to live more fully.” “… I—and probably many of us—will have to start thinking about grieving as something we do in an ongoing way.” (Meghan Kallman)

“I’ve learned that I need to work on my own grief because it’s the only way I can access the depths within myself that are requisite of these times. Only then am I able to be clear about what is most important, and what my next right step should be. Only after fully taking in the gravity of our crisis and the impending collapse of civilization are my eyes cleared of any delusion, or any fantasy of hope.” (Dahr Jamail)

“Will we be able to move beyond fear, denial, anger and blame to allow in our grieving and through that move on to acceptance, facing an unknown future with courage and an open heart?” (Peter Russell)

### Reconcile with one’s mortality—the impermanence and uncontrollability of life. Let go of attachment to how things should be, hoping for the good ending.

“Will we be able to let go of our attachment to how things should be, our hope that things will turn out well in the end, and accept that this is the way it is for a technologically empowered intelligence spinning ever-faster into the eye of its evolutionary hurricane?” (Peter Russell)

“Can we let go of the cherished belief that we are here to stay, rejoice in our existence, and live our final days with grace?” (Peter Russell)

“The tragedy of climate chaos is also an invitation to drop our illusions of permanence.” (Jem Bendell, January 9, 2019)

“… could we start to explore the thought that earth may appropriately proceed without us?” (Martin Shaw)

“Whatever you choose to do, I hope you give yourself time and space to listen for the psycho-spiritual invitation of our predicament. **To reconcile yourself with impermanence, uncontrollability, and death, while letting yourself awaken from the deepest illusions of our culture.** To act with passion for your truth and goal, while maintaining some equanimity about the outcome.” (Jem Bendell, July 7, 2019)

“I focus on how I can be a part of helping to create the possibility of a better future after I am dead, not how I will be around for that better future myself.” (Robert Jensen, August 7, 2019)

### Attend to the present. Pay attention, make life relevant and beautiful.

“… I have come to see any hope, even radical, as influenced by our egos’ fear of the unknown. All hope is a story of the future rather than attention to the present.” (Jem Bendell, April 10, 2019)

“…Now, in facing extinction of our species, you may wonder if there is any point in going on. If your future projects make no sense any more, if you feel it is unwise to have children, and that things are going to get really hard and bad, you may not want to bother living any longer. Yet, there are other ways to use your attention that make life still relevant and even beautiful.” (Catherine Ingram)

### Respond to wonder, engage with the mystery of life, rejoice in our existence.

“I’m not even asking for hope or despair, I’m suggesting responsiveness to wonder.” (Martin Shaw)

“… we have to operate from both wonder and grief, at absolutely the same time.” (Martin Shaw)

“… the climate crisis invites us to engage with the mystery of life with fresh eyes and open hearts.” (Jem Bendell, July 12, 2019)

### Live with love and compassion.

“… [I] hope that through growing realisation of a coming collapse, more people will awaken to a deeper understanding of themselves and life, and live with love and compassion …” (Jem Bendell, January 9, 2019)

### Engage in contemplative gratitude: reflection, acceptance (facing the unknown with courage and an open heart), compassion, kindness, and equanimity.

“…how we might foster an attitude of “[contemplative gratitude](http://howtosavetheworld.ca/2013/06/18/john-grays-attitude-of-contemplative-gratitude/)” — reflection, acceptance, compassion, kindness and equanimity …” (Dave Pollard)

“[I hope] we may find greater equanimity about our predicament. I once confused that state with either calm or serenity. Now I realise that equanimity is a state of being accepting, even of our own difficult emotions, like grief, anger and despair.” (Jem Bendell, July 12, 2019)

### Reconcile with others and with nature. Open to our interconnectedness to all beings and the natural world.

“… I propose a fourth question to guide our reflection on how to navigate our climate tragedy: “What could I make peace with to lessen suffering?” … Otherwise, without this inner deep adaptation to climate collapse we risk tearing each other apart and dying hellishly. My radical hope is that more of us work together to achieve this reconciliation, in all its forms, as a basis for the fuller deep adaptation agenda that I explain in my paper.” “Ours is a time for reconciliation with mortality, nature and each other.” (Jem Bendell, January 9, 2019)

“When we’re open to our interconnectedness to all beings and the natural world, we make decisions based on compassion and insight instead of egocentric motivations. Instead of thoughtless and selfish actions, we reinvest ourselves with an understanding of the consequences to the larger world.” (Aimee Lewis-Reau and LaUra Schmidt)

“… to have any chance of surviving as a species, we need to share resources, to bring the weakest and most marginalized into the center of our communities, and yeah, we’re going to get a lesson in dependence and interdependence like you haven't seen. Well, none of us have seen. I say, *Stay put if you can and get to know your neighbors!*” (Susanne Moser)

### Reground to the earth.

“For me it begins and ends with being connected to the Earth. … Even if it is just to go sit on the grass in a local park, or spend time underneath a tree, this reconnects one back to the Earth, and brings perspective.” (Dahr Jamail)

“It is only by consistently re-grounding ourselves to the Earth, silently in order to listen, that we can allow the grief of these times to wash through us. And then, may we be clear-eyed and able to act with the conviction required by these times.” (Dahr Jamail)

### Live with inconsistencies even while fixing problems.

“It’s a practice to live with the inconsistencies, even as we try to fix them.” (Meghan Kallman)

## Reconsider what to hope for

“Hope” has become a controversial term. Increasingly authors are trying to avoid illusory hope and magical thinking. What sort of hope is appropriate when our ideas of the future are darkening, when the promises of “progress” are slipping away? Is hope merely a convenient delusion, or all that’s left as uncertainty and sorrow grow? A new term, “radical hope”, is gaining currency. In my own case, even this very limited hope is elusive.

