
BUSINESS-AS-USUAL AND SUSTAINABILITY: WHICH PARADIGM ALIGNS WITH OUR BELIEFS?

Jane Lorand, J.D., M.A. ¹

¹GreenMBA, Dominican University of California
50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901 USA
Tel 415-888-3778, Jane@GreenMBA.com

ABSTRACT

For today's businesses, there exist two distinct paradigms about what is real and important. Business-As-Usual practices are remarkably consistent globally, and are based on two foundational beliefs: 1) Everything is Separate and 2) Materialism is the Only Reality. Sustainability Entrepreneurs and Sustainability Companies are remarkably consistent globally as well, and their work is based on two different foundational beliefs: 1) Everything is Connected and 2) Spirit and Matter Co-exist to Form Reality. Logical, internally consistent systems based on these ontologies play out in the marketplace and create both confusion and threads of coherence toward the future of life on the planet. This paper is a parallel comparison of practices and methods that relate to these two paradigms. The paper also introduces a snapshot of the position and tension of the Sustainable Entrepreneur who must navigate among business and government systems dominated by a polar-opposite worldview. As Sustainable Entrepreneurs, until we are more clear about what we believe and why we believe it, until we have investigated how our beliefs align or conflict with Business-As-Usual, we will be less able to generate effective leadership strategies for advancing Sustainable Entrepreneurship.

Keywords

Sustainability, business-as-usual, spirit, paradigm, entrepreneurship, leadership

INTRODUCTION

As my late Uncle Buck would say, we Americans have bet the farm on the paradigm, principles and derivative practices of "Business-As-Usual." (BAU) Yet, as a teacher of critical thinking for the GreenMBA at Dominican University of California, I must ask, "What are the unexamined assumptions that are the very foundation of Business-As-Usual?" What are we counting on being true? How does logic extend these root beliefs into consistent practices and systems? Do these assumptions stand up to the light of day? Do we actually believe them?

My hope is that by examining these underlying root beliefs in a comparison with the paradigm of Sustainability, we will find new choices for how to work and act, choices that align with what we believe is real and true. It would be tragic if we fail to recognize choices that could minimize global disaster because we failed to look into our own minds and unearth the inconsistencies in our thinking. Consistency of thought and action is valued

worldwide and brings coherence to life. My hope is that this exploration will support Sustainable Entrepreneurs worldwide.

College professors tell us that Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." As hard as it is to face it, examining our thinking may be our only path to life at all. On a more optimistic note, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) asserted that we can be free human beings only to the extent we know what we believe and why we believe it (Steiner, 1918). Thus, this exploration of our intellectual operating system has promise: we may find ourselves free to take a different course. Yet, we need to do the basic exploratory work so that we can answer the question, "What do I believe? Why do I believe it? From what beliefs does Business-As-Usual act? Do the people who work in BAU believe them?"

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL AND SUSTAINABILITY

The customs, practices, expectations and behavior standards of corporations worldwide are remarkably consistent, reflecting the singular goal of maximizing financial profit for shareholders. I'm calling Business-As-Usual my direct experience of the consistent corporate beliefs, identity and methods of acting in the world.

As individuals, each of us lives within our unique (if unexamined) system of belief structures or paradigms. Our corporate organizations have their own beliefs that support collective actions. These shared understandings are also typically unexamined, but may be different from the belief structures of the employees, shareholders and customers. Individuals who work in Business-As-Usual corporations find it very difficult to assert belief structures, identities or methods inconsistent with their corporation.

Sustainability is a paradigm that has emerged globally over the past four decades. With ancient philosophical and pragmatic day-to-day roots, Sustainability is extending its influence into policy and business. Companies based on Sustainability are emerging around the world, with remarkably consistent belief structures and articulated goals. These companies reflect the initiative taken by Sustainable Entrepreneurs. Through working in the Economic Realm, Sustainable Entrepreneurs are trying to align human behavior with 1) the ecological limitations of the Earth and 2) a loving and just social compact among all humanity, present and future.

Sustainability is evidenced in the Cultural Realm by the evolution of the tens of thousands of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) dedicated to consistent and closely related goals (Hawken, 2007). It is evidenced in the Rights Realm by progressive, systemic environmental legislation worldwide. Such legislation and policy has been noticeably absent in the United States for the past decades. If the alignment of the paradigms of these initiatives were clearly articulated, considerable support would emerge for Sustainable Entrepreneurs.

Our culture has allowed alternative paradigms, such as Sustainability, to be ridiculed as "idealistic," as if idealism were a disease. Idealism has been held up as the opposite of practical or wise, a mere luxury. Yet we strive to instill ideals in our children. What is the root of this double standard?

This paper is based on two hypotheses:

- 1) There is profound inconsistency between the modern individual human’s root beliefs and his/her individual conduct, and
- 2) There is a profound inconsistency between the root beliefs of the vast majority of modern people, and the powerful conduct of Business-As-Usual, which is operating with the polar-opposite set of root beliefs.

