

The Earth – Friends and Enemies

Synopsis of Presentation by:

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What is the question we should be addressing? Is it 'What is the relevance of the environment to humankind in the 21st Century?' Or is it the reverse - 'What is the relevance of humankind to the environment in the 21st Century?'

Is the globalised world spinning away from the centre and out of control? What is at risk? Should we return to the centre and get back to basics? Should the Earth be regarded simply as a business resource - a 'free good' in the globalised economy.

What then is the 'real' state of the world environment? If things are bad why isn't 'everyone' doing something about it? Where are our leaders? Why are we comfortable with taking the 'it is someone else's problem' line? Conversely, if things are OK with the world environment, why are we having this discussion?

What is the role of environmental NGO's like Greenpeace? Why, in a world of only about 160 governments, are there more than 20,000 NGO's? Have governments and corporations absolved themselves of responsibility for the future? Who said they could?

Who has responsibility for looking at the big picture of our future? As a community, if we are all in Spaceship Earth plunging into the future, and our seats are facing backwards – who the hell is in the driving seat and who is navigating? Is it one of us – or one of them?

Humankind is consuming the Earth's natural capital at an unprecedented rate. Is it sustainable? Where is the point of balance between human wellbeing and planetary survival? How does the individual fit into the global pattern?