“And then there's ‘radical hope,’ a term coined by a man named Jonathan Lear, an anthropologist. With radical hope, you don’t know at all whether the outcome is positive or negative. Neither the means nor the ends are clear, and you have to reinvent yourself completely to come to peace with whatever that new future is. Between grounded hope and radical hope, that’s what we’re going to need for climate change.” (Susanne Moser)

“Radical hope … is a form of hope that is empowered surrender to a situation. It accepts difficult realities about what is happening as well as one’s capabilities to influence things, but still connects with deeper values and requires action to make it real.” “It is time to drop all hopes and visions that arise from an inability to accept impermanence and non-control, and instead describe a radical hope of how we respond in these times.” (Jem Bendell, January 9, 2019)

“Successfully answering this existential challenge may not even matter at all unless we immediately see substantial reductions in global carbon emissions … Nevertheless, the fact that our situation offers no good prospects does not absolve us of the obligation to find a way forward. Our apocalypse is happening day by day, and our greatest challenge is learning to live with this truth while remaining committed to some as-yet-unimaginable form of future human flourishing—to live with radical hope.” (Roy Scranton)

## Design the sequel

Shaun Chamberlain coined the term that I use for this category, which well describes the project to leave our current civilization behind and construct a more beautiful world based on imagination and an understanding of what’s wrong with the current civilization. The positive orientation is very attractive to writers who have not really accepted the collapse of civilization (they imagine it still can be reformed) or who look forward to a better, newly self-organized society after collapse. They seem to believe that if something can be imagined and desired, people can make it a reality. (To me that smacks of magical thinking.) My own opinion is decidedly pessimistic: I believe the opportunities for reorganized domination with continuing environmental destruction and human misery are much greater than for something beautiful to arise from the ruins of civilization.

“… it is up to us to design the sequel.” (Shaun Chamberlain)

### Live creatively. Imagine the future, what we might gain.

“And part of a practice of hope is the act of imagining the future we want. For without that vision, how do we act? How do we *enact*?” (Meghan Kallman)

“It is really crucial that we learn to imagine what we could gain. If we can't imagine it, it’s more difficult to create.” (Susanne Moser)

### Orient toward a positive outcome. Create a more beautiful world.

“It’s time to have a huge *positive* impact.” (Shaun Chamberlain)

“This shouldn’t be merely a reactionary thing, we’re trying to constantly put out the fires of fascism or whatever, and trying to stop climate change, it’s also about creating that more beautiful world, that’s what it’s all about.” (Patrick Farnsworth in conversation with Ian MacKenzie)

## Believe that what we do matters.

We want to know if what we do really matters, if we have any agency in the world beyond our immediate relationships. Are each of us part of a large “we” that has real influence in world affairs, and that can address the predicament of our civilization? If we only really affect those near us, that feels unsatisfying. In my opinion, most people believe that they matter even though evidence mounts that the world is out of our control, and (at least to a large extent) our individual lives are out of control. The belief is comforting while we identify primarily as individual egos, fearing oblivion.

“… what we do matters even though we don’t know if, when, or how our actions will have an effect.” (Meghan Kallman)

“… we must take action, not surrender to a false belief in the inevitable.” (Jeremy Lent, April 4, 2019)

“…Hope is an active state of mind, a recognition that change is nonlinear, unpredictable, and arises from intentional engagement.” (Jeremy Lent, April 4, 2019)

“There’s another crucial point arising from this understanding of complex systems: each of us plays a part in directing where that system is going. We’re not external observers but intrinsic to the system itself. That means that the choices each of us makes have a direct—and potentially nonlinear—impact on the future. It’s a relay race against time in which every one of us is part of the team.” (Jeremy Lent, April 11, 2019)

## Accept moral obligations

A number of writers assume a moral obligation to do something. They imply that their readers probably share the same moral beliefs, rather than arguing for their particular morals. Perhaps the morals are commonly held much less often than they imagine, which might explain why environmental (and other) campaigns are so slow to build steam. I have no argument with people for whom moral obligations drive their activism, but that is not happening in my case.

### Keep pushing forward, driven by moral urgency. Fight for what can be achieved, even if it’s not enough.

“… while grieving, we must take action, not surrender to a false belief in the inevitable.” (Jeremy Lent, April 4, 2019)

“… the dogged actions of a critical mass of engaged citizens who see something that’s wrong and, regardless of seemingly insurmountable odds, keep pushing forward driven by their sense of moral urgency.” (Jeremy Lent, April 4, 2019)

“…Hope is an active state of mind, a recognition that change is nonlinear, unpredictable, and arises from intentional engagement.” (Jeremy Lent, April 4, 2019)

“… the choices each of us makes have a direct—and potentially nonlinear—impact on the future. It’s a relay race against time in which every one of us is part of the team.” (Jeremy Lent, April 11, 2019)

“Are we not morally obligated to do everything possible to serve and protect the Earth, no matter what, and even against all hope?” (Dahr Jamail)

“…grounded hope, active hope, or authentic hope [is] where you are not at all convinced that there is a positive outcome at the end of your labors. It’s not like you're working towards winning something grand. You don’t know that you'll able to achieve that. But you do know that you cannot live with yourself if you do not do everything toward a positive outcome.” (Susanne Moser)

“Our challenge is to highlight not only what we can but also what we cannot accomplish, to build our moral capacity to face a frightening future but continue to fight for what can be achieved, even when we know that won’t be enough.” (Robert Jensen, September 10, 2019)

“… it is right to do what we can. To slow the change. To reduce the harm. To save what we can.” (Jem Bendell, July 12, 2019)

## Aim for goals

Writers propose a variety of goals for their activism. Are the goals typically quite vague because pinning them down is actually impossible (except within a small organization)? Or in the case of a demanding goal (such as reducing CO2 to 350 ppm), perhaps everyone believes it’s impossible so it doesn’t have to be taken seriously. I interpret the goals as being aspirational and think they point in useful directions, but I don’t take them seriously as guides for political strategy or building mass movements. At present, I have not adopted any of these goals.

