

With rare exceptions, we humans are not rational. We're *rationalizers*. We try to force our perception of reality to fit our beliefs; rather than the other way around. This is why the vast amount of grief, angst and encroaching dread that many of us feel today is likely due to the fact that, deep down, whether we're willing to admit it to ourselves or not, everybody already knows the truth: *Our way of life is unsustainable*.

In our hearts, we fear that someday, possibly soon, our comfy way of life will be ripped away.

The simple reality is that society's hopes for a "modern consumer-class lifestyle for all" are incompatible with the accelerating imbalance between the growing human population and the increasing depletion of the planet's natural resources. Basic math and physics tell us that the Earth's ecosystems can't handle the load for much longer.

The only remaining question concerns *how fast* the adjustment happens. Will the future be defined by a "slow burn", one that steadily degrades our living standards over generations? Or will we experience a sudden series of sharp shocks that plunge the world into chaos and conflict?

It's hard to make predictions about the future, so it's left to us to remain open-minded and flexible as we draw up our plans for how we'll personally persevere through the coming years of change. While the specifics about the future elude us the macro trends most likely to influence the coming decades are predictable. Here are a few trends: federal debt, income inequality and geopolitical tensions are rising while funding levels for pensions, and confidence in the future among younger generations are falling.

Since I'm in the 4th quarter of my life I'm hoping my pension will hold. If California, the 5th largest economy in the world, can't pay its pension obligations the country as a whole is heading for some major problems. But that isn't what concerns me. Here are a few statements from millennials that may just sum up many of their views that do concern me.

When I'm at retirement age, around 2050, I think it's possible we'll have seen a breakdown of modern society."

I don't think the world can sustain capitalism for another decade, it's socialism or bust.

Resource wars will kill us all if we don't accept that the free market will absolutely destroy us within our lifetime [if] we don't start fighting its dominance."

And finally

I see the future as encompassing one of two possibilities: an apocalyptic total breakdown of industrial society, or capitalism morphing into a government by the wealthy.

Younger people are increasingly seeing that the model of extractive, exponential growth which is often errantly termed "capitalism" when, as practiced, it should be termed "corporate socialism" has no future. And from one voice of their grandparent's generation, I think they may be right.