

How are things going for you these days?

As I See It

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My basic thesis based on studies beginning with the Club of Rome's "Limits of Growth" to Joan Williams' 2025 book "Outclassed" is that the key to almost every problem (personal, social, economic, political, and environmental) from war, to illegal immigration, to inflation, to growing inequality, to dehumanization, to personal psychological issues, to excessive poverty and wealth, relates to overpopulation, and the ever increasing and excessive drive for economic growth and overconsumption.

But if those are the most basic sources of all of our personal and societal problems, why haven't we adopted the obvious solutions to those problems — fewer children, end less consumption?

The answer to that question should be obvious to any observer. Just open your eyes, turn on your TV, check your lap top, or read any news paper. It's all right there on almost any station, any web site, or any page of your paper. We're totally bombarded with appeals to purchase every imaginable product or service under the sun.

American, and now world wide culture is not only based on more of everything, but requires increases in whatever we have, and whatever exists, and bigger and better of everything, from Fruit Loops, to pharmaceutical drugs, to new cars, to home improvements, to products that will make us more beautiful, admired, and loved. Happy people doing happy things, but always as the result of purchasing new and better material

goods and services.

So the important question is — how is this all going for you? How do you like driving in more and more traffic every day, continually facing higher prices at the supermarket, having to talk to someone who is English challenged, or an AI bot when you're trying to get a vendor issue resolved — a robot by the way that may soon be replacing you at the office? and how does it feel listening to politicians telling you the future is rosy, while enriching themselves with crypto deals, and tax cuts for everyone?

Well, maybe not everyone.

And how about great relations with your children, who will cost you on average \$36,000 each a year to raise in Massachusetts, but don't have time to talk to you because they're on their phones six or seven hours a day? Oh, and have you checked your recent electric bills, as ACs work overtime trying to compensate for the warmer world we've created as the result of consumer overindulgence, and ever larger numbers of people in need of cooling?

But it's not me you say who's causing all these problems -it's all those other guys out there.

And speaking of other guys out there — there are a lot more of them out there every day. According to demographic studies, we're adding 170,000 more people (net births minus deaths) to our planet every day, or a net increase of 62 million people every year. And that's every year to a finite planet now containing over 8 billion people, expected to grow to 11 or 12 billion people by the end of this century.

Wait a minute you say — that's world population — not U.S. population increase.

And judging from most media, you might think that the U.S. is losing population. Unfortunately, or fortunately if you're a growth

advocate, that's not the case. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population is growing by over 6,000 a day, or well over 2 million people a year.

If the current projected increase holds up, by 2050 we'll add over 56 million more people to the U.S. population, a number that is almost four times the current population of our current six New England states.

These kinds of increases in population, internationally and nationally, will obviously result in greater demand and higher prices for such necessities as housing, food, and medical care; higher prices that have already increased more than many people can currently afford.

Consider also the fact that population growth means more competition for jobs, and smaller wage and benefits improvements — a condition that has plagued the American workforce since the 1990s, despite significant increases in workforce productivity.

It can also be argued that keeping the wages and benefits of workers to a minimum has contributed to higher corporate profits and executive compensation, e.g. the number of billionaires in the country, most of whom have come from the corporate world, increased ninefold since 1990, and continues to grow by more than 50 new billionaires a year, while wages and benefits, after inflation, for most workers have barely increased.

At the end of the day, having smaller families, and consuming less stuff would go a long way to improving our everyday life, lessening social and economic conflict, and saving our planet from impending demographic and environmental disaster.

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