

**Blessed Unrest:
How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being
and Why No One Saw It Coming
by Paul Hawken**

When asked whether he is pessimistic or optimistic about the future, Paul Hawken replies, “If you look at the science that describes what is happening on earth today and aren’t pessimistic, you don’t have the correct data. If you meet the people in this unnamed movement and aren’t optimistic, you haven’t got a heart.” Civilizations disappear when they use up their habitat, and science says we are close to exhausting the ability of the earth to support life as we know it. Averting the crisis requires massive shifts in our practices – a change in the way we treat each other and the earth. Hawken reports it *is* happening.

With inspiring prose, Hawken describes the movement he observes emerging as tens of millions of people around the world dedicate themselves to safeguarding nature and ensuring justice. Whether their specific focus is on climate change, poverty, deforestation, peace, water, hunger, conservation or human rights, they all embrace caring for the future of humanity and nature. He sees solutions arising from the ground up, rather than being imposed from above and he sees an interweaving of concerns for human rights (justice and fairness) and responsibility for the impact of humans on the environment with the wisdom of indigenous cultures.

Hawken illustrates how this movement imitates nature – it is evolutionary. It involves many organisms (humans) adapting to a changing environment in unique ways which then proliferate. He also compares the changes necessary to the working of the immune system; in this case the earth and its inhabitants are responding, each with its own tools and mission, to threats to the future of life. In order to prevent the “irreversible losses of planetary capacity to support life,,, every citizen must be enlisted to accomplish this task.” Defense of the world will require respect, cooperation and compassion. Concern for the well-being of others, and a sense of responsibility for the impact of our actions on others and our habitat are the attitudes that will allow humans to survive, and even better – to thrive.

This beautifully written and deeply hopeful book is 190 pages of text supplemented by a 100 page appendix which catalogs WiserEarth’s classification of the nonprofit and community organizations that make up the “movement.” You can join in the web of people and organizations by going on line at www.wiserearth.org.

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