

# “THE FAT LADY” HAS SUNG HERSELF HOARSE

On the July 8th I went by the Danish Parliament to deliver a letter to all 179 members. I do hope they will listen. Not to me. But to the inner voice within, that also knows that something is very wrong. I also hope you read the letter – and share it – because it is our ethical foundation and our future that is at stake.

And I have also handed it over to the press.... because, of course, they need to know as well.

**Open letter to all responsible politicians: Now you can't say that you didn't know.**

“The Fat Lady” has now sung herself hoarse, so I would like to know; are you deaf or are you dumb?

Scientists have said it for years. Julia Roberts and the Pope have just started to say it. I've said it since 2009. It is old news that the world is in trouble, but in the last few years the climatic changes have become painfully obvious. The water levels are rising, new species of animals are becoming extinct every day and one war just gets replaced by the next. It is a fine mess we have made, and the craziest part is that it does not have to be that way. We only have ourselves to blame for most of these incidents. And YES, we are actually well aware of that fact. And it is the same with our food supplies. With all the information and campaigns around the world, none of us can still be in doubt about what is healthy or unhealthy – sustainable or destructive. It simply can't just be ignorance, so there must be another phenomenon at play. For it can't just be sheer egoistic stupidity. Can it?

The Ministry of Environment of Denmark has just been dismantled, and the new Minister for Environment and Food, Eva Kjer Hansen, has removed the buffer zones that are supposed to protect the water supplies, and now the water supplies will yet again be contaminated. She is also pro-genetic engineering, although no one can foresee the consequences it will have on nature in the future. Maybe it's time to consider whether you – the government – are competent enough to make decisions in areas where there is NO right of recall. Once the groundwater IS contaminated, the fish ARE dead and the crops ARE poisoned, there is no turning back. Perhaps you should only make decisions that can be undone – seen in hindsight?

Let me put things straight: I 'm not out on a political errand. I 'm just trying to get somebody's attention before it's too late. It's not about the red party or the blue party. From a sustainable and ethical perspective, one party is no different from the other. For example, where was your ethical compass when you sold Dong to Goldman Sachs – which is known to be one of the most cynical investment banks of all times – or when you proposed to use development aid to send refugees back to ISIL. And now that I am on the topic of ethics: How could you get yourselves to dismantle the Iraqi Commission just as Anders Fogh Rasmussen was up for questioning to clarify whether he had acted fraudulently or failed to disclose the contracts with Blackwater. From a general human perspective, both sides are acting deeply unethically. It can only be in the interests of democracy to clarify what is up and down in these situations. But transparency seems illusive.

Research has long since identified the 5 things – the 5 NO NOs – that we just CANNOT do if we want to have a sustainable future.

Jared Diamond, a professor of history and evolutionary biology says that the warning signs of a breakdown of a civilization involve one or more of the following elements:

1. Destruction of the environment
2. Climate change
3. War
4. Dysfunctional trade
5. Rigid social structures

The big difference between us and the previous civilizations, is that we are well aware of it – they were not. We have seen what happens when you cut down all the trees on Easter Island, and from French history, we also know how it goes when an elite tries to hold on to their exorbitant privileges. And yet we do all five of these elements... at full throttle. Is it because we just can't face the mountain of challenges we have created? Is it all just TOO MUCH since we pull a "Thelma and Louise" and just charge ahead at full speed and drive off the cliff? I understand that it seems almost insoluble – but the dumbest thing we can do is to turn a blind eye and continue. And we know it all too well. We can't keep polluting nature, overfishing the oceans and dividing the world's resources so unfairly – but quite fascinatingly, we just keep on doing it anyway.

Winnie the Pooh says; 'if the person you are talking to doesn't appear to be listening, be patient. It may simply be that he has a small piece of fluff in his ear'. And it's not because I haven't been patient – because I have. I already published my first "ear cleaner" in 2009, entitled *Be Generous and Prosper*. I wrote it together with H. H. Dalai Lama – Who, from my point of view, is one of the ethical

lighthouses that shines the way. My hope was to awaken our sleeping conscience. For too long, too many have just looked to Obama and Merkel, hoping that they would take action – because they themselves couldn't do anything. Many were under the understanding that the challenges the Earth now faces are so great that they could only be solved by the leaders of the major countries. The scary thing is that this sense of powerlessness has only increased. But nothing can be further from the truth.

