

Vita Sapien

# A SUSTAINABLE LIFE PHILOSOPHY



Guy Lane

Vita Sapien  
A Sustainable Life Philosophy  
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## Introduction

I am an environmental scientist, and for three decades I have been watching humanity degrade the Living Planet, our life support system. My enduring question has been: ‘Why?’

Why not instead foster a civilization and ecosystem that thrives?

In August 2016 it became clear to me that the root of our man-made crisis was that most people hold unsustainable worldviews.

The term *worldview* relates to how a person sees and understands the world in which they live. People view life framed by their beliefs (religion & spirituality), their knowledge, (including scientific understanding), the culture of their society,

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and their own personal experiences. No two worldviews are alike, although many share common themes.

The inspiration for this book was to frame a worldview that gives humanity the best chance of surviving the 21st Century and thriving beyond. This is achieved primarily through the fusion of environmental science and spirituality grounded in the living world – put another way, *ecoscience & ecospirituality*.

Vita Sapien Philosophy gains deeper meaning when considered alongside *Six Valuable Worldviews* including: Stoicism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto, Western Eco-spirituality, and Indigenous Worldviews.

I believe that around 8% of Western adults (about 53 million people) could become early adopters of Vita Sapien Philosophy.



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Through the behavioural changes that Vita Sapien Philosophy inspires, these people will alter the trajectory of human civilization.

Instead of heading toward the abyss, we will move toward a Verdant Age, where humanity and the Living Planet thrive in synergy deep into the Long Future.

This book has four Parts.

- Our Predicament
- Spiritual for Sustainable
- Vita Sapien Philosophy in Practice
- Vita Sapien Organization

The first chapter Understanding **Our Predicament** outlines where we are with respect to the global crisis that Vita Sapien Philosophy seeks to resolve.

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**Spiritual for Sustainable** introduces the spiritual belief in Gya – the Living Planet viewed as a single organism – and the *Vita Spiritual Framework* that makes it easy to understand *the subject* of spirituality.

**Vita Sapien Philosophy in Practice** describes ways in which individuals can give effect to this sustainable life philosophy and help advance the Verdant Age.

Finally, **Vita Sapien Organisation** describes the institution behind Vita Sapien Philosophy and how you can support our work and get involved.

In an hour or so when you come to the end of this book, I ask that you sit in quiet contemplation and ask yourself a single question:

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“What should I do with  
the rest of my life?”

Guy Lane – 21 April 2025

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

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**1.**

# **Our Predicament**

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### A Tale of Two Tribes

The archaeological record shows a dramatic shift in human cognition around 70,000 years ago – The Cognitive Revolution. To grasp what this meant, picture two groups meeting in Northern Africa 40,000 years ago.



*Homo sapiens* first arrived in Europe from Africa about 40,000 years ago.

Two tribes meet on the bank of a river. The grass is tall and lush. The air is warm and alive with the sounds of insects and birds. It is high season, and there is a lot of food in the environment, so there is nothing much to

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compete over. The two clans sit down to talk.

River Mussel clan are new to the area, having slowly moved their way in from the South. They are chatty and have a lot to say.

The clan leader points to his people one-by-one. He describes the archer, the one who makes bows and arrows. He points to the needle maker who can sew form-fitting clothing. Others in his clan specialise in finding minerals to paint with, and medicinal plants. Others are expert in shaping complex stone tools.

River Mussel clan stand-out in these parts because of the sophistication of their tools, the extent of their vocabulary. They are known for the detail and beauty of their artworks left behind on the walls of caves, carried with them as tiny statues, or worn as

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jewellery or facial paint. They have an advanced spiritual perception and beliefs about what happens to a person after death.

The other clan is called Heavy Stone. Their people have been in this region for thousands of years. They have little to say because they know only few words and their minds aren't sharp enough to form complex thoughts. They can't really plan, so they have not mastered archery, and they hunt with just sharpened stones on the end of sticks. The landscape offers less for them to eat. They lack sewn clothing, and the extent of their artistry is feathers in their hair, and a handful of coloured stones.

When Heavy Stone bury their dead, that's all they do. They dig a hole, push the body in, and cover it over. River Mussel Clan, on the other hand, have extensive funerary

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practices which involve burying the dead with artefacts in specific locations and with rituals involved.

While this encounter is imagined, the profound impact of the Cognitive Revolution is laid bare. In reality, by 40,000 years ago, all *Homo sapiens* populations had undergone this transformation. This scenario exaggerates the contrast to illustrate what the Cognitive Revolution meant for our species.

One might think that these two clans were from a different species. But they are both *Homo sapiens*. A primary difference between them is that a switch was flicked to the 'On' position inside the minds of the River Mussel clan, and this opened a reservoir of intellect, curiosity, symbolism, innovation, and spirituality.



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All these things are interconnected, intertwined, interlinked, inseparable, and from the same source.

Let us call these mental faculties Thinking-Feeling and view them as an emergent property of a complex central nervous system that arose through a subtle evolution in the wiring of the brain, and the advancement of language and culture.

*Homo sapiens* evolved around 300,000 years ago. For most of that time, our tools and practices differed little from our forebears.

Then, around 70,000 years ago the revolution in cognition exploded in the human mind and fostered a matrix of intellectual and transcendent abilities that created a pathway for engineering, mathematics, complex tool production, language, symbolic representation, art,

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funerary practice, stories and shared beliefs, and the full expression of what we now know as spirituality.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that ‘cognition’ relates to knowing, understanding, and awareness — encompassing intellectual functions such as reasoning, memory, and perception, as well as reflective and contemplative capacities that allow for spiritual insight, meaning-making, and inner growth.

These new cognitive abilities conferred huge advantage to the ‘modern’ humans, making it easier for them to both compete and cooperate, to communicate, to find food and shelter, and to survive a wider set of climatic conditions.

The revolution of the mind (and some might say the heart) is believed to have begun in

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Africa around 70,000 years ago. Eventually Thinking-Feeling people swept into Europe 40,000 years ago, people we now know as the Cro-Magnon.

The capacity for Thinking-Feeling is the origin of the full expression of spirituality in humans.

### ***Spirituality***

Think of spirituality as the perception of being part of a greater thing, a quest for answers to imponderable questions, the ability to fall periodically into transcendent mental states, the awareness of mortality, and holding a view of what comes after life ends.

In its original form, human spirituality is associated with nature: with landscapes, seasons, wildlife, plants, insects, rivers, and coastlines. A spirituality bonded with nature.

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However, spirituality is a vessel that can hold many different types of belief. The hunter-gatherer lifestyles of the Cro-Magnon gave way to agricultural communities as the Ice Age ended and the climatically stable Holocene Epoch began around 12,000 years ago. As human culture changed, so did the spiritual expression of those people.

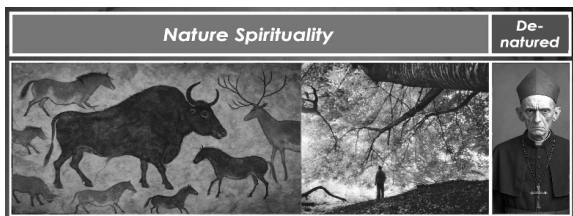
Later, in a period referred to as the Axial Age—around 2,300 to 2,800 years ago—a new suite of beliefs spread around the world and severed humanity spiritually from nature. Most of the religions and spiritual philosophies that exist today have their origins in the Axial Age.

For the vast majority of human existence since the Cognitive Revolution—tens of thousands of years—human spirituality was intimately connected to the natural world.

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Only in the last few thousand years has this bond been severed.

However, for the last 2,500 years or so, the dominant spiritual expression for humans has been denatured. As a result of the behaviours that these denatured beliefs inspire, our planetary life-support system is in decline.



*Nature spirituality is innate in humans but for the last few thousand years most people's spirituality has been denatured.*

‘Decline’ is a profound understatement. Human civilization is spiralling towards self-extinction, dragging most life on Earth

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with us. Why? Because we have devastated the climate and ecological system of our home planet, and there is nowhere else to go. Make no mistake, we are in a crisis of civilization—a climate crisis, an ecological crisis—and nothing short of a radical transformation will save us.

To make an analogy, imagine a dozen people in a big rubber raft have taken a wrong turn on the river. They are heading for the deadly rapids that everyone fears. If there is competent leadership and everyone cooperates some people may survive to raft another day. Alternatively, they all perish.

Translating this to real life, we need a radical transformation in the way that humans relate to the environment, and this necessarily begins with a spiritual

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transformation. A return to our innate, nature spirituality.

Absent this transformation, humanity and most life on Earth will likely perish in the not-too-distant future. Global heating and ecosystem destruction together with the toxification of nature (you have microplastic in your brain) are the primary drivers of this impending collapse.

A pathway to restore our Living Planet to full health is a global spiritual reconnection with nature, and the acceptance of knowledge and practice that can guide us through the troubled times ahead.

We need to *renature* our spirituality.

The first *Homo sapiens* to arrive in Europe, the *Cro-Magnon*, arrived during a warm period that followed an ice age. As the next

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ice age came on, the Cro-Magnon adapted and survived.

Today, a similar phenomenon is occurring. The period of ice ages is in the past. Now the future is one of warming, heating, overheating, and potentially an annihilating hothouse.

A new culture is possible in this changing climate, a culture that views the world through a lens that provides the best opportunity to survive what's coming and thrive thereafter.

By selecting the spiritual and intellectual tools that work and rejecting the tools that don't, Vita Sapien Philosophy curates the mindset that will help us survive this century and thrive beyond.



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### ***Spiritual Marketplace***

One hundred years ago, if you wanted spirituality, you went to the Church.

Today's spiritual marketplace is radically diverse. Walk into a shop selling metaphysical and New Age supplies and you'll find ancient religious traditions (Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism), wellness practices (yoga, meditation, Tai Chi), and New Age eclecticism (crystals, tarot, channeling). Some offerings have deep philosophical roots; others are recent inventions or fringe theories.

Many pursuits—from sports to hobbies to traditional practices—fill our spiritual needs and provide genuine meaning. These pursuits nourish the spiritual dimension of our lives, give us a sense of meaning, and can open pathways to transcendence.

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What most spiritual traditions weren't designed to address is the climate and ecological crisis. This isn't a failing—most were developed long before planetary-scale environmental collapse was conceivable. But it does create a gap. Our civilization and global ecosystem are heading toward the abyss, and we need spiritual frameworks that speak to this reality.

Many of us have become so immersed in modern life—its activities, technologies, and distractions—that we've lost the ability to hear what the natural world is telling us. The signals are there, but our culture hasn't taught us to recognize them.

As a result, most people have no sense that our Living Planet is dying and that if she dies, we die with her.

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There is a powerful article titled Drowning Doesn't Look Like Drowning by coast guard Mario Vittone. He says that most people don't know what a drowning person looks like. We think that they wave their arms, shouting, "Help! Help!" like they do on TV.

However, the *Instinctive Drowning Response* isn't like that. Drowning is a 'deceptively quiet event'. Drowning people look peaceful, and this explains why so many drown just a short distance from family and friends.

Similarly, most people don't know what a dying planet looks like, even though we are living on one. People cannot feel that the planet is dying because we are spiritually disconnected from nature.

Vita Sapien Philosophy proposes that we augment our spiritual views to include a

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reverence, a passion, and a deep love for nature. A fascination for nature, even.

Nature spirituality fosters moral concern for nature, and this is the most direct pathway to creating right action to make things better for our planet and our future.

Because of the relationship between spirituality and behaviour, when people undergo spiritual change, they are primed for behavioural change. And this is exactly what we need in order to change the trajectory of human civilization away from the abyss.

Pro-environmental behavioural change can be brought about in people when spiritual enlightenment to nature is paired with a deeper understanding of how nature works, and guidance for right action.

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If millions of people align their hearts, minds, and efforts to the wellbeing of nature – our life support system – it is possible to shift the trajectory of human civilization away from the extinction abyss that faces us today, and towards a future, environmentally sustainable civilization referred to as the Verdant Age. This is Vita Sapien Philosophy's intent.

In developed nations—including North America, Europe, Australia, Japan, and South Korea—there are believed to be approximately 53 million Vitans. These are individuals who possess three core characteristics:

- A deep love and reverence for nature (which Vita Sapien frames as spiritual connection, whether or not individuals label it as such)

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- Trust in scientific consensus on major issues
- Willingness to take action for environmental causes

The 53 million estimate represents about 8% of adults in these regions—those holding all three characteristics simultaneously.

Not everyone starts as a Vitian. Many people are Proto-Vitians—developing one or two of these characteristics. Perhaps they care deeply about nature but distrust science, or trust science but haven't yet felt a spiritual connection to the Living Planet. Vita Sapien Philosophy offers a pathway for Proto-Vitians to develop all three traits and become Vitians. And Vitians who discover this philosophy and put it into practice become Vita Sapiens.

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Fifty-three million adults represent a significant political and economic force for change. When unified by a compelling philosophy that speaks to their existing values, they become agents of transformation capable of advancing the Verdant Age.

According to literature that underpins the Extinction Rebellion movement, non-violent rebellions don't fail when 3.5% of the public becomes actively involved. Whether you accept this thesis or not, imagine the change for good if 8% of the public tap into the motivational shift that is unleashed through the spiritual awakening to our Living Planet.

So, we need a spiritual reconnection to nature. What do the dominant spiritual philosophies have to say on this subject?

## ***Worldviews & Sustainability***

You may be surprised to learn that the dominant spiritual and philosophical worldviews of today offer little of practical use to reconnect us to nature and to resolve the Anthropocene Crisis.

The Anthropocene is a scientific name for the modern era in which humans are the main drivers of change in the climate and environment.

The Anthropocene Crisis describes the interconnected matrix of global problems including climate change and ecological collapse, and others. It is also referred to as the polycrisis, or the metacrisis.

While some spiritual traditions offer useful advice regarding the Anthropocene Crisis, many do not.



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Today, the proportion of spiritual following amongst eight billion humans on Earth looks something like this:

Christianity	31%	2.48 billion
Islam	24%	1.92 billion
Non-religious	16%	1.28 billion
Hinduism	15%	1.20 billion
Buddhist	7%	0.55 billion
Indigenous	5%	0.37 billion

*Spiritual / religious affiliation of  
8 billion human beings on Earth*

Most of the spiritual traditions on the list are grounded in Axial Age beliefs and include the Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism), Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, etc.

The point to make here is that these spiritual traditions were conceived over 2,000 years before the Anthropocene even began. It is therefore no surprise that climate change and

global ecosystem collapse are not referred to in the founding documents. The question is whether these traditions can be reinterpreted to address planetary-scale crises.