The parallel root beliefs that are the focus of this paper are evidenced below.

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL Everything is separate Materialism is the only reality	SUSTAINABILITY Everything is connected Spirit and Matter co-exist to form reality
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There are other root beliefs that can be explored, however, this paper will focus on a comparison of these two. As currently practiced, BAU and Sustainability are mutually exclusive, just as these two root beliefs are polar opposites.

If we can identify and awaken humans to these inconsistencies, (which today are masked or unexplored), human nature’s inherent drive toward consistency will begin to work toward alignment, and Sustainable Entrepreneurs, as bona fide leaders, will be able to better leverage our basic human nature toward the goals of Sustainability.

Sustainable Entrepreneurs can’t save humanity as the yawning abyss of climate change and natural resource degradation faces us. But through their concerted and insightful communication efforts, they can enable individual humans in BAU companies and the general public to awaken to the root inconsistencies and their eroding quality. Only then, through local and regional action, will individuals and the enterprises they lead be clear enough in their thinking, and thus strong enough in their resolve to force a realignment of individual and corporate behavior with life itself.

SEPARATENESS OR CONNECTEDNESS

The following charts extend the logic of these comparative root beliefs, illustrating how each paradigm is internally consistent and the polar opposite of the other.

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL Everything is separate <i>The Logic of Separateness</i>	SUSTAINABILITY Everything is Connected <i>The Logic of Connectedness</i>
If I am separate, what I do is independent of what others do. I am not my brother’s keeper, and in fact I don’t need to attend to his interests. I can pursue self-optimization regardless of consequences because those consequences won’t come back on me. I can afford to build protections against them.	If everything is connected, then I am connected to everything. What I do is co-dependent on what others do. I am connected to my brother, however remote, and therefore to hurt him or fail to assist him is to hurt my interests. Self-optimization makes no sense because I would be advancing myself at my own expense.
I emphasize a bill of rights, individually and collectively.	I emphasize a bill of responsibilities, individually and collectively.

<p>If I am separate, I am responsible for myself and logically am entitled to self-optimize. Individual competition serves the common good.</p>	<p>Collective, conscious effort serves the common good. Networks of cooperation makes sense as drivers for achievement: individuals are connected.</p>
<p>As corporations, we build structures (legal, financial, political) to assert our separateness. The managers and staff use resources to create complex operations to self-optimize the interests of our investors. We follow legal systems that mandate this way of operating, doing just enough to keep within the legal limits of harm or the affordability of fines/litigation costs.</p>	<p>As corporations, we build networks to assert our interdependence and collaboration. We seek to optimize the interests of all the parties, to balance interests and share the risks and rewards of taking initiative. We are connected so it makes sense to care for the spirit of the law, not just the letter of the law as it reflects on shared interests.</p>
<p>If we are separate, it makes sense to influence government to help us self-optimize.</p>	<p>If we are connected, we are the government and we are the people, therefore, it makes no sense to use government to self-optimize.</p>
<p>It makes sense to be as opaque in our operations as possible, as layers of complexity act as a shield, making the bar higher for those who might hold the company accountable.</p>	<p>It makes sense to be as transparent as possible as more opportunities for mutual support appear.</p>
<p>If we are separate, we are not responsible for any one else's behavior: thus, with impunity, we can manipulate children and adults to generate demand for unhealthy products and habits.</p>	<p>Since we are connected, we are responsible for the consequences of our conduct, especially when vulnerable parties, who lack an equal voice, are at risk.</p>
<p>If we are separate, we can acknowledge stakeholders in communities (where we self-optimize natural resource or human labor use) by setting up Corporate Social Responsibility divisions and giving miniscule amounts of money with lots of fanfare.</p>	<p>If everything is connected, CSR principles and practices are embedded in every operation of our corporation.</p>
<p>If we are separate, individual employees and departments self-optimize within the corporation.</p>	<p>If we are connected, it makes sense to support fellow employees and departments, optimizing the whole at the "expense" of the parts.</p>
<p>If we are separate from the natural world, it makes sense to exploit it for</p>	<p>If we are connected with the natural world, it makes sense to preserve and</p>

our use and growth in the present, without attention to the system consequences, today or in the future.	protect and restore it, with close attention to the system implications today and seven generations ahead.
If we are separate from our communities, it makes sense to get as much as we can and give as little as we can.	If we are connected with our communities, it makes sense to give as much as we can and take as little as we need.
If we are separate from our own employees, it makes sense to get as much work as possible for as little expenditure as possible.	If we are connected with our own employees, it makes sense to offer as much support as we can, because we all benefit.
If we are separate, we are more free, have more choices, and are best positioned to know what we want and go after it.	If we are connected, it can appear that we are less free with fewer choices because we have greater responsibility (respond with ability).
It is simple and manageable to be separate: more things are seemingly within our control.	It is complex and challenging to be connected: fewer things are seemingly within our control.
If we are separate, we need not be concerned about the future: we live in the present or the near future and need only pragmatically attend to those time windows. We are minimally connected with our descendants out one generation, let alone seven generations. We need not extend our consciousness to try to take into account what their present will be like.	If we are connected to the past and the future, there is a logic to taking into account the long-term future because the long-term future is the near-term future and present for our progeny.

