

Designed to Fail

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Why don't things always work? This is a profound question that many people often ask themselves. With a country as great as America, with high level thinkers and advanced technologies, we often remain disillusioned by our lack of success. What can be more frustrating than an appliance that breaks soon after its purchase or a social system that always seems bogged down by failures?

How things work is often imprinted into the blueprint of the design. Great thinkers become great designers who can foresee problems and correct them before they begin. Small-minded thinkers can only see what is directly in front of them and will not see future catastrophes that are just waiting to happen. One could say that a genius is one who avoids placing a glass of milk near a counter top ledge. The odds of the milk glass being knocked off are enormous. A short-sighted thinker will place the glass of milk near the edge of the counter top without ever thinking of future consequences. The odds of the milk glass being knocked off are substantially greater in this case.

The reality is that not everything is designed to be successful. Look at the old homes and castles of Europe that might be five-hundred or a thousand years old. These buildings were designed with success and longevity in mind. We live in a time that demonstrates that much of what exists today is actually designed to fail, either by design or by sloppy and small-minded thinking.

Designed for Success

There are actually a few products and systems that have been designed for success. These are areas where there has been meticulous research and development, long-term thinking applied and strategies for success implemented. Here are a few of those products and systems.

1. Airplanes

Yes, there are airplane crashes from time to time and occasionally the reason for these crashes is due to mechanical failure of the aircraft. However, based on the millions of miles of airline traffic each year, this is still a very reliable system. Airplanes cannot afford to fail or the public will lose trust in them and stop flying. Airplanes are meticulously designed and have double and triple redundant systems to back up other systems that might fail. An airplane's design from top to bottom has success in mind.

2. Satellites and space craft

Once again, every now and then we see a spectacular explosion of a rocket ship and on rare occasion there is loss of life. However, space craft have a very high success rate and have a well-designed plan that enables the vehicle to absorb some of the harshest and most violent of conditions, from extreme cold and heat to solar radiation and violent re-entries into the Earth's atmosphere. Overall, space craft are designed for success in mind. Nobody wants a multi-million dollar space ship to explode on lift-off.

3. Automobiles

The car has been very successful in its near hundred year life-span. Yes, there have been exploding gas tanks, brakes that failed and airbags that did not deploy. As of late we hear about many millions of cars being recalled for dangerous and faulty parts. However, the automobile has had a great safety record over the lifespan of the auto industry. The car usually does what it is expected to do when one pushes on the gas peddle to accelerate onto a freeway or to make a left-hand turn in front of oncoming traffic.

Failure Systems

You might not be so lucky with the rest of the systems and devices in our modern society. Much of what we experience in our lives has a high failure rate or was designed poorly to begin with. We somehow just accept this as normal when in fact, failure might have already been designed into the system.

1. Appliances

Do you remember the "good old days" when a vacuum or toaster would last forever? Solid steel and analog parts made for a well-built and sturdy appliance. You had faith in these solid machines to last forever. Not today. Most appliances are designed to fail within 3-7 years. This is called "planned obsolescence." By using inferior plastic materials, cheap digital switches and a poor design most appliances will need to be replaced sooner than you think. The manufacturers try to convince you that this design failure is for your benefit so that you will be able to purchase the newest and most updated model. I do not know about you but my grandmother's solid steel fifty-year-old toaster still works fine for me.

2. Computers and the Internet

Do you cross your fingers every time you turn your computer on, hoping the system won't freeze up, crash or be invaded by a virus? The reality is that computers are incredibly unreliable and ultimately the system is designed to fail. Governments and large corporations cannot even keep their secrets safe from would-be hackers and cyber terrorists. How can the average citizen be expected to be safe and secure.

A "tech support" is required to live in each of our back bedrooms, emerging on a daily basis to clean up our key strokes and constantly

update our software. Who hasn't had a computer virus, their email hacked, a credit card stolen online or bank funds absconded with? The United States has 5 % of the world's population yet we also have 50% of the world's stolen credit cards, most of that from online thievery. We just expect this as the price we must pay for the freedom to search the internet and buy products online. Every day we hear of a new cyber breach where a major company has been taken down, a hacker attack on infrastructure or a cyber bank take-over.

How long will it be before a cyber terrorist sets off a nuclear bomb, takes over the electrical grid or destroys a dam? Everything connected to a computer has the ability to be hacked into, including your car, smart phone, smart house, or banking system. Can you imagine a hacker hacking into your car's computer and making the car drive you to an ATM so you can withdraw your money for him? You cannot allow everyone to be this connect with few safeguards and expect it not to fail at one point. Thank you Bill Gates and Steve Jobs for your short-sighted thinking.