This concern is particularly relevant in the West. Carl Safina in his book *Alfie and Me: What Owls Know, What Humans Believe* explores how different cultures relate to nature. He examines how certain philosophical ideas—including Platonic dualism between material and spiritual realms—became embedded in Western thought and contributed to viewing nature as separate from the sacred.

These ideas emerged when Earth's human population was a fraction of today's, and wilderness seemed boundless. Now, with over 8 billion people and rapid ecological decline, we need a philosophy specifically

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designed for planetary-scale crisis and transition to a sustainable civilization.

A legitimate concern is whether some interpretations of End Times beliefs—such as certain readings of Christianity's Armageddon, Islam's Qiyamah, or Hinduism's Kali Yuga—might discourage environmental action by framing ecological decline as inevitable or divinely ordained. However, many practitioners within these traditions are actively developing ecological theologies and finding environmental imperatives within their faiths.

The challenge isn't abandoning these traditions, but ensuring they speak powerfully to our current emergency. When they do, mainstream religion becomes a powerful ally in advancing the Verdant Age.

## ***Six Valuable Worldviews***

With respect to addressing the Anthropocene Crisis, there is value in some spiritual / philosophical traditions.

Six in particular stand out:

- Buddhism
- Taoism
- Shinto
- Stoicism
- Western Eco-spirituality
- Indigenous Worldview

**Buddhism, Taoism, and Shinto** (Japanese folk religion) all have reverence for nature and observance of natural flows.

**Stoicism** is an ancient Greek Philosophy that advises how one can achieve *Eudemonia*, or how to live a life that is good

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for you and society through virtue, wisdom and rationality.

**Western Ecospirituality** borrows from these traditions and includes cultural practices such as home-grown food, organic growing, low consumption lifestyles, the protest movement, and nature immersion.

**Indigenous spirituality** can be viewed as a continuation of the original thinking-feeling *Homo sapiens*. This worldview is unique among all others in that it identifies the practitioner as a part of the landscape and the ecosystem.

These Six Valuable Worldviews – Stoicism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto, Western Ecospirituality, and Indigenous – account for around maybe around 15% of the 8 billion humans in the world today.

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However, even combined, they do not provide us with all the tools we need to effectively resolve the Anthropocene Crisis. Climate and ecological collapse is a crisis of modernity floundering in ancient ideas, so we need some modern ideas in the mix.

Whilst imperfect, the Six Valuable Worldviews make a good starting point for a sustainable life philosophy that is designed specifically to resolve the Anthropocene Crisis in a single human generation.

Through Vita Sapien Philosophy, it is possible to establish a right relationship between humans and nature, a relationship that will endure the test of time.

A question arises, “What has philosophy got to do with sustainability?”

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Simple. People are motivated to act based on what they know and what they believe. Of the two, beliefs are the greater motivator of action.

If you believe that our Living Planet is sacred, you will nurture her and protect her. Alternatively, if you believe that our Living Planet is simply a resource to be exploited then you will exploit and destroy her.

If we want people to care for nature – our life support system – we need them to have nature at the heart of their worldview and their spirituality.

The word ‘nature’ is used extensively in this book, and it has given a specific context.

In Vita Sapien Philosophy, the word ‘nature’ has a specific definition.

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When we speak of nature, we are not referring to black holes and galaxies on the far edge of the observable universe or the quirky, quarky interactions of subatomic particles.

Instead, nature refers to living organisms, ecosystems and natural processes that take place within Earth's biosphere, and those factors that influence the biosphere such as the Sun, Moon, climate and weather, and tectonic forces.

Vita Sapien Philosophy offers ideas about how individuals can connect to nature, and in doing so unleash the extraordinary power within each of us to do the audacious things that are necessary to prevent the collapse of the global ecosystem. To be effective, we must be properly advised by the latest science.



## **According to the Science**

What does modern science tell us about the relationship between humans and our Living Planet? There is both good news and bad news here, but each provides insights into how we should behave to live sustainably on Earth.

Scientists communicate through peer reviewed science papers, and many are published in journals every week. Here are summaries of just a dozen or so papers that provide a broad-brush overview of where things stand with respect to humans and the Living Planet, and a brief commentary about what we might learn from them.

## ***By and for the Biosphere***

Lovelock, James E., and Lynn Margulis.

“Atmospheric homeostasis by and for the biosphere: the Gaia hypothesis.” *Tellus* 26.1-2 (1974): 2-10.

This is the paper that introduced the Gaia Hypothesis to the world in 1974.

Written by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, the Gaia Hypothesis has a poetic name even though the argument in the paper is grounded in physics, with an emphasis on entropy.

In short, the Gaia Hypothesis says that living organisms have evolved mechanisms to regulate the temperature of planet Earth, to keep it within the range best suited for life to flourish.

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Simply put, the Living Planet behaves in the manner of a single organism in that it maintains internal homeostasis.

From the Gaia Hypothesis we can deduce that to maintain a stable climate all we need to do is to restore the climate to its pre-industrial state and ensure that there is an abundance of wilderness on Earth. Gaia provides our planet with an excellent air conditioning system and all we need to do is look after her.

Later in this book you will be introduced to a concept called Gya which is a spiritual interpretation of Gaia.

The fundamental difference between Gaia and Gya is that Gya is believed to actually be a living organism of which we humans are cells in the greater body. More on this, later.

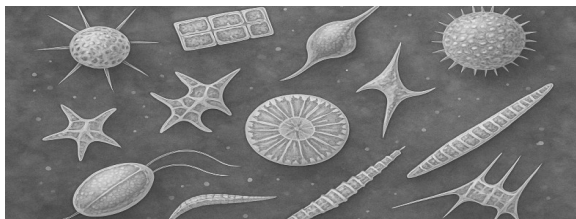
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### ***Plankton Make Clouds***

Charlson, Robert J., et al. "Oceanic phytoplankton, atmospheric sulphur, cloud albedo and climate." *Nature* 326.6114 (1987): 655-661.

In later work, Lovelock would go on to explain some of the biological mechanisms by which life on Earth regulates the climate.



*Phytoplankton are tiny plants that drift in the ocean and make more than half of the world's oxygen*

For example, plant plankton help to form clouds over the ocean by producing tiny molecules called DMS that foster nuclei upon which water vapour condenses to form clouds. One such type of plankton that

produces cloud condensation nuclei is the coccolithophore.

The paper goes on to say that by doubling the cloud condensation nuclei it will be possible to create more and thicker clouds that would reflect away excess sunlight, helping to keep the planet cool.

This paper is evidence that we ought to work with nature to help her restore the balance of life on Earth. If we stopped acting like unsustainable super-predators, that would be a good start.

### ***Super-predators***

Darimont, Chris T., et al. "The unique ecology of human predators." *Science* 349.6250 (2015): 858-860.

Darimont and others found that humans kill adult prey at much higher rates than other

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predator species. This interferes with the reproductive success of the prey species.



*A good day fishing is a bad day for fish*

In addition, humans use advanced technology that way outcompetes their rival predators. As such, human hunters and fishers can be regarded as unsustainable super-predators.

Humans have been predators from our earliest days. The advent of archery 70,000 years ago gave humans a major advantage over our competitor predators, and our technology has become increasingly more deadly year by year.

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Whilst humans may have been super-predators for a long time, not all human cultures are unsustainable in their predation. We need to learn from the sustainable hunters, the indigenous people, about the right relationship between humans and the animals we take for food. Today, for example, the relationship between humans and livestock is way out of balance.

### ***4% Wild Mammals***

Bar-On, Yinon M., Rob Phillips, and Ron Milo. "The biomass distribution on Earth." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115.25 (2018): 6506-6511.

Back in the time of River Mussel Clan if you weighed all the mammals on Earth (referred to as mammalian biomass) you would find that humans represented just a tiny fraction of the total, and the balance would be wildlife.



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*96% of mammalian biomass is humans and livestock.  
Just 4% is wildlife.*

Today, the situation is reversed: just 4% of mammalian biomass is wildlife.

A full 96% of mammalian biomass is humans, our pets, and livestock.

This means that there is now 15 times more livestock than wild animals, by mass. This is itself a good reason to adopt a low meat diet.

One of the reasons that wildlife is shrinking is that we have paved the planet and replaced natural habitat with human habitat

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to such an extent that there is now more stuff than life.

### *More Stuff Than Life*

Elhacham, Emily, et al. “Global human-made mass exceeds all living biomass.” *Nature* 588.7838 (2020): 442-444.

The findings of this paper are mind-blowing in demonstrating the profound footprint of humanity on our Living Planet.



*Life on Earth is drowning in the technosphere*

Over the past century the mass of material produced by humans – the technosphere – doubled every twenty years or so, while the

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mass of the biosphere remained relatively steady.

In 2020, the mass of the technosphere exceeded the mass of the biosphere for the first time.

There is now more stuff manufactured by humans than there is living matter that grew here.

- There is twice as much plastic on Earth as there are animals
- There are more buildings and infrastructure than trees and shrubs
- Twenty years from now there will be twice as much technosphere

Perhaps we have built enough. We have certainly built enough streetlamps.

## ***No Stars for You, Tonight***

Falchi, Fabio, et al. “The new world atlas of artificial night sky brightness.” *Science advances* 2.6 (2016): e1600377.

Artificial light is another aspect of the technosphere, creating artificial night sky brightness or skyglow. Skyglow is caused by artificial light reflecting off tiny particles in the air and making the night sky glow slightly. This hides the dimmer stars from view.



*Viewing the Milky Way is a birthright for humans*

As a result of skyglow our Milky Way galaxy is invisible to more than one-third of

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humanity, including 60% of Europeans and nearly 80% of North Americans. In some places like Singapore, the night is never full-dark at night, but a permanent twilight.

Skyglow diminishes human flourishing, and it is terrible for wildlife, particularly birds and insects. We need to reduce Skyglow and allow people to contemplate the cosmos that lies above the biosphere. This will also help make things better for wildlife.

Suppose for a moment that you could find a place with zero skyglow on a cloudless night. Here you could gaze in awe and wonder at the Milky Way and contemplate the vastness of space and the extraordinary number of stars. You might also contemplate that there are now over 51 trillion pieces of micro-plastic trash in the ocean, which is 500 times more than the

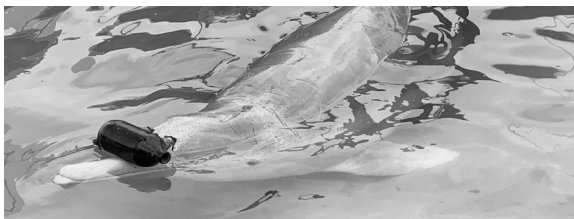
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number of stars than in the Milky Way Galaxy.

### ***More Trash Than Stars***

Nirmala, K., et al. “A critical review on recent research progress on microplastic pollutants in drinking water.” *Environmental Research* 222 (2023): 115312.

Metaphorically, microplastics now contaminate every cubic millimetre of the biosphere including inside the human body.



*A dolphin in Tin Can Bay, Queensland, Australia, returns a piece of trash to the shore*

Scientists are finding microplastics throughout the human body: in the brain, in

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the testicles, in blood clots and in unborn babies which are said to be born pre-polluted.

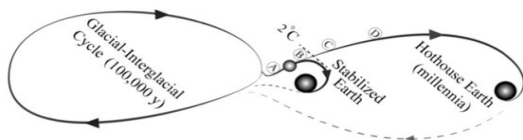
It is time to stop producing non-biodegradable petroleum-based plastics, rapidly transition to sustainable bioplastics and clean up the mess we have made by pulling plastic trash out of the ocean and off the beaches.

While you are pondering how to get all that microplastic out of the ocean, you might also have a think about how to get a trillion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere, as we are heading to the hothouse.

## ***Heading to the Hothouse***

Steffen, Will, et al. “Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 115.33 (2018): 8252-8259.

If global average temperatures continue to rise, somewhere between 1 & 2 degrees Celsius average above pre-industrial temperatures lies a *cascade of climate tipping points*.



*The Trajectories Diagram shows two potential futures – Stabilized Earth or Hothouse Earth*

If we trigger the tipping points, global temperatures will rise further and drive the

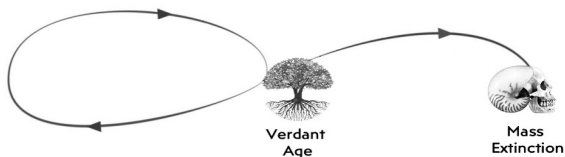


## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

climate into the *Hothouse phase* that will kill-off most life on Earth.

The Vita Sapien diagram (below) shows two potential futures for humanity and the biosphere:

- In the *Stabilised Earth* future the Verdant Age is represented by the Tree of Life symbol in the next diagram
- In the *Hothouse Earth*, mass extinction is represented by the Anthronaut symbol

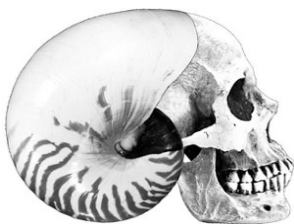


*The Vita Sapien Diagram shows two possible futures the Verdant Age or Mass Extinction*

## Vita Sapien

As we are already over 1.2°C above baseline, so we are well within the Hothouse Danger Zone.

The graphic below is derived from the Trajectories paper and has been adapted into the Vita Sapien Diagram. Vita Sapien is the name of the organisation that advances Vita Sapien Philosophy.



*The Anthronaut reminds us that not all species endure. The nautilus did, but we might not.*

The Anthronaut symbol is comprised of a nautilus shell and a human skull. The human skull is symbolic of the extinction of the human race. The nautilus shell reminds us

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

that it is possible for species to survive hundreds of millions of years.

The nautilus itself has remained largely unchanged for over 500 million years, having survived all the mass extinction events. However, today, the nautilus is vulnerable to extinction as they are being remorselessly poached.

## *Highway to Heat-death*

Hansen, James E., et al. “Global warming in the pipeline.” Oxford Open Climate Change 3.1 (2023): kgad008.

The Paris Agreement seeks to limit global warming to 2°C above baseline, beyond which lies a cascade of climate tipping points. However, this paper says that there is already enough carbon in the atmosphere to take global temperatures 10°C above, and we will likely reach 2°C well before 2050.

This paper demonstrates that we are in a deep crisis of Life on Earth – heading towards the heat-stroke of the biosphere. Now that you are sitting up and paying attention, consider that the climate and ecosystem crises are not alone.

## ***Six Boundaries Broken***

Richardson, Katherine, et al. “Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries.” *Science advances* 9.37 (2023): eadh2458.

