

## **The Eight Points - A Reinterpretation of Deep Ecology**

### **Key Words**

Deep Ecology, Environmental Ethics, Environmental Politics

### **Abstract**

*Naess and Sessions "Deep Ecology Platform" provided a loose framework for a movement that was gaining momentum after a series of successful social and political actions and events throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. Most of the points are essentially adopted from Naess' earlier work, which provided the basis for a number of the core concepts expressed in the later eight points and is largely an expression of a movement that sought to create a shift in consciousness of society towards the natural world. It is probably better understood as a loose framework that encapsulates a world view and perspective of nature which is better understood as an aesthetic movement rather than a moral or ethical movement.*

Work began in the early 1970s amongst a small number of authors on a movement whose name was first coined in the work of Arne Naess (1973) in his paper 'The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary'. It was further developed and formulated throughout the rest of the decade and well into the 1980s with the famous eight points of Arne Naess and George Sessions being published in 1984 which represents for many advocates of this brand of environmental ethics, a foundational ethical document (Keller 2009, 206-211). Deep Ecology rose to prominence throughout the 1980s becoming one of the most influential schools of environmental thought amongst many organisations including the likes of Earth First as well as casting a wide academic net in the process and was influential in the early "Green" political movement in much of the western world. The sudden and dramatic decline of Deep Ecology in the final decade of the twentieth century was preceded by a series of intellectual blows that highlighted critical flaws in the coherency of many core beliefs of the movement specifically relating to its moral and ethical imperative (or lack thereof) with many critics claiming that there is nothing in the eight points that compels its adherents to action on moral and ethical grounds (Keller 2009, 206-211). Many of the core concepts associated with Deep Ecology including the Anthropocentrism debate, and the moral argument for environmental ethics itself were put under a great deal of

intellectual pressure, being increasingly challenged in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. A changing political landscape in the 1980s with the Thatcher government in the UK and the Ragan administration in the United States, and the subsequent popularisation of Neo-Liberal political and economic ideals undoubtedly played a key role in opposing the environmental movement. At the same time, the green movement found other moral imperatives that hit home much harder than deep ecologies doctrine as the movement at large adopted a more humanistic approach to its politics which over time have pushed green politics more in the direction of humanitarianism than environmental action. It is not surprising at all that notions of growth, more wealth and more economic freedom appealed to so many people (ideals that are both core to Neo-Liberal and more broadly western ideologies – at least in principle) - after all, most of us wish for our children to be better off than we were, and to earn more money and become wealthier than us. While Deep Ecology saw a sharp rise in popularity in the 1980s despite opposition politically and an ethical structure that is less than coherent as we will come to understand, became the dominant ideology behind many environmental protest movements around the world throughout the 1980s and early 1990s for people who were discontent with the direction and state of the natural world at the time and the way many people in power at the time viewed it.

When Naess and Sessions published their “Deep Ecology Platform” (1984) they provided a loose framework for a movement that was building momentum after a series of successful social and political actions and events throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. Most of the eight points are essentially adopted from Naess’ (1973) earlier work, which provided the basis for a number of the core concepts expressed in the eight points and is largely an expression of a movement that sought to raise awareness of society and their views towards nature rather than organising a unified and powerful political movement. While some people came to view it as an essentially ethical doctrine, it is perhaps better understood as a doctrine that encapsulates a world view and perspective on nature which is perhaps better understood as an aesthetic movement that draws on an often-romanticised appreciation of nature (Lynch & Wells, 1997). While there are indeed certain elements of these points that need to be corrected, updated, or reinterpreted in some way, they nevertheless provide a meaningful and useful foundation from which to formulate a worldview on which a social movement that is concerned primarily with demanding that the needs of the natural world be taken into consideration in every aspect of human life. Most of the points do not give direct instruction on how to achieve the outcomes that Deep Ecology is most concerned with, choosing instead

