



Accelerating smart growth

# Entropy: The Disruptive Forces Shaping our Lives

By Andre N. Mamprin





## Vector Point

Diminished attention, increased polarity, bias and the assault on truth and reason, combined with the acceleration of technology increasing the pace of automation, and surveillance capitalism, contribute greatly to the chaos we are witnessing in the world today. Add in the rapidly diminishing carrying capacity of our planet through climate change, burgeoning population, species degradation and extinction at rates unprecedented in human history, and we begin to identify changes that contribute to grave impacts on humans and all species on earth.

The world is facing a critical vector point. This vector point will undoubtedly force humans into substantial decisions for our future.

With inept and often toxic leadership on the rise, our communities, organizations, institutions, systems and even capitalism itself are in dire need of a rethink. The emergence of career politicians and corruption so pervasive have been accepted as the way to do business. Polarization, racism and police brutality leading to civil unrest is now commonplace. At time of writing a mob stormed the Capitol in Washington D.C., holding the world's attention as the capstone of the erosion of democracy.

*In short "the world is warming, animals are dying, crops are failing, people are starving, and our leaders are fiddling while Rome burns". [1]*

Individually each of these factors is significant. Collectively, they are on the verge of insurmountable and are severely constraining our options of how we navigate our future. Time is of the essence and a new way of thinking is requisite. A deeper dialogue and advanced design on the best way forward is essential.

In a single sentence, humans are the single largest destructive force on earth.

# next

Accelerating smart growth

[thenext.ca](http://thenext.ca)



## Entropy

Entropy, in physics, is the measure of unavailable energy available in a closed thermodynamic system that measures the systems' disorder. Entropy can be used synonymously with chaos and both terms represent disorder. When we look at human systems, our large, dynamic systems can be sent into entropy or disorder when small incremental changes lead to quite different and unanticipated outcomes.

Our mental models, or how we see our world, affect our decisions and how we choose to act. Bringing the concept of entropy forefront in our perspective and applying it to every part of our lives, leads to a radical change in the way we see the world. Entropy is inescapable, ignoring it results in collapse of some kind.

There are several things that only happen when entropy is low, many of which are considered good, including some of the chemical reactions needed to sustain life.

“To better understand entropy, think of a student's bedroom. If no energy or work were put into it, the room would quickly become messy. It would exist in a very disordered state, one of high entropy. Energy must be put into the system, in the form of the student doing work and putting everything away, in order to bring the room back to a state of cleanliness and order. This state is one of low entropy. Similarly, a car or house must be constantly maintained with work in order to keep it in an ordered state. Left alone, the entropy of the house or car gradually increases through rust and degradation.” [2]

Great, we are all in some way familiar with components of the problem and know at some level it is time to do something beyond the denial which is the easiest response for many of us. It is time to act.

Where might we begin?

# next

Accelerating smart growth

[thenext.ca](http://thenext.ca)



## One Way Forward

Of course, the short answer is, I don't know. But if I did know and were to offer an idea of only one way forward, I would keep it simple and offer 5 steps. This hyper-simplistic process is not intended to solve, but to provoke thought. If I could deploy a "magic wand" here is my proposition.

### 1. Acknowledge

It matters little how we got here or who is to blame, we are here now. A common acknowledgement of where we are at is an essential first step. According to Aristotle's Logic, a thing is what it is. We must name it and design a way forward. We are in dire straights as a species and a global community. Time is of the essence. We must let go of our entrenched perspectives, and self interest and actively co-operate for our collective and greater good.

### 2. Better is Always Possible

It all begins with individuals and our collective responsibility to be informed and participate in anyway we can to make our lives and world slightly better. What is the one thing can we do within our sphere of control or influence that can minimize being part of the problem and contribute to being part of the solution?

### 3. Cooperation

The 2020 Covid-19 Global Pandemic has shed significant light on many of the structural and systemic issues confronting humanity. One example is the lack of cooperation in developing a comprehensive global response to an issue that deeply affects us all. As a collective, we have been unable or unwilling to create a solution to a significant global problem. Our leaders and organizations must intensify our collaborative capacity. Coming together to create a solution that will benefit us all is in our own best self interest.