There are nine dumb ways to die on planet Earth and we have blundered into six of them, already.

The Planetary Boundaries framework seeks to identify the key processes that regulate the stability and resilience of the interconnected Earth systems.

In 2023 the framework quantified all boundaries and concluded that six of the nine boundaries have been transgressed.

“Crossing boundaries increases the risk of generating large-scale abrupt or environmental changes.”

Vita Sapien

Each of the Planetary Boundaries are discussed later in the book.



*This poor turtle is dealing with Novel Entities, Biogeochemical Flows, Climate Change, Ocean Acidification and Biosphere Integrity.*

However, a takeaway message is that we need a civilization that honours all nine Planetary Boundaries.

We need civilisation that is  
Nine-Boundaries Safe.

As if we didn't have enough on our plate as we hurtle to 2°C and beyond, we also have

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

to deal the profound complexity of our predicament.

## ***Ghastly Complicated***

Bradshaw, Corey JA, et al. “Underestimating the challenges of avoiding a ghastly future.” *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 1 (2021): 615419.

This paper holds the following chilling insights: “...*future environmental conditions will be far more dangerous than currently believed. The scale of the threats to the biosphere and all its life-forms – including humanity – is in fact so great that it is difficult to grasp for even well-informed experts.*”

This paper ought to make us immediately leap out of our skins and start doing everything we can to bail-out our sinking ship.

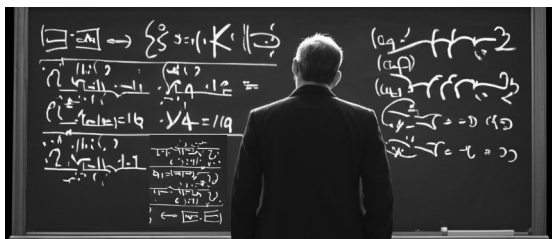
*All-hands-on-deck!*



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

This is not something for the future ‘to do list’. It calls for action, now. We should do the biggest thing we are capable of doing today and do something grander tomorrow. And keep doing that until we die, content in the knowledge that we honoured our responsibility to Mother Nature and the future generations of our own kind.

So, we started with River Mussel Clan, and we have considered the science. Let’s put all of these ideas into a structure to help get clear on how the world is. Let’s call this the *Material View*.



*It's all so ghastly complicated.*

## **Material View**

Material View is a summary of the physical aspects of our global predicament. It is advised mainly by environmental sciences and possible future scenarios.

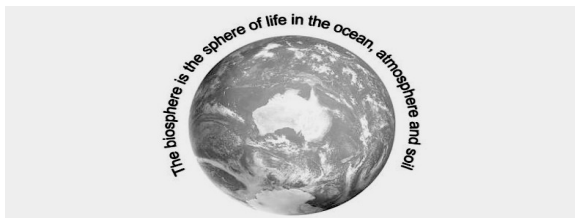
- Biosphere as Life Support
- *Homo sapiens*
- Anthropocene
- Planetary Boundaries
- The Long Future
- The Verdant Age
- Changing Trajectory
- Transition
- Earthwork

### ***Biosphere as Life Support***

The word ‘biosphere’ describes both the place where life exists on Earth, and the totality of life on Earth.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

As the name suggests, the shape of the biosphere is a thin-walled sphere, located on the outer surface of our planet. The biosphere includes all the animals, plants, and other living things, plus the ocean, atmosphere, soils, and other substrates that are the habitat of life.



*The biosphere is the sphere of life on Earth.*

Gaia Theory tells us that animals and plants behave in a manner that maintains the condition of the atmosphere to ensure that the planet doesn't get too hot or cold. Life on Earth maintains conditions suited to life on Earth.

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It is as though all the living things in the biosphere behave in the manner of a single living being that self-regulates its own temperature.

The biosphere self-regulates and thus acts as a life-support system for humanity through a variety of mechanisms. For example, ocean plankton help to create the rain that falls onto our crops; plants produce atmospheric oxygen for us to breathe; plants also produce food, pharmaceuticals and materials like wood, hemp, and cotton.

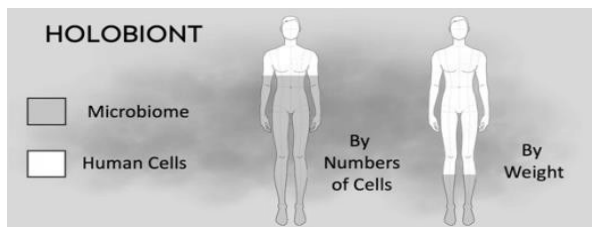
The biosphere is the life-support system for humans. Destroying the biosphere is a form of collective suicide. And yet, that is exactly what *Homo sapiens* have been doing over the last 80 years or so, the time of the Anthropocene.

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### ***Homo sapiens***

Human beings are holobionts, which is to say an organism made of many organisms.

Indeed, human bodies contain more non-human cells than human cells. About 60% by number of cells in a human body are microbiome, consisting of bacteria, fungi, archaea, protists, and viruses. The microbiome accounts for about 15% of the human body by mass.



*A human is a holobiont, living entity that contains many other species without which it couldn't survive.*

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We are, ourselves, an ecosystem. We don't just live in the biosphere; the biosphere lives within us. Our species, *Homo sapiens* evolved around 300,000 years ago.

However, it was only about 70,000 years ago that our central nervous system and language became sophisticated enough for the Thinking-Feeling awakening that fostered innovation, engineering, mathematics, art, culture and spirituality.

The native spiritual expression for humans that sustained us for more than 80% of the last 70,000 years is a connection to wild animals and plants, ecosystems, forests, lakes, shorelines, clouds, storms, and the rain, thunder, and lightning that the storms bring.

However, from the Axial Age, humans began to synthesise spiritual beliefs that

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

involved Gods, statues, symbols, activities and ultimately machines that run counter to nature.

Today, for example, there is a legion of muddle-headed space-bros who have attached their spiritual locus to rockets and spacecraft. These beliefs underpin behaviours that have a negative effect on the biosphere such as launching rockets adjacent to turtle rookeries.

The human footprint on nature is now so profound that the entire global ecosystem is in severe decline, placing billions of humans and millions of species at risk of extinction in the coming years and decades.

Much of this harm has been caused in the last few human generations, the modern era, the time of the humans: the Anthropocene.

## ***The Anthropocene***

If you have seen the movie Jurassic Park, you may know that the Jurassic is not a type of dinosaur, but instead, a period (201-145 million years ago) in which dinosaurs roamed the Earth.

The people who make up names like Jurassic are geologists who study stratigraphy: the relationship between rock layers and past time. The name given to the 12,000 years since the end of the last Ice Age is the Holocene Epoch. This is a time with a stable climate in which human civilization developed and grew.

In 2016, stratigraphers gathered in South Africa to debate an idea that humans had so changed the world that we were no longer in Holocene-like conditions. It was claimed that we had entered a new geological epoch



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

called the Anthropocene: the Age of the Humans.

However, after nearly a decade of debate, the official ruling came through in March 2024: the Anthropocene does not exist as a geological Epoch, we are still in the Holocene.

Whilst the geologists are arguing over the nitty-gritty of rock science, the rest of society who knows about these things were having a field-day with the concept of the Anthropocene: the Age of the Humans.

Some believe that the Age of Humans began 12,000 years ago with the advent of agriculture. Others hold that the Anthropocene began when Columbus brought guns, germs and steel to South America. Others hold that the carbon pollution of the industrial revolution is the

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beginning of the Anthropocene. The original proposal from the geologists held that the Anthropocene began in the mid-1950s, as evidenced by the radioactive fallout of nuclear bomb tests.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that the Anthropocene began with the detonation of the first nuclear bomb – the Alamogordo Test – in New Mexico, USA, on 16 July 1945 at 5.29am Mountain War Time.

This moment in time also serves as the beginning of the Vitan Calendar and is thus the date and time of the Vita New Year celebration, referred to as Earth New Year, a night of Fire and Wine.

The Anthropocene is a fundamental concept for Vita Sapien Philosophy. The name Anthropocene Crisis refers to the multiple, interconnected crises of the modern era

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

including climate change, ecological collapse, nuclear weapons, plastic contamination, global inequality, late-stage capitalism, AI, etc.

A big concern of the Anthropocene Crisis is that human activities are damaging key Earth Systems that are necessary to maintain a safe operating space for humanity. We are breaking through the Planetary Boundaries.

### ***Planetary Boundaries***

Scientists have identified key Earth systems that determine whether Planet Earth remains a good home for humans. Think of these as the warning lights on a planetary dashboard.

There are nine key Earth systems, and the safe boundaries of six (**bold**) have already been crossed because of human activities

## Vita Sapien

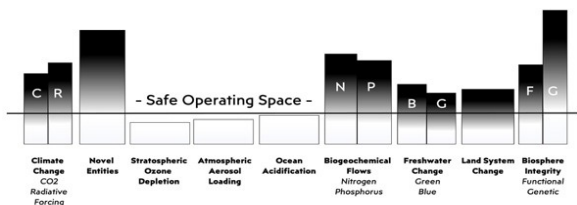
- The amount of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and the energy imbalance of the atmosphere (**Climate Change**)
- Things humans created and released into the environment that nature doesn't know how to deal with (**Novel Entities**)
- Ozone in the upper atmosphere (Stratospheric Ozone Depletion)
- The concentration of particles in the atmosphere that block sunlight (Atmospheric Aerosol Loading)
- The acidity of the ocean (Ocean Acidification)

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

- The amount of nitrogen & phosphorus in the ocean  
**(Biogeochemical Flows)**
- The amount of freshwater used by humans at the expense of ecosystems  
**(Freshwater Change)**
- The abundance of forest cover around the world **(Land System Change)**
- The genetic and functional wellbeing of the biosphere **(Biosphere Integrity)**

*Six of nine planetary boundaries are exceeded.*

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Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that the primary cause of the Anthropocene Crisis – and breaking through the Planetary Boundaries – is that people are disconnected from nature, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

An enlightened civilization would never allow Planetary Boundaries to be crossed, in the first place. *Why would they risk it?*

Thus, a solution to the Anthropocene Crisis is a global mass-movement to re-nature our spirituality and motivate people to undertake the actions necessary to restore the Planetary Boundaries and return our Living Planet to

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

full health. Then we might survive deep into the Long Future.

### ***The Long Future***

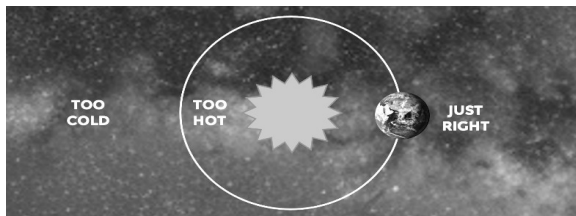
Planet Earth is suited to life because our planet's temperature makes it possible for water to exist in all three phases – ice, liquid water, and atmospheric vapour. The temperature is right on Earth because the planet's orbit is neither too close, nor too far from the Sun, and because nature has mechanisms for regulating greenhouse gases for temperature control (Gaia Theory).

Earth's orbit is said to lie within the Habitable Zone – the Goldilocks Zone – and will do so for another two billion years or so.

Beyond this time, the Sun will massively expand into a Red Giant as it ages and

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consumes its fuel. Eventually Earth will be baked dry and lifeless.



*Earth orbits within the Habitable Zone of the Sun.*

Vita Sapien Philosophy refers to the remaining 2 billion years in which life can exist on Earth as the Long Future. A subset of the Long Future is the Verdant Age.

### ***The Verdant Age***

The Verdant Age is a potential future time when human civilization and the Living Planet thrive in synergy. Let's break that down because it is important.



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- – Thrive suggests not just surviving but prospering.
- – In synergy means that each party is better off with the other.

The concept of the Verdant Age is not just wishful thinking but is consistent with scientific frameworks such as:

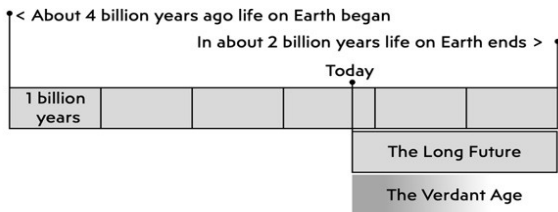
- Gaia 2.0
- Class-5 (Agency Dominated) Planets
- Earth System Stewardship
- Ecozoic Era
- Ecological Civilization

One might ask, how long could the Verdant Age last?

A year, as we all know, is the time it takes for our planet Earth to orbit the Sun. What is less well known is that our solar system is entrained within the Milky Way Galaxy that

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rotates around its galactic core every 230 million years or so. This is referred to as a Galactic Year.



*The Verdant Age could last 230 million years or more.*

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that the Verdant Age could last a Galactic Year. This means that humans could be living happily on Earth more than 200 million years from now.

The Verdant Age is represented by a symbol called the Verda.

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*The Verda symbol represents the Verdant Age.*

Advancing the Verdant Age so that human civilization might survive a Galactic Year is the *raison d'être* of Vita Sapient Philosophy.

A nice aspiration, indeed, but if you chart the current trajectory of human civilization, you will see that we are heading rapidly towards the abyss. If we are to enter the Verdant Age, we need to change trajectory.

### ***Changing Trajectory***

Our civilization is entrained in the deadly rapids that get more dangerous as we continue blindly on. As the global economy

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grows at around 3% per annum, so does its energy metabolism and its toxic waste by-products.

Around 80% of the global economy's energy comes from fossil fuels, and humanity spews around 50 billion tons of heat-trapping carbon dioxide pollution into the atmosphere every year. In addition, we hack-down, chop-up, rip-out, obliterate, annihilate, and poison the global ecosystem, our life support.

We get closer to the precipice every day, and we are now in the final few years of maintaining agency over our destiny. No person in their right mind wants to live through global ecological collapse. And yet, we are all part of the cause and the consequence of this situation. Fortunately, there is an alternative.

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The alternative is to change trajectory and restore the global biosphere to full health.

### **Vita Transition Plan**

This can be advanced by completing the Vita Transition Plan:

- Climate Reset
- Wild Revival
- Planet Detox
- Circular Future
- Nature First

Let's consider each of these elements recognising that they are not in chronological order and should all be attempted simultaneously.

