

Guided Envisioning of a Sustainable World

Donella Meadows

Inspired by a speech written for the Third Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Ecological Economics, October 24-28, 1994, San Jose, Costa Rica.

Video: <http://donellameadows.org/archives/envisioning-a-sustainable-world-video/>

Transcript: <http://donellameadows.org/archives/envisioning-a-sustainable-world/>

The Home

What would it feel like to wake up there in the morning?

Who else would live there; how would it feel to be with them?

Where would energy come from, and water, and food?

What kinds of wastes would be generated and where would they go?

When you look out the window or step out the door, what would it look like, if it looked the way you really want?

Who else lives near you (human and non-human)? How do you all interrelate?

The Neighborhood

How is it arranged, so that the children and the old people and everyone in between will be surrounded by security and happiness and beauty?

What kind of work do you do in this sustainable world?

What is your particular and special role?

With whom do you do it?

How do you work together and how are you compensated?

How do you get to work? (Do you have to "get" to work? Is "work" a distinguishable activity in your ideal world? Is it separate from the rest of life?)

The Surrounding Communities

What physical systems sustain them — water, energy, food, materials?

How do they relate, what do they exchange with each other, how do they know of each other?

How do they make joint decisions?

How do they resolve conflicts? (How do you WANT them to resolve conflicts?)

How do they treat different kinds of people, young and old, male and female, intelligent and talented to different degrees and in different ways?

How do they fit within nature? How do they treat, how do they think about plants and animals, soils and waters, stones and stars?

The Nation

Does your visionary world have nations? If it doesn't, what does it have?
How does it meet its physical needs sustainably?
How does it make decisions, resolve conflicts within and without its borders?
What do your people know of other people, and how do they think about them?
How much and what kinds of people and goods and information travel between your place and other places?
Is your nation and your world diverse or homogeneous (the way you WANT it, not the way you expect)?

The Paradigm

How does it feel to live in this world?
What kind of consciousness or worldview, or tolerance of diverse worldviews do people use to keep things sustainable?
What changes in this world, and what stays the same?
What is the pace of everyday life?
How fast, if at all, do people travel and by what means?
What fascinates them?
What kinds of problems do they work on?
What do they regard as progress?
What makes them laugh?