

Hello, everyone. an old guy who knows shit here. Welcome back to

Season 2, anoldguywhoknowsshit explains it all for you

Episode 5: Where to start?

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There is no doubt in my mind that the freedom to make money without recourse or consideration has caused climate change. It has caused a great many other things as well, but climate change is its piéce de resistance. Once you have climate change, all other achievements are moot - because everybody dies - or, at the luckiest, everybody but a hardy few who manage, somehow, to survive. Those few, if humanity is lucky enough to have them, will have to start all over. This climate change thing is a wipe-the-slate-clean kinda deal. Either way: if we do nothing but business as usual, nature will wipe the slate clean, and on the flip side, the only way we can stop - well, curb at best - climate change is going to be for us to wipe the current slate clean. If we cannot end money's reign as the Most Important Thing, if we cannot wipe that slate clean, nature will do it for us. Climate change is definitely a wipe the slate clean kinda deal.

The culture we have built around the freedom to make money is clearly DEstructive because it is causing climate change that is doing its damnedest to eliminate humanity altogether.

In the preceding episode I said that "If you consider that the purpose of government is to protect society, then there is no greater fail of public institutions anywhere in history." Think about that. Climate change represents the largest, most colossal FAIL of public institutions of all time. Up till now, when civilizations failed, which they have, one after the other - we don't seem to be able to get it right, do we? - they only took out themselves. Today, we have thrown things so far out of balance on a global scale that we will have created an environment where humans - any and all humans - can no longer exist. The biggest FAIL of any system, ever.

Do you need a better reason to change a system?

The sad fact is that our public institutions should have curbed the capitalists' enthusiasm, so to speak. It was the lack of "job-killing" regulation that created the "without recourse or consideration" atmosphere of our economy. Without that, the capitalists went wild, on their working-

class employees, on Mother Earth, on the oceans, the rivers, space, you name it. Our public institutions failed to rein in their excess, and now we are teetering on the brink of runaway warming.

In fact, the "conservatives" - who are the freedom to make money folks, in case you hadn't noticed - have taken over an astounding number of state legislatures, and are acting in utter defiance of all common sense and reason. It has gotten crazy in a way that historians - if there are any - will shake their heads and marvel that people were so willing, so eager, so committed, to their own destruction. The liar mainstreamed in-your-face lying, and now we are seeing where this leads, which is utter defiance of common sense and all reason, so committed are members of our institutions to the lies.

This is one reason I believe it has gotten so far - we have forgotten how to discern the truth. We don't see actual value, we can only see monetary value, so almost everything in our lives is essentially corrupted. In my youth, I could never articulate it, it just didn't seem right. And now, as an old guy who knows some shit, finally, I see how the very essence of our culture is corrupted because all we know how to value is money.

I do believe it was accidental that money became the absolute ultimate essence of what we are all about. Nobody meant for that to happen, they just wanted to be able to do business without interference. And yes, it is probably true that at least some of the framers who agreed, ok, we'll let making money justify enslavement, did so in the firm belief that slavery would not hold up. They were right that slavery would be abolished, but they did not foresee that by saying ok, making money will justify enslavement they created two powerful energy streams as side effects, both of which would outlive slavery by over a century, and are still a plague on humanity: first, making money is, if it justifies enslavement, actually, the most important thing; second, that money-making endeavor is entitled to a slave class. Both of which are powerful energy streams today. Side effects, that nobody ever wrote down, but which have both been main events throughout American society: money is the most important thing, and racism.

And then, springing from the money and racism energy streams were even deeper, more profound and fundamentally destructive streams, that are springing into full fruition today. The most important of these is the loss of empathy. I suppose it is likely that early on it was easy to think, well, it's just

this one group of individuals that we will swallow our empathy on, we can live fully empathetic lives regarding everyone else we encounter, and thus retain our christian values, love your neighbor, all that. We'll just pretend this one group of folks is not human, then we can cut off all empathy for them, but just for them. / But, then, in the long run, as the humanity of those individuals became more and more undeniable, the suppression of empathy simply spread like a virus because that was easy, it was the way it was, it was how you made money - without empathy. But if you have no empathy, it is impossible for you to have any respect. Without empathy, there is no reason for authentic respect, one must empathize with a person's challenges to feel true respect for them. Without empathy, what we respect becomes the lack of empathy, and liars behaving badly become heroes.

Right now we are multiple generations away from empathy, from any real empathy at all.

American freedom has been, pretty much with the single possible exception of the FDR administration, of, by and for the wealthy. Based on the assumption that there will always be a slave class who will work for a pittance, the government is structured to keep the wealthy wealthy and in power. No empathy there.

In the 1930s, the Workers Movement brought much of this to light. Workers were being abused up and down the line by capitalists who were just exercising their freedom to make money. And the government always came down on the side of the capitalists. It never came down on the side of the workers. Because American freedom is the freedom to make money, not the freedom to live. And there can be no empathy or respect for the working class, whoever that is or whatever it is based on. If you empathize with them, you might respect them, and that makes it harder to cheat them.