### 4. Equipping and Mobilizing Enterprising Youth and Young Adults

Realistically, it may be too difficult or too late for us to change. This is understandable, as many of us have entrenched and calcified values, beliefs, and norms that govern the way we think and behave. We act this out everyday by the choices we make. These choices shape and drive the type of society we live in.

The solution may be in the next generation of future leaders. Focusing on "enterprising" young people (age 14-28) is prudent. I define enterprising as *ready to undertake projects of importance or difficulty, or untried schemes; energetic in carrying out any undertaking with great imagination and initiative*. Enterprising is on the opposite end of the spectrum from bureaucratic or entitled. No problem or task is too large for these individuals who exhibit a "work around" can-do attitude.

# next

Accelerating smart growth

[thenext.ca](http://thenext.ca)



Focusing on, investing in, developing and giving this up-and-coming cohort the tools, they need to help us re-imagine the “Adjacent Possible” is an investment that will pay dividends in a myriad of ways.

## 5. New Operating Mythologies

Ultimately, we need a new operating mythology. An organizing story that can transmit a renewed set of values and beliefs more conducive to the emerging era. In hindsight, the advent of social media has made one thing abundantly clear; from conspiracy theories to cat videos, we are being slowly and methodically reprogrammed. Television pales in comparison to the new interactive technologies and their effectiveness in rewiring our brains. [3]

According to Dr. Sharon Blackie, whose work sits at the interface of psychology, mythology, and ecology, the dominant cultural myth has been about more. More of everything. *“The idea of a triumphant journey of an all-conquering mankind careening towards a deathless perfection, as we leave our animal natures behind and launch ourselves on a one-way, linear trajectory towards a perceived mastery of the planet, if not the entire universe.”* [3]

This myth is now pervasive. According to Annie Leonard author of [The Story of Stuff](#), in the past 3 decades, one third of the planet’s natural resources have been consumed. Of the goods that flow through our ever-expanding consumer economy, only one percent remain in use 6 months after sale. [4]

This myth of more, new, now may be causing us to lose our way. It may be time for a new overarching, operating narrative. A narrative that may organize our collective behavior to be kinder to the earth and our cohabitators including millions of other species, and gentler to and more accepting of each other. All of this in service to a different and perhaps better quality of life during the time we have on earth. According to Blackie, we must ask ourselves, “Is this really the story we want to live in? Does it still serve us?”

### So What, Now What?

In my view, if we acknowledge that we are at an important vector point in our history, we can choose to iterate our way forward. Or we can continue the current road to a dystopian future. We are the frog in the boiling pot of water. Do we stay in or jump out?

Jumping just might allow us to avoid the sixth extinction [5] event in the Earth’s history and evoke the evolution of a more intelligent enterprise.[7]



- [1] The Enchanted Life Unlocking the Magic of Everyday Sharon Blackie
- [2] <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-biology1/chapter/reading-the-second-law-of-thermodynamics/>
- [3] The Myth of More Pg. 155
- [4] Annie Leonard – Facts from the Story of Stuff
- [5] The Sixth Extinction an Unnatural History Elizabeth Kolbert
- [6] Ron Deibert – Reclaiming the Internet for Civil Society
- [7] The Evolution of Intelligent Enterprise. A.N. Mamprin 2005

### **Andre N. Mamprin**

Andre Mamprin has been a student of both the Art and the Science of Strategy and Leadership for more than two decades. His work developing leaders, designing leadership learning content and delivering programs to more than 20,000 Leaders as Executive Director of The Banff Centre, Leadership Development and as Leader of Knowledge Architecture at The Next Institute has created a foundation for meaningful change.

He has translated his experience as both a leader and entrepreneur in the Oil & Gas, Manufacturing, and Banking industries to designing and delivering intricate and often large-scale solutions for an array of blue-chip organizations across North America.

He continues his learning as his Leadership evolves.

© Andre N. Mamprin 01-24-021

**next**

Accelerating smart growth

[thenext.ca](http://thenext.ca)