### Lessen suffering. Reduce harm and misery.

“… a fourth question to guide our reflection on how to navigate our climate tragedy: “What could I make peace with to lessen suffering?” … Otherwise, without this inner deep adaptation to climate collapse we risk tearing each other apart and dying hellishly.” (Jem Bendell, January 9, 2019)

“… there is a way of being incredibly passionate and engaged about reducing harm and suffering and living your truth, without the belief that we will create a materially better future.” (Jem Bendell, July 12, 2019)

“…make life much less miserable for the vast majority of the world’s people.” (Susanne Moser)

### Avert further disaster.

“…As long as there are people at risk, as long as there are species struggling to survive, it’s not too late to avert further disaster.” (Jeremy Lent, April 4, 2019)

### Aim for human flourishing.

“… committing to an idea of human flourishing beyond any hope of knowing what form that flourishing will take.” Roy Scranton

### Strengthen useful systems; save what you love.

“To survive rising temperatures, every system, whether of the natural world or of the human world, will need to be as strong and healthy as we can make it.” “… Keep doing the right thing for the planet, yes, but also keep trying to save what you love specifically—a community, an institution, a wild place, a species that’s in trouble—and take heart in your small successes.” (Jonathan Franzen)

“We can simultaneously explore immediate changes in the existing systems and think about new systems needed in a dramatically different world.” (Robert Jensen, August 7, 2019)

### Move from fear to trust, creating spaces of belonging and trust.

“[We must be] creating that deep sense of belonging and trust in community.” (Patrick Farnsworth in conversation with Ian MacKenzie)

### Serve and care for Earth and its life. Preserve the planet.

“… we are born onto this planet with the obligations of caring for it, and of making decisions based on what will be best for the future generations of all species.” (Dahr Jamail)

“…making it part of our species’ purpose to recreate and nourish the conditions for the continuity of life.” (Susanne Moser)

“I still want to do what I can to preserve the planet. But now I want to do so for the planet's own sake. Perhaps the best we can do with our remaining years is to make sure we leave the Earth in as good a state as possible for the species that remain and those that may follow.” (Peter Russell)

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## Adam Sacks: “The fallacy of climate activism”

August 24, 2009, <https://grist.org/article/2009-08-23-the-fallacy-of-climate-activism/>

“If we climate activists don’t tell the truth as well as we know it — which we have been loathe to do because we ourselves are frightened to speak the words — the public will not respond, notwithstanding all our protestations of urgency.

“And contrary to current mainstream climate-activist opinion, contrary to all the pointless “focus groups,” contrary to the endless speculation on “correct framing,” the only way to tell the truth is to tell it. All of it, no matter how terrifying it may be.

“It is offensive and condescending for activists to assume that people can’t handle the truth without environmentalists finding a way to make it more palatable.”

“Our obligation as activists, the first step, the essence, is to part the cultural veil at long last, and to tell the truth.”

## Shante' Sojourn Zenith: “Grief-Tending and the Ecological Imagination”

7/2/2018, <https://www.transitionus.org/blog/grief-tending-and-ecological-imagination>

“The unhealed trauma we are carrying is narrowing the capacity of our imaginations to imagine a transition into a more beautiful world. To reconnect to the vastness of our imaginations, we must journey through the initiatory threshold of grief.”

“…a deep purpose of human existence is to listen to the imagination of the earth. This Ecological Imagination offers a different way of witnessing the crisis our disconnection has created. In this different way of listening, there comes a moment when we discover that in the absence of our tears, the waters that are rising can teach us how to flow. And as we freeze into immobility, the Earth is showing us how to melt. We are being invited back into a deeper relationship in which our collective grief is the gift we release to the Earth, the only gift that can witness the full vastness of our belonging.”

## Jem Bendell: “Hope and Vision in the Face of Collapse – The 4th R of Deep Adaptation”

January 9, 2019, <https://jembendell.com/2019/01/09/hope-and-vision-in-the-face-of-collapse-the-4th-r-of-deep-adaptation/>

“In distinction to passive hope some have called for an “active hope” where we drop mainstream or received ideas of hope and instead face what we think is reality and construct a new hope based on what we believe in. That is a powerful rethinking of what hope means, as it makes us realise that hope involves actions to make it real. But I don’t think it is a sufficient reworking of the concept of hope. Because it can downplay whether we really think our actions will add up to the outcome we are actively hoping for. Instead, the emphasis is on intention, without being precise about the nature of intention, such as love, compassion, forgiveness, and so on. Therefore, people who speak of “active hope” may actually be practising magical hope, and avoiding either deeper inquiry into the intentions they value or into the implications of the futility of their actions.”

“Radical hope … is a form of hope that is empowered surrender to a situation. It accepts difficult realities about what is happening as well as one’s capabilities to influence things, but still connects with deeper values and requires action to make it real.”

“The tragedy of climate chaos is also an invitation to drop our illusions of permanence.”

“If you, like me, hope that through growing realisation of a coming collapse, more people will awaken to a deeper understanding of themselves and life, and live with love and compassion, then that is not an idle hope.”

“…I propose a fourth question to guide our reflection on how to navigate our climate tragedy: “What could I make peace with to lessen suffering?” … Otherwise, without this inner deep adaptation to climate collapse we risk tearing each other apart and dying hellishly. My radical hope is that more of us work together to achieve this reconciliation, in all its forms, as a basis for the fuller deep adaptation agenda that I explain in my paper.”

“…But all of [what we decide to do] we can do because we have a faith or sense that this is the right way to be alive, not because it will work. … It is time to drop all hopes and visions that arise from an inability to accept impermanence and non-control, and instead describe a radical hope of how we respond in these times. I believe it’s possible and necessary, though mutual inquiry and support, for our fears, beliefs or certainties of collapse to be brought to a place of peaceful inner and outer resourcefulness. Ours is a time for reconciliation with mortality, nature and each other.

“We can develop and share a vision of more of us experiencing the invitation to live lovingly, creatively, and truthfully, in acceptance of mortality and impermanence. After all, any other hope or vision were always a tactical delusion for temporary benefit.”