Empathy engenders respect.

And that cannot be, if our objective is to make money. Which it has always been. Empathy and making money are not good bedfellows.

To this day, with strikes at Kellogg and unionization at Starbucks, we see the ongoing antagonism between mucky mucks who need cheap labor to maintain their wealth, and their assumed-to-be slave class, the workers, who are, finally, simply refusing to live shit-hole lives so those mucky

mucks can roll in wealth at the expense of Mother Earth - and everybody else, when you think about it.

So, NOW, the truly great thing about the good ol' US of A, is that we the people DO have power, within the existing system, to elect people who can and will make CONstructive change. The cards are stacked against us from the git-go. The framers did not trust the people. In fact, at the very beginning, only 6% of citizens were able to vote. But even then, the framers did not trust the people - they, the framers, were there to run things, not to be dictated to by rabble, and this is why there is no direct election of the president. That manipulatable electoral college, carefully inserted between the voting and the electing, has overridden we the people four times, and has quite specifically kept the DEstructors in power at least three of those times - 1876, 2000 & 2016. Each of those times it was a debacle for the freedom to live team and a boon for the freedom to make money team.

They say you must have a margin of success in the popular vote greater than 5% to have an electoral college-proof election. Plus DEstructors cheat shamelessly, restricting voting rights, re-districting; there are many cheats DEstructors are proud to use. So to win the country back from the freedom to make money team, we will have to have the biggest turnout in history. There has to be a 10% margin. I believe this is totally do-able, because I believe that the CONstructors out there outnumber the DEstructors by a very large margin. All that needs to happen is for the American people to get pissed off enough to decide that they want their freedom to live, they want to stop consuming the planet to feed the wealthy, and finally get angry enough to get their asses to the polls and say let's get our shit together and make this thing work.

But hold on. We're putting the cart before the horse here. Let's look at what we're talking about. If you were voting for my programs, what would you be voting for? In other words, what does the freedom to live look like in practice? How do you change an economy from a doomsday machine to a balance-restorer?

Let's imagine, for a second, what might a company look like if it was structured based on the freedom of everyone to live. If the society values everyone's freedom to live over one guy's freedom to make money, then there would be no individual ownership of corporations. Everybody who works there would own part of it. Rather than one family becoming insanely wealthy with more than they could ever spend, you have all that wealth

spread out among everyone, you support everyone's freedom to live. It would be a system based on compassion rather than on greed. CONstructive rather than DEstructive. The thing society values is the freedom of all of its citizens to live, which is CONstructive to society as a whole, as opposed to each individual's freedom to get rich at everyone else's expense, which is DEstructive to society as a whole.

It would end Wall Street as we know it, but maybe not altogether. We do need to figure out remuneration for the investors as well as the workers, and cutting the employees in would fundamentally change Wall Street, if not eliminate it altogether. It would certainly end its control of the economy. Consider, though, that Wall Street is, first of all, an instrument made by the wealthy to stay wealthy, a way for wealth to grow without working; and secondly it requires growth for success, and indefinite growth is a fallacy; it is a prodigious disruptor of balance. I think we would discover that we do not need Wall Street. All of that income would be in the hands of people who need it and would use it.

Profit-sharing is not a new idea. It is pretty old, in fact. But only ever actually applied in ways that still supported the wealthy first. What if we really took profit-sharing seriously? All the wealth of all the giant companies - no, actually you don't have to take it all. Let's say 90% of the wealth spread out in all the publicly traded companies is re-distributed among those companies' employees. Then, all the wealth that is held privately, which, according to one source, is \$41.52 trillion in the top 1% alone. If we let those guys keep, say, one trillion to divide among themselves, take the other 40.52 trillion and divide it into 330 million pieces, that's \$122,000 per person. Can you imagine what a boon that would be to reconstructing local economies?

Which brings up the question, what the hell does profit-sharing and income redistribution have to do with climate change? That is a very good question. So I'll tell you the big picture, which we are going to examine in much greater detail in future episodes. The big picture is that one of the very big jobs we have to do in our battle with climate change is to break our reliance on the grid. We need to decentralize. We need to get small. The grid is antique technology, certain to fail in extreme weather events. Investing massive amounts of money in giant power plants that rely on the grid only makes sense if you're one company trying to make money. We should be powering everyone's individual house. We have the technology, between solar and wind, to make homes and communities power independent. Don't

separate from the grid, but create sub-grids at the neighborhood level, so that when the grid fails, or when we have to shut down those polluting power behemoths, we are prepared; homes are powered locally, if not by themselves. Think of what happens when disasters strike now. The power goes out and people are immediately desperate for help because there are no alternatives. What if there was a national network of small little self-reliant tiny neighborhood power grids, instead of all these giant nasty power plants that rely on one massive grid that is certain to fail?

