

# 'No time to lose' to start thinking sustainability

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As director of the University of Oregon's Climate Leadership Initiative, the need to address human contributions to global warming is a no-brainer that Bob Doppelt says in his new book requires a mindset tuned into "The Power of Sustainable Thinking."

The 240-page book published by London-based Earthscan Publications Ltd. is targeted at decision makers in the public and private sector, but its content is accessible to "anyone interested in changing thinking and behavior about the climate and sustainability," Doppelt said.

"The primary message is that global warming, at its core, is not an energy, technology or policy problem," he said. "It is the greatest failure of thought in human history. Attempts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will fail unless people first alter their thinking and behavior. This requires that we overcome what I call 'systems blindness' and begin to 'think sustainably.' Sustainable thinking involves constantly taking the natural environment and other people, today and in the future, into account when we plan, make decisions and act."

The book, being distributed in the U.S. by Stylus Publishing LLC (list price \$29.95), officially is named "The Power of Sustainable Thinking: How to Create a Positive Future for the Climate, the Planet, Your Organization and Your Life." It is divided into two sections: "The Imperatives of Change" and "The Path Forward."

Doppelt writes in Part One that climate has become a defining moment

in human history and "perhaps the most serious threat that the whole of humanity has ever faced." While people have adapted to changing localized climate conditions, the current crisis is a worldwide one. He addresses the long-running dependence on fossil fuels, as well as food production, including its transport and waste. He tackles the meaning of sustainability and outlines its three required conditions -- endurance, cleanliness and community -- and discusses sustainability thinking blunders and what he calls the ten tenets of sustainability thinking and behavior.

In the much longer Part Two, Doppelt considers how humans think and how people might be able to change both their thinking and behavior, including how sustainable thinking can be applied to multiple aspects of everyday life, especially traveling. He then goes into "The Ethics of Sustainable Thinking," and how to motivate other people and even groups, including organizations, to think and act sustainably."

Doppelt's final chapter, titled after the name of the book, is a call to action.

"The policies and practices that proved so useful to us during the past century or so, and the mental frames that produced them, were designed for different times and circumstances," Doppelt writes. "From decaying organic material that provides the nutrients for new plant growth to age-old fuel deposits that today power our energy systems, the past has always influenced the present. For perhaps the first time in human history, however, the past cannot guide us in a future punctuated by the exhaustion of the Earth's sources and sinks, overpopulation, growing economic inequality and rapidly changing climate conditions."

"We have no time to lose," he writes in closing the book.

Source: University of Oregon

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