## Jem Bendell: “Responding to Green Positivity Critiques of Deep Adaptation”

April 10, 2019, <https://jembendell.com/2019/04/10/responding-to-green-positivity-critiques-of-deep-adaptation/>

“Awakening from our delusions of separation with nature and each other is a wonderful thing to do. Liberating ourselves from political, monetary and economic systems that structure those delusions of separation is also a wonderful thing to pursue. Both are important whether they achieve any material outcome or not. We do not need a fairytale of flourishing on this planet for these processes of awakening and liberating to be pursued. Rather, such a fairytale could even be counter-productive by suggesting we only do these things in so far as they create a desired end state.”

“Deep Adaptation is imbued with this radical hope – that humanity will find compassion and collaboration during terrible circumstances. Second, I have come to see any hope, even radical, as influenced by our egos’ fear of the unknown. All hope is a story of the future rather than attention to the present. If we lived ‘hopefree’ rather than hopeful, might we take more ownership and responsibility for how we are living in the present?”

“If some people feel that they can’t continue pursuing impact unless they tell themselves a story of hope of a better tomorrow, then they may be acting from a need to affirm their ego against their fear of death. Instead, we can keep pursuing change and keep helping those afflicted by climate-related disasters, with an acceptance that we are not likely to escape tragedy ourselves.”

## Jem Bendell: “A Year of Deep Adaptation”

July 7, 2019, <https://jembendell.com/2019/07/07/a-year-of-deep-adaptation/>

“To be successful in society means one is having affirmed, daily, the illusion of the socially-respected agentic separate Self. Instead, our climate chaos invites us to see that we aren’t separate, we aren’t in control and our stories of self-respect and meaning were always made up. We must let our deepest assumptions and stories melt away to find what else can emerge.”

“Whatever you choose to do, I hope you give yourself time and space to listen for the psycho-spiritual invitation of our predicament. **To reconcile yourself with impermanence, uncontrollability, and death, while letting yourself awaken from the deepest illusions of our culture.** To act with passion for your truth and goal, while maintaining some equanimity about the outcome.”

## Jem Bendell: “Don’t police our emotions – climate despair is inviting people back to life”

July 12, 2019, <https://jembendell.com/2019/07/12/dont-police-our-emotions-climate-despair-is-inviting-people-back-to-life/>

“We gather and rebel not with a vision of a fairy-tale future where we have fixed the climate, but because it is right to do what we can. To slow the change. To reduce the harm. To save what we can. To invite us back to sanity and love.”

“… there is a way of being incredibly passionate and engaged about reducing harm and suffering and living your truth, without the belief that we will create a materially better future.”

“One hope I have for my own life and those I engage in person is that we may find greater equanimity about our predicament. I once confused that state with either calm or serenity. Now I realise that equanimity is a state of being accepting, even of our own difficult emotions, like grief, anger and despair. Serenity, like calm, is an emotion which comes and goes. With equanimity we can observe such moments of serenity and welcome them, cultivate them, but not become attached to them nor think they are superior states of being. Rather, being alive at this time will mean we ebb and flow with various emotions.”

“…an awareness of impending collapse is an invitation to ask ourselves deep questions of meaning that we typically postpone – and some of us never even get to. *Climate despair is inviting people back to life.*

… I have become more certain that the way through despair involves experiencing oneself as part of a greater whole and surrendering to the mystery of creation. Yes, that is not a new idea! Yet it is so often loaded with culturally specific baggage that leads to ignorance and division. But now the climate crisis invites us to engage with the mystery of life with fresh eyes and open hearts.”

## Roy Scranton: “Lessons from a genocide can prepare humanity for climate apocalypse”

April 24, 2019, <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/613343/lessons-from-a-genocide-can-prepare-humanity-for-climate-apocalypse/>

“So we have to confront two distinct challenges. The first is whether we might curtail the worst possibilities of climate change and stave off human extinction by limiting greenhouse-gas emissions and decreasing atmospheric carbon dioxide. The second is whether we will be able to transition to a new way of life in the world we’ve made. Meeting the latter challenge demands mourning what we have already lost, learning from history, finding a realistic way forward, and committing to an idea of human flourishing beyond any hope of knowing what form that flourishing will take. “This is a daunting form of commitment,” Lear writes, for it is a commitment “to a goodness in the world that transcends one’s current ability to grasp what it is.”

“It is not clear that we moderns possess the psychological and spiritual resources to meet this challenge. Coming to terms with the situation as it stands has already proved the struggle of a generation, and the outcome still remains obscure. Successfully answering this existential challenge may not even matter at all unless we immediately see substantial reductions in global carbon emissions …

“Nevertheless, the fact that our situation offers no good prospects does not absolve us of the obligation to find a way forward. Our apocalypse is happening day by day, and our greatest challenge is learning to live with this truth while remaining committed to some as-yet-unimaginable form of future human flourishing—to live with radical hope. Despite decades of failure, a disheartening track record, ongoing paralysis, a social order geared toward consumption and distraction, and the strong possibility that our great-grandchildren may be the last generation of humans ever to live on planet Earth, we must go on. We have no choice.”

## Dave Pollard: “The Work That Seems Worth Doing Now”

May 26, 2019, <http://howtosavetheworld.ca/2019/05/26/the-work-that-seems-worth-doing-now/>

“What I’d rather talk about, I think, is how we might hone our capacity for paying attention, which I think underlies all great art, as unbearable as paying attention in a world in collapse can often be. I’d rather talk about how we might foster an attitude of “[contemplative gratitude](http://howtosavetheworld.ca/2013/06/18/john-grays-attitude-of-contemplative-gratitude/)” — reflection, acceptance, compassion, kindness and equanimity — that might enable us to be of more use to others in these challenging times, and might allow the great ‘works’ of art that are waiting for us to get out of the way so they can be expressed through us, to emerge.”

