



Peak Oil Blues

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Topic: [Sociology/Psychology](#)

Peak oil is a pretty depressing subject. Eventually I think it starts to take a toll on one's psyche after a while of putting your mind to a subject as large and intractable as Peak Oil. The more I read, the more I feel I sink into the abyss of doomsday scenarios. There are no easy answers and even the difficult answers are going to require an enormous level of national political cooperation and local community coordination that seem to border on utopian. I fear the worst, but that type of thinking has a way of becoming a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Instead I've been trying to make a list of reasons why peak oil is actually a good thing and we should view this as an opportunity for building a more sustainable way of life. So here's my top ten list of opportunities that peak oil presents to us (if we are willing to take advantage of them):

1. Value all finite resources appropriately: The peaking of oil could represent a watershed in how we value all natural resources, including other fossil fuels, metals, water, soil, ecological systems.
2. Full Employment: As fossil fuels become more expensive, more labor intensive forms of manufacture/agriculture/etc would be more attractive. This would mean that more people would become productive members of society.
3. Build More Cohesive Communities: People will have no choice but to band together for mutual aid and protection. Each member of a community will be needed to step up in some way to help survive the energy crisis. Since long distance transportation will be expensive
4. Healthier / more physically fit population: More expensive transportation fuel costs will mean that more people will walk, bike, or use other forms of self-propelled transportation which will help improve the amount of physical activity that people do.
5. Pragmatism over Ideology: These days it seems that one-size fits all ideology (left or right) has trumped the seemingly pragmatic ways of dealing with different situations with different solutions. When presented with real practical issues that need technical solutions, I think voters will reward competence over ideology.
6. Become energy independent nationally and locally: Right now, our economic structure could be completely disrupted by the whims of leaders of other countries. If we can successfully power down our lifestyles and increase our production of alternative energy sources, we will be able to have a more humane foreign policy
7. Focus on quality of life, not quantity of consumption: Frivolous consumption will become a lot more expensive and instead I think people will focus on the things that really make life enjoyable - good relationships, exercise, pride in producing something of value to your neighbors.
8. Less specialization: Today we largely have a career that is highly focused in one area at the expense of all other pursuits. We may have to diversify our skills (gardening, sets to deal

9. Slow Process of Global Warming: Instead of ramping up coal, powering down and switching to renewables could start to actually lower the amount of CO₂ ending up in the atmosphere which would at least slow down the rate of global warming (reversing the process seems a little too lofty!)
10. Eat healthier food: A move to more local and organic farming will increase the amount of nutritional content of foods while also decreasing the harmful pesticides and preservatives that are used currently.

These can only happen if we take the right path, the path toward building a more sustainable economy/society. The other path of continuing on our present path leads to resource wars, ecological devastation, famine, and a prolonged period of wasteful opulence for a dwindling elite ending in a serious die-off scenario.

As always, I invite your ideas and comments.



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