- **Climate Reset:** Transition away from fossil fuels to the efficient use of sustainable, clean energy, and safely drawdown 1 trillion tons of

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CO<sub>2</sub> to restore the climate to how it was before the industrial revolution

- **Wild Revival:** nurture endangered species back to stable populations, and rewilding 1/3 or more of the planet to restore biosphere integrity
- **Planet Detox:** Transform the waste left behind by 250 years of industrial civilization including landfills, marine plastics, chemical and nuclear waste
- **Circular Future:** Create a fair and efficient, ecologically sustainable global socioeconomic system so that all humans can thrive

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

- **Nature First:** Foster a spiritual and intellectual bond to nature in all cultures to ensure that we don't end up at the brink of the abyss again

In addition to cleaning up the mess we have made, we humans might be useful to the biosphere in unique ways.

Humans provide the biosphere with a threat management capability, i.e. looking out for Earth-killing asteroids, and destroying or deflecting them.

Humans could conceivably help the biosphere to reproduce by taking Earth species to another part of the solar system and thereby extending the life of Earth biota beyond the Long Future.

Hold-up, space bros, I know you are gagging to colonise Mars, but we shouldn't

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even be thinking about going to other planets until the home planet Earth is brought back to full health. That is a form of civilisation discipline that we need to learn.



*A symbol representing Earth's biosphere reproducing.*

Finally, a poetic benefit: humans give the biosphere consciousness, a capacity for self-awareness.

It was, after-all humans who in 1968 took the first Biosphere Selfie, the famous Earthrise photo from the Apollo-8 mission. It wasn't the dolphins or white mice that took that photo, we did.



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One could argue the benefits of a biosphere being aware of itself, but as components of the biosphere, we humans gain a deeper understanding of ourselves from Biosphere Selfies. By seeing Earth from space, we gain a perspective we don't have in our daily lives.



*The first Earth Selfie rising above Moon surface.*

The first Earth Selfie was black and white with the Moon in the foreground. A few minutes later the iconic, colour Earthrise photo was taken.

Today, there is a satellite positioned at a location in space called L1 that provides a

## Vita Sapien

daily Earth Selfie. You can see these images on the website. Just google the words Epic Dscovr.

To reach the Verdant Age, it is necessary to swiftly change the trajectory of human civilization and resolve the Anthropocene Crisis with enough of the Living Planet intact, and a high-enough proportion of people with nature spirituality.

By necessity, a sustainable civilization will have sustainable levels of population and consumption and if we have learned anything from the Anthropocene, it is where the limits lie.

To achieve this in the narrow window of time remaining, the widespread uptake of a sustainable life philosophy grounded in nature spirituality is required.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

Remember that 80% of the world's energy comes from the fossil fuel industry, and the super-wealthy corporations, families, individuals, and their enablers have zero intention of protecting the global ecosystem whilst they are gorging themselves from the multi-trillion-dollar fossil fuel trough.

These are the agents of the hyperthreat, and the business model of the elite is to continue growing the global economy based on fossil fuels. That's it.

We need to mercifully euthanise this industry before it mercilessly kills us all. The sustainability crisis is a crisis of power. They wield it effectively. We don't. Yet.

Transitioning to a sustainable future requires overthrowing the destructive systems of power that exist on Earth today. This will require a herculean effort that only a

spiritual motivation can provide. That and a realistic appraisal of our situation.

### ***The Stockdale Paradox***

Individually, having our expectations set right is imperative if we are to be protected from what is coming and have the best chance of making things better.

Amongst the environmental community who are aware of the Anthropocene Crisis, there is a spectrum of beliefs, many of which are not helpful.

- **Techo-optimism** suggests that we can simply invent machines that will fix our predicament
- **Doomerism** suggests that there is nothing can be done, and human extinction is inevitable

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

The Stockdale Paradox is named after Admiral Stockdale, the most senior US military official captured in the Vietnam War.

Over his seven years in POW camps, he saw many of his countrymen perish due to an inappropriate worldview. The pessimists lost hope and perished early. However, the optimists were frequently disappointed which led to their despair.

Those who had the best chance of survival had a steely understanding of the dire nature of the circumstance, plus an unwavering faith in their survival.

Retain unwavering faith that you will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties... AND at the same time confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.

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*That's a quote from a book called Good to Great by Jim Collins, speaking of the Stockdale Paradox.*

Vita Sapien Philosophy embraces the Stockdale Paradox and is prepared to stare into the abyss to confront the most brutal facts of the current reality.

It is possible that humanity has already pushed the Earth System so far that a climate and ecological collapse is inevitable. We may have already triggered the cascade of climate tipping points.

We must accept this and yet do all that is in our power to Advance the Verdant Age.

Humans have set in motion an ecological catastrophe that could easily dwarf the worst of the mass extinction events of times past.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

### ***Worse than the Permian***

Consider the Permian Extinction – the Great Dying – 253 million years ago as a frame of reference. Over a period of 30,000 years or so, vast plumes of CO<sub>2</sub> gas were emitted from huge volcanic eruptions in the Siberian Traps.

The CO<sub>2</sub> raised global temperatures about 10-degrees Celsius, warming and acidifying the ocean. The warm ocean became stratified, which is to say that the oxygen-rich surface waters failed to mix with the waters below, starving the deeper ocean of life.



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*In the Permian Extinction, around 90% of marine species and 70% of terrestrial species went extinct, nearly ending complex life on Earth.*

As a result, over 85% of all lifeforms on Earth died off. It took 10 - 20 million years for life to evolve a comparable level of biodiversity.

Now consider that humans have set in motion a planetary catastrophe *WORSE THAN THE PERMIAN EXTINCTION*.

We are similarly pumping billions of tons of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere – 2 trillions tons to date. However, rather than doing this over 30,000 years, we have done this one hundred times faster, in around 300 years since the Industrial Revolution began chewing through coal.

Today, carbon sinks are failing, and natural positive-feedback processes are kicking in



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driving temperatures higher and out of our control. And we have not even started to reduce emissions, let alone end them.

In addition to this profound climate crisis, there are two other factors today that were not present during the Great Dying.

First, most of the 9 billion tons of plastics we have manufactured reside in landfills that were not designed for the massive superstorms that are coming. These monster storms could scour-out the world's landfills and flush the contents into the ocean.

The picture below shows a Coelacanth, an ancient type of fish that survived the Permian Extinction and exists today living in caves hundreds of meters below the sea surface.

*Coelacanth found dead in Indonesian waters in 2016  
with a chip packet in its gut.*

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The Coelacanth pictured was found dead, having choked on a Lay's potato chip packet. It is chilling to think that a species that survived the Great Dying might be susceptible to extinction from something as ubiquitous as chip packets floating in the ocean. This is the nature of the Anthropocene—we've created threats that evolution never prepared life on Earth to face.

Second, potential ionising radiation from nuclear war and nuclear power meltdown.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

The threat of nuclear war is still with us. Today, there are around 15,000 nuclear weapons dotted around the world.

The USA and Russia both hold over 5,000 nukes, many of which are located in forward operating bases and could be deployed at short notice. Nukes can be delivered via missiles fired from submarines and wheeled vehicles. Nukes can also be dropped from planes, such as the W61, pictured.

Besides nuclear weapons, there are 450 or so nuclear power stations and thousands of tons of radioactive waste that need generations of maintenance to make safe. There is a huge risk of ionizing radiation escaping into the environment or burning once the human technocratic system fails to maintain them.

The speed of the carbon emissions, the plastics, and the threat of ionising radiation

**This is not a crisis of economics,  
politics or technology.**

***This is a crisis of spirituality.***

from nukes all point to the potential for a profound mass-extinction event, with us humans among the first tranche of organisms to go. We risk setting back Earth's evolutionary clock hundreds of millions of years.

**Planetary solvency risk impact and likelihood definitions**

**Human mortality:**

≥ 50% or >4 billion deaths

**Climate:**

3°C or more by 2050 – Multiple climate tipping points triggered, tipping cascade.

**Nature:**

Breakdown of several critical ecosystem services and Earth systems.

**Societal:**

Significant socio-political fragmentation worldwide and/or state failure with rapid, enduring, and significant loss of capital and systems identity. Frequent large scale mortality events.

*Details from the table on page 32  
of the Planetary Solvency report.*

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This is why we need a spiritual transformation to reconnect people to our global ecosystem and transform our relationship to the Living Planet while we still have time. But we are running out of time.

The 2025 paper *Planetary Solvency – finding our balance with nature* describes a worst-case scenario with climate collapse killing-off half of humanity by 2050. That's 25 years from time of writing. Is this alarmist? No. But it is alarming.

If there is only a 1% chance of this catastrophe being true, we should pursue the solution with all the vigour we can muster.

Like it or not, we are going into some form of collapse. We have simply done too much damage to the planet and have such forward

momentum, that we can't avoid things getting worse before they get better.

We are going into collapse; it's already begun. But collapse needn't be fatal. It could be survivable. But to survive we need a Full Transition away from our unsustainable global system.

### ***Transition***

The diagram below shows three scenarios for transition:

- Full Transition
- Partial Transition
- Zero Transition.

The concentric circles in the diagram show the depth of collapse associated with the three levels of transition.

- **Full Transition:** the outer ring representing a shallow collapse that

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humanity can survive

- **Partial Transition:** the middle ring shows collapse so deep that human survival remains in doubt even after the collapse has resolved
- **No Transition:** the inner ring shows collapse that is so deep it leads to mass extinction including human extinction.

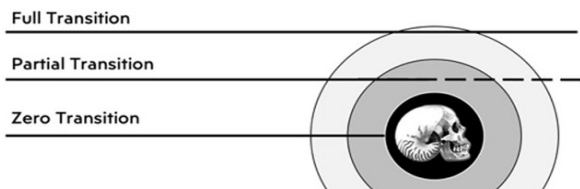
Achieving Full Transition calls for us all to engage in Earthwork.

### ***Earthwork***

The name Earthwork describes the duties that we can all undertake to bring about the transition to a sustainable planet, to the Verdant Age.

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If our civilization is to survive, we need to make this transition swift and effective: Full Transition, full-speed ahead. If we just do Partial Transition, so much will be lost that we will risk losing it all.



*Three degrees of transition: Full, Partial, and Zero.*

If we continue the way we are going – Zero Transition – *Homo sapiens* face oblivion along with most of the plants and creatures we share this beautiful planet with.

The purpose of Earthwork is to make collapse as shallow as possible and resolve the Anthropocene Crisis in a single human generation.



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

Humans arrived on Earth through the same evolutionary pathway as the trees, the bees, the whales, and the snails. As such, we have the same responsibilities to the Living Planet: to pursue our own interests in a manner that supports the well-being of the whole.

By reconnecting people spiritually to nature, it is possible to transform their behaviour to become pro-nature.

An enabler of Earthwork is a spiritual connection to our Living Planet. Vita Sapien Philosophy helps you to develop Spirituality for Sustainability.

Vita Sapien

**2.**

**Spiritual  
for  
Sustainable**

## **Introducing Gya**

The name ‘biosphere’ has two meanings in common usage. First, biosphere refers to the place where life exists on Earth. Second, biosphere refers to the sum total of all life on Earth.

Biosphere is so-named because ‘bio’ means life, and all that life is encompassed within the shape of a hollow sphere surrounding our Earth.

The biosphere extends from the top of the clouds to some kilometers down in the Earth’s crust.

In Earth system science is an idea called Gaia Theory which postulates that life on Earth behaves in the manner of a single organism. This is because organisms are able modify the composition of the

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atmosphere and ocean to keep chemical and thermal equilibrium.

When Gaia Theory was first published in 1974 – back then it was referred to as the Gaia Hypothesis – it helped trigger the environmental movement with the call: ‘The Earth is Alive’.

Vita Sapien Philosophy accepts this science and uses it as the foundation of a spiritual belief called Gya.

Note: the words Gaia and Gya are pronounced the same despite different spelling.

- **Gaia** is a scientific theory that life on Earth has the characteristics of a living organism in that it maintains internal conditions suited to life

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- **Gya** is a spiritual belief that all life on Earth forms the body of a single, planet-sized life-form that includes the ocean, atmosphere and soil

Unlike Gaia, which is a scientific theory, Gya is a spiritual belief. When people choose to believe in Gya they see themselves as part of a planetary life-force.

You don't have to believe in Gya to follow Vita Sapien Philosophy. It's a spiritual option.

However, when you do believe in Gya, you are more likely to identify yourself as a part of the Living Planet. The alternative is to see yourself as being apart from the Living Planet, which is the normal view in the West.

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When you see yourself as a part of the Living Planet, you understand that there is no ‘away’ to throw things to, and polluting the environment is akin to polluting yourself.

Landfills are not just municipal waste disposal facilities; they are wounds in the body of Gya.

When you see yourself as a part of the Living Planet, you understand that your well-being is intertwined. If the planet dies, we all die with her.

To help flesh-out the idea of Gya, here are some of her characteristics:

- **He, She, or It?** – Technically, Gya would be referred to as an ‘it’ as it is a gender-less, non-human species. However, out of reverence Gya is

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referred to as ‘she’.

- **Grown, Not Created, Not God** – Gya is neither a God, a deity, nor the creator of the universe. Instead, Gya is an emergent property of the laws of nature – in particular biology, physics, and chemistry – playing out on Planet Earth. Gya arose spontaneously, around 3.8 billion years ago, when conditions allowed.
- **Not Conscious** – Gya does not have consciousness, intent, or free will except to the extent that humans confer it to her. Humans are the part of nature that has free will.
- **Wide & Thin** – Gya has the shape of a thin-walled sphere, with the wall

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thickness about 0.5% of the diameter of the sphere. Think of Earth as a ping-pong ball full of rock. The skin of the ping-pong ball is analogous to the relative diameter of Gya.

- **Above & Below** – Above Gya is the frigid depth of space, and below Gya is the Earth's mantle and molten rock. Gya's wispy outer boundary is about 100 kilometres above the ground. Her lower boundary is some kilometres below the seafloor in the Earth's crust where microscopic organisms are known to live in the pores of rocks.
- **Very Old** – Gya has endured about 3.8 billion years because she maintains internal chemical and



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thermal equilibrium that is conducive to life. If the Universe is 13.8 billion years old, that makes Gya about one-quarter the age of the Universe.

- **Not judging** – Gya is not conscious, and she doesn't judge us for our actions. However, she does respond to them at the global scale. If we continue to pump 50 billion tons of heat trapping CO<sub>2</sub> gas into the atmosphere every year, we can expect a dramatic reaction.
- **We are welcome here** – Humans came to be a part of Gya through the same evolutionary process as the trees and the bees, the whales, and the snails. We are as welcome on this

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planet as they are.

