



## 2. Where are we today?



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**Our earth has been *radically* altered through technology and industrialisation.**

**Humans, in their behaviour, thinking and hoping, have remained *the same*.**

» The questions we ask ourselves, a society has to answer, are not significantly different than they were years or even centuries ago, but the answers - especially the answer options - are completely different.

*Translated from: Robert Habeck. Von hier an anders. Eine politische Skizze. 2021*

» The world's two most urgent problems are still not solved, but solvable: the complete destruction of nuclear weapons and the limitation of climate change.

*Steven Pinker, experimental psychologist. Enlightenment Now. For Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress. 2018*



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» A major problem is that digitalization - as well as climate change - is progressing faster than societies can react in a meaningful way.

*Translated from: Philipp Blom. Was auf dem Spiel steht. 2017*

» The human ability to act has far surpassed the ability to understand. As a result civilization is faced with a perfect storm of problems driven by overpopulation, overconsumption by the rich, the use of environmentally malign technologies, and gross inequalities.

*Blue Planet Prize Laureates, Gro Harlem Brundtland and others - Environment and Development Challenges: [The Imperative to Act](#). 2012*

» We are facing a change that has nothing in common with the usual advances and transformations. This is due to the unintended side effects of technical progress. These have now become central risks that we are fundamentally unable to cope with.

*Ulrich Beck, sociologist. Risk Society - Towards a New Modernity. 1986*

» The great promise of unlimited progress - the prospect of subjugation of nature, material abundance [...] and of *unlimited* personal freedom - that is what has sustained the hope and confidence of generations since the beginning of the industrial era.

*Erich Fromm, psychoanalyst and social psychologist. To Have or to Be? The Spiritual Foundations of a New Society. 1976*

» Living off the fossil fuel deposits of the carboniferous era for more than two centuries gave us a false sense of an open-ended and unlimited future where everything was possible and with little price to pay. [...] We called this era the Age of Progress. Climate Change is now the bill come due.

*Jeremy Rifkin, Economist and Journalist. The Green New Deal. Why the Fossil Fuel Civilisation Will Collapse by 2028, and the Bold Economic Plan to Save Life on Earth. 2019*

» We are speechless and do not know how to overcome it in order to make reality comprehensible, to adequately describe the seriousness of the situation.

*George Marshall, communications specialist. Don't Even Think About It - Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change. 2014*

» Today, the principle of responsibility must first and foremost be used to slow down, protect, preserve and thus prevent developments that could lead to the demise of humanity.

*Hans Jonas, philosopher. The Imperative of Responsibility. In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age. 1979*



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» We have to set ecological limits on human activities.

*Tim Jackson, economist. Prosperity without Growth - Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow. 2016*

» Everywhere measures are being taken against the devastation of the habitat; these are far from sufficient, but raise the hope of becoming so soon.

*Konrad Lorenz, biologist and Nobel Prize winner. Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins. 1973*

» Global environmental problems are no longer just about producing more efficiently. In addition, consumption reduction is needed for holistic environmental and social sustainability. It's about individual

and collective behavioural change - and about psychology.

*Translated from: Karen Hamann and others, psychologist. Psychologie im Umweltschutz - Handbuch zur Förderung nachhaltigen Handelns. 2016*



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» Today, we have enough new knowledge to make the necessary changes to preserve our world.

*Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, biologist and Anders Wijkman. Come on! Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet. 2017*

» Very few people are willing to act for the long term and even fewer understand properly what is needed. [...] Most of the world still has its head in the sand and societies need to act, not hide from the challenge.

*Graeme Maxton, economist. Change! - Why We Need a Radical Change. 2018*

**Even if we people in the rich countries are tired of being reminded over and over again that, with the lifestyle we now hold so dear, we are blatantly risking our descendant's chances of enjoying a good life...**

**... we have an *unquestionable* responsibility to change our lifestyles *now* for the sake of our children and grandchildren and all future people.**



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The question is not *how*?

The question is, *when* do we start to live sustainably?

