

Response to *Radical Evil-Radical Hope* By Jeffrey Newman

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1. Could the concept of “radical hope” help in the approach to “avoidable starvation, poverty and death for hundreds of millions” which is predicted by scientists over the next 60 to 100 years.

The subject is of great interest to me in the quest I started by creating ‘The Ecological Sequestration Trust’ to build the tools needed for society all over the world to avoid these outcomes and to test, improve and scale up their use in the most rapidly urbanizing regions, like China, India, Africa. Indeed it was the shock of hearing that there was a calculated 60% probability of 4degC rise in earth temperature by 2070, leading to human catastrophe, that kick-started the quest. So I am searching for the meaning of “radical hope”.

I have positioned TEST in the space between the existing silos of politicians and their short termism, companies and their short-term sector interests, researchers and their deep specialisms, NGO’s and philanthropy and their even more specialist interests and finance community struggling to find anything stable to invest in, as turbulence increases.

Who else stands in this space? Well interestingly it is religion, art and culture and that is why this is a great opportunity to set out some learning from around 6 years of discussing this all over the world including, visiting 38 countries.

I will try to pick up on the many useful themes and my first reaction is that “*radical hope*” is very useful as a framing for ongoing exploration of resilience.

2. Radical Hope and the need for a Resilience Compass

Radical Hope is very relevant. *Radical* because dealing with the severe problems requires serial cutting edge innovation in the integration of previous disconnected decision making processes-it has never been done before.

Hope because I think ‘*hope*’ can only be fulfilled with a ‘compass’, being an indicator of whether you are on the right track to reach a particular goal. The availability of the beginnings of a ‘compass’ to enable the future of humanity to be resilient (islands of security amongst oceans of uncertainty) is I think what we are trying to achieve at TEST (more later) and before you think I am getting ahead of myself this is still a very humble approach! Resilience is a good general goal and we have to learn more about what it means in detail as we go but the UN SDG process is doing that right now. The current development of UN post 2015 SDG’s will be sufficient to define the resilience goal I think. It brings together world leading thinking from all the sectors. The concept of resilience is important because it means the solutions have to come from within society and not be imposed from outside if they are to succeed. *Hope* is the theme that comes through my engagement all over the world with many people, with the most common reaction being that the approach has hope and is inspirational.
Hope + compass= inspiration for resilience in my experience.

There is both hope and despair in the recent 3000 year history of the resilience of the human race mainly in my view because we measure success globally though

a GDP metric which essentially means destruction of natural systems that support life. The *cycle of hope* in this industrial model is an obvious delusion. Warnings are reflected in many religions and philosophies but have not been embedded in the decision making of politicians, economists and the private sector globally, other than in very limited locations like Bhutan. So there has been a continual collapsing of very 'advanced' societies like the Greeks and Romans due to over-exploitation of natural systems. I agree in this respect that our 'modern understanding of ourselves is suffering a breakdown in the wake of the death of the monotheist God'. The so-called 'moral compass' has been very helpful but not always successful in the human-human dimension of culture but has not helped at all with the human-ecological one. We have developed legal structures around morality but no legal structures around ecological protection, which is why 'ecocide' is now being proposed.

Inspiration is a form of spiritual reaction to *hope* and the deepest connections and outcomes that I have experienced are when our 'resilience compass' design is discussed in the context of culture in our "Culture Futures" events, which we have run in 12 countries in partnership with religious and cultural leaders.

In the "culture futures" events we are not advocating 'acting freely' or 'starting again'. We are instead talking about a way to help the human race to change direction as quickly as possible by genuinely 'thinking globally and acting locally'. We have concluded from practical planning work and "culture futures" events that engaging the cultural history of religions, families and society which shape our beliefs, fears and hopes is necessary for this to succeed. As Gandhi said "there is no point of running fast unless you are running in the right direction". We need to run fast to avoid the catastrophe and the right direction needs a "thinking global, acting local" resilience compass, which enables the building of resilience on the bedrock of existing and diverse culture.

3. Culture, Trust, Loyalty and Reliability (resilience)

I agree the world can be a little more firm and reliable if we can quickly build trust and loyalty and I believe this can be done with a 'resilience compass' which embraces and includes culture and enables the culture of existing communities however diverse to find a common purpose through collaboration.

At our COP 17 "Culture Futures" event in Durban, in the very room where Nelson Mandela received Freedom of the City and with Gandhi's grand-daughter present, Dr Pachauri IPCC Chairman said he "thought one of the main reasons why the UN climate change negotiation process was not succeeding was that the process excluded the Culture Community, including religious leaders and art and culture". He said "this meant that communities were only connected to the process through science and politicians and the process was therefore polarized and much trust had been lost".

Culture Futures has found a strong voice by connecting the 'resilience compass' idea with the cultural history of the community and everyone has identified trust as a necessity for change and has confirmed change towards a more resilient future cannot be achieved without engaging the cultural roots of society. Another facilitator of change in communities is to treasure, honor and respect the past. In my experience people often object to change because of the loss of memory of the past. If the history of people, place and nature are remembered and reflected in the future plans, then communities are much more likely to accept change towards a more resilient life.

