**book info:**

**Designed for the Future**  
**80 Practical Ideas for a Sustainable World**  
**Jared Green, Editor**  
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**"We are both the cause of our problems and the solution to them. We have the answers."**

...JARED GREEN

1 BEDDINGTON ZERO ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (BEDZED), LONDON. CREDIT: TOM CHANCE, CREATIVE COMMONS, CROPPED, [HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/2.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) 2 LES ANNEAUX BY DANIEL BUREN, CONTEMPORARY ARTWORK AT ESTUAIRE ART BIENNALE, NANTES AND SAINT-NAZAIRE, FRANCE. CREDIT: JEAN-PIERRE DALBÈRA, CREATIVE COMMONS, CROPPED, [HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY/2.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

READ BY LINDA A. IRVINE

## WE CAN'T GIVE UP YET!

EN\_ IN 1972, A BOOK entitled *Limits to Growth* created an international sensation by modelling 12 world development scenarios that showed different possible outcomes based on population growth and natural resource use and the resulting "limits to growth" that would be required if we were to live sustainably, and comfortably within the planet's carrying capacity.

Now more than 40 years later, the authors have concluded that humanity has squandered the opportunity to correct our current course, and that change is essential if the world is to avoid the serious consequences of exceeding the planet's material, resource and energy limits, including its capacity to absorb pollution and waste.

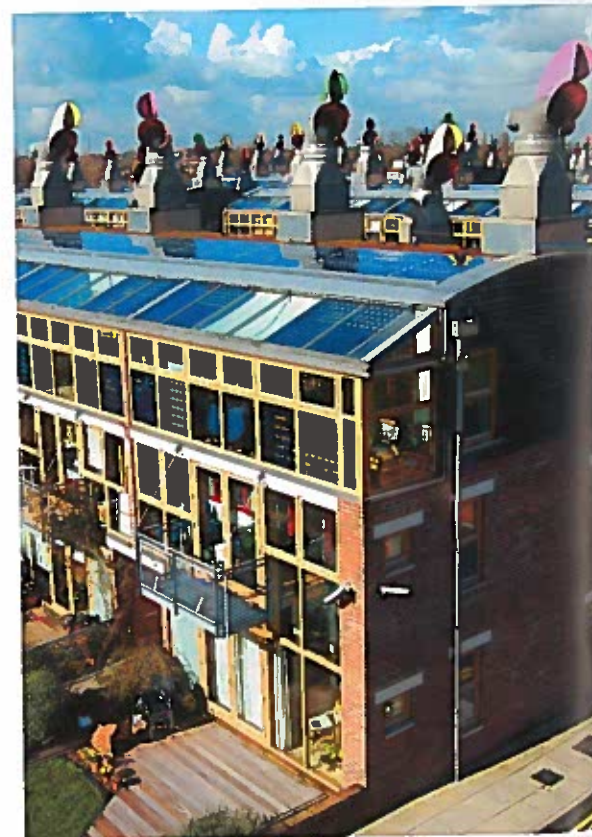
Worldwide, we are either in denial or engage in quick technical or economic fixes that do not eliminate the root causes of our unsustainable lifestyles. We must go beyond simply reducing, reusing and recycling to initiating meaningful social, economic and structural changes to significantly reduce our human ecological footprint.

What would the world look like if we lived in ways that reduced our ecological footprint? How would we be living? Would our cities and landscapes be 'unimaginably different' from the ones in which most people live now?

Jared Green has written a small but inspirational book that provides real, tangible examples of how we can move forward towards a more positive, sustainable future. Green is the noted author of "The Dirt," a weekly blog sponsored by the American Society of Landscape Architects.

### WHAT STORIES WOULD WE TELL?

Green invited over 70 contributors from around the world (architects, landscape architects, urban planners, academics, policy makers and artists) to share their ideas about current projects and initiatives that might inspire us and give us hope that a sustainable future is possible. More interestingly, he asked that contributors highlight the work of others, rather than their own work, so that the selected examples are focused on the *we* rather than the *me*. As Green says "We are both the cause of our problems and the solution to