Is there a middle position? Is it possible that some things are connected and some things are separate? I suggest that where there is confusion (typically on the way to the showdown where Boards of Directors and CEOs meet their legal obligation to play the trump card of profit), what is reflected is the tension of BAU leadership trying to have it both ways. The lack of integrity, greed and actual criminal intent get a wink, or a shrug in many circles close to the heart of BAU wealth.

In my experience as an entrepreneur, as a consultant, a tax attorney and teacher of thinking, I have observed that BAU is amazingly consistent in its systemic assertion of the Logic of Separateness. There is lip service to connectedness, of course, however the Dog-Eat-Dog paradigm of scarcity and competition asserts itself in command-and-control hierarchies mimicking military-type governance within the economy. The consistency reflects an appalling lack of imagination in how humans could organize themselves to address profitable enterprise as well as life-and-death issues.

Does BAU's assumption of "Everything is Separate" work to benefit the individual employee? Does it benefit the individual customer? Does it benefit the individual investor? Does it benefit the natural world? Does it even reflect a realistic approach to profit when the complexity facing corporations is so profound? Whether or not individuals within corporations realize it or not, whether they believe it or not, the Logic of Separateness is a fundamental operating principle of Business-As-Usual. We see the evidence everywhere, however it is not openly discussed or acknowledged as such. Would it matter if it were out on the table? Could clarity offer support to change agents?

Similarly, Sustainability is remarkably consistent around the globe. There are business people who hold these beliefs and are struggling to bring viable businesses into being in this time. They have to make some compromises to accommodate the un-level playing field of externalized environmental and social costs of BAU companies, yet in general, this does not diminish their goals. These Sustainable Entrepreneurs recognize the transition phase in which we live requires accommodation. For an illustration of the detailed market challenges of the Sustainable Entrepreneur, see Page 16.

Getting down to the root beliefs is not easy. Yet, once they are unearthed, we are able to see the inter-penetrating actions stemming out of a single belief. Systems work toward consistency, and our beliefs are woven into systems: they do not exist alone. When they are unearthed, we can decide what we believe and why we believe it. New choices emerge. From them, we can set about pursuing consistent actions that can change the systems.

MATERIALISM OR SPIRIT AND MATTER

The second root belief we will compare between Business-As-Usual and Sustainability relates to materialism, and the co-existence of spirit and matter.

Materialism: the philosophy that regards matter and its motions as constituting the universe, and all phenomena, including those of the mind, as due to material agencies.

New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language

It is my observation that Business-As-Usual is based on materialism. Sustainability is based on a paradigm where Matter (all that we can directly experience through our physical senses) and Spirit (Aspects of reality that are beyond our direct physical sense perception.) co-exist to form reality.

In the development of human consciousness, the influence of materialism spread with the growth of the Natural Scientific era and the Industrial Revolution. Freedom from the constraints of religious dogma and a growing middle class of people interested in advancing their material security and wealth were both influential. Those with wealth and consequent power, coincidentally, also became those with dominant positions in commerce, government, education and communication.

I have tried to create a comparative framework for materialism. There is a semantic challenge. The word "spirit" has been associated with everything from religious authoritarianism to individual freedom of consciousness completely free from formal religion. It is a word with a lot of baggage, particularly for the Western-educated intellectual and scientific class. Webster's offers several definitions as follows:

Spirit: that which is believed to be the principle of conscious life and the vital principle in man; the incorporeal part of man; the soul or heart as the seat of feelings or sentiments, or of animation of the body; ... the divine influence as an agency working in man; An inspiring or animating principle that pervades and tempers thought, feeling, or action; as the spirit of love, or spirit of reform; the dominant tendency of anything; as the spirit of the age; the general meaning or intent of a regulation, statement, or the like, as opposed to its literal interpretation; as the spirit, not the letter, of the law.....to animate with fresh ardor or courage;.....(New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language)

In the context of this discussion, I am using the word "spirit" to represent all that exists beyond the direct sensory perception of humans. Thus, spirit includes human thought itself. (I experience my own thoughts as real, although I cannot taste or touch or see them.) It includes self-consciousness, intention, emotions, identity, community, cooperation, love, enthusiasm and the essence of business activity, itself. Spirit also includes rhythm, form, natural laws such as coming into being and fading away, growth and decay – even life itself.

