

# Pathways to systems change and the use of one's podium

With the wonderful work of diverse system thinkers worldwide, in science journals, active online forums like LinkedIn and Facebook groups, in the European activist communities, the UN's grand project sustainable development goals, and of course the UN's IPCC and other agencies, NGOs and other organizations responding to the escalating world environmental crisis, anyone interested has been seeing more and more of the big picture of our fast-escalating combined world crises, and after such a long time, the raw experience of climate change finally hitting home, the new evidence that 40 years of passionate, healing and caring sustainability efforts, of all kinds, the evidence is accumulating that they have been encouraging but also caused no reduction in the rate of escalating global crises escalate as before. The most dangerous and damaging one may be the one given the least attention, the traumatic effect of living in a world forcing everything we do to reorganize ever faster. All the derivative rates of change for a growth system are always growing.

So, it might be time to look at the whole problem from a fresh point of view.

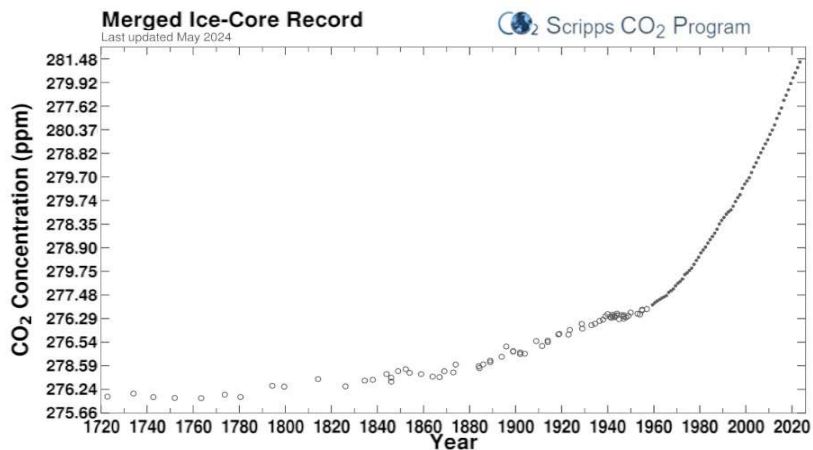


Fig 1 : The current world measure of atmospheric CO2, causing the exponential planet heating we're now experiencing the extreme effects of. Its growth is closely proportional to world GDP growth from 1970 to the present, at ~2% a year since WWII rather than GDP's ~3.5% avg. a year. CO2 Data - Scripps: [https://scrippsco2.ucsd.edu/data/atmospheric\\_co2/icecore\\_merged\\_products.html](https://scrippsco2.ucsd.edu/data/atmospheric_co2/icecore_merged_products.html)

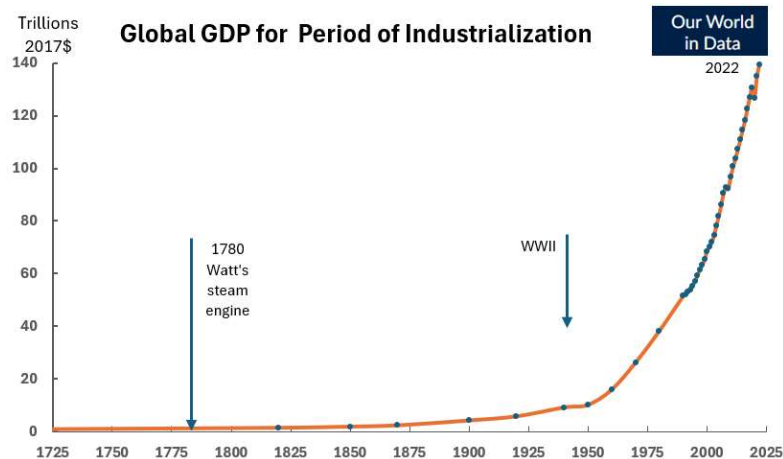


Fig 2 : World GDP figures only became accurate in 1971. So, the difference in shape here seems partly due to using sparse pre-2070 figures and GDP growing faster. GDP Data – OWD: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/global-gdp-over-the-long-run>

As a senior natural systems research scientist, I've been striving to shed light on the fundamental error that seems to be at the core of our world's struggle for survival. I invite you to delve into my research site and the numerous writings, all of which are linked from <http://synapse9.com/signals>, to gain a deeper understanding of my approach as an empirical systems scientist to this great issue.