- **Habitable for Humans** – Over the past 3.8 billion years, Gya has existed in many forms not all of which were suited to human habitation. At times in the past, it has been neither too hot nor too cold on Earth for humans.
- **Gya's climate** has been ideal for the growth of human civilization over the past few million years. However, our actions are shifting Gya into a new climactic phase that will be hostile to human life.
- **Many names** – there are many names that describe ideas similar to Gya. The term Living Planet is used

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throughout this book and can be taken as being broadly synonymous to biosphere, Gaia and Gya. Similar words also include *Gaea* the Ancient Greek Goddess of Earth and the source of the name Gaia. There is also Mother Nature, Pachamama, and many other names from different cultures.

- **A Species** – If Gya is a living organism then she needs a proper scientific name, referred to as a taxonomic binomial. It is proposed that Gya be given the name: *Imperium vitae-planeta*, which roughly translates from Latin to Empire of the Living Planet. *Vitae-planeta* is a unique species in that it is a single individual comprised of a

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complex interconnected web of all life on Earth.

- **Spiritual Belief** – Gya is not a scientifically validated idea, although it is very close to the concept of Gaia Theory.

This is a really important point. You see, science and spirituality are natural partners as they both help us understand the world around us, and to establish our right relation to that reality.

It was established in the opening pages of this book that the Cognitive Revolution opened a reservoir of both rational and spiritual thinking in humans.

Most contemporary spiritual philosophies hold that science and spirituality offer

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irreconcilable concepts: If one is true, the other cannot be true.

In the German language, the word ‘gheist’ has a broad meaning encompassing both intellect and spirituality. Similarly, Vita Sapient Philosophy sees spirituality and scientific enquiry stemming from the same source. Cognition relates to intellectual and spiritual wisdom.

### ***A Spiritual Framework***

Conversations about spirituality with strangers are fraught with peril for a number of key reasons.

First, people tend to talk about spirituality wholly from the perspective of their individual lived-experience. This is because most people don’t have good spiritual literacy or a deep knowledge of the subject of spirituality.

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In the academic world, things aren't much better with spirituality being framed into religious, medical or psychological fields of thought, and with no common definition.

So, it is no wonder that people who talk about spirituality in public often come across as weird. This is problematical as it makes it difficult to communicate how spirituality is absolutely vital for advancing a sustainable future.

We all have spirituality, it's not just religious or indigenous people, or hippies.

Spirituality is like noses. We all have one, its right there in front of us, but we can't normally see it unless we look the right way.

We need to be comfortable talking about spirituality in public. To cut through all the confusion, *The Vita Spiritual Framework*

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has been developed to help foster conversations about spirituality for sustainability.

Vita Sapien Philosophy views the term ‘spirituality’ as an umbrella concept that shelters many themes. Six themes are listed below, with multiple subthemes.

Vita Sapien Philosophy does not claim that these themes represent the totality of spiritual experience. Instead, they form a simple frame of reference to make it easy to talk about the subject of spirituality.

In this way, we are better able to discuss the potential for spirituality to foster radical pro-environmental behaviour change.

Vita Sapien Philosophy's spiritual framing is not competitive, but a co-operative system of belief that encourages people to care

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about the Living Planet in addition to other beliefs.

Anyone with the three core traits—a spiritual bond to nature, trust in science, and commitment to action—can be considered a Vitán. Thus there can be Vitán Christians, Vitán Atheists, Vitán Hindus, Vitán Buddhists, and so on.

People reading Vita Sapien's work may find some conflict between philosophies. This is okay, as humans are able to comfortably hold conflicting ideas.

In this next section, the Vita Spiritual Framework's theme and sub-themes are defined, followed by a brief discussion about how the themes relate to Spirituality for Sustainability.



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- 1. The Bigger Thing**
- 2. The Golden Rule**
- 3. Life's Big Questions**
  - Where did we come from?
  - Why are we here?
  - What happens when we die?
- 4. Journey Within**
  - Inner Self
  - Grounding
  - Self-Actualisation
- 5. Transcendence**
  - Peak & Trough Experience
  - Awe, Wonder & Amazement
  - Timelessness & Flow
- 6. Deep Feelings**
  - Phenomena & Insight

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- Sacred & Profane
- *Raison d'être*

### ***The Bigger Thing***

One of the most common concepts that describes spirituality is an individual's quest to identify as part of something bigger than themselves.

For some people the Bigger Thing is God, and for others, say professional athletes, it is their sport.

People's behaviour is guided in part by their efforts to contribute to the success or advancement of the Bigger Thing. People can be part of multiple Bigger Things.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that we should see ourselves as a part of the biosphere and seek to be a part of a movement to Advance the Verdant Age.

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As with the trees and bees, the whales and snails, the belief in Gya holds that we humans are cells in the body of the Living Planet.

Holding this belief profoundly changes our relationship to the environment, as we see that the environment is us: an interconnected, holistic ‘oneness’. An interbeing.

When you identify with Gya and the social movement to protect her, you are advancing your own life support system. So, this is not only spiritually rewarding, but wholly logical, as well.

Adopt the biosphere, Gaia, the Living Planet, or Gya and the social movement to protect her as your Bigger Thing.

## ***The Golden Rule***

A Golden Rule is a central, guiding statement that frames ethical and rational decision making. The world's major religions all share a common Golden Rule which goes something like this: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

The problem with this Do unto others statement is that it fails to take into consideration the Living Planet that is our life support system.

Vita Sapien Philosophy's Golden Rule is thus:

Do unto others and the Living Planet as you would have them do unto you.

Phrased another way:

Be good to people and the Living Planet, and they will be good to you.

## ***Life's Big Questions***

Spirituality offers answers to imponderable questions, particularly those relating to human origins, meaning, and ultimate outcomes. There are many Big Questions, but three are particularly important.

- Where did we come from?
- Why are we here?
- What happens when we die?

### **Where did we come from?**

*What are the origins of the human race?*

Some people hold that humans were created by God. Others hold that we evolved from forebears such as *Homo erectus*. Some Australian aboriginal cultures hold that rain and cloud spirits called *Wandjina* created life on Earth, including humans.

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Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that to answer this Big Question we ought to speak to cosmologists and biologists. They will tell us that these questions can be answered by science and that our understanding gets better year by year.

The best theory for the origins of the universe and life on Earth is that the universe formed around 13.8 billion years ago with a rapid expansion of space called the Big Bang. Humans arose through a long process of evolution from the first living things that formed from non-living compounds and elements on Earth about 3.8 billion years ago. From this abiogenesis, evolutionary pressures selected some organisms to survive and adapt to changing conditions.

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We humans and the other living things alive today are the survivors of five Mass Extinction Events. We are made of what Earth is made of. We grew here with the trees and the bees, the whales, and the snails. We belong here.

### **Why are We Here?**

*What is the purpose of human existence?*

Some people hold that humans are placed on Earth to serve God. Others hold that we are here to have a good time, or to share love. The philosophical movement called existentialism holds that there is no meaning to human existence.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that humans are here on Earth for the same reason as the trees, the bees, the whales, and the snails: to pursue our individual life interests in a

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manner that makes a positive contribution to the whole.

In this case, the whole is human society and the Living Planet, both of which are our collective life support system.

That's why we are here.

I am going to repeat that because it is such an important point:

The purpose of our existence as human beings is to pursue our personal interests in a manner that benefits the well-being of the whole.

### **What Happens When We Die?**

*What happens to us upon death?*

Some people believe that when you die a non-physical part of you either goes to heaven or hell for eternity. Others believe



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that there is an eternal soul that occupies another body and returns in an after-life.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that when the body dies, we die with it. However, the compounds and energy in our body may be revitalised by being taken up by other organisms. In this way, the end of our life begets the beginning of new life.

While we are alive, the flow of blood and electrical energy pulsing through our bodies and our breathing in and out, is our spirit.

Evidence of an individual's spirit can be seen while we are alive, and by what we leave behind after death. If we plant a forest, our spirit can be said to reside within the trees. If we wrote books, our spirit can be said to reside on bookshelves around the world. If we spread joy and wisdom, our spirit can be said to be the fond memories

and the knowledge in the people that we leave behind.

## ***Journey Within***

The Journey Within consists of three key aspects:

- Inner Self
- Grounding
- Self-Actualisation

### **Inner Self**

The Inner Self represents the unique essence of every individual – an aspect of being that can be explored through introspection, often in solitude and quiet contemplation.

- **Essence & Identity** – The Inner Self represents the core of who we are at our most authentic level

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- **Conscious Awareness** – This is the practice of being mindful and fully present with our thoughts, emotions, and experiences
- **Intuition and Inner Guidance:** Intuition connects us to deeper wisdom beyond rational thought. It serves as an inner compass, helping guide decisions and actions from a place of truth.

The Inner Self is not isolated but exists in relationship to all of life. Understanding that we are part of a greater web of life – connected to nature, other beings, and the Earth – deepens our sense of purpose and enhances our spiritual journey.

People can find deeper insights into their Inner Self through meditation, yoga and a

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many other avenues available through New Age and other spiritual traditions. This is good. We ought to understand ourselves at this deep level, it leads to a more fulfilling life.

However, here is the problem. Most of what falls under the umbrella of spirituality in the Western World is basically just self-help. Yoga makes you feel good. Meditation makes you feel better. This is good.

But it's not just us that needs help. The biosphere needs help.

The biosphere needs a ton of help if it is to remain in a form that sustains human life on Earth.

We have to approach spirituality in a way that fosters us to protect that which is most

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valuable to us. Investigate your Inner Self to find the power to change the outer world.

### **Grounding**

Grounding is the recognition of our place within the interconnected whole. It is knowing where home is, where we belong, and how we fit within the vastness of human society, the biosphere, and time itself – past and future. Grounding includes:

- **A Sense of Place** – Feeling comfortable in certain places and situations
- **Reverence for Ancestors** – Honouring and learning from those who came before us, including our distant Palaeolithic forebears

- **Commitment to Future Generations** – Taking responsibility not only for the wellbeing of those who live today but also for the human and non-human beings of tomorrow.

It is often said that the atoms in our bodies were forged in the first moments of the Big Bang, or inside stars.

This idea translates into New Age spirituality with the statement that we are made of Star Dust. Believe in the Cosmos, they say. You are a child of the Universe.

These New Age Spiritual tropes hold grains of truth, but a more relevant framing would be to identify ourself as children of the biosphere.

The visible universe is 96 billion light years in diameter and there are cosmological

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phenomena what have a bearing on life on Earth. These include cosmic radiation, asteroids, Super Nova, coronal mass ejections, and so on. However, these are beyond our circle of control and of far lesser immediate concern than the atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> and the well-being of forests and phytoplankton.

New Age Spirituality has engaged millions in spiritual inquiry, but often without grounding in environmental science. When people hold the living systems that sustain us—forests, oceans, plankton—as sacred with the same intensity they reserve for cosmic mysteries, we will have turned a corner toward the Verdant Age.

### **Self-Actualisation**

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Self-Actualisation is the pursuit of one's highest potential – living authentically in alignment with one's values and purpose.

- **Self-Reflection** – Examining thoughts, emotions, and beliefs to cultivate self-awareness
- **Expediency** – Continuously refining one's skills, influence, and effectiveness over time

Self-actualisation is important if we are to be effective agents for change to advance the Verdant Age. Be the best you can be for life on Earth.

### *Transcendence*

Transcendence refers to those times when you feel yourself to go beyond the normal experience of life. Three sub-themes are identified:



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- Peak & Trough Experience
- Awe, Wonder & Amazement
- Timelessness & Flow

While these sub-themes are given distinct names, they are often experienced overlapping with one another.

### **Peak & Trough Experience**

Peak & Trough experience refers to intense pleasurable or painful experiences that powerfully shape us. They can often be sensed during the same situation – think of a roller-coaster ride, both exhilarating and terrifying in equal measure. Extreme experience – whether perceived as good or bad – opens a doorway to spiritual change, and therefore, potentially to the adoption of nature spirituality.

### **Peak Experience**

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Peak Experience refers to those moments of euphoria and bliss when you are detached from your normal reality and become enthralled and entranced by an uplifting experience. A pathway to a fulfilling life is to regularly enjoy peak experiences.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that when we enjoy peak experience through nature, we more closely bond with Gya, the Living Planet, our life support system.

### **Trough Experience**

Trough Experience refers to those instances where you are flattened, rendered helpless, approaching what feels like death. This can be brought about through near-death experience, witnessing a tragic accident, war, physical assault, attack by wild animals, etc. Trough experience is not

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pleasant, but it can trigger a substantial shift in our spirituality.

Many environmental activists have trough experience through being beaten or jailed for standing up for the planet. Don't be afraid of trough experience if your actions are advancing life on Earth.

### **Awe, Wonder & Amazement**

The words awe, wonder and amazement refer to the instances when we feel overwhelmed or taken aback by the vastness or extraordinariness of an experience. Such experiences are often associated with Aesthetic Chills where an experience triggers powerful and lasting emotional feeling that can result a person rethinking their values and worldview.

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People can find awe and wonderment in many different places including from such obscure sources such as drag races or watching YouTube videos of rocket launches, or the manufacturing process of golf balls. Others find awe in nature.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that we should seek awe, wonder and amazement in nature.

Seek awe, wonder and amazement in natural landscapes and the social movements such as the growing rebellion against extinction.

### **Timelessness & Flow**

Timelessness comes when circumstances are so distracting that one loses track of the passage of time.

Flow is where one is engaged in effortless action with total focus.

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One could fall experience timelessness and flow watching your underwear in a tumble dryer or sitting under a metal triangle chanting ‘*Ohmmm*’ but these won’t point your spiritual compass towards the Living Planet.

Vita Sapien Philosophy teaches that we should seek timelessness and flow in nature: a waterfall, a walk on a beach, kayaking across a lake, the sights and sounds of life on Earth.

Get into flow by reading books or articles about the Earth System. Lose track of time in the garden or a forest or in conversations about how to Advance the Verdant Age.

### ***Deep Feelings***

These are the feelings that strongly held, and for which one will make sacrifices to defend.

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- Phenomena & Insight
- Sacred & Profane
- *Raison d'être*

### **Phenomena & Insight**

One aspect of spirituality lies in how we interpret experiences and emotions that lack a clear, rational explanation. Some people approach these phenomena through a scientific lens, while others perceive a deeper, mystical dimension.

Some people, for example, claim to have extra sensory perception, or to have communicated with people who have died, beings of other dimensions, or to a god. You'll often hear the expression, "There's something out there."

Take UFOs, for example. Seeing an unfamiliar pattern of lights in the night sky,

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one person might assume they are witnessing an alien spacecraft, while another might simply acknowledge that the airspace is busy and accept that not everything is immediately explainable.