Why does this definition of spirit matter? Social justice and injustice are difficult to conceptualize in their full reality if materialism is your base. You can count sacks of rice and beans, but if "all phenomena, including those of the mind, as due to material agencies," then suffering, greed, generosity and intention are not seriously part of the conceptual framework. Yet these are real phenomena that exist. Using my definition, this means social justice is a spiritual reality because we know it to be true, yet it is beyond our direct ability to perceive. Evidence of social justice lies in physical matter, like rampant extreme poverty amidst extreme wealth, but the spirit of justice is beyond our direct sensory perception. For materialists, conscience can become conveniently fuzzy.

To the extent that we have no scientifically-acceptable definition of spirit, we are unable to talk credibly and intelligently about human activity, especially coordinated global activity that is essential for our survival. This kind of activity will require intelligent redesign and sacrifice on the part of Business-As-Usual companies. (McDonough and Braungart, 2002) Yet BAU's very identity denies or ignores and does not account for non-material realities. If we can't talk about spirit in the boardrooms and C-Suites, we will be relegated to materialism and this creates a profound constraint in designing choices. Ideals, love, sacrifice, enthusiasm and critical thinking are spiritual activities and realities that will be desperately needed as we fashion optimal responses to our common plight. Rice and water and energy will be the evidence of how humanity sees reality, but they are just part of a much broader reality for those working within the paradigm of Sustainability.

Given the reality that our best scientists tell us exists, based on strictly material data (Stern, 2006, it will take the most refined and disciplined spiritual activity to organize an intelligent response to our current climate change and ecosystem situation). Thus, I suggest this definition of spirit: all that exists beyond the direct sensory perception of humans. If we can talk about it, maybe we can engage with it coherently.

Of course, spirit can also mean the recognition of specific higher powers of both creation and wisdom. However, it is not necessary to extend its meaning for the purposes of this discussion. My suggested definition of spirit enables us to work with deep respect, crossing the boundaries of the various established religions of the world, engaging the entire human community. That humanity doesn't share an identical conceptual framework for "spirit" does not mean that the vast majority of humans do not believe, out of individual

experience, that spiritual activity exists and that thinking, community and cooperation are primary manifestations. (We can't touch, smell or see any of those, but do we believe that they are not central to our ability to live?)

Again, it is important to recognize that we are referring to the ontology of Business-As-Usual. Even though individuals in businesses may not share that ontology, it is evidenced globally, consistently, amid multi-national corporations as well as small and medium-sized businesses, day-to-day, in the developed and developing economies. Similarly, the ontology of Sustainability appears to reflect the consistent integration of spirit and matter as its foundational reality.

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL Materialism <i>The Logic of Materialism</i>	SUSTAINABILITY Spirit and Matter Co-exist to Form Reality <i>The Logic of Spirit and Matter</i>
The focus of attention is on material things: things like money and property that lend themselves to counting. Huge controlling industries have grown up around counting.	The focus is on essential services and relationships, authentic needs, community and an economy that works in a balanced, healthy way. Money is used to balance exchanges, but it has little inherent value in and of itself.
BAU only counts what it defines as important: financial profit and loss, and growth of material wealth as evidenced by property and legally defensible rights such as patents. Decisions are made to augment and protect property and profit.	Social and Environmental capital have great value and must be integral to the value equation along with "Patient Financial Capital and Patient Growth."
It is logical to design accounting systems that externalize as many of the environmental and social costs as possible....sending the uncounted expense side of their ledger to the commons, to the people, the governments, local, state and federal.	Working within a macro-economy, Sustainable Enterprises take responsibility and accountability for all of their activities: the goal is to build a moral economy out of freedom, insight, and service. Therefore, externalizing costs to those who do not share profits is inconsistent with the logic.
Death is the end: therefore, it makes sense to assure comfort and safety during an individual's lifetime. Time is money.	Spirit is both integrated with the material world and exists beyond the material world: death is not the end, but a step in renewal of life processes. Time is time.
The interests of people living today are far more important than people born in 2050, even if they are our great-grandchildren.	All human life, present and future, is equally valuable and deserves the vigilance of present community members.
Humans have the inherent right to be owners of both land and material	Humans have the inherent honor to be stewards of the land and its fruits. High

