

Watt's Happening? #174

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LESSONS from the pandemic



The two fastest growing occupations in the U.S.? Solar installer and wind turbine technician.

It's wake-up time on planet Earth. Here's a list of some of the good things we're doing now, not by choice, but because we must.

EVERYBODY HAS TO COME HOME

We spend so much time travelling and exploring the world "out there" that we have forgotten and neglected the world at our doorstep. Going for a walk around the neighbourhood or along the fence line out back is actually a wonderful thing to do,

remember? We are exploring our your own back yards again.

EVERYBODY HAS TO HELP EVERYBODY

It's a big reminder that we are all dependent on one another, and that cooperation, not competition, actually makes the world go round.

We have to care for and love each other. If we don't, we are all the losers, and what we might lose can include our health, our future prosperity and

well being, our economies, our jobs, our planet, our lives. We, and all living things on this little planet are deeply interdependent.

WE REALLY DO NEED GOVERNMENTS

Sure we all want small government and minimum taxation, but when things get tough, we quickly see the value of competent leadership versus none or one that's incompetent.

To address a true global crisis, politicians have to actually work together . . . wow! Countries have to help each other. Racial prejudice, religious differences, war and conflict suddenly seem less important when the entire world and everyone in it is united by imminent catastrophe.

GIVE EVERYBODY SOME MONEY

Sounds very socialist, but really it's just common economic sense. Henry Ford paid his assembly line workers well because, as he said, if they didn't have enough money they wouldn't be able to buy his cars.

Where Universal Basic Income has been tried (in both the U.S. and Canada among others), crime rates plummet, creativity and innovation flourish, productivity climbs, happiness levels rise as anxiety, suicide, drug addiction and depression fall, homelessness evaporates, and government bureaucracy is reduced. It's time for governments to just give everybody some money.

THE REAL POWER OF THE INTERNET

With the Internet, we can stay home and stay connected. Far too much high-pollution air and road travel is used just to attend meetings, either business or social. Let's make Skype and Zoom so good (they're almost there now) that 90% of that travel is no longer needed . . . or wanted.

In these unprecedented times of change, danger and worry, it is the health and safety of our

friends and family that matters. That's what the pandemic threatens, and that's what climate change threatens too.

The good news is that rapid progress is being made on both fronts. Let's close with some positive notes from the clean energy transition south of the border.

THE END OF COAL

Closing highly polluting coal-fired plants seems to be a trend. In the U.S. coal consumption is the lowest it has been in 40 years, with more than 500 plants closing in the last ten years.

Last year for the first time, renewables generated more electricity in the U.S. than coal. Both China and India are still building new coal plants, but they are both installing more wind and solar each year than coal.

GREEN IS GROWING

As the cost of solar and wind power continues to fall, they are on track to increase globally over the next five years by an amount equal to the entire electric power capacity of the U.S. According to the Bureau of

Labor Statistics, the fastest growing occupations in the U.S. over the next ten years? Number one: solar panel installer. Number two: wind turbine technician.

U.S. SOLAR BOOMING

It took 40 years, until 2016, for the U.S. to install one million solar power systems (small roof tops and large solar farms). It took only three years to install the second million. In another three years, this number is expected to double again to four million, with no end to the upward curve in sight.

By doing what we all must do, we will get through this pandemic together, and maybe, like addressing climate change, come out the other side better for it. Meanwhile, I hope you and your loved ones stay healthy, stay safe and stay home.

*It's time
to give
everybody
some money.*