3. High-tech Civilization

In the summer of 2012 an enormous solar flair shot out from the sun and was headed for the Earth. This bombardment of high intensity radiation just barely missed striking our defenseless planet. Had the radiation from this solar flair made a direct hit on us, every computer chip on the planet would have been "fried." Hence, airplanes would not fly, cars could not be driven, buses and trains would be idle, food could not be grown using mechanized means or transported to market, water could not be pumped to homes and businesses, cell phones and home computers would be useless, electricity could not be produced, ATMs and banks could not distribute money and gas pumps would not work. Virtually anything with a computer chip in it would be dead.

Because we rely on everything now with a computer chip (food, water, heat, cooling, sanitation, banking etc.), we would be in deep "doo-doo." What most people do not realize is that we barely missed an "extinction level event" that could happen again at any time. Placing the survival of the planet in the hands of one tiny device—the computer chip—will eventually have fatal consequences.

A high-tech civilization will fail, whether it is sooner or later remains to be seen. A high-tech civilization connected together by the computer chip is like everyone in one household sharing the same tooth brush. Only bad things can happen. Let's thank Bill Gates and Steve Jobs once again for the mess they have gotten us into. Some people would refer to these two individuals as the geniuses of our time. I would not be so kind. The final chapter has not been written yet on the benefits or demons of technology and when it is, it may be written not on a tablet or computer, not even on pen and paper, but scrolled in burnt charcoal in some remote cave somewhere.

4. Public School System

It takes a village to raise a child; it also takes a village to graduate a child from high school. There are some public schools that are very good and provide all the necessary ingredients for success. Most however, do not. For a student to be successful there is more required than just testing and memorizing of data. Parents need to be actively involved and the emotional needs of the child must be considered. A safe environment is also a critical component.

Today's public school is about data memorization. The whole person is not considered. It will be difficult to study when a child comes from a broken or disruptive family environment. It will be difficult to focus on school when a child has to walk to school through a crime riddled neighborhood and has to dodge bullets from gangs. It will also be difficult to study if a child is hungry from lack of nutrition or scared because of the continual fighting at home. Far too often public schools act as a baby sitting service because they receive money each day for every student in attendance.

Why do you think the high school drop out rate in America is about twenty-two percent on average? One-third of all African Americans fail to graduate while nearly twenty-nine percent of Hispanics do not graduate from high school. By contrast, the high school drop out rate in Japan is about 2% while in Germany it is 8%. If you did not include the number of graduates from private schools (who actually raise the average) the public high school drop out rate in America would be even higher than what is recorded.

5. Health Care System

Over two-trillion dollars are spent each year in the United States on health care. About twenty-five percent of that money goes to keeping people alive who are on their "death beds" and giving them an extra few weeks of life. We have a fear of letting people die so we continue to keep them alive as long as we can.

Ninety-eight percent of that two-trillion dollars goes to pay for drugs, surgery and radiation services. This wasteful spending cannot keep going at this rate and will ultimately fail. Think again if you believe that by creating more drugs we would be the healthiest population on the planet. There are already hundreds and hundreds of drugs on the market, either prescription or over-the-counter drugs. Americans, accounting for a mere 5 % of the world's population, consume over half of the world's drug. If drugs actually cured disease than one would think that we would have to be the healthiest population on the planet with the longest life expectancy. We are not.

The American health care system is riddled with fraud, abuse and ignorance. Just because we spend more money per capita on health care does not make us any healthier. Just because we are bombarded with more and more science and technology does not make us any healthier. At one point the current system will have to crash as the average person will not be able to afford to pay for any monthly health

care premium and no government subsidies will make up the difference.

6. Commercial Agriculture

When it comes to growing food, what we are doing is unsustainable. By pouring pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilizers into the soil we are depleting the minerals in the soil and thus the food being grown is without the necessary vitamins and minerals. At one point the soil becomes so dead that nothing will grow. Besides that, when you create GMO's (genetically modified organisms) the weeds start to become resistant, not to mention what these relatively untested (over the long-term) GMOs are doing to our bodies.

Mile upon mile of mono crops are a very unnatural way to cultivate soil. A natural farm will have many crops being grown and rotated year after year. This helps to replenish the soil. Some years the fields are left fallow to give the earth time to rejuvenate itself. Commercial agriculture, once promised to save the world from starvation, will eventually fail and lead the world into starvation. You cannot keep raping the soil and pouring lethal toxins into it and expect it to keep on producing.

