

I've been invited to contribute to an anthology called "Global Chorus - Worldwide Concern and Enduring Hope" which will raise money for The Jane Goodall Institute, The David Suzuki Foundation, The International Committee of the Red Cross etc.

It will contain 365 short essays from Jane Goodall, David Suzuki, Stephen Hawking, Bill McKibben, Frances Moore Lappé, Paul Hawken, Gary Snyder, Mary Evelyn Tucker, Farley Mowat, William McDonough, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and hundreds more,

Each person has one page to answer the central question of what they think our planet's future has in store for it. The Global Chorus question is as follows:

"Do you think that humanity can find a way past the current global environmental and social crises? Will we be able to create the conditions necessary for our own survival, as well as that of other species on the planet? What would these conditions look like? In summary, then, and in the plainest of terms, do we have hope, and can we do it?"

Here's my contribution:

Of all the species that have ever existed, less than one in a hundred survives today. The rest are extinct. Extinction is the rule. Survival the exception.

As environment changes, any species unable to adapt, to change, to evolve, is extinguished. All evolution takes place in this fashion. In this way, an oxygen starved fish, ancestor of yours and mine, commenced to colonize the land. Threat of extinction is the potter's hand that moulds all the forms of life.

The human species is one of millions threatened by imminent extinction. While it is true that the "human nature" revealed by 12,000 years of written history does not offer much hope that we can change our warlike, greedy, ignorant ways, the vastly longer fossil history assures us that we can change. We are those fish, and the myriad other death-defying feats of flexibility which a study of evolution reveals to us. A certain confidence (in spite of our recent "humanity") is warranted. From this point of view, the threat of extinction appears as the invitation to change, to evolve. After a brief respite from the potter's hand, here we are back on the wheel again. The change that is required is a change in consciousness. Indeed, nothing but a revolution in consciousness can possibly save us.

Surely consciousness emerged and evolved according to the same laws as everything else. Moulded by environmental pressures, the mind of our ancestors must time and again have been forced to transcend itself.

The conditions for evolving a new consciousness must include fully facing up to our impending extinction (the ultimate environmental pressure), and a halting of shying away from the truth or hiding in intoxication or busyness from the despair of the human, whose 4000 million year race is run, whose organic life is a mere hair's breadth from finished. Join in community to publicly embrace this despair and allow it to squeeze and pressure new consciousness into existence.