## Jeremy Lent: “What Will You Say to Your Grandchildren?”

April 4, 2019, <https://patternsofmeaning.com/2019/04/04/what-will-you-say-to-your-grandchildren/>

“…There is plenty to grieve about in this unfolding catastrophe—it’s a valid and essential part of our response to mourn the losses we’re already experiencing. But while grieving, we must take action, not surrender to a false belief in the inevitable.”

“…lesson to learn from the nonlinear transformations that we see throughout history, such as universal women’s suffrage or the legalization of same-sex marriage. They don’t just happen by themselves—they result from the dogged actions of a critical mass of engaged citizens who see something that’s wrong and, regardless of seemingly insurmountable odds, keep pushing forward driven by their sense of moral urgency. …”

“…Hope is an active state of mind, a recognition that change is nonlinear, unpredictable, and arises from intentional engagement.”

“…As long as there are people at risk, as long as there are species struggling to survive, it’s not too late to avert further disaster.”

## Jeremy Lent: “Our Actions Create the Future: A Response to Jem Bendell”

April 11, 2019, <https://patternsofmeaning.com/2019/04/11/our-actions-create-the-future-a-response-to-jem-bendell/>

“There’s another crucial point arising from this understanding of complex systems: each of us plays a part in directing where that system is going. We’re not external observers but intrinsic to the system itself. That means that the choices each of us makes have a direct—and potentially nonlinear—impact on the future. It’s a relay race against time in which every one of us is part of the team.”

“I recognize only too well how a false hope that, “somehow things will be better if we can only improve our technology, recycle more, or go vegan,” can cause continual suffering, emotional paralysis, and political incrementalism. We need to open our hearts to the agony of the truth that we’re facing—to the loss of our living earth, to the devastation already being wrought on millions of climate refugees around the world. When we do that, we need spiritual sustenance. We need compassionate community support. Each of us needs to find our way through the quagmire of despair.”

## Dahr Jamail: “Dancing with Grief”

July 15, 2019, <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2019-07-15/uncertain-future-forum-dahr-jamail-essay/>

“… I realized, again, the need to turn within, and begin taking the measures necessary to dance with my grief about all that is happening to the planet—just as I’ve needed to dance with my grief from my experiences in Iraq.

“I’ve learned that I need to work on my own grief because it’s the only way I can access the depths within myself that are requisite of these times. Only then am I able to be clear about what is most important, and what my next right step should be. Only after fully taking in the gravity of our crisis and the impending collapse of civilization are my eyes cleared of any delusion, or any fantasy of hope.”

“… we are born onto this planet with the obligations of caring for it, and of making decisions based on what will be best for the future generations of all species.

“So each morning, I awake and engage in my morning practice, part of which is pondering what I shall do each day to serve Earth and all her species. When I approach my life from this perspective, no matter how bleak the future appears, I always have work to do and services to perform.

“Are we not morally obligated to do everything possible to serve and protect the Earth, no matter what, and even against all hope?”

“For me it begins and ends with being connected to the Earth.

“Each time that I’ve been brought into grief by facing what is already upon us, I find solace outside. In my talks as of late, I encourage people to do the same. Even if it is just to go sit on the grass in a local park, or spend time underneath a tree, this reconnects one back to the Earth, and brings perspective.”

“It is only by consistently re-grounding ourselves to the Earth, silently in order to listen, that we can allow the grief of these times to wash through us. And then, may we be clear-eyed and able to act with the conviction required by these times.”

## Meghan Kallman: “Three Practices for a Time of Crisis”

July 23, 2019, <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2019-07-23/uncertain-future-forum-meghan-kallman-reflections/>

“Grief acknowledges love, because it is only through love that we feel loss. And if we don’t grieve, we stunt our ability to love in the future. Grieving allows us to live more fully.”

“…in a climate crisis we all lose continually, and generations to come will suffer more than their parents. That is not the natural order of things. And it means that I—and probably many of us—will have to start thinking about grieving as something we do in an ongoing way.”

“…a related practice: the practice of holding painful paradoxes close to our hearts, without the need to explain them away or seek out false binaries. It’s a practice to live with the inconsistencies, even as we try to fix them.”

“Hope lives in the unstuck middle place between optimism and pessimism, where what we do matters even though we don’t know if, when, or how our actions will have an effect.”

“And part of a practice of hope is the act of imagining the future we want. For without that vision, how do we act? How do we *enact*?”

## Susanne Moser interviewed by Laurie Mazur: “Despairing about the Climate Crisis? Read This.”

July 22, 2019, <http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/articles/entry/despairing-about-climate-crisis>

“A conversation with scientist Susanne Moser about climate communication, the benefits of functional denial, and the varied flavors of hope.” [Quotes below are from Moser.]

“There is a ton of space left in terms of what we can do. We can’t just do anything we want, because of the things we have already set in motion, but we can stop making it worse, and there are so many options to deal with the challenges and to make life much less miserable for the vast majority of the world’s people.

“So I think it’s a matter of priorities and values, and reckoning with what we have done. In the public sphere, it’s called political work. In the private sphere, there is deeply personal transformational work that needs to be done.”

“…grounded hope, active hope, or authentic hope [is] where you are not at all convinced that there is a positive outcome at the end of your labors. It’s not like you're working towards winning something grand. You don’t know that you'll able to achieve that. But you do know that you cannot live with yourself if you do not do everything toward a positive outcome.

“And then there's ‘radical hope,’ a term coined by a man named Jonathan Lear, an anthropologist. With radical hope, you don’t know at all whether the outcome is positive or negative. Neither the means nor the ends are clear, and you have to reinvent yourself completely to come to peace with whatever that new future is. Between grounded hope and radical hope, that’s what we’re going to need for climate change.”

“It’s a very archetypal process. Maybe we've never been at this much risk, as a species, but it’s not like we have never had to go through anything similar.

“Maybe migration is a good example. You have to let go of your homeland, and you set off on a ship in the ocean. You don’t know whether the boat is going to hold up or whether the captain knows anything about where he's going. That’s a metaphorically perfect illustration of what we’re doing. We let go of something old in order to go through great uncertainty and come to a new place where we unfold in new ways.”