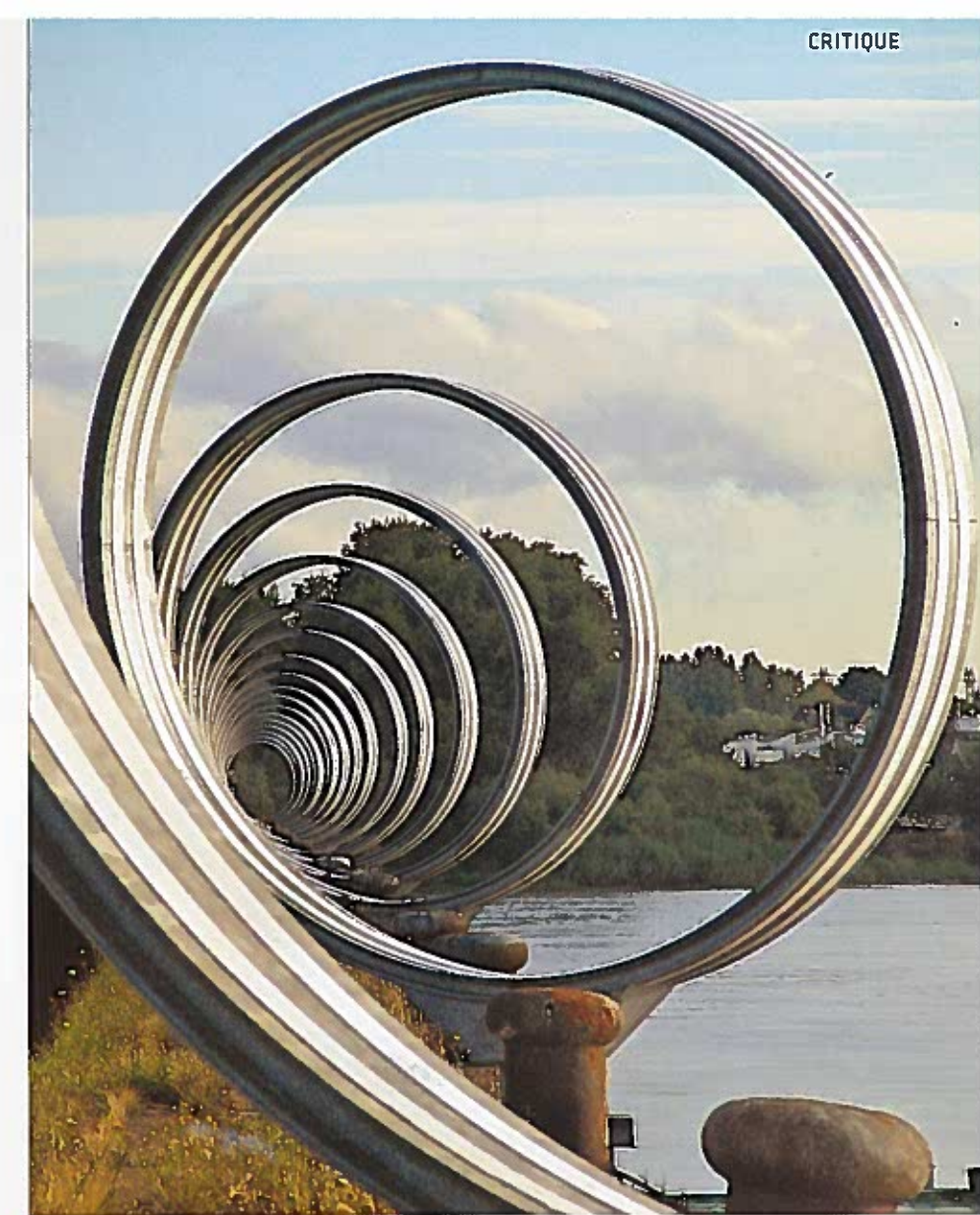
them. We have the answers." He urges us to think about what each of us would say if we were asked the same questions. What innovative examples of more sustainable ways of life would we pick? What stories would we tell?

This book is simply laid out, easily read and well-illustrated. The ideas and projects presented fall loosely into four broad areas: relying on new cutting edge technologies and revolutionary approaches; relying on old ideas that have survived, changed and adapted; relying on community, sense of ownership and reinvestment in communities; and relying on harnessing or reconnecting with nature and natural processes. Each "project/essay" is presented in two pages – a single page description accompanied by a page of single or multiple images – which makes it very easy for each reader to thumb through, scan topics of interest, or spend time on particular stories that resonate. I was particularly inspired, and re-inspired, by the following stories:

**Live with Nature:** Li Xiaodong advocates creating ingenious sustainable architecture based on a dialogue with local conditions and lifestyles.

**Use Nature's Blueprints:** Janine Benyus urges us to research natural processes and nature's design intelligence to help us design our own communities and buildings.

**Provide a Warm Shower:** Jia You talks about a DIY portable shower made from inexpensive parts and piloted in a Chilean slum. The shower significantly improves people's health, hygiene and self-esteem.



**Install Solar Roadways:** Christoph Gielen highlights the Solar Roadways Campaign where roads, driveways and parking lots would produce renewable energy for neighbouring homes.

**Make Infrastructure Do Double Duty:** Christopher Hume features Sherbourne Common where a water filtration plant is turned into an aesthetic feature within a new urban park.

**Take Your City Into Your Own Hands:** Tracy Metz discusses how a crowd-funding campaign in Amsterdam resulted in a new pedestrian bridge connecting two isolated neighbourhoods.

**Do Many Small Scale Projects:** Nina-Marie Lister urges us to take advantage of small, local opportunities to make simple changes

and offer tangible solutions. If they fail, they fail safely, not catastrophically.

**Change Ourselves:** Janet Echelman believes, "If we change ourselves – and then feel empowered to shape our world according to human and connected values – things we previously thought impossible suddenly seem real and within our reach."

This little "green" book presents many wonderful projects and ideas that demonstrate to each of us – students and professionals alike – that we can all provide leadership, vision and courage. By seizing opportunities in our everyday lives and in our own communities, we can create a more functional, sustainable and equitable world.

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