



BUSINESS-AS-USUAL AND SUSTAINABILITY: WHICH PARADIGM ALIGNS WITH OUR BELIEFS?

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ABSTRACT

For today's businesses, there exist two distinct paradigms about what is real and important. Business-As-Usual practices are remarkably consistent globally, and are based on two foundational beliefs: 1) Everything is Separate and 2) Materialism is the Only Reality. Sustainability Entrepreneurs and Sustainability Companies are remarkably consistent globally as well, and their work is based on two different foundational beliefs: 1) Everything is Connected and 2) Spirit and Matter Co-exist to Form Reality. Logical, internally consistent systems based on these ontologies play out in the marketplace and create both confusion and threads of coherence toward the future of life on the planet. This paper is a parallel comparison of practices and methods that relate to these two paradigms. The paper also introduces a snapshot of the position and tension of the Sustainable Entrepreneur who must navigate among business and government systems dominated by a polar-opposite worldview. As Sustainable Entrepreneurs, until we are more clear about what we believe and why we believe it, until we have investigated how our beliefs align or conflict with Business-As-Usual, we will be less able to generate effective leadership strategies for advancing Sustainable Entrepreneurship.