to express itself more in terms of social and political attitudes towards nature and society, rather than any ideological or political preferences. These points also hint at, but rarely actually identify Deep Ecology's aesthetic roots; instead it focuses on the attitudes of adherents towards environmental issues. Nevertheless, the vague and generalised nature of the 8 points is such that most people have interpreted these points and Deep Ecology more broadly up until the mid-1990s as a moral and ethical movement more than a movement merely concerned with generating an awareness of nature and an appreciation of its beauty and sublimity – in simple terms, a movement that is concerned with a shift in worldview and not ideology (Lynch & Wells 1998, 151-163). This it seems is as much to do with modern societies attitudes towards the nature of aesthetics and art, and as such seems to be a case of mistaken identity with regards to the nature of Deep Ecological thought. Through an analysis of these points, Deep Ecology may be more accurately interpreted and understood this way, which unfortunately was lost on many of Deep Ecology's early writers who failed to recognise and identify that aesthetics and aesthetic appreciation of nature were the basis of the natural ethic that they were trying to build. Most likely this is because of their underlying attitudes towards aesthetics itself and their desire to enter what they take to be the "higher" realm of morals and ethics. Later in their careers, well after the decline of the movement, Naess, Sessions and Fox seemed to take a very different tone towards Deep Ecology, hinted at a recognition of the weaknesses they had at the time failed to respond to, illustrating their opinions in interviews in the mid-1990s regarding the claim that Deep Ecology was a moral and ethical movement (Keller 2009, 206-211). Naess (Fox 1995, 219) said "I'm not much interested in ethics or morals, I'm interested in how we experience the world ..." and Sessions too seemed to be in the same boat, in his words (Fox 1995, 225) "The search... is not for environmental ethics but for ecological consciousness". Both comments seem to hint at the roots of Deep Ecology, which is that it is not at all a mode of thought concerned with morals and ethics, as it were; rather, it is a mode of thought aimed at raising the consciousness within society so that nature and environmental issues were taken seriously. Conservation, preservation and restoration of nature were no longer seen as altruistic or charitable and rather as imperative obligations to the future of the human species and other animals alike.

*"1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: inherent worth, intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are*

*independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.*” (Naess & Sessions 1984, online)

The notion that life is of value is a non-contentious question amongst human societies, even (all be it to a lesser extent) non-human life in many cases. It is not at all surprising that we place more value on human life, given that humans are significantly closer to us in terms of kinship - however, this should not deter one for considering the validity of this notion. If there is one thing that the science of evolution has taught us, it is that quite literally all life on earth is on some level kin and recognition of that kind of relationship allows one to place a significant degree of value even on the most basic of lifeforms. Nevertheless, it is important that we allow for some differentiation of value between other humans and certain kinds of life, if only for reasons of self-preservation and survival. However, there are problems with the first point; with the notion of “intrinsic” or “inherent” worth is a deeply contentious philosophical position to say the least. To rest the value of life on this notion is perhaps unnecessary, even though many authors would gladly contend that if intrinsic value exists at all then its bedrock ought to be life itself. If one holds the position that intrinsic value exists as many traditional Deep Ecologists do, then such a position as this makes sense, but nevertheless it is a strange position - it seems difficult on these grounds for instance to consider how and why we see some animals as “pests” or “parasites”, and why we do not think it is wrong to eradicate such species from our immediate area. No doubt there are those who would claim that even this is wrong, but it does not seem to follow logically, many animals are quite harmful to us if they remain in our homes, as they often maybe be poisonous, or carrying diseases and germs that can make us sick or even kill us, such things are themselves living creatures - are we then to say that we should allow Smallpox or Ebola to run ramped in human society? It is extremely unlikely that the even the most extreme Deep Ecologist would agree to this. This does not mean that life itself is not of value to us, but its value can be superseded by other interests and demands, for example when an animal poses an immediate threat - even still most of us would prefer if it is avoidable to not kill the creature but to relocate it or ourselves if possible, especially in the case where it is a beautiful animal such as that described in a thought experiment put forward by Lynch and Wells (1998) known as “A Killing Objection”.