“For [Jem] Bendell, and also the Dark Mountain project, they are finding community with each other and building social capital that is absolutely crucial to get through the tough spot that we’re going through.

“… the Dark Mountain project and Jem Bendell’s deep adaptation are actually doing some of the deep psychological and social work required to get to a different place.”

“… to have any chance of surviving as a species, we need to share resources, to bring the weakest and most marginalized into the center of our communities, and yeah, we’re going to get a lesson in dependence and interdependence like you haven't seen. Well, none of us have seen. I say, *Stay put if you can and get to know your neighbors!*”

“…The loss is tremendous and heartbreaking on so many levels, both the human suffering and the wiping out of other species, the loss of places, seasons. And it strikes me that it seems so much easier to imagine these losses than to imagine that we could change ourselves and create a different form of living on the planet.

“It is really crucial that we learn to imagine what we could gain. If we can't imagine it, it’s more difficult to create. It'll make us dependent on accidents, serendipities.”

“…I can imagine something different. …

“That we will be a nondominant species again. I'm not the first one to say that. But it’s basically the idea of keeping the Anthropocene to a really thin layer in the geologic record and being one among many species that live on this planet within the confines of its resources, without damaging it, and in fact making it part of our species’ purpose to recreate and nourish the conditions for the continuity of life.

“In my highest aspirations for the human species, that’s what we will be: servants of life.”

## Shaun Chamberlin: “Humanity – not just a virus with shoes”

August 6, 2019, <http://www.darkoptimism.org/2019/08/06/humanity-not-just-a-virus-with-shoes/>

“There are two possibilities from here – we dramatically change direction or we end up where we are headed. Either way, we are on the cusp of radical change.

“So don’t buy the story that the *status quo* is overwhelmingly vast and powerful, far beyond your ability to change it. On the contrary, it is devouring its own foundations, and it is up to us to design the sequel. Those who see this necessity are the pioneers. We were born into a culture of death, but it needn’t hold our allegiance.”

“These times don’t call us to ‘low-impact’ lives. It’s time to have a huge *positive* impact. To break the mould. Many people have. Many cultures have. And so can we.”

## Patrick Farnsworth and Ian MacKenzie: “#204 | The Village That Heals: Love School, Lost Nation Road, & Exploring The Edges w/ Ian MacKenzie”

August 7, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/lastborninthewilderness/ian-mackenzie> (podcast episode)

My transcription follows.

53:52: [Farnsworth] “I think about the work that’s required right now of us … where the planet is currently and the systems that seem to govern everything, and how unhealthy and how traumatized and how everything is, that when I look at activists, and they may be doing really good work, and it may be instrumental and very important … [but we must also be] creating that deep sense of belonging and trust in community. … how necessary that is. … it’s not [just] about we need to get to work, action is required, but that deepening needs to happen as well. … It’s a deeper work. It’s not just about punching Nazis on the street … What are we going to build out of this? This shouldn’t be merely a reactionary thing, we’re trying to constantly put out the fires of fascism or whatever, and trying to stop climate change, it’s also about creating that more beautiful world, that’s what it’s all about. So unless we address those traumas and those deeply felt tyrannies, almost, within ourselves, we’re not going to really get there. We’re not even going to be able to resist effectively unless we build those deeply felt spaces and communities for people to heal, and I think that simultaneously that needs to be happening along with all the other stuff that people are kind of already doing right now, in some form or another.”

56:01: [MacKenzie] “Just to add on that, … often we get this question with the film “Love School” [(our documentary on Tamera’s research)] … [from] people coming from the activist background or even just peering at the carnage around the world, and they say, “Yeah, OK, I get it that something needs to change, but why love and sexuality and partnership, what does that have to do with anything? We should be out there chaining ourselves to trees, or this kind of stuff.” And it becomes a hard link, a hard bridge for people to really get. ‘Cause in my understanding it’s not like it’s just one other thing to deal with—we got climate change, we got ocean acidification, we got economic breakdown, we got the issues with love and sexuality—it’s not another thing on the list to me. What I’ve come to understand by my time now with Tamera is that it is the central issue. It’s the root of everything. And by that, meaning: you could say the improper channeling of life energy (which is another understanding of the word “Eros”) … is what’s at the root of violence, of war, of the “hungry ghost”-ness of this culture at large. … so many of the actions, or so much of the culture, is geared toward a compensatory, cotton candy nourishment to this deeper longing that’s actually dying to be met. … if we’re able to get to the root of this central issue, the questions change. … Tamera believes too [that] at the root … of capitalism is fear. … Charles Eisenstein has talked about this too, this idea that the very base level of the story of separation is that the orientation towards the Other, towards the planet and towards the universe, is fear, that it’s out to get you. And if you don’t have enough to protect yourself, to be safe, then you’re in danger or you’re facing oblivion, which is really another way of saying a deep phobia of death, of nonbeing. The shift that’s needed, where so much of our current institutions in this dominant culture, economic particularly, are based on this idea that others are to be feared. The core binary shift is from fear to trust. Because what happens when you start with trust … there’s something completely different happens ...”

## Aimee Lewis-Reau and LaUra Schmidt: “Tools for the Awakening”

August 21, 2019, <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2019-08-21/tools-for-the-awakening/>

Step 1: Accept The Severity of Predicament.

Step 2: Acknowledge That I Am Part Of The Problem And Solution.

Step 3: Practice Sitting With Uncertainty.

Step 4: Honor My Own Mortality And The Mortality Of All.

Step 5: Do Inner Work.

Step 6: Develop Awareness of Brain Patterns And Perception.

Step 7: Practice Gratitude.

Step 8: Take Breaks And Rest.

Step 9: Show Up.

“We cannot permit fear of pain or humiliation stop us from participating in life. There is strength in pushing through that which makes us uncomfortable. There is power and energy in asserting that we’re not going away. Life exists in the moments we show up. To shy away from these experiences is to miss the essence of being alive. So, we must be brave. We must take chances. And we must commit to being the main character in each of our lives.”