Many who hold these beliefs subscribe to the idea of a hidden reality—an unseen realm operating alongside everyday existence. This perspective extends to beliefs in crystals, tarot, and other phenomena associated with New Age Spirituality.

At times, people experience an overwhelming sense that they must follow a particular course of action, holding to this conviction as strongly as if they had material proof.

What should we make of such intuitive or less-than-rational interpretations of reality?

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First, there is a lot going on that is not easily explained. And that's okay. It's okay that we don't know how the ancient Egyptians made the pyramids.

The main point is to not get distracted by all these mysteries. Our biosphere is dying and bring her back to full health is the priority. So, rather than learning about ancient mysteries or how Tarot cards supposedly foretell the future, maybe instead learn about how the climate and the global ecosystem functions.

### **Sacred & Profane**

The sacred are those things that are perceived to be imbued with unique and higher qualities and values, and for which distinct rules apply. Profane is simply



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something that lacks sacredness, such as the everyday and mundane. Sacredness is not implicit but is granted by one's beliefs.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that we can choose what we believe to be sacred and if we are to advance the Verdant Age, the following need to be seen as sacred:

- Places of ecological significance are sacred as are acts of personal sacrifice on behalf of the biosphere
- Natural biophysical processes that underpin our life support system are sacred, and we should act accordingly by protecting them
- Indigenous cultures and endangered species are sacred and ought to be revered and protected

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Sacred & Profane also builds on the basic principle of right and wrong which signifies actions that either help or hinder achieving a desired state. A desirable state for human civilization is a healthy biosphere populated by healthy, happy people for millions of years into the future.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that harming people and the biosphere is wrong, and actions that help people and Advance the Verdant Age are right. Of equal importance, inaction in the face of wrongdoing is itself wrong.

Those who hold power, wealth, or influence and deploy it against the well-being of people and life on Earth—whether through fossil fuel extraction, ecosystem destruction, or blocking climate action—are agents of harm that must be opposed.

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While individuals have agency and can choose differently, our opposition must be predominantly focused on dismantling the systems that enable and reward planetary destruction. Both matter: destructive systems create perverse incentives, while individuals with power make choices that perpetuate or challenge those systems.

Many within extractive industries, for example, could redirect their talents toward sustainable solutions; some already have.

### *Raison d'être*

*Raison d'être* is a French term meaning reason to be. This is part of a broader conversation about the meaning of an individual's life.

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Some people attach themselves to a cause so tightly that they experience Identity Fusion, a visceral sense of oneness with their belief. Identity Fusion can be a positive or negative for the Living Planet. For example, activists in the rebellion against extinction fuse their identity with a cause that advances the Verdant Age.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that the Anthropocene Crisis calls upon us to set our *raison d'être* to the highest levels of Earthwork: Advancing the Verdant Age.

Your *raison d'être* will determine what rituals and ceremonies are meaningful to you. Your *raison d'être* will determine the causes you support and those people who you regard as significant others, leaders and heroes.

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If you are to fuse your identity, fuse it with the integrity of the biosphere and the proper function of the Earth System as these are fundamental to life on Earth and for human civilization to prosper.

Once you have fused your identity with the biosphere, you will feel your spirit rise.

### ***Spirit & Soul***

Vita Sapien Philosophy does not advance the idea of gods or the soul. This is not to say that such things don't exist, but they are a distraction from a sustainable spirituality.

However Vita Sapien Philosophy does refer to three types of spirit:

- Somatic Spirit
- Exosomatic Spirit
- Parasomatic Spirit

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Let's consider the three Vita Sapien Philosophy spirits.

- **Somatic Spirit** is the animating essence of a living being characterised by movement, growth, breath, heartbeat, reproduction, and so on. Humans, animals and plants have a somatic spirit while they are alive, but this dies when they die.
- **Exosomatic Spirit** refers to that which a living being leaves behind. For a human that may be fond memories in the minds of families and friends, or books they wrote. The exosomatic spirit of the Dutch painter van Gough remains dominant over a hundred years after his death. However, the exosomatic spirit of the man who fixed van Gough's

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shoes is lost in the annals of time. Animals and plants can also have an Exosomatic Spirit. The imprints of fossilised animals, for example, or a painting of a particular tree. The story of Moby Dick is the exosomatic spirit of the author and of a white sperm whale.

- **Parasomatic Spirit** refers to the perception that some inanimate objects are alive. For example, a piece of concrete in the shape of a cat can give the sensation of having met a real living animal. Parasomatic Spirit is analogous to the Kami in Japanese Shinto culture. Kami are spiritual entities believed to reside in waterfalls and groves, and indicated

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by the presence of the red archway,  
the *Torii*.

This chapter has so far provided a rational explanation of the Vita Spiritual Framework to help frame the idea of Spirituality for Sustainability.

Now, let's consider these ideas from an emotional perspective. We have done the thinking, now let's do the feeling.

### ***Nature Calls Out***

To change the world, we need to be able to hear nature calling out to us.

Drowning Doesn't Look Like Drowning, remember. We have to be in tune to nature to understand her. To feel her.

Nature is calling out to us all the time. Can you hear her?



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*Nature Calls Out* are those instances when nature intervenes into your consciousness. Read each little phrase below, then close your eyes and go there.

How many of these have you sensed, and what would you add to this list?

*the wind changes to cool breeze as the  
storm approaches*

...

*you hear small animals rustling in the  
grass*

...

*the multicoloured glow of a rainbow in  
a waterfall's mist*

...

*the spangles of dappled sunlight  
through a forest canopy*

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...

*the unique diversity of colour and  
texture of lichen on a boulder*

...

*a bird lands on a branch close to you,  
taking you by surprise*

...

*you come across a fallen tree covered  
in fungi and moss as it returns to the  
soil ...*

*you see a bird on a branch with an  
insect in its beak*

...

*a possum climbing up a tree turns to  
look at you*

...

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*the Full Moon breaks through the  
clouds to illuminate the ocean horizon*

...

*the sun sets in an orange sky*

...

*a dolphin comes to the surface, and you  
hear its breath*

...

*clear sea water washes against green  
seaweed on the rocks, lolling back and  
forth*

...

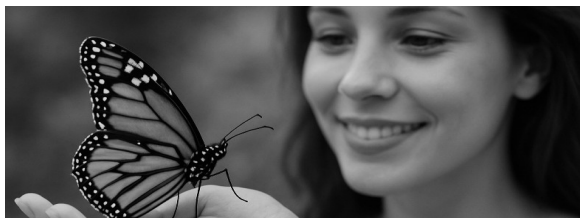
*you see the first sign of a new leaf on a  
pot-plant*

...

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*a bird lands on your windowsill and  
looks inside*

Nature is all around us. She is calling out to us. Asking us to care for her. Can you hear her?



*Nature calls out to us all the time. Can you hear?*

It is imperative that you do hear her, and care for her. We are going into dark times, and we need all-hands-on deck, emotionally prepared for what is coming down the pipeline.

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When people fill their spirituality with nature this guides them towards right action to Advance the Verdant Age.

Here are some simple practices that help you connect spiritually to nature.

*Practice Vitan Meditation by losing time looking at or listening to nature. Maybe close your eyes and listen to birdsong, gaze into a fish tank, or listening to a guided Vitan meditation.*

...

*Take your shoes off and walk on the ground, on the grass, in the mud, on the beach.*

...

*When it rains, find somewhere to watch the water fall from the sky. Maybe stand in the rain.*

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...

*Do a Moonscope to determine when and where the Full Moon rises and then watch it. Experience the Moon Illusion alone or with friends.*

...

*Stand close to a native animal and just look at it. See if you can encourage the animal to look at you. Maybe you can be friends.*

...

*Close your eyes for five minutes and then open them to gaze upon an old leaf.*

...

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*Watch a documentary about nature, concentrate on learning the new information, then ponder it deeply.*

...

*Plant a seed in a pot, water it, and observe the seed sprout and grow. Maybe you can nurture the plant to become a tree that will outlive you.*

...

*Visit a cave that has ancient paintings and ponder the motivations and the spirituality of the people who painted it. Check if you need permission, first.*

...

*Learn about climate change and then sit in quiet contemplation of this knowledge until you feel it.*

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...

*Go to a place where wildlife  
congregates and try to be accepted as a  
witness.*

...

*Meet with your local Indigenous clan  
and learn about their spiritual  
connection to the land.*

...

*Visit a waterfall and sit in quiet  
contemplation with the sound of the  
falling water.*

...

*Ask yourself, what is important to me.  
What should I do with the rest of my  
life?*

...



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

*Ponder the Gaia Hypothesis, the idea that life on Earth controls the atmosphere to keep conditions suited to life. Then, contemplate how much of an aberration it is that one species – Homo sapiens – could risk annihilating most life on Earth by fostering climate and ecological collapse.*

### ***Fostering Mass-Ecophany***

While it is innate for humans to be in tune with nature, not everyone is.

One of Vita Sapien Philosophy's unique ideas is called *ecophany*, or *ecological epiphany*.

This is an emotional, spiritual, or intellectual awakening to nature.

Ecophany is a one-way street because once you sense what humans have done to our

## Vita Sapien

Living Planet and what the planet is soon to do to us, you can't unfeel it. It changes your life. You will find yourself reconsidering everything that you previously thought was important, and your behaviour will change.

Ecophany is emotionally challenging, but it is a necessary pathway to enlightenment: *understanding how things really are.*

Fostering Ecophany involves creating conditions suited to helping people experience ecophany. To this end, programs can be developed that invite people to open their hearts to nature and our Living Planet.



*You've had your coffee, but have you had ecophany?*

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

Mass-Ecophany is the concept of ecophany occurring in tens of millions of people. So, Fostering Mass-Ecophany is ultimately what Vita Sapien Philosophy seeks to achieve. And given the urgency of our climate and ecological crisis, Fostering Rapid Mass-Ecophany is what we need to do. But that is not enough.

A spiritual enlightenment is like hoisting a huge spinnaker sail on a yacht. What's also needed is a rudder to set the direction of the vessel, a chart, and a plan of how to get to a desired destination.

All these ideas can be brought together in programs that include the following elements:

- Spiritual enlightenment to nature
- A deeper understanding of the Earth System

## Vita Sapien

- A map for the future (Transition)
- A destination (the Verdant Age)
- Duties for the crew to achieve the mission (Earthwork)

To prevent the collapse of the global ecosystem, we need a powerful spiritual enlightenment to nature for hundreds of millions of people around the world, framed by environmental science and directed towards expedient action.

Then, there is hope that humanity may enter the Verdant Age that will extend deep into the Long Future. To achieve the Verdant Age, we need action. The following chapter helps explain how to put Vita Sapien Philosophy into practice.

### **3.**

## **Vita Worldview in Practice**

## **Planetary Quests**

Planetary Quests are actions that anyone can undertake to put Vita Sapien Philosophy into practice.

1. I, Biosphere
2. Live with Earthity
3. Practice a Vitamission
4. Grow Something
5. Find Yourself in Nature
6. Celebrate the Moon
7. Cosmos & Magma
8. Know Your Boundaries
9. Embrace the Storm
10. Reinvent New Year
11. Know Your White Horse

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

### 12. Return to the Flux

#### ***I, Biosphere***

We are all part of the biosphere, and the biosphere is part of us. The acceptance of this idea is called I, Biosphere.

We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the biosphere, so every-day, in some way, say thanks or take some time to connect-in with nature.

If you are in a big hurry, maybe just say "Thanks Plankton" as a way of recognising the wonderful things that the biosphere provides for us. Maybe say "Hi" to a cloud.

Feel free to create your own I, Biosphere routine and share with others. The more we acknowledge, connect to, and give thanks to our Living Planet, the more we realise that we just can't live without her.

## Vita Sapien

There is a simple I, Biosphere poem that you might like to recite as a way of confirming that you identify as part of the biosphere.

*I am human, I come from Earth  
In a little bubble of gas  
With molten lava below  
The freezing depths of space above  
I am one organism  
Made of billions of organisms  
Amongst trillions of organisms  
In a vibrant community  
A biological sphere of life  
The biosphere  
I am part of the biosphere*



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

*I, biosphere*

*You, also, are part of the biosphere*

*You, biosphere*

*We are all in this together*

*The humans and all else that lives on  
Earth*

*We, biosphere*

*We are all part of the biosphere*

*And the biosphere is part of us*

*So, we should care for the biosphere*

*We really can't live without her*

This short poem could become part of an initiation ritual into a Vita Pod, which is a group of people who put Vita Sapien

## Vita Sapien

Philosophy into practice. See more about Vita Pods, below.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

### *Live with Earthity*

The name Vita Sapien is roughly translated from Latin to ‘Life Wise’. Life wise has two connotations:

- Wise about our personal life
- Wise about our place amongst life on Earth

While much of Vita Sapien Philosophy is concerned with our personal relationship with the biosphere, it is through Earthity that we deal with personal and interpersonal issues. Earthity has three components:

- Live Lightly on the Earth
- Be Kind to Others
- Be Kind to Yourself

## Vita Sapien

### **Live Lightly on the Earth**

As cells in the body of Gya, we have common responsibilities to our fellow cells, and that means to other people and to nature. Vita Sapien Philosophy calls upon people to be good neighbours and good environmentalists.



*To learn about how to live lightly, search for  
'sustainable lifestyle'*

Western lifestyles are unsustainable because the dominant social, political and economic systems and their use of energy and materials are pushing us beyond safe

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

planetary boundaries. With that said, it is relatively easy to slash one's material and energy consumption through conscious consumption and this should be done as a matter of course. This book does not delve into the details of Live Lightly on the Earth because it is so well covered elsewhere, for example, google 'sustainable lifestyles' to get started.

### **Kind to Others**

Living with Earthity also means being decent to people who are and aren't like you. You can be anything, so be kind. Don't hate people. Don't be racist, homophobic, transphobic, misogynistic, sociopathic, etc.

So many of the world's problems are caused by people who simply aren't kind to other people. Thieves, murderers, rapists, and abusers of men, women and children fit into

## Vita Sapien

this category. Many people are bought up around violence and use violence as a daily tool. Rise above this. The word '*sapiens*' means wise. So, use wisdom to defuse conflicts.

*Kind to Others* calls upon us to be okay with the lifestyles of people who aren't like you. If you don't like the idea of gay marriage, that's fine, don't marry a homosexual. If drug taking offends you, that's fine, don't take drugs.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that people ought to be free to live their lives without others interfering because their moral values sit in judgement. If people just let other people live their lives, everyone could just get on with living their lives.

With this said, the *Tolerance Paradox* tells us that if we want to live in a tolerant

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

society, we need to be intolerant to intolerant people. A tolerant society must be prepared to defend itself against fascists and Nazis.