<p>goods. High status goes to individuals who arrange to own the most. To own a company is preferable to stewarding an idea into existence for the benefit of humanity.</p>	<p>status goes to individuals who arrange to be the most effective stewards of humanity, of the natural world.</p>
<p>To the extent that there is engagement in stakeholder processes, financial stakeholders count more.</p>	<p>All stakeholders' views are equally valued.</p>
<p>Safety is best assured by accumulating lots of money and property to insulate you from the rabble and make sure amidst a scarcity of goods, that you will get what you want. One works to be able to continue to accumulate to assure your safety and abundance through self-optimization for yourself and "yours," even if people in your community are hungry.</p>	<p>Safety is best assured through a community of shared interests: therefore, the logic is to identify authentic needs and work cost-effectively to meet those needs. Through meeting the authentic needs of others in community, within environmental constraints, long-term safety is enhanced.</p>
<p>Control of self and others furthers self-optimization and accumulation. Exert control as much as possible through hierarchy and methods of evaluation and compensation that reinforce position and power.</p>	<p>Humans best work in a liberated, trusting environment where Through trust in relationships, the individual can delegate and work without tight controls.</p>
<p>Working in competition and isolation to protect self-optimization; careful interface with community to assure a politically correct posture.</p> <p>"What can I get?" is the leading question. If what is coming is bad, shove responsibility onto others. If what is coming is good, make sure you get more than your share.</p>	<p>Constantly sensing into the environments. Responding with the local community is essential as we cannot thrive in a sick community or environment.</p> <p>"How can I help?" is the leading question.</p>
<p>BAU is riddled with inconsistencies between the spiritual Vision/Mission and the day-to-day physical practices that Dilbert has made famous: ignore or hide inconsistencies.</p>	<p>Strive for consistency and transparency, continuous improvement through addressing and aligning for integrity between values and actions.</p>
<p>Homogeneous, English-speaking, caucasian males over age 50 have disproportionate power in the economy and politics, (with</p>	<p>Diversity is a strength in managing the complexity of the Sustainable Enterprise. Innovation and resilience both rest on multiple perspectives and cooperation,</p>

conspicuous donation to NGOs). Limited exposure to diversity day-to-day.	optimizing cultural, gender, and age diversity.
Expand and grow at a global scale to optimize market forces and place manufacturing based on limited environmental law/regulation and labor sources world-wide.	Develop local businesses and economies that provide “right livelihood” where work is a meaningful extension of one’s individual values and beliefs.
Utilize legal system to insulate shareholders from liability for damage to the commons, enabling private property rights to trump ecosystem health and community’s right to design its future based on the common good.	Redesign the legal system and reinvent government to free it to act for the highest good of the most people over the long term, including the yet-to-be-born.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF COMPOUNDING

Each of these BAU paradigmatic root beliefs, alone, is harmful to humanity and to the natural world. The compounding of Materialism and Separateness creates for Business-As-Usual, a world of the moment, of material gratification, of self-optimization and suffering for the future that is hardly imaginable. The logic of these dual beliefs yields the practice of exploitation of the planet and people.

Similarly, the compounding of the power of Spirit and Matter, and awareness of the Connectedness of all things offers a platform for health and collaboration that transcends the present, the geographically immediate, and the limited reality of our relationship to the material world. The logic of the dual beliefs of Sustainability yields the practice of conservation of natural resources and compassion for all life.

Brought into the support of the status quo of Business-As-Usual is the parallel structure of Education-As-Usual. Business schools around the world are remarkably adept in perpetuating Business-As-Usual companies, whom they consider their clients, their source of authority, and at times near-deities. Independent thinkers who know what they believe and why they believe it are rare amidst the compliant business school students. The culture in many business schools is, “The winner is the one who figures out how to make as much money as possible, as fast as possible and then cash out.” The logic is that this is success where Separateness and Materialism work together to shape the unexamined, unquestioned reality. Morally, the justification is that once successful, the winner can become a high-profile donor, who is then the near-deity of the NGOs. We are witnessing a systemic yet unexamined set of beliefs that under-gird practices that reach thought-strangling tentacles into what might be an environment of freedom and innovation. Yet, the word “spirit” isn’t really allowed within serious educational conversations, either. It is not surprising that the results are consistent.

TIME FOR LEADERS TO STOP AND THINK: WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE? WHAT IS MY WORK, BASED ON WHAT I SEE?

As we extend the logic and examples of the two root beliefs of Business-As-Usual and Sustainability, the implications become self-evident. If we are seeking criteria of attitudes and behaviors that are self-destructive of humanity and the natural world, Business-As-Usual provides a blueprint for our own demise. The more powerful we become, the more destructive we become. And who is to stop us in our pursuit of self-optimizing material gain if not we, ourselves? If we don't collaborate to stop ourselves, it appears that the natural world will come up with some uncomfortable barriers. The handful of insulated humans at the top of the food chain will find themselves holding the last cups of rice, and perhaps then it will dawn on them that there had been choices that they never seriously considered.

If we are unwilling to explore our own thinking, to face the semantic jungles of our own creation around pivotal concepts of spirit and matter; if we are unwilling to identify our own paradigms and do a credibility check with ourselves, we will remain helpless and without choices that lead to any substantive change. We will continue to act as if we are enslaved to self-destruction and the destruction of others, and of life itself. I agree with Rudolf Steiner, if we want to be free human beings, we have to invest in figuring out what we believe and why we believe it.