Step 10: Reinvest Into Problem-Solving Efforts.

“When we’re open to our interconnectedness to all beings and the natural world, we make decisions based on compassion and insight instead of egocentric motivations. Instead of thoughtless and selfish actions, we reinvest ourselves with an understanding of the consequences to the larger world. This new type of effort must come from our inner stillness and from our Love for ourselves, each other, the natural world. It will be well-intentioned and well-informed, colored by our perspective, experience, and courage. Unless we’ve undergone an intensive process that forces us to seek truth from within ourselves, rather than having “truth” pushed on us, any action with regard to our collective problems will perpetuate the same social, political, and economic systems that are failing us.

“Now is the time for each person to find her opportunity to be powerful. Action and power don’t have to mean risking arrest or giving up on civilized society and living in a yurt. Action and power exist in the decisions we make with compassion, insight, respect, and Love. Our next moves must be made from a place of inner calm and outward reverence.”

“We suggest working through these steps in community. Move through your difficult emotions and past trauma, challenge the social constructions pushed upon you, and wholeheartedly reconnect with life. When you complete the steps, run through them again with the new insight you possess. And then run through them again. Help awaken others and encourage them to reconnect and envision new ways of existing.”

## Robert Jensen: “Struggling to be ‘Fully Alive’. Reports on Coping with Anguish for a World in Collapse”

July 8, 2010, <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2010/07/08/struggling-be-fully-alive>

“Emotions are what they are, and we don’t “win” by telling people what they should feel. It’s enough of a struggle to understand what I feel and why I feel it; I don’t think I’m qualified to dictate to others what they should feel. In dealing with multiple crises on all fronts -- economic, political, cultural, and ecological failures that pose a significant threat to human life as we understand it -- it’s folly for any one of us to imagine we figured out the right approach, or that there is a single right approach, or that there is any right approach at all.”

## Robert Jensen: “From the Royal to the Prophetic to the Apocalyptic: The Case for a Saving Remnant”

August 7, 2019, <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2019-08-07/from-the-royal-to-the-prophetic-to-the-apocalyptic-the-case-for-a-saving-remnant/>

“The royal, prophetic, and apocalyptic traditions in the Hebrew and Christian bibles provide a compelling framework for understanding progressive intellectual and political work today, as we face the task not only of struggling to create a just and sustainable world but also imagining a saving remnant that will negotiate a radically different future in which both new and old skills, stories, and spaces will be necessary.”

“The prophetic tradition’s calling out of injustice requires not only the willingness to confront the abuses of the powerful but to acknowledge our own complicity. To speak prophetically requires us first to see honestly—both how our world is structured by systems that create unjust and unsustainable conditions, and how we who live in the privileged parts of the world are implicated in those systems. To speak prophetically is to refuse to shrink from what we discover or from our own place in these systems. We must confront the powers that be, and ourselves.”

“When prophetic warnings have not been heeded—or, worse, when royal societies learn to contain and co-opt the prophetic—what comes next? This is the time when the prophetic imagination requires an apocalyptic sensibility.”

“Instead of predicting the rapture to come, apocalyptic vision can help us understand social and ecological ruptures in the here and now. Responsible apocalyptic thinking does not assume a script already written by a divine hand nor offer pseudo-scientific predictions, but rather reminds us of the importance of dealing honestly with reality even when it is frightening, and holding onto our humanity, which is even more important when we’re frightened. Given the severity of the human assault on the ecosphere, compounded by the suffering and strife within the human family, honest apocalyptic thinking that is firmly grounded in a systematic evaluation of the state of the world is not only sensible but an obligation.”

“…while the prophetic imagination helps us analyze and strategize about the historical moment we’re in, it is based on a faith that the systems in which we live can be reshaped to stop the worst consequences of the royal consciousness, to shake off that numbness of death in time. What if that is no longer possible? Because no one can predict the future, these two approaches are not mutually exclusive; people should not be afraid to think prophetically and apocalyptically at the same time. We can simultaneously explore immediate changes in the existing systems and think about new systems needed in a dramatically different world. The term “saving remnant” captures what might be on the other side.”

“… the idea of a remnant isn’t about who deserves to make it but how to do what we can to give those who do make it a fighting chance. I focus on how I can be a part of helping to create the possibility of a better future after I am dead, not how I will be around for that better future myself. What will be required of people in that uncertain future—that life on the other side of the high-energy/high-technology world? We cannot predict the terrain—social or ecological—on which people will be building a different world, but we can contribute by fashioning the skills, stories, and spaces that likely will be necessary.”

“What stories can we tell about what it means to be human that will help us on the other side? Some old stories may be useful, but they were created in another time for another world and will need modification or more wholesale change. We especially will need a story about why we humans were so short-sighted and cruel, and how we can overcome those limitations.”

“Facing all this is not easy. Being human has always been hard, and it will be harder as we come to terms with our collective failures.”

## Robert Jensen: “The Danger of Inspiration: A Review of On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal”

September 10, 2019, <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2019-09-10/the-danger-of-inspiration-a-review-of-on-fire-the-burning-case-for-a-green-new-deal/>

“Our challenge is to highlight not only what we can but also what we cannot accomplish, to build our moral capacity to face a frightening future but continue to fight for what can be achieved, even when we know that won’t be enough.

“One story I would tell is of the growing gatherings of people, admittedly small in number today, who take comfort in saying forthrightly what they believe, no matter how painful—people who do not want to suppress their grief, yet do not let their grief overwhelm them.”

“…At best, we struggle to come to terms with a “bleak and austere” future.

“But that’s exactly why we need to engage rather than avoid the distressing realities of our time. If we are afraid to speak honestly, we suffer alone. Better that we tell the truth and accept the consequences, together.”

