

Four challenges of sustainability

[Education](#), [Sustainability](#)



“ Four Challenges of Sustainability” by David W. Orr confronts the problems of sustainability and proposes a path to get there. The concept of sustainability is the primary topic and goal in regards to the future of humans. The entire idea that humans and civilization as we know it may cease to exist, is a relatively new idea. This very real idea has spawned acknowledgement and pursuit of avoiding it through sustainability.

Militarization, the increasing number of incredibly poor, and the increasing amount of frivolous consumption are some of the many current practices that simply cannot be sustained.

Major industrial industries like agriculture, energy production, and healthcare have begun to exhibit diminishing returns. The move to sustainability requires major changes and improvements in government, specifically democratic governments and the relationship between them and their citizens. Fair distribution of wealth, cradle to cradle material policy, and building ecologically sound cities are only possible through ethical governments that have their citizen’s best interests at heart.

Orr more succinctly puts this as, “ Sustainability, in short, constitutes a series of public choices that require effective institutions of governance and a well-informed democratically engaged citizenry. ” Education and curriculums must be improved to include ideas that are essential to sustainability. These ideas should promote more windmills, more farmers’ markets, and more small businesses. Orr feels that the public must be educated about sustainability and then taught how to implement it.

It is then their responsibility to pass this knowledge on to future generations. The transition to sustainability requires more than education and critical problem solving skills. In the quest for sustainability, Orr says we need “ a higher level of spiritual awareness” and references Schumacher in saying that we require, “ wisdom, love, compassion, understanding, and empathy. ” These spiritual tools will enable us to stop the self destructive behaviors that we continually perpetuate. If not for any other reason than preserving humanity we must stop killing the planet.