



2. Where is humankind today?



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Our earth has been *radically* altered through technology and industrialisation.

Humans, in their behaviour, thinking and hoping, have remained *the same*.

» The world's two most urgent problems are still not solved, but solvable: the complete destruction of nuclear weapons and the limitation of climate change.

Steven Pinker, experimental psychologist. Enlightenment Now. For Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress. 2018



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» The human ability to act has far surpassed the ability to understand. As a result civilization is faced with a perfect storm of problems driven by overpopulation, overconsumption by the rich, the use of environmentally malign technologies, and gross inequalities.

Blue Planet Prize Laureates, Gro Harlem Brundtland and others - Environment and Development Challenges: [The Imperative to Act](#). 2012

» Everywhere measures are being taken against the devastation of the habitat; these are far from sufficient, but raise the hope of becoming so soon.

Konrad Lorenz, biologist and Nobel Prize winner. Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins. 1973

» The great promise of unlimited progress - the prospect of subjugation of nature, material abundance [...] and of *unlimited* personal freedom - that is what has sustained the hope and confidence of generations since the beginning of the industrial era.

Erich Fromm, psychoanalyst and social psychologist. To Have or to Be? The Spiritual Foundations of a New Society. 1976

» Today, the principle of responsibility must first and foremost be used to slow down, protect, preserve and thus prevent developments that could lead to the demise of humanity.

Hans Jonas, philosopher. The Imperative of Responsibility. In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age. 1979



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» We are facing a change that has nothing in common with the usual advances and transformations. This is due to the unintended side effects of technical progress. These have now become central risks that we are fundamentally unable to cope with.

Ulrich Beck, sociologist. Risk Society - Towards a New Modernity. 1986

» We are speechless and do not know how to overcome it in order to make reality comprehensible, to adequately describe the seriousness of the situation.

George Marshall, communications specialist. Don't Even Think About It - Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change. 2014

» We have to set ecological limits on human activities.

Tim Jackson, economist. Prosperity without Growth - Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow. 2016



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» Today, we have enough new knowledge to make the necessary changes to preserve our world.

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, biologist and Anders Wijkman. Come on! Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet. 2017

» Global environmental problems are no longer just about producing more efficiently. In addition, consumption reduction is needed for holistic environmental and social sustainability. It's about individual and collective behavioural change - and about psychology.

Translated from: Karen Hamann and others, psychologist. Psychologie im Umweltschutz - Handbuch zur Förderung nachhaltigen Handelns. 2016

» An alignment of the global digital revolution with the goals of sustainability [...] is hardly to be seen, even though many key players emphasise that they have acted for the benefit of humankind.

German Advisory Council on Global Change. [Digitalization: What We Need to Talk About](#). 2018



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» We are determined to protect the planet from harm, including through sustainable consumption and sustainable production.

United Nations. Transformation of our world: 17 Goals for Sustainable Development. [Agenda 2030](#). 2016

And what we do in our everyday life?...

» ...it's so easy to do nothing, when you are busy night and day.

From the song Desperation, Steppenwolf. 1968

» Very few people are willing to act now with a view to the long-term future, and even fewer people are clear about what actually needs to be done.

The majority of humanity is burying its head in the sand. But we must act instead of hiding from the challenges.

Translated from: Graeme Maxton. Change! - Why We Need a Radical Change.



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- Even if we people in the rich countries are tired of being reminded over and over again that, with the lifestyle we now hold so dear, we are blatantly risking our descendant's chances of enjoying a good life...
- ... we have an *unquestionable* responsibility to change our lifestyles *now* for the sake of our children and grandchildren and all future people.



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The question is not *how*?

The question is, *when* do we start to live sustainably?