## Catherine Ingram: “Facing Extinction”

August 2019, <http://www.catherineingram.com/facingextinction/>

“Letting go of the future means re-ordering your tendencies of thinking about the future. How psychologically invested you have been in your ideas and hopes about the future will likely determine how well you adapt to ignoring those kinds of thoughts as they arise. You may also find a stronger habit in present awareness begin to prevail. And if your own legacy project entailed a lot of stress and strain in hopes of building (or maintaining) a name for yourself, you may even find great relief and freedom in the irrelevance of those thoughts and their incumbent efforts. You may be released from both the legacy project for the future and a similar project in the present, one that I call “The Me Project,” which is dedicated to self-importance and is in particular vogue among social media addicts.”

“…We, too, can make our final acts on earth a testament to the human capacity for mercy, a living bow to our highest good—for its own sake–even though it will not save the day.”

“…Now, in facing extinction of our species, you may wonder if there is any point in going on. If your future projects make no sense any more, if you feel it is unwise to have children, and that things are going to get really hard and bad, you may not want to bother living any longer. Yet, there are other ways to use your attention that make life still relevant and even beautiful.”

## Jonathan Franzen: “What If We Stopped Pretending? The climate apocalypse is coming. To prepare for it, we need to admit that we can’t prevent it.”

September 8, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/what-if-we-stopped-pretending>

“All-out war on climate change made sense only as long as it was winnable. Once you accept that we’ve lost it, other kinds of action take on greater meaning. Preparing for fires and floods and refugees is a directly pertinent example. But the impending catastrophe heightens the urgency of almost any world-improving action. In times of increasing chaos, people seek protection in tribalism and armed force, rather than in the rule of law, and our best defense against this kind of dystopia is to maintain functioning democracies, functioning legal systems, functioning communities. In this respect, any movement toward a more just and civil society can now be considered a meaningful climate action. Securing fair elections is a climate action. Combatting extreme wealth inequality is a climate action. Shutting down the hate machines on social media is a climate action. Instituting humane immigration policy, advocating for racial and gender equality, promoting respect for laws and their enforcement, supporting a free and independent press, ridding the country of assault weapons—these are all meaningful climate actions. To survive rising temperatures, every system, whether of the natural world or of the human world, will need to be as strong and healthy as we can make it.

“…It’s fine to struggle against the constraints of human nature, hoping to mitigate the worst of what’s to come, but it’s just as important to fight smaller, more local battles that you have some realistic hope of winning. Keep doing the right thing for the planet, yes, but also keep trying to save what you love specifically—a community, an institution, a wild place, a species that’s in trouble—and take heart in your small successes. Any good thing you do now is arguably a hedge against the hotter future, but the really meaningful thing is that it’s good today. As long as you have something to love, you have something to hope for.”

## Martin Shaw: “We are in the underworld and we haven’t figured it out yet”

2019, <https://cistamystica.com/we-are-in-the-underworld-and-we-havent-figured-it-out-yet/>

“…I’m going to ask us to hold two, seemingly contrary positions at the same time. That we could deepen into both.

“1. Stop Saying That The Earth Is Doomed

“You may be doomed, I may be doomed, the earth not so much.

“And anyway, do you have any idea how offensive that is to the gods? To any amount of offended magics? Especially to your children? To the perpetual and ongoing miraculous?”

“I’m not even asking for hope or despair, I’m suggesting responsiveness to wonder. To entertain possibility. And to deepen.

“Cut out the titillation of extinction unless we … really are prepared to be appropriately stupefied with loss. … It doesn’t mean it’s not true, … but there’s an odd twisted eroticism, a Western Thanatos that always comes with excessive privilege. And let’s be clear, most of us reading this are excessively privileged. I think some of us are getting off on this. That it-all-will-end assists some poignancy to a life deprived of useful hardships. Not ever knowing appropriate sacrifice is not a victory, it’s a sedative.”

“2. Approaching The Truth That Things End

“Dancing on the very same spear tip, we accept our very human response to things ending. We don’t like it. We loathe it. … could we start to explore the thought that earth may appropriately proceed without us?”

“… we have to operate from both wonder and grief, at absolutely the same time. One does not cancel the other out, it is the very tension of the love-tangle that makes us, possibly, a true human being.

“Notice I said approaching, not accepting the truth that things end. That’s [too] swift a move, too fraudulent, too counterfeit, too plastic. Approaching is devastation enough.”

## Peter Russell: “What If There Were No Future? Some Overlooked Consequences of Exponential Growth”

July 2019, <https://www.peterrussell.com/winf/index.php>

“… will we be able to allow in the profound sorrow over what has become of us, this wondrous, creative, intelligent species, and of this planet with its awe-inspiring beauty and diversity of life?”

“Unexpressed grief is often sublimated into anger and blame. It is easy to get angry at the corporations, the politicians, the wealthy, the Church, the military, the terrorists, or anyone else we think is to blame for our predicament. They may to be blame for particular situations that have arisen, but ultimately there is no one to blame for the overall unraveling. It is the inevitable exponential development, with all its consequences, that has brought us to this point. We'd have ended up in a similar situation whatever path we took.

“Will we be able to move beyond fear, denial, anger and blame to allow in our grieving and through that move on to acceptance, facing an unknown future with courage and an open heart?

“Will we be able to let go of our attachment to how things should be, our hope that things will turn out well in the end, and accept that this is the way it is for a technologically empowered intelligence spinning ever-faster into the eye of its evolutionary hurricane?”

“For me, acceptance of the situation has brought with it some surprising shifts in attitude. I am not so angry at the people whose views and actions I disagree with. I am no longer so upset by the latest political shenanigans, economic swings, or social unrest. This is simply how it is to be living through the final generations of an intelligent, technological species. There is no blame to be apportioned. Instead I can be more understanding, more forgiving.

“Nor does it mean I no longer care for the world around me. I still want to do what I can to preserve the planet. But now I want to do so for the planet's own sake. Perhaps the best we can do with our remaining years is to make sure we leave the Earth in as good a state as possible for the species that remain and those that may follow.”

“Can we let go of the cherished belief that we are here to stay, rejoice in our existence, and live our final days with grace?”