We find that our students in the GreenMBA come with that intention and are committed to doing the work that it takes. Interestingly, many highly successful business people who come as students find themselves shocked at how unexamined their lives have been at these fundamental levels. There is no shame in it, of course, but it is a dramatic awakening. In the United States, we turn out millions of graduates each year, and yet few of them have done the work to become familiar with, and thus able to take responsibility for their own belief structures. Consequently, they enter companies and succumb to Business-As-Usual paradigms even in the face of their obvious self-destructive characteristics.

As I observed earlier, the post-industrial culture has allowed alternative paradigms, such as Sustainability, to be marginalized and ridiculed as "idealistic." For example, let's say that we discover that we are poisoning ourselves. Health is an ideal. Is it idealistic to stop poisoning ourselves, even if it is difficult and costly and requires sacrifice? Does that make it impractical? Idealism is not a disease. Idealism has been held up as the opposite of practical or wise, and somehow not affordable. Some people would say that ideals are at the foundation of common sense. We strive to teach our children ideals such as love, justice and responsibility for others and are distraught when they fail to exhibit them. Somehow this double standard escapes our thinking, and BAU logic disparages ideals on a regular basis.

I suspect that the double standard escapes our thinking because too many of us don't know what we think, what we believe and why we believe it. Such knowledge and insight takes work and time and discipline: and if we are in BAU, time is money. We don't invest. Without clarity, we buckle under the first time someone says that an obstruction of unbridled self-optimization threatens "our economy." Whose economy are we actually talking about here? In these circumstances, there is often a deathly silence in the room because as we all know, "Business must go on and anything that obstructs business is bad for the economy, and thus bad for us." There is no economy if there is no life on earth: logic doesn't get much simpler than that.

I am suggesting that our root beliefs can be a point of intervention into the systemic paralysis that intelligent people of conscience appear to be experiencing as climate change and eco-system collapse run unabated. Articulating a consistent set of beliefs that speaks to

both the mind and the heart of the vast majority of people worldwide can be a point of strength for Sustainable Entrepreneurs. It can also be a call to action for leaders within Business-As-Usual.

Working with People Who Won't Invest in Thinking

Do we have to know what we believe and why we believe it in order to change our minds? Most Americans are not free-thinking, that is, they do not have an active working knowledge of their root beliefs and their rationale for them. They live mostly out of imitation, habit and intuition (knowing something without the benefit of conscious reasoning). In general, most humans believe in spirit and matter, yet they work in corporations that perpetuate the logic of materialism. Humans are acting as if everything were separate, yet I believe that when they really think about it, humans everywhere recognize that everything is connected.

These contradictions can be a lever for change because although they may sit below the conscious level, humans around the world experience the tension that these inconsistencies create. It is human nature to eliminate tension where possible. Leaders need to create models for these people to imitate, alternative habits for them to adopt, and speak in the language of imagination that can call their intuition into the service of survival and health.

Leadership Challenges for Sustainable Entrepreneurs

Notwithstanding the existence of a non-free-thinking majority, Sustainable Entrepreneurs need to be free-thinking. They need to know their root beliefs and their rationale because they are the authentic leaders in the new economic order, not the followers. In order to plan effective campaigns, they can leverage the inconsistencies of BAU and the consistency of Sustainability. Human nature and systems work toward consistency and integrity.

Sustainable Entrepreneurs need to work together with the plethora of NGOs and responsible governments to raise the obvious question: Why aren't intelligent humans awaking each day with 100% of their attention focused on securing life and health for themselves and their progeny? Some of the lessons that have emerged from my day-to-day challenges as a Sustainable Entrepreneur suggest the following answers.

- People do not live with the perception that they are at immediate risk.
- People have a wide assortment of defenses against the perception and information flowing to them.
- Even if they perceive risk, people feel that there is nothing significant that they can do.
- People are disabled by the complexity of the threats that they do perceive.
- People realize that the changes necessary will impede their current material expectations.
- No one wants to be first to make the sacrifices to face the hard science of climate change, persistent toxicity, water scarcity and energy volatility.
- People are habituated to do, do, do and not reflect conscientiously about the consequences of their behavior. The media-consumer-industrial complex supports these habits and addictions with expenditures that are deductible as business-expenses.
- Many people do not know what they believe and why they believe it: thus, it is difficult to decide if any given path or idea is preferable to what they are acting out now.

- For many people, there is a tension between what they feel to be true, or what they intuitively know to be true, and the root beliefs of the corporations for which they work. More people are listening for coherent alternatives.
- The seduction of comfort and ease speaks directly to our lower self, drumming out resistance, even in the face of the obvious suffering of others, and perceived risk on the horizon for ourselves.
- People are habituated to live with the undifferentiated tension between what they feel is true and right, and the way they are engaged in the economic realm: what they do for work has little meaning, and/or they are doing little more than paying the debts of their consumer life style. Yet, they have made commitments and do not feel free to make any changes or rock the boat.