Building on this we then come to reliability and a new opportunity offered by connecting scientific evidence to practice through a trusted 'resilience compass'. This is new because deep research evidence of all the complex global interconnections has never been able to be accessed by communities. The

Internet has enabled this to be possible and we know from personal experience that there is potential to use real-time information in our lives and, if we find it works, for that information to be trusted as a means to improve quality of life. There are plenty of examples like public transport ticketing, timetables and arrival times.

Processing data in **systems** platforms offers the much greater potential to increase the direction finding for communities to broader and more significant components of resilience, which are trusted and reliable. This is the birth of the 'resilience compass' and the one TEST is taking forward to be tested in China, Africa , Mongolia , South America and UK later this year.

4. The role of culture in respecting and nurturing human and ecological health

The three dimensions of Culture that we have explored in Culture Futures are "people and nature" "people and people" 'people and the land" ,all in a place. We have done this through the history of religion, art, music, anthropology, ecology, archeology and education in a place.

When the Chief of the Crow Nation said 'When the buffalo went away the hearts of the people fell to the ground' it was a reflection of the tragic loss of all these elements. We now know what they knew, from the work of Alan Savoury, that buffalo grazing is a key essential element of the survival of people and natural systems on grasslands. We really do need to listen to the knowledge and voices of the past in order to find the resilient direction and so 'culture' must be embedded in the 'resilience compass'.

This means a critical roll for all community, religious and cultural leaders in taking the process forward, inputting knowledge and voices from the past into the 'resilience compass', which covers time and space. It enables us to go back and understand the past as well as collaboratively to test scenarios for the future. Science has a key roll throughout to provide the evidence and understanding of the complex linkages between human, ecological and solar activity at both local and global scales. In particular it provides the clear evidence that human and ecological health are intertwined and so the linkages need to be embedded in our 'resilience compass' so that good investment decisions can be made to enhance human well-being. In this I see the potential for Judeo-Christian culture to move from 'impossible' to be even more 'intelligible' and maybe to evolve.

5. Consciousness and social media

There is clear evidence that social media is enabling the growth of protest movements against undesirable regimes and imposed laws all over the world. The Arab Spring is a clear example. It can be argued that this is technology enabling the mobilization of a shared consciousness about a particular direction in which there is a certain level of trust that what is happening is 'wrong'. This 'trust' is such that movements for change, with leaders being appointed, have evolved at a speed never seen before and they are often inclusive and diverse in their approach. However I would argue that these social media facilitated Movements fail because there is no 'resilience compass' for them to use, that is able to provide the evidence for a forward direction for a diverse community in such a turbulent world. Without this, trust quickly breaks down and sectarian divisions are able to take hold. There is some evidence that various forms of evil are able to take advantage of the break down in society caused by such Movements. I hope and believe that the 'resilience compass' would have the potential to enable such problems to be avoided.

6. Where does evil come in

A number of people have asked me about having a 'resilience compass', which enables global thinking to inform local action, and questioned quite rightly whether this could be used for evil purposes to undermine and take over parts of society and destroy it. In practice would open data systems enable weak spots in society to be exploited and used to bring a society to its knees?

My answer has been that this group would necessarily be a minority to start with and with the 'resilience compass' the majority has a tool to constantly and vigilantly ensure weak spots have resilience.

There is strong evidence of this in the way wiki-pedia works. Research shows that on difficult subjects like abortion, the text lurches from one end of the spectrum to another over a long period but eventually settles down to a compromise, maybe setting out balanced arguments.

As long as the majority has access to the system to spot weaknesses then we will be safer, more resilient and less vulnerable. I therefore follow the 'open data' principle and argue that open data and systems access will allow improved safety and resilience. As long as the cultural roots of all people in a region are reflected in the platform and the platform is trusted, reliable and accessible, then everyone that wants to is able to work together for a more resilient future that reflects global needs. I think the evil of the minority can be then be countered, but we need to prove this!.

7. Collaborative Intelligence and Consciousness.

The use of interconnected platforms that talk to each other at regional and global scales could lead to collaboration around investments and lifestyles that enable communities to find a more resilient future. This will be done through a form of testing, feedback and knowledge sharing with an understanding of interconnectedness through science that we have never had. This could lead to a collaborative intelligence, which humans have never really had in the context of human-ecology intersections. This intelligence would come from the intelligence of individuals being magnified through access to a 'resilience compass', which has both local and global dimensions. This collaborative intelligence could be the outcome that enables the human race to take a more resilient turn really quite quickly and would empower business, political leadership, community leadership and NGO's to be more effective in their relatively narrow areas of interest.

This in turn would lead to collaborative consciousness through a learning process about what works and starts to solve the problems we are facing. This will feed back into local action and drive even better decision-making within existing local cultures and philosophies, deepening and evolving them. This could be a very hopeful outcome and the basis of Radical Hope.