On the matter of war, it is accepted that sometimes war is a necessary pursuit, for example to repel an invading force.

However, there is nonetheless a need for that war to be just and to be fought justly. Wars where soldiers attack soldiers are bad enough without soldiers abusing civilians or captives.

*Kind to Others* may seem simple and straightforward, but there are some nuances. As an example, there are training courses that help people identify racism and sexism in their behaviour that they may not have seen, themselves. In addition, there is a field called *non-violent communication* that

## Vita Sapien

similarly helps people communicate in a non-confrontational manner. *Kindness to Others* calls on people to familiarise themselves with these things and bring them into practice through their lives.

Many spiritual traditions promote charitable giving as a way of sharing the bounty that comes to an individual and help ameliorate social problems caused by systemic wealth disparity. Vita Sapien Philosophy condones this and accepts that changing the system that creates wealth disparity is the ultimate resolution of the problem. Charitable donations ought to be considered with reference to the concept of ‘expedience’. This suggests that we ought to seek to do as much good with the donation as possible.

### **Kind to Yourself**



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

While we live surrounded by other people who engage in reciprocity and cooperation, at the end of the day we were born alone, and we die alone. In between, there are many decisions that are made that either advance our personal interests or run counter to them. Being kind to yourself is important.

*Kind to Yourself* covers the whole spectrum of what is referred to as Personal Development which includes personal finances, plus health and fitness, mental health, and so on. Avoiding harmful addictions is a part of Kind to Yourself.

Regarding wealth creation, it is important to consider how wealth is made and how it is consumed. For an example, someone who makes money from oil exploration (in a climate crisis) and spends his money shooting elephants (in a biodiversity crisis)

## Vita Sapien

ought never earn another dollar. On the other extreme, someone who makes money advancing sustainable energy and spends their money advancing noble causes, ought rightly do well for themselves.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

### *Practice a Vitamission*

Every cell in a body is tasked with a specific mission. So, it is with us humans, except that we have agency, which means that we can choose our own mission.

What is your self-chosen mission to help Advance the Verdant Age?



*There are many ways to serve the Living Planet.*

Given that climate change and biodiversity are the two biggest threats to the Living Planet, these might be the primary focus of your attention.

## Vita Sapien

There are many ways to support our Living Planet including removing plastic from beaches, climate activism, developing new technology, or researching who's responsible for bad governance and holding them accountable. However, supporting environmental efforts should not come at the expense of human well-being, and vice-versa.

Ideally, a cause could foster more than one benefit. For example, supporting women to plant trees in developing countries helps to eradicate poverty, sequester carbon, and improve biodiversity.

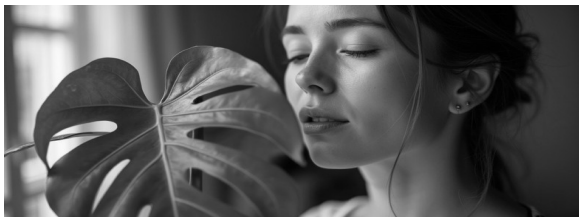
Seek to make your Vitamission as impactful as possible and seek to continually increase your efficacy. This is referred to as expedience.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

Devote your life to your Vitamission and become a powerful force in the transition to a sustainable global civilization.

## ***Grow Something***

Growing something helps to connect people to Gya and the life-force that drives organisms to prosper. If you are not familiar with growing things, maybe start with a Swiss Cheese Plant – *Monstera deliciosa*. To get started, find someone who has a *Monstera* and ask for a cutting.



*Gazing upon a pot plant is a form of Vitan Meditation.*

You might also take an interest in a home aquarium or a frog pond in the backyard. Frog ponds are good as they can enhance

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

local ecosystems. Maybe combine the *Monstera deliciosa* with the frog pond.

In this way, you can connect directly to the wellbeing of other organisms and learn how to make them comfortable. If plants are comfortable, they grow and flower. If fish are comfortable, they breed.



*Watching fish in an aquarium is a form of Vitan Meditation.*

While you can grow things yourself, you can also participate in growing things with others. Collective actions can help restore entire ecosystems, forests and marine environments. The *Vita Transition Plan*

Vita Sapien

calls for the rewilding of vast tracks of Earth, that is a growing mission you can get involved in.



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

### *Find Yourself in Nature*

Periodically immerse yourself in nature. Ideally, you would find a place where the technosphere is absent. No roads, and no traffic noise. It's hard to escape aeroplane noise, however.

If you can't escape a city, then go to the botanical gardens, or some place that is overgrown.



*Waterfalls are one of nature's most extraordinary gifts.*

## Vita Sapien

Immersing yourself in nature helps reconnect you to wilderness, a sensation that has been largely lost through urbanisation.

In Japan, there is a practice called *Shinrin-yoku* or *Forest Bathing*. This involves visiting a forest and engaging with nature through all five senses. There is a large body of medical research that demonstrates the benefits for health through relaxation and stress reduction from being in nature.

There is another aspect to finding yourself in nature: nature helps you *find yourself*.

It helps you become present to your *Inner Self*. This is why it is important sometimes to be alone in nature, to discover yourself outside of someone else's frame of reference.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

## ***Celebrate the Moon***

On the Full Moon, gather with friends and associates and use this auspicious event to engage in an evening of Big Talk. A gathering on the Full Moon has several key attributes.

### **A Peak Experience**

The rise of the Full-Moon provides a peak experience in nature – the Moon Illusion. The Moon Illusion is an optical illusion that makes the Moon appear larger near the horizon than it does higher in the sky.

### **Joins Us Together**

The Moon is a great leveller of humans as it joins us together across space and time. The Moon looks the same, no matter where we are. A Full Moon in Malaysia occurs on the

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

same night as a Full Moon in Australia, for example.



*Once a synodic month – every 28 days or so – a spectacle awaits.*

The Moon has looked the same to all humans over the entire course of human history. So, when Shakespeare wrote “*The Moon’s an arrant thief, and her pale fire she snatches from the sun,*” he was referring to the Moon that looked the same as the Moon that we see today.

### **Reminder of Life**

The Moon offers a visible reminder that we do not just live in a constructed society, but

## Vita Sapien

we are part of an ancient natural system that has been here long before us. The Moon is dead, inert, and lifeless, reminding us that life is the exception, not the rule, in our solar system.

The Moon has a huge influence on living things as its gravity moves trillions of tonnes of seawater around, causing the rise and fall of the tides. The Full Moon floods the night with light, making landscapes and seascapes visible in the dark.

So, every time you see the Moon think of life on Earth and how precious it is.

### **Renewable Energy**

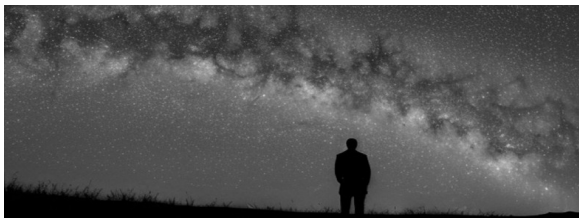
The tides, caused by the influence of the Moon's gravity, can be harnessed to provide clean renewable energy. The Moon thus reminds us of the need to end the fossil fuel

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

industry and advance sustainable renewable energy.

## ***Cosmos & Magma***

According to the 2016 paper, The New World Atlas of Artificial Night Sky Brightness, about 30% of humans will never see the Milky Way from their homes due to night sky light pollution.



*The visible Universe is about 93 billion light years in diameter.*

Seeing the cosmos reminds us that Earth is a planet of one star (the Sun), amid trillions of stars in a vast expanding bubble of vacuous space. This is where we live, and to see the stars of our galaxy, the Milky Way, on a



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

clear night serves to remind us of the frailty of our blue/green planet.

What lies above the biosphere is a vast expanse of space that is a frigid -273 degree Celsius. Not a welcoming environment for life.

To manifest this contemplation, visit a place where artificial night sky brightness is minimal or zero to view the cosmos. You will need a map for this. A skyglow map. So, google Skyglow Map.

You might also contemplate what lies below the Living Planet. What lies below the biosphere is a bubbling cauldron of molten rock – the magma – at a temperature of around 1,000 degrees Celsius.

This contemplation might be advanced by visiting a volcano. However, there is an

## Vita Sapien

ecological footprint to travel (consider your Earthity), and volcanoes can be dangerous; so, one might simply ponder volcanoes and magma through a book, a website, or a documentary.



*Don't get too close. Lava is superhot.*

Alternatively, visit hot springs. This is where water is heated by magma and finds its way to the surface. There are many hot springs around the world, some that you can bathe in.

Maybe you can find hot springs that are in a place with zero skyglow and contemplate

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

what lies above and below the biosphere at the same time.

There is a takeaway message in these contemplations of the Cosmos and the Magma. The biosphere has dangerous neighbours and yet can maintain internal temperatures within a narrow range despite the extremes of temperature on either side. We ought not tamper with that ability.

## ***Know Your Boundaries***

Know Your Boundaries is a call to develop Earth Consciousness by learning how our planet provides us with a life support system. The scientific field called Planetary Boundaries is discussed earlier in this book. You can learn about the Planetary Boundaries through reading and watching videos. In addition, you can go and visit places to help you learn. For example, visit the local dams, lakes and rivers to learn about Planetary Boundary: Freshwater. Go somewhere you can see a fossil fuel power station and a wind farm to get a better understanding of the human influence on the climate system.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

### *Embrace the Storm*

Embrace the storm has three meanings.

First, take the opportunity to experience heavy weather when it comes, to get a deeper connection with nature. Stand in the rain, feel the strong breeze on your skin. Visit the site of a flood to develop a deeper understanding of how weather systems influence your region.



*Go somewhere safe to experience the power of nature.*

Second, seek a deeper understanding of meteorology, the science of the weather.

## Vita Sapien

Learn how clouds form and why storms do what they do. This will help give you advanced warning of extreme weather. Pay special attention when large weather systems are approaching, and use these instances to share your knowledge with others and learn from what they know.

Third, find inner-peace with the understanding that we have destabilised Earth's climate, and extreme weather is coming to us all, eventually.

As we continually add 50 billion tons of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere, we heat the planet plus increase the amount of water vapour in the atmosphere. We are heading into an age of storms that will get worse and worse until we overthrow the destructive systems of power, resolve the Anthropocene, and enter the Verdant Age.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

## ***Reinvent New Year***

At the heart of this practice is the recognition that all institutions are ecologically unsustainable and must be transformed to advance the Verdant Age.

The term institution includes a wide range of entities, practices and norms that structure social life such as banking, finance, energy production, governance, public holidays – including New Years. All institutions need augmentation to align with a sustainable civilization.

Vita Sapien Organisation has taken up this challenge and reinvented New Year away from the 1st of January.

A New Year is an arbitrary date, after all. When is the natural beginning and end of an orbit around the sun? There isn't one. So,



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

around the world, cultures ascribe different dates to the beginning of the New Year.

Vita Sapien Philosophy believes that it is auspicious to celebrate New Year on a date that advances the conversation about the Living Planet and the Verdant Age. As such Vita Sapien Organisation's Foundation Pod celebrates New Year on 16 July. The minute of the end of one annual cycle and the beginning of the next is 9.29pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST).

At that time in 1945 in New Mexico, USA, the first nuclear explosion was detonated: the so-called Alamogordo Bomb Test. This event is significant because radioactive contamination from atmospheric bomb tests has been identified as a potential chemical marker of the beginning of the

## Vita Sapien

Anthropocene Epoch, and this was the first such bomb test.

Vita Sapien Philosophy holds that the New Mexico nuclear bomb test as the beginning of the Anthropocene Epoch.

Every year Vita Sapien's Foundation Pod holds a New Year celebration on 16 July.



*Earth new Year, 2023 – Priming the Gadget*

At 9.29pm AEST, the Gadget is primed then detonated, creating a small explosion created from dry-ice in a soft drink bottle submerged in a bucket of water with a bright LED light shining behind.

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When the Gadget detonates, it shoots a bubbling plume of aerated water into the air accompanied by a loud *POP!* The LED light illuminates the bubbles as a bright white flash. This ceremony is called *Trinibomtess* and commemorates the beginning of the New Year.

It is fitting to align the Earth New Year with the beginning of the Anthropocene Epoch, as Vita Sapien Philosophy seeks to help foster the creation of a subsequent era where humans thrive in synergy with nature. We refer to this subsequent epoch as the Verdant Age. The sooner that starts, the better.

Commemorating the first nuclear bomb test is appropriate because there are many prognostications about the world ending in fire due to Climate Change, Armageddon, Nuclear War, etc. These ideas are

## Vita Sapien

widespread in Western culture and religious traditions. It is therefore refreshing to find a narrative in which the fireball occurs at the beginning of the story, leaving the end-date for humanity to be decided deep into the Long Future.

Vita Pods (groups of people who practice Vita Sapien Philosophy) are invited to accept Foundation Pod's New Year date or to propose their own. The choice of their New Year needs to be backed by a rational justification of how this date helps to advance the Verdant Age.

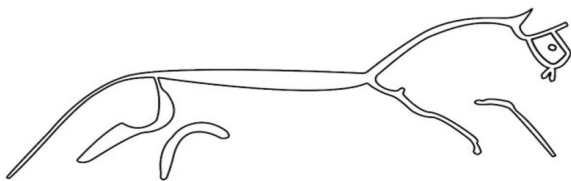
Remember, that the exhortation to Reinvent New Years is a call to reinvent all institutions, which includes but is not limited to banking, government, archery, netball, fishing, war, air travel.... All

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

institutions should be reinvented to advance the Verdant Age.

## ***Know your White Horse***

The Uffington White Horse is a Bronze-age artwork etched into a hillside in Oxfordshire, UK that is regarded as sacred by many people. Every year, thousands of people visit the White Horse to remove weeds, cut the grass, and add new chalk. The horse is elevated, giving a commanding view over the Oxfordshire landscape.



*The Uffington White Horse is an iconic Bronze Age symbol on the side of a hill in the UK.*

The practice *Know Your White Horse* is not an exhortation to visit the Uffington chalk-figure *per se* but represents whatever or

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

wherever an individual goes for spiritual renewal in nature. If you do not know how to find spiritual renewal in nature, this is your next adventure.

Our civilisation is heading into a pressure cooker of climate and ecological collapse, and it is important that we all know how to regenerate from the battles that we choose and those that are thrust upon us.

Many people find solace on the beach, walking by the lake or watching the Full Moon rise. Spiritual solace in nature needn't be outside. A balcony full of pot-plants will do the trick for some. If you are unable to escape the bounds of the city, nature-spiritual solace can be found online, maybe watching videos of fish schooling or some such.