The challenges we humans face (as a species) cannot be solved by individuals. They can only be solved by joint-responsibility – for each other and for this planet. And yes, I know what the response will be when I say that, because I've heard it many times before: "It's beautiful and well-meaning, but it's also utopian. Society is built on profit and competition and that's not bound to change any time soon." Especially when I'm in the United States and give my lecture 'Be Generous and Prosper' – where I explain the simple truth behind our current behavior, and that we are sure to annihilate ourselves within the next three-four generations – There is always someone in the crowd shouting: "Are you a bloody communist," to which I must reply, "No. I'm a scientist." For there is nothing to be in doubt about; we are doing really well in killing ourselves. And we are becoming more and more efficient at it. With fracking, social inequality, biological warfare and so on. So excuse me if I come across as a little impatient when I say; "Go get the fucking fluff out of your ears and take responsibility."

### **Your circle of influence:**

It's actually not that difficult nor is it confusing to take part in a collective responsibility. In fact, it's liberating and even enhances the quality of life. The recipe is simple: Do what you can with the resources you have. That's all it takes. Think about your actions, what you buy (and how little you really need), and what you promote in your life – and what comes out of it. Help the people you can – with what you can. Whether you are sitting in parliament or whether you are a cashier at the local supermarket. It is as simple as that. Take responsibility for what you can, and be a responsible part of humanity. Gandhi says it much more simply: "Be the change you want to see in the world." So it is really not that difficult. And yet. I find that a lot of people are fighting to maintain their private little illusion that everything will be all right. We entrench ourselves on our own little island and do everything we possibly can to avoid hearing about it.

As one of my friends put it: "We had actually planned to take a trip to Kos this year, but I can't bear to look at all those refugees, so we are going to Bali instead." And it's not because I don't understand her – because I do. From my work in India, I know that you, as an individual, feel powerless when faced with so much misery. But we have come to the point where SO many deliberately repress SO much that it's horrifying. And yes, I know that it is considered a universal human trait, that when humans are faced with a dangerous or impossible situation, they numb

themselves so much that they can no longer see nor hear what is actually happening. But that's just not good enough this time. There is too much at stake for us to continue our apathy.

How can any ethical human being justify the strict methods that are now being made to keep refugees out of Fort Denmark?

How can anyone brush off their collective responsibility instead of stepping in while the world is burning?

Whether you are a minister or just a member of the public, get that fluff out of your ears and get going. Take responsibility for what you can.

### **A meaningful life is awaiting us:**

From positive psychology, we know that the greatest experience of life is achieved when a human being spends his or her life doing that which is deeply meaningful. We also know that when we reach the final stage of life and are about to die, it is not whether you had three or four pairs of shoes that occupy your mind. What you think about and re-live are the relationships and experiences you have had. There lies the real value of life. So now that we are aware of all this, are you spending your life on the right things, or do you need to adjust some things? There must be more points to be gained by concentrating on the good for ALL and not just for the few. In other words, is that which is good for the individual, also that which is good for the whole? There is really no time to waste. For me there is nothing more important than to help my fellow human beings realize how wonderful life is – as long as we live in harmony with nature and each other.

And although I mentioned that it has become difficult to be even more patient, I sat down anyway and wrote another book, in the hope that it would remove even more fluff from the ears of my fellowman. *Beyond the Illusion of Gravity* is a novel that with a firm and loving hand puts the distorted interpretations back in its original place and recreates the original message.

Because when it comes to love, equality and the world as a whole, humanity has stuffed SO much fluff into their ears that it needs to be flushed out with a pressure hose. It is SO absurd to claim that men are more important than women, or that people are more important than animals. And if it should actually come to that, the result is not in our favor. From an overall point of view, we humans don't contribute with anything to the ecosystem. In fact, we are just messy and noisy. So if we removed the humans, the ecosystem would only benefit. Whereas it would have disastrous consequences if ants were to disappear. We are of no importance to

anything but ourselves. As Gerardo Ceballos and his co-authors explained in their article in Science Advance; the pace at which species are now becoming extinct, is so high that within a few generations it's going to hit us like a boomerang.

But maybe it doesn't matter that "The Fat Lady" has sung herself hoarse in the attempt to make people listen. Maybe we have to be completely over the edge, before we can reboot our entire existence. It's just a very high price to pay for not getting the fluff washed out. You may not have noticed it – because you live in it every day – but from my point of view there is no doubt that a brutalization process has begun in the political arena. It has slowly but surely eroded all human respect and ethics altogether. There is a rawness and cynicism that can only send us further off course.

In the hope that you will listen. Not to me – but to the voice within you, which also knows there is something very wrong.

Sebastian Nybo  
Lecturer and author

NB. I have enclosed the book *Be Generous and Prosper* and I hope you will take the time to read it. And if you have a lot to do right now, I have put a post-it – note into the chapter where the 5 NO Nos are mentioned. At least now you can't say you didn't know any better.