Nevertheless, people the world over feel the boat rocking, and thus live with significant tension, uncertainty and fear. Without a coherent alternative path, many retreat further and further into distraction.

Intelligent people of conscience are seeking authentic, coherent leadership. Sustainable Entrepreneurs can offer this leadership while working in the Economic Realm. The Economic Realm is the only realm that seems to have any credibility or real power. The Rights Realm and the Cultural Realm appear disabled or compromised or unaffordable. Political power is focused in the Economic Realm, thus the pivotal leaders are likely to emerge from this realm. Yet, power will come from effective alliances among those who share coherent, clear goals and call to the NGO world and governments. Power can also come from leaders emerging within Business-As-Usual who come to see new choices. Unexpected alliances can form. The internet is a valuable tool, however, I agree with Bill McDonough, ultimately "All sustainability, like politics, is local." (McDonough, 2000)

Leading by Re-framing the Questions and Issues

Can Sustainable Entrepreneurs frame the questions and conversations to help people recognize the tension and inconsistencies and thus leverage them toward the goals of Sustainability? Can we collaborate, in a sophisticated way, to create social, economic, and political systems that 1) live within the ecological limitations of the Earth and 2) reflect a loving and just social compact among all humanity, present and future? A study of George Lakoff's *Moral Politics* is a basic text, as well as *Cradle to Cradle*, by William McDonough and Michael Braungart.

Further Actions that Demonstrate Leadership among Sustainable Entrepreneurs

These leadership strategies provide guidance for Sustainable Entrepreneurs of today and tomorrow.

1. Become clear themselves about the paradigmatic and root belief inconsistencies between Sustainability and Business-As-Usual.
2. Become increasingly clear about what we believe and why we believe it, liberating ourselves. There is nothing more powerful than the free human spirit. The courage of our convictions is best rooted in clear, coherent convictions.
3. Recognize how potent questions become living, organic forces in social, political and economic change.
4. Identify images, metaphors and stories that carry the inconsistencies into narrative and visual form so that they are inescapable. (How long do I want to continue to shoot myself in the foot? What would life on Earth look like in sixty years if I commit to changing our self-destructive habits? The Little Red Hen didn't stop her bread-

- making because she had no support from those she asked. What might it look like to love all of the children of all species for all time? (McDonough, 2000)
5. Work together to build on repetition and messages that capture the imagination across cultures and socio-economic levels, recognizing that Environmental Entrepreneurs are educators and change agents that require sophisticated strategies.
 6. Acknowledge the power of human nature's quest for consistency and integrity.
 7. Ask for help, especially from those not deeply vested in the status quo.
 8. Incorporate these communication strategies into their day-to-day work as well as their long-range strategic planning.
 9. Continually speak to the higher nature of humanity, to the higher self of each individual, bringing a coherent call to action based on truth, wisdom, love and justice.
 10. Expose and encourage others to acknowledge the destructive consequences of the opaque assumptions that are accepted as fact in BAU strategies.
 11. Expand your own perceptive field by living into the dilemmas faced by your potential customers, rather than just intellectualizing about them.
 12. Invest in alliances with related NGOs.
 13. Live with trust in the truth and pursue critical and systemic thinking about the complex challenges before us. As Sustainable Entrepreneurs, we are not alone.

Implications for Change Agents and Leaders within Business-As-Usual

What does it mean to be a leader in these times, working as a manager or executive or board member of a Business-As-Usual company? If we are leaders in companies that are operating with the Logic of Separateness and the Logic of Materialism, how do we bring together the right people under the right conditions? We need people who are courageous enough and willing to do a "Paradigm Check" to see if their company's future lies in a shift to Sustainability. With insight and courage, we build bridges to a paradigm that leads to life.

There is just us. We have to do this work. The time is now. We have to decide if we want to try to assure the survival of humanity through new thinking, through generating conscious new choices that can only emerge through a paradigm shift. As we approach the decisions before us, we need to ask, "If everything is connected, is this what we should do?" As we are generating options for our company, we need to ask, "Are we taking into account the spirit and the matter, realizing that both exist and require our deepest respect? As leaders, we need to be clear about our ideals. We need to use our imagination to account for the embedded suffering and loss implicit in the ways we work, as well as imagining into a reduction of the embedded energy use in our supply chain. This is what is called for by leaders who, as Rudolf Steiner said, are free human beings who know what they believe and why they believe it.

We have bet the farm on Business-As-Usual, as my Uncle Buck said. The odds are not looking good, yet we have it within our power to change them. Sustainability offers a coherent ontology that can underlie a transition of leaders among Business-As-Usual companies. It will not be easy, however, there is a path that can lead to life. The fellow-travelers, those Sustainable Entrepreneurs, NGOs and stealth change agents lurking within Business-As-Usual companies and Education-As-Usual universities, are worthy companions.