## ***Return to the Flux***

Our bodies are the receptacles of minerals and energy borrowed from the Living Planet. When we die, we ought to promptly return the energy and minerals to the Living Planet so that other life forms might get the benefit of them.

This might be done through cremation, being aware of not using fossil fuels, or plastics in the casket. Alternatively, one might be buried in a casket that allows the soil to absorb the body easily.

There are various ‘Green Funeral’ practices that you might consider. This might include a simple practice like burial in a forest with a tree planted on your grave. There are more complex technological decomposition processes such as the system called *Recompose*.



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

When the minerals in your body return to the biochemical flux from where they came, you are contributing to the growth of new life. Who knows what living organisms may come to be the beneficiary of the minerals that you once were composed of?

This is the principle of Revitalisation. A Vitan funeral will help add new life to that which was once part of you.

Today, the average life expectancy of humans is about 72 years, ranging from 84 years in Japan to 54 years in the country of Chad in Africa. That's all you get. And that's all you need. One can do extraordinary things in just 54 years.

You were unalive for billions of years, you have a short time of being alive, and then you become unalive for billions more years.

## Vita Sapien

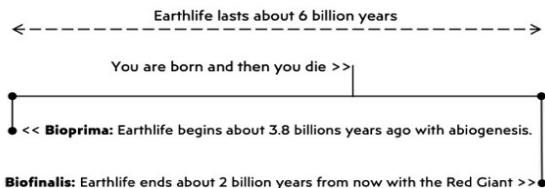
That's just how it is on Earth for all the animals and plants, humans included.

So, let us embrace being alive in the full knowledge that it doesn't last long. And similarly, let us embrace death as an inevitable conclusion to our brief time alive. And it is not just humans who have this fate, this is common to all that lives on Earth. Indeed, this is the fate of life itself, on Earth.

Life formed on Earth around 3.8 billion years ago in a process called abiogenesis, and will likely remain for another 2 billion years, beyond which time the Red Giant will swallow Earth, consuming all life. There are no formal names for the first living organisms, nor the prospective last ones to survive the Red Giant. So, we will create some names here. The first living organism we'll call *Bioprima*, and the last, *Biofinalis*.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

Between Bioprime and Biofinalis is Earthlife that lasts about 6 billion years. You get to enjoy your 50 – 80 years during that time.



*You get 50–80 years of the 6 billion years of Earthlife.*

When you become unalive, that which you leave behind is your Exosomatic Spirit. This might express through fond memories in the minds of the people who survive you.

If you invented a gadget, the existence of these gadgets is a part of your Exosomatic Spirit. If you planted a forest, the trees are a part of your spirit.

## Vita Sapien

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

### ***Being Vitan***

A Vitan is someone who has three key traits:

- A spiritual bond to our Living Planet
- Trust in science and a grasp of reality
- In action to make things better

It is believed that around 53 million adults in the Western world are Vitans who could discover this philosophy and become Vita Sapiens—practitioners who actively engage with Vita Sapient Philosophy.

To help Vitans become Vita Sapiens, it is necessary to share Vita Sapient Philosophy.

Humanity could quickly come to an end if we continue on our present path.

Alternatively, if the 53 million Vitans can be enrolled, it is possible to resolve the Anthropocene Crisis and enter the Verdant Age.

## Vita Sapien



I am a Vitan.

- A spiritual bond with our Living Planet
- Framing reality through science & reason
- In action to make things better

I will die one day, complete.

*The image shows a person with a Vitan Halo. For millennia, the halo has been used to indicate enlightenment, having a deeper understanding of how things really are. Vita Sapien Philosophy offers this enlightenment, both spiritual and intellectual.*

To enrol the Vitans, it is necessary to share Vita Sapien Philosophy. Here is how you can help.

Visit the Vita Sapien website and join the social media, and like, follow, and share.

...

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

Host a party on the Full Moon Party  
and talk about Vita Sapien Philosophy  
to your guests.

...

Invite people around for lunch to share  
Vita Sapien Philosophy.

...

Order a box of Vita Sapien Philosophy  
Pocketbooks and gift them to friends  
and family.

...

Wear a Quendant (see next section) and  
when people comment on it, talk to  
them about the Verdant Age.

...

## Vita Sapien

Maybe form a Pod, a local gathering, to undertake Vita Practices and share the message.

Pods are gatherings of Vita Sapiens and Vitans who practice Vita Sapien Philosophy together.

Pods are formed by individuals who take the initiative. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to create a Pod, but you need to have a grasp of Vita Sapien Philosophy before you can share it competently.

How to form a pod:

Learn about Vita Sapien Philosophy and Vita Sapien Organisation. There is a mountain of information and youtubes online.

...



## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

Choose a name for your pod and map out some activities for members.

...

An excellent way to get started is to host a Moon Party.

...

Invite people to join you in undertaking the Planetary Quests.

...

Have conversations about Living with Earthity and how to add expedience to your Vitamission.

...

Organise a Cosmos Night and take people to where they can see the stars at night in a place where there is no skyglow.

## Vita Sapien

...

Help people connect emotionally,  
cerebrally, and spiritually to the Living  
Planet.

...

Become actively involved in the  
rebellion against extinction.

...

Create a safe-space for people to talk  
about solastalgia and ecogrief and to  
share their fears for the future.

...

Wear a Quendant, and when people  
enquire about it, share Vita Sapien  
Philosophy.

A Quendant?

A Sustainable Life Philosophy

What's a Quendant, you ask?

# **4. Vita Sapien Organisation**

## About ViSO

Vita Sapien Organisation (ViSO) is an Australian registered charity that innovates at the intersection of environmental science and ecological spirituality.

ViSO's mission is to advance the Verdant Age, the potential future time when humanity and the biosphere thrives in synergy, deep into the Long Future.

ViSO shares its ideas through the website – [vitasapien.org](http://vitasapien.org) – through social media and through this Vita Sapien Philosophy pocketbook.

Vita Sapien Philosophy is the sustainable life philosophy at the heart of all of ViSO's work.

To spread Vita Sapien Philosophy far and wide, ViSO needs resources to function.

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

An excellent way of demonstrating your support is by wearing a Quendant, like Nick and Srey, here.



### ***The Quenn Pendant***

The Quenn is Vita Sapien's symbol for the Anthropocene.

A Quendant is a Quenn Pendant

The standard Quendant is made of laser-cut stainless steel with a stainless wire and magnetic clasp. They are a tried and tested piece of robust, attractive jewellery.

## Vita Sapien



The Quenn is deeply symbolic. The lower rings represent:

- a) the Living Planet
- b) human civilization.



The outer ring represents continuum, the ability to continue. This outer ring is broken because civilization is out of balance with

## A Sustainable Life Philosophy

the Living Planet – we've transgressed the Planetary Boundaries.



The upper, inner circle, incorporating the tops of the two lower circles, is the Verda symbol.



Verda represents the Verdant Age, the potential future time when humans and the Living Planet thrive in synergy.

## Vita Sapien

The Quenn is the symbol of the Anthropocene, and within the Anthropocene are the seeds of the Verdant Age.

If you wear a Quendant in public, people will comment on the piece, creating a space for a conversation about Vita Sapien Philosophy.

You can purchase Quendants through the Vita Sapien website where there are also Quendant explainer videos, and a lot of other merchandise.

If you want to support Vita Sapien Organisation, you might consider a monthly donation. That would help a lot.

Help Vita Sapien if you can. But really what we most ask is that you is to pursue your life interest in a manner that makes a positive



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contribution to society and the Living Planet  
and advance the Verdant Age.

Learn more on the Vita Sapien website:  
[vitasapien.org](http://vitasapien.org)

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## Glossary

**Advance the Verdant Age:** Undertake efforts to resolve the Anthropocene Crisis and advance a sustainable civilization where nature and humanity thrive in synergy, deep into the Long Future.

**Anthro:** Anthro is a prefix that describes humans.

**Anthropocene:** The Anthropocene is a central concept in Vita Sapien Philosophy that describes the modern era – since 1945 – in which humans are the main driver of change in the climate and environment.

**Anthropogenic:** Made by humans.

**Anthropogenic Mass:** The mass of material created by humans that since around the year 2020 outweighs the mass of living things on Earth.

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**Big Talk:** The opposite of small talk, Big Talk is conversations about substantial topics such as the climate and ecological crisis, human civilization, and the Verdant Age.

**Bio-physical Flux:** See Flux.

**Biosphere:** The biosphere has two meanings. First, it describes the thin-walled sphere where life can be found on Earth. Second, it refers to that place, and the totality of all the life found within it. Thus the biosphere is both a place and a thing.

**Cosmos Night:** A proposed activity to visit a location with zero skyglow at night during Milky Way season to view the full depth of the cosmos. This is part of developing a greater appreciation of what lies above Gya.

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**Cro-Magnon:** The Cro-Magnon are the first *Homo sapiens* to arrive in Europe dating from about 40,000 years ago until about 12,000 years ago.

**Defaunation of the Anthropocene:** the past and future mass-death of animals in the modern era caused by direct and indirect human action.

**Earthity:** the practice of living lightly on Earth and caring for oneself and others.

**Earth New Year:** a Vitian New Year celebration on 16 July that commemorates the beginning of the Anthropocene.

**Ecophany:** formed from the words ecological and epiphany, ecophany is a core concept for Vita Sapien Philosophy and refers to a spiritual, emotional, or intellectual awakening to nature – and

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particularly the plight of the biosphere – in an individual. The mission of Vita Sapien Philosophy is to foster ecophany in hundreds of millions of people around the world, rapidly.

**Euthanise the Fossil Fuel Industry:** to rapidly remove power of the fossil fuel industry to facilitate the rapid and swift and orderly transition to sustainable renewable energy.

**Expedience:** is like continual improvement, the idea that we should be constantly reframing our actions to make the as effective as possible.

**Flux:** the high-entropy environment of the ocean, atmosphere and soil from which low entropy structures are formed by plants. All that lives on Earth is comprised of flux.

**Fostering Rapid, Mass-Ecophany:** the process of swiftly fostering ecological epiphany in tens of millions of people worldwide.

**Gaia:** a name for Earth as a living planet derived from Gaia Theory, the concept that life on Earth behaves in the manner of an organism to maintain thermal equilibrium.

**Gya:** the biosphere seen as a single living being, a spiritual belief fostered by Vita Sapien Philosophy.

**Holocene:** The Holocene Epoch is name given to the last 12,000 years since the retreat of the last Ice Age. During this period, humans went from being predominantly hunter-gatherers to developing agriculture, cities and towns, and so-called ‘civilization’. Vita Sapien Philosophy teaches that the Holocene

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Epoch ended in the 1950s when the Anthropocene Epoch began.

**Long Future:** The Long Future refers to the vast stretch of time during which Earth remains habitable, thanks to its position within the Sun's Habitable Zone. This is the era when conditions allow life to thrive. However, as the Sun slowly ages and expands, Earth will eventually receive too much solar radiation. When that time comes, our planet's orbit will no longer support life—the temperatures will rise too high, and the biosphere will break down.

**Moon Party:** a gathering of Vitans to watch the Full Moon Rise and engage in Big Talk.

**Moonscope:** This is the practice of determining when and where the Full Moon rise will be visible.

**Nine-Boundaries Safe:** a design that helps ensure that none of the nine planetary boundaries are exceeded.

**Imperium:** Imperium is a word from Ancient Rome that describes an authority bestowed upon an individual to act with force on the behalf of the Roman Empire.

***Imperium vitae-planeta:*** There are two aspects to the name *Imperium vitae-planeta*.

- *Imperium vitae-planeta* is a proposed taxonomic binomial (scientific name) for the biosphere as a single living being. Note the capitalisation and italics. The name roughly translates from Latin to Empire of the Living Planet.
- A second meaning of *Imperium vitae-planeta* is an intrinsic authority for



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humans to act with force of character  
on behalf of the Living Planet.

**Pod:** A Pod is a name ascribed to an organised gathering of individuals for the purpose of learning about, sharing and practicing Vita Sapien Philosophy.

**Proto-Vitan:** A person concerned about the climate and ecological crisis who is developing one or two of the three core Vitan characteristics: spiritual bond to nature, trust in science, and commitment to action.

**Quenn:** A Vitan symbol that represents the Anthropocene.

**Quendant:** A Quenn Pendant, a Quenn symbol worn as a necklace. An iconic piece of Vitan jewellery.

**Resolve the Anthropocene:** This means to fix the climate and ecological crisis swiftly by euthanizing the fossil fuel industry, restoring the climate by drawing down a trillion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> and rewilding a third of nature. All this needs to be well underway by mid-century.

**Return to the Flux:** Vitan funerary practice seeks for the minerals and energy in a deceased individual to re-enter the flux from where it came thus enabling other living beings the opportunity to use those minerals and energy.

**Technosphere:** the totality of all matter created by humans. It presently weighs more than the mass of the biosphere.

**Thrive in Synergy:** Thrive in synergy refers to the biosphere and human civilization prospering as a result of a synergistic

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interplay between the two. This is to say that the condition of the biosphere can be improved as a result of human actions.

**Uffington White Horse:** The Uffington White Horse is a horse-like symbol etched into the side of a hill in Southern England. The Uffington White Horse is the inspiration to the Vita Sapien Philosophy Practice, Know Your White Horse which describes knowing where to find spiritual solace in nature.

**Verda:** a symbol that is derived from the Quenn that represents the Verdant Age.

**Verdant Age:** The Verdant Age is the potential future time when humans and the biosphere thrive in synergy deep into the Long Future. It is conceivable that the Verdant Age could last of hundreds of millions of years.

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***Vitae-planeta*:** A shortened name for *Imperium vitae-planeta*, the biosphere of Planet Earth viewed as a single living organism. Note the capitalisation and spelling of *Vitae-planeta*, that is consistent with it being a species name.

**Vita Hypothesis:** the hypothesis that the combination of spiritual enlightenment to nature and environmental education is a pathway to fostering ecophany and triggering radical pro-environmental behaviour change.

**Vitan:** A person who has developed all three core characteristics: a spiritual bond to nature, trust in science and grasp of reality, and active commitment to making things better.

**Vita Sapien:** A Vitan who has discovered and actively practices Vita Sapien

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Philosophy. Vita Sapiens may wear Quendants, form or join Pods, and practice the Planetary Quests. Also, the name of the organisation and the philosophy.

**Vita Sapien Organisation (ViSO):** is a registered charity in Australia that advances Vita Sapien Philosophy.