The whole GMO culture is even more unsustainable and will eventually fail. GMO crops actually require more (not less) fertilizers and water than non-GMO crops. GMO crops even have a high failure rate. In America when GMO crops fail the farmer just declares bankruptcy and walks away. In India, 300,000 farmers in the last 16 years have committed suicide because their GMO crops failed and they did not see how to recover from this bleak future. (Vanda Shiva)

6. Prisons

Why are our prisons so crowded? The United States has more people in prison per capita than any other country (except North Korea, where accurate data is hard to come by). The United States incarceration rate per capita is around 707 per 100,000 people. What are we doing wrong?

First off, many people are in prison because of drug offenses. This includes either selling drugs, making drugs, transporting drugs, using drugs or the crime that is often associated with drugs (like robbery and burglary). *The War on Drugs* is a complete failure (see next section) and this policy has allowed the prison population to skyrocket.

We also have a punitive system rather than a rehabilitative system. We would rather see people punished and suffer than help them understand the mistakes they have made and teach them how to correct those behaviors. We somehow feel "an eye for an eye" and need to seek revenge on law breakers. Our philosophy is if someone commits a crime they need to pay. This helps fill the prisons with repeat offenders who have never learned how to fully integrate into society and the label of "criminal" will continue to follow them. We

have "three strikes laws" where a repeat offender is locked up for life on his third conviction, even though this third offense might be something as minor as stealing a pizza.

After one leaves prison there is often little chance of success. We take away many of the rights of someone who has been in jail. It is not forgive and forget. A convicted felon might not be able to find work and may be short on money. A convicted felon after serving his time is still being punished by having many opportunities and privileges removed including his ability to work at certain jobs, inability to vote, to join the military etc. A convicted felon remains with a societal scar on him and never really is in the clear. They may not have any support on the outside. There are many things stacked against someone who is coming out of prison. For many, committing a crime and going back to prison is the only safe place to be.

7. War on Drugs

In 1971 the United States government declared war on drugs and began its ambitious campaign. This methodology has been a complete failure from the very beginning. You cannot heal something unless you can accurately define it and then treat it. Addictions have been labeled as genetic anomalies that some people carry with them. This is incredibly false.

Addictions are choices that we all make in our lives in order to not feel our emotions. Genetics have nothing to do with the choices we make. Some people choose shopping addiction, others choose alcohol and others use drugs to medicate themselves. Until we teach people how to feel and express their emotions we will continue to lose this war on drugs. Drugs are not the problem. Our inability to feel and express our emotions is the problem. The "War on Drugs" is a misguided and errant philosophy that has taken us nowhere and is only going to fail.

8. Wireless Society

We have become a wireless society over the last decade or so. While some might see this as a wonderful advancement in our technological lives there are enormous consequences that we are not willing to look at. Over time this system will fail and leave us all in the dark.

We are being bombarded with EMF radiation through all of our cell phones, cell phone towers, smart electric meters, Wi-Fi, wireless computers, keyboards, streaming video on the television, wireless speakers and a host of other technological services. While many enjoy these conveniences we will eventually pay the price for all of this radiation being absorbed into our bodies. Brain cancer rates for instance, have already begun to soar as this microwave radiation penetrates deep into one's skull, cooking our brains when using our cell phone.

In addition, you are in trouble if you are in an emergency situation and forget your cell phone. There are very few pay phones around these days to make emergency phone calls. In a natural disaster like

an earthquake, there is a good chance that your land line telephone will still operate but there is little chance that your cell phone will be operational. Networks are flooded in a disaster with calls and it will be very difficult to have a call go through. A wireless society will ultimately fail.

9. United States Economy

How long can you continue to borrow money and when that stops working print more money to pay off your previous debt? Not long! The United States economy is a debtor's economy where we continue to borrow money to pay for our uncontrolled spending and imperialistic ways. A true imperialist nation would conquer lands and people around the world and take those resources to enrich the "mother nation." A fake imperialist nation (like the United States) continues to make its citizens pay for its worldly conquests while not wanting to appear as a conquering nation, thus not obtaining the resources of those conquered nations (like minerals, gas, oil etc). For instance, a logical strategy would have been for the United States to confiscate the oils wells of Iraq for several years after invading the country and liberating the Iraqi people from a tyrant ruler. The oil revenues would have been able to pay for the United States' military expenditures for the war.

