

## **Economics of Happiness Competition – Open Letter – by Sophie Appleton**

Dear Reader,

I ask you to pause. To take a step back. And for a moment, look at the bigger picture.

We are in a failed system, an economy where GDP is the only measurement of success.  
Where the sicker we get and the more we pollute, the more powerful this system grows.  
Where the structure of our system makes us dependent on an emissions-intensive trajectory.  
Where giant multinationals have the power to sue governments for protecting the environment.  
Where there is no value on wellbeing, community, our environment and each other.

We are in the age of corporate capitalism and consumer monoculture.  
Where our supermarkets value destructive and toxic food systems, over our very own health.  
Where the deregulation and free trade of multinational corporations has catalysed their global domination.  
Where the over-regulation of local businesses enables corporations to consistently undercut their prices.  
Where we wastefully import the exact same foods we export, and readily grow.

We are trapped in a constant treadmill of growth.  
Where mega-urbanization is fueling mega-globalization.  
Where we are being pushed further and further from the source of everything we know and use.  
Where we cannot stop rushing and chasing after an ideology of “success”.  
Where “success” is an unsustainable goal that is destroying life as we know it.

We are in an extreme state of disconnection.  
Where we can no longer see the impact of our actions on our environment and each other.  
Where we have misplaced our deep sense of community and culture.  
Where technology is making us more connected, yet more isolated and dehumanized than ever.  
Where we have forgotten that we, and all of nature, coexist equally as one breathing organism.

We are living in an unhappy world.  
Where our desire for love is perverted by competition and greed.  
Where epidemics of anxiety, depression and suicide pervade our youth.  
Where we are ever more lonely, fearful and empty inside ourselves.  
Where we have lost our fulfilment for self-love and human contact.

We are in a distorted reality.  
Where global media locks us into a false narrative of the world.  
Where our university courses are dictated by corporate interests and greed.  
Where we are led to believe that our economic system is independent of climate change and personal suffering.  
Where reductionist viewpoints are manipulating the very fabric of life.

Dear Reader,

I ask you to pause. To take a step back. And for a moment, look at the bigger picture.

We need to understand and feel empowered to act for change.  
Where we intrinsically question and acknowledge our dysfunctional system at play.  
Where we recognize that our ignorance to this system only fuels its power.  
Where we travel and experience the truth of our global reality.  
Where we are open to a new economic movement of happiness, connection and empathy.

We need to foster shared, collective learning and knowledge.  
Where we educate and communicate our broken system with at least five people around us.  
Where we host study groups of 3-15 people, and organize Economics of Happiness film screenings.  
Where we support community-level projects and groups.  
Where we unite to find solutions to heal the world together.

We need to support a localized economy.  
Where we purchase from local markets and businesses wherever we can.  
Where we readily participate in community action, activities and events.  
Where we decentralize our current system and reduce dependence on multinational organisations.

Where we stop thinking as individuals, and unite with family, friends and our environment.

We need to support a local food system.

Where we put our money towards local farmers over supermarket chains.

Where we reduce food mile emissions and the distance from farm to plate.

Where we condemn the intensity and ecological destruction of monoculture farming practises.

Where we support regenerative farming principles to restore the land and our health.

We need to expand our sense of self and inner connectedness.

Where we revalue what it means to be human and to live.

Where we are vulnerable and open with our fears and anxieties.

Where we rest and renew, and learn to say no.

Where we nurture our spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing.

We need to connect with nature.

Where we grow our own food and cultivate ecological abundance.

Where we take time out to restore amongst the trees.

Where we value our plants and animals as equal companions.

Where we understand that the living world is the real economy.

Dear Reader.

I ask you to pause. To take a step back. And for a moment, look at the bigger picture.

We have designed this system, and we can still redesign it.

We have disrupted our planet, but we can still restore it.

We are a voice, and we can be heard.

We are an engine, but we are not machines.