Think of what you would find of interest or missing in this story to discuss from your podium ways to take a fresh new look at how we can change. One of the main problems seems to be everyone assuming someone else is in control when that's simply untrue. So, even if people all agreed on what to do, they would find the systems we need to change control themselves, having developed systems of self-control themselves. So, it's a big problem for us now, believing someone is in charge when no one ever has really been, only falling helpfully or harmfully into an especially influential role in the greater system's story of our lives. It's the contexts we find ourselves in that create the opportunities.

Growth systems are natural phenomena and, as such, are self-organized, animated, and controlled, working as wholes to coordinate their parts. We don't see the systems we live in working on us, but they're doing it all the time. They also evolve and change their designs in response to innovation and contextual signals, their "intelligence," the collective mind of the whole. Today, the challenge is to facilitate its shift from multiplying its parts to perfecting how they work together. This seems to be the implied goal of all systems. As people, mistakenly thinking we're in charge, rather than needing to be good partners with the system that grew around us, we've been doing things getting in its way of seeking to perfect its design.

All systems are designed around how the parts cooperate. The smoothness of the long-term global curves of economic data shows how effectively human cultures all over the world work together. Systems naturally design themselves as they grow to work as wholes, smoothly coordinate, and respond to changing conditions, 99% hidden from our view. That natural self-coordination comes along with the system as it changes purposes, as when going from multiplying to perfecting their designs.

Our dilemma? No one is in charge. The system actually designed itself, though leaders often thought they were. It was an evolutionary process of "try this and that," people offering new designs and the system finding what did and did not work.

System transitions from emerging to maturing are often quite smooth, relying on chain reactions of the parts "getting the signals" to change and then moving together to cooperate in coordinating the transition to the next new way of working together. It can go in phases, but ultimately, any living system needs to shift from endlessly multiplying its parts to maturing and fitting in with its world to survive.

From a view of long history, human cultures may have started experimenting with "boundless growth" very long ago, the whole record peppered with both stable cultures and catastrophes. That it's a certain design to fail, that life uses to kickstart new designs and discard, was, however, never appreciated by some humans, such as our direct ancestors.

Our ancestors seem to have taken several civilizations in a row to catastrophic collapse, erasing the cultures involved to leave close to no history of what happened, unaware that designs for maximum endless explosive growth naturally blow up. That fact provides rather clear evidence of there being something wrong with our most advanced forms of knowledge, also one of the messages of the Bible story of Adam and Eve.

That repeatedly inherited blindness to people, from the start, of not being in control of the economies they worked hard to grow and improve, was just never followed up with the normal kinds of studies one would do! I stumbled into doing that in my 20s, and for a long time couldn't understand why others didn't. So today, as the economy gives every sign of accelerating as fast as it can to totally collapse... we need a "full court press" to find out how to survive nature's everyday startup process for anything, "compound growth."

We do see that all lives begin with it, but all projects do as well, along with all friendships and anything else that works as well. The physics is that any energy use needs an organized system to carry it out, and nearly all display a ready response to approaching their organizational limits, but advanced civilizations - not so much. So, there's evidently a somewhat hidden way successful new lives seem to all automatically know how to transition from growing to maturing their designs, that some human cultures easily notice and others can't. The key seems to be that it's \*in the relationships\* that we naturally can't see. So it's through the relationships we need to respond. There are formulas, too, of course, but it's the relationships that make them useful.

To make life work for all the parts, the natural goal for all systems, we need to share good ideas on how to "get the signals" from our contexts to reorganize our way of life, follow the paths of all successful new living systems, moving

from investments in multiplying our designs to fulfilling them, not erasing creativity but balancing it with the new focus on caring for and perfecting our designs that every beautiful work ends with.

So... What do you find of interest or missing in this story worth using your podium to illustrate a fresh new story of how we can change?

## Author References:

Research site: Reading Nature's Signals

– <http://synapse9.com/signals>

Top 100+ World Crises Growing with Growth report

– <https://synapse9.com/r3ref/100CrisesTable.pdf>

### Recent Papers:

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