Currently the United States economy is over seventeen-trillion dollars in debt with little hope of slowing down this money free-fall. Nobody seems interested in cutting spending or making the national debt a priority. Where do you think the next seventeen-trillion dollars will come from? The estimated population of the United States is 307,795,997. This means that every man, woman and child each owes about \$40,146.02. (The National Center for Policy Analysis) You might want to start looking for that second job. An economy cannot continue this way of spending and borrowing and it will eventually collapse.

10. Fossil Fuel Economy

At one point it seemed that we were going to change over to a renewable fuel economy. The door was open and then it quickly closed again when the recession of 2008 hit and stabilizing the economy and creating jobs took center stage. We are in an era where we have the knowledge and the technology to run our lives on alternative energy, (wind, solar, hydrogen, hydroelectric, geothermal, fuel cells, etc.) yet we continue to slide back in favor of cheap oil, coal and gas.

Not only are we continually polluting our environment with carbon gasses from the burning of fossil fuels but we are investing in a system that will eventually fail. At one point all of the coal, natural gas and oil will be gone. It does not matter whether that day is next year or in fifty years. The fossil fuel economy will fail.

It might even fail much sooner as we are experiencing affects of global climate change which many people believe the fossil fuel

economy is largely responsible for. We continue to tear down rain forests for fuel and land. Rain forest are a large part of our oxygen generating system here on Earth. The fewer the rain forests we have the less oxygen that will be released into the air.

Ice shelves are rapidly melting causing sea levels to rise. Interestingly, as sea levels rise more and more low lying areas will be taken over by water. The center for world banking is New York City, which happens to be just a few feet above sea level. Could the stock market and banking industry, who largely support the fossil fuel economy, be creating its own poison pill, soon to be swallowed up by the ocean itself?

The sad truth is that we have had so many warning signs and so many opportunities to make the shift over into an alternative fuel economy and we keep sliding back into what is safe and comfortable. Gas, coal and oil make easy quick dollars in the moment for a very few. I guess we will have to wait until we are all gasping for our next breath of air before we are willing to make that shift.

Epilogue

The problem with small-minded thinkers who design products and systems that will ultimately fail is that after the failure of the product or collapse of the system they seldom raise their hands and take responsibility for their failures. In their minds it is always someone else's fault and not theirs.

By no means is this list of systems and products designed to fail complete. You could also mention the Medicare system which is filled with fraud, the Social Security network (doomed to run out of money), the stock market (which is designed to be the world's largest gambling casino), professional sports disciplinary policies that seem to just make up rules as they go, the political landscape which is ruled by lobbyists and corporations, the credit card industry which offers few safeguards for fraud or stolen cards and the United States foreign policy, which bribes countries to do what we want them to do (called "aid") and allows our military to place tens of thousands of troops on military bases throughout the world, often protecting other countries from invasion (like South Korea and Japan) yet costing the United States tax payers billions of dollars each year. Political parties take action only to win the next election and corporations create products for quick profit that need to be replaced frequently.

Where are the visionaries of our day? Why don't we see more people like Thomas Jefferson, Albert Einstein, Leonardo Da Vinci or Thomas Edison? Visionaries are not necessarily found at Google, Apple, Microsoft, school boards or the advisors to the president. A visionary is one who can see into the future with long-term success. Those whom we believe to be visionaries of today are guilty of only

short-minded thinking and can only see what is right in front of them. Metaphorically we are not constructing great castles like in Europe that are made to last but instead are building cardboard houses with a short lifespan.

The rules of success are to build products and institutions that are designed to last, have a long life span and can foresee possible problems before they happen. These products and systems are also based in nature and not on illusion or speculation and are community supported. These rules of success eliminate most products and systems of today which are about "get-rich-quick" ideas, inability to plan for the future and when something goes wrong "we will fix it later" mentality.

We have several working models of products and systems designed to be successful. Unfortunately this is the minority. Far too often we are burdened with products and systems that were designed to fail from the very beginning of their inception. The question I pose is this: "What is wrong with us that we allow 'Designed to Fail' to be the default in which we live our lives?" We accept stolen credit cards and computer viruses as normal. We accept government programs that do not work. We accept consumer products that are cheap and inferior. What is wrong with us that we accept mediocrity and failure to be the new norm?

Resources

GMO crop failures

Every Thirty Minutes: Farmer Suicides, Human Rights, and the Agrarian Crisis in India
(NaturalNews.com)

The National Debt

The National Center for Policy Analysis Ncpa.org/ The National Debt

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