Getting small does not just apply to power. Local water and food networks need to be set up. All the old services that used to make up small town America, the corner stores and shoe repair shops and small appliance repair, all that, all those businesses that closed when a Walmart opened 25 miles away. We need all those businesses back. We need to break our reliance on the grid and on the supply chain as much as possible. An earthquake that takes out the grid could just as well take out highways and bridges, and then you have a double whammy of paralysis. But if you have sub-grids that can provide at least minimum amounts of power, water and food, without using fossil fuel or plastic, then you are a very long way toward combatting climate change. You shut down most if not all the box stores, but not all at once. You give them, say, five years to provide the building materials necessary to get all that local business thriving, and then you phase them out. You give everybody \$100,000 and a plan and challenge all of our local communities to become self-reliant. Everybody gets to do their own thing. People will fight over what to do, sure, but at the local level and it won't paralyze the entire country. Every successful mini-grid is an island of stability. In a natural disaster, there is an organization of mini-grids that all pool their resources and help out the stricken.

I have to respond right now to what I know will be the first thing many folks will think and that is, well, that income redistribution, that sounds like communism, or socialism, or some apocalyptic "ism" anyway. First of all, yes, it is income redistribution because we want to survive as an entire species, and income redistribution will be a first step towards restoring real balance by putting the power into the hands of each individual. Second of all, profit-sharing does not Marxism make, it is, in fact, still 100% pure capitalism, the only difference from what we have now is that the profits are divided up among all the workers rather than just one – it is simply democratic capitalism; third, I believe it is totally possible to legislate profit-sharing without authoritarianism, completely within our existing system; and

fourth, the government does not legislate control of the companies or its employees, all it says is that the companies have to cut the employees in on the profits and the decisions, as well as the investors, and everyone has both a say and remuneration on a more or less equal basis. Which, I believe, is democratic. And capitalistic. Existing companies do not go out of business; our current infrastructure is not dismantled suddenly. The only thing that happens suddenly is who gets the money. Then we all work together to become locally self-reliant without fossil fuel or plastic. More on that in later episodes.

Every person with a job will have a genuine stake in that job. And a genuine stake in the politics that made it happen. That, along with other regulation that would be needed to reverse climate change, would leave us with a very similar, privately-controlled, capitalistic, profit-based economy, but one that benefits society as a whole, not one that benefits only a few dozen families at the expense of the planet. A job becomes more than just a job. Politics more than stupidity, corruption and/or greed. Corporations and government would both benefit from an educated, participating citizenry. They are going to NEED an educated and participating citizenry to get on board some serious climate change-fighting energy streams. What we have now, the rich guys need citizens who will believe lies without asking questions. What they need is mindless consumers, not an educated citizenry. In order for the current system to continue benefiting only the wealthy, we the people must be kept distracted and quiet. This is why teachers and education get absolutely no respect.

Government would not control anyone's life, nor any corporation's business. All government would do is say "everybody has to get a share" and "here is how we must work together to reverse climate change." I believe certain minimal education standards around ecology and civics might be in order. And of course other basic stuff like defense, infrastructure, international relations. We need a strong federal government in this world. But one that is put there by the people, legitimately.

So.... What can we do to fight climate change? So, back to the Introduction to Season 2, money has to stop being the most important thing. American freedom needs to be redefined. It must mean the freedom to live, not the freedom to make money. The freedom to make money is the DEstructor stream. The freedom to live is the CONstructor stream. That is an essential change, but it has to happen throughout society, not just at the top but citizens everywhere must demand their freedom to live. That is what you

can do to start with - ask yourself what would it mean to you to demand your freedom to live?

Got any kids? Grandkids? Think about them. Think about the urgency of climate change. The UN is screaming out to the world THERE IS A CODE RED ON HUMANITY. There was an article in my news feed in January 2022, a paleontologist defining the inevitability of our extinction. Folks, this is a truly apocalyptic moment. We, humanity, are in danger of being wiped out. The original plot line of just about every superhero movie ever made. The special twist in this movie is that we ourselves are the supervillains bringing us down, and at the same time, we are also the superheroes who are the only ones with the power to stop it. And there ain't no other superheros. Just you 'n me. And our kids who are gonna follow us. This is the real deal, folks. The ultimate video game, the blockbuster superhero movie, the horror show everyone is afraid to go see. Except we HAVE to see it because it is real. It is for real. The DEstruction is real. So I would ask you to ask yourself how you are personally contributing to the destruction in your everyday life, and maybe at least try to do less of that? I know, for instance, that driving and flying both seem vital, but all fossil fuel has gotta go. And, like, NOW. It is an emergency, folks. Why we are not on a war footing to combat it is - well, we'll get to that in a later episode.

In following episodes of season 2: anoldguywhoknowsshit explains it all for you, we will look more closely at what exactly we can do. There are specific things we can do to make these essential changes, both without violence and without undoing everything we have; CONstructive streams we can set in motion, or join, in everyday life, that actually might CONstruct; that actually might move us towards a new balance. It is possible, folks. We can slow the juggernaut. A new balance can be achieved. Hold that in your minds.

This is anoldguywhoknowsshit, signing off till next time.