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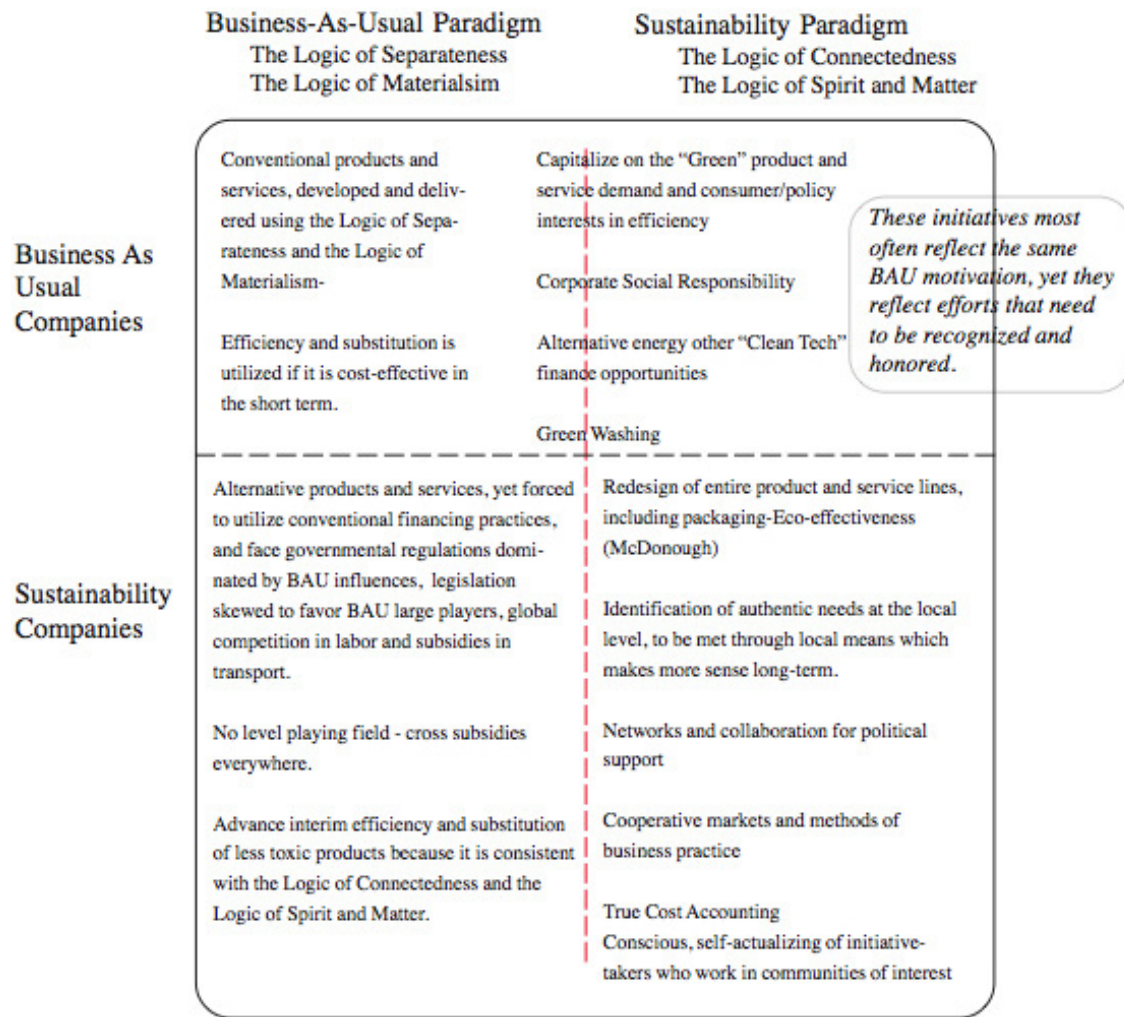
APPENDIX

A Chart of Who is Who, and How are the Players Related on Today's Playing Field

As a guide for the reader, the chart on the next page lays out one way of exploring the dynamics at play, today, for the individual Sustainable Entrepreneur and the fledgling Sustainability Companies, all in the context of this paradigm discussion. In some ways, the

chart discriminates among the different groups and efforts that are emerging globally to take up the challenges before us all. The chart also reflects how BAU companies may be merely co-opting the impulse toward Sustainability to further their singular conventional goal: financial profit.

The Market Challenge for the Sustainable Entrepreneur:



Note:

This is a chart that reflects the market challenges faced by the Sustainability Entrepreneur. These pioneers have to have a foot in both worlds, knowledgeable about both paradigms and working to create choices for consumers and governments that are true improvements. Although it is the subject of an expanding conversation, it is included as a reference for the reader

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