The question is, if we are to accept that life has value, and then what kind of value are we assigning to it? Life in and of itself has no value except in so far as it is about to be enjoyed, appreciated or utilised in some way – at least for us as humans. Ultimately, one

might suggest that this is also an aesthetic claim that we value life for our ability to enjoy it, even the reasons of utility and purpose exist to satisfy either our or our kin's utility or purpose. We do seem to have a sense that there is something cold and empty about this universe void of all life, even if that universe is still otherwise fully operational. This sense of emptiness itself points to an aesthetic sense like an unfinished painting we look at a universe without life as lacking a certain something even though life itself on a universal scale is so small and insignificant. It is not moral and it is certainly not a matter of utility except in so far as it allows us to be moral and utilise various things in our lives and yet we are still willing to say that such a world is "cold" and "empty". This it seems is our aesthetic sensibility telling us that we value life on these terms, though certainly not on aesthetic terms alone, life can indeed be useful and have moral worth – but in the end, it is humans that assign and respect that value in the first place not nature itself. But we value nature because it is full of life, and we value that life on fundamentally aesthetic terms. This kind of value then allows us to recognise certain truths and fallacies about ourselves and about the world around us, as we will see when we work through the remainder of Naess and Sessions (1984) eight points.

*"2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves."* (Naess & Sessions 1984, online)

The second of the eight points is perhaps the most explicit in its claim that Deep Ecology is in some sense an aesthetic movement, the wording used to articulate this point hints at this underlying theme. While it may be an aesthetic movement at its core, this does not mean Deep Ecology is aimless or in any sense worth less because of it, it is a powerful critique of modern human society. The claim that "Richness and diversity" contributes to the value of anything is precisely the kind of language one would expect to read in the description of a painting, along with expressions like "form and texture" or "coherence and structure". The idea that "Richness and diversity" is of value in nature, is an explicitly aesthetic statement that sounds very much like an argument Stephen Jay Gould (1998) made in defence of native plants:

*"The defence against all these misuses, from mild to virulent, lies in a profoundly humanistic notion as old as Plato, one that we often advance in sheepish apology but should rather honour and cherish: the idea that "art" must be defined as the caring, tasteful, and intelligent modification of nature for respectful human utility. If we can practice this art in partnership with nature, rather than by exploitation (and if we also*

*set aside large areas for rigidly minimal disturbance, so that we never forget, and may continue to enjoy, what nature accomplished during nearly all of her history without us), then we may achieve optimal balance.”*

Not only does Gould express an aesthetic concern for the “richness and diversity” of nature, but he also identifies perhaps the most significant reason why so many writers in Deep Ecology have failed to identify that they were in fact engaged in an aesthetic mode of thought. Which is to say, as Gould suggests, that we often advance the notion of aesthetic value “in sheepish apology”, with so many people callously placing it well below notions of moral and ethical value - this is perhaps in part due to the modern world’s great emphasis on the notion of “rights”, on which notions of “right” and “wrong” so easily fit. Yet, this seems to overlook the role that aesthetics plays in our everyday lives; our attitudes and our culture are heavily influenced by our aesthetic tastes and judgements, impacting heavily on almost all of the things we take to be “right” and “wrong”.

It’s not so much that individuals arguing for Aesthetic Deep Ecology, such as Lynch & Wells (1998), are trying to say anything significantly different to what the core of Deep Ecology argues - it’s that they are explicitly articulating what many people in the movement have already said, and what many people really mean when talking about value in nature (Lynch & Wells 1998). Deep Ecology has for years said that it is dealing in ethics and morality, while sliding in aesthetic descriptions to justify their arguments for doing so. It’s not that a certain degree of moral judgement cannot be entertained when we are talking about the value of the natural world, indeed it is because we feel that notions of vandalism and destruction of our aesthetic experiences are “wrong” that we feel compelled to protect nature in the first place. The destruction of nature is “wrong” from this perspective, because vandalism and the destruction of the experience for ourselves and others is viewed as “wrong”. But this is a judgement we place on other humans and not nature itself, nature does not judge us for our actions, we do. Nevertheless, these judgements come from our aesthetics experiences, specifically the kinds of peak aesthetic experiences that can only be described as the sublime and numinous. These experiences are seldom far from our “moral” and “ethical” sensibility.

*“3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.” (Naess & Sessions 1984, online)*

The extent of this claim is a source of contention amongst many Deep Ecologists, that there should be minimal contact at all between humans and nature, with the implication that human interference on any level is inherently wrong. However, this idea seems to undermine one of the key points made so far, which is that one of the greatest problems is that many humans do not value nature appropriately (ie Aesthetically). It has been suggested that the best way to educate people on how to do this is for them to experience nature directly as it really is, to let go of the demands of human society and allow our minds and our body to be immersed in and, surrounded by the natural world - yet another aesthetic claim. However, the point is nevertheless valid, and one might suggest that instead of telling us to remove humanity from nature altogether, it is advising caution when interacting with nature on all levels, with a focus on the macro scale. This does not mean that we should not contact nature and appreciate it on an aesthetic level, especially as this kind of interaction allows us to make contact with nature and not interfere with the natural process that govern it. Direct human intervention with nature has rarely ended well in the past, particularly on a large scale - often ending with introduced species wreaking havoc on the native eco-system, or a complete destruction of the local environment altogether (Gould 1998, 7-10). Human growth (population and economic growth) almost always ends in the devastation and destruction of yet more of the large areas of the natural world purely out of necessity and the ideological imperative of growth. This aspect of human large scale interference in nature is perhaps the most important aspect that one should take from this, and ties in very closely to the fourth point, that this kind of interaction with nature is more often than not excessive, unnecessary and getting worse - this is perhaps one reason why our appreciation for the aesthetic experience of nature is gaining such momentum in recent decades and it is growing increasingly scarce in the face of more and more agriculture, mining and cities (Naess 1986, 403-404).

This ties in very closely with the idea of the conservation, preservation and restoration of nature - it is hardly surprising that we place such a high value on the conditions necessary to having “peak” aesthetic experiences because these are the experiences that can offer real meaning in our lives. The observation of our horror and disgust at the bombing of an art gallery, museum or archeologically site for example, illustrates how the destruction of nature can impact our state of mind and our attitudes in coming to the defence of the natural world; the destruction of “priceless” artefacts and paintings often rates amongst the most distasteful and disrespectful crimes in modern human society - even with our advancement of the notion

being made in “sheepish apology”. The undertone of Deep Ecology is clearly aesthetic in nature, and yet for so many people to acknowledge so would seem to degrade and devalue the movement - which is why the notion of an “eco-centred” ethic is pushed so firmly by so many of the early thinkers of Deep Ecology. Typically, such an attitude is held only when aesthetics is reduced to mere preference, and separated from other kinds of perceptual experience - meaning that many people view aesthetics as merely that which entertains them and nothing more. But if aesthetics were mere preference, then a vigorous defence of an individual’s aesthetic taste for any reason would and should be considered completely irrational since it is in this case, a matter of mere preference - and yet, we all defend our tastes vigorously and we claim it as rational, right and above all, true. One reason for thinking that this is not the case is precisely because aesthetics like morality is not a product of the world around us, rather it is a mode of emotional and intellectual perception and projection from us onto the world around us.

*“4. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.”* (Naess & Sessions 1984, online)

The fourth point seems to suggest a Malthusian assessment of populations and population growth, meaning that more people invariably means more food is required to prevent people from succumbing to starvation. With food wastage in much of the western world being incredibly high, and a general reluctance to act on the issue of population growth, this generally means the clearing of more land must be cleared for agriculture - ultimately the removal of yet more forests and wetlands to make way for more towns as well as the farmland to support them. The idea is essentially a Malthusian (1798:1998) in its construct, and not necessarily completely accurate with regards to the distribution of populations and agricultural production - this is in part because this ignores other factors such as technological access (not all countries have the same access to technology) and improvements that increase crop yield, population density and the willingness for people to utilise fertile land efficiently, and the variable quality of the soil and land used in agricultural production – indeed one must also consider the idea of erosion and land degradation over time as a further issue that must be taken into account. Nevertheless, the point is valid, even if the requirement of land per person is simply not a linear or wholly stable amount, and where one’s mindset is that of more profit and more people - nature will at some point invariably be compromised in order to make way for the needs of human society with ever increasing



demand for land and resources, and as such the argument stands even if the Malthusian argument is somewhat simplistic.

We must first understand what is meant by “interference” in this statement, for many Deep Ecologists this has meant the creation of a kind of wall of separation between the natural world and human activity. While at the same time claiming that we are in fact a part of nature, and should hold this thought at the forefront of all our considerations on how we treat the environment around us. This in some sense seems contradictory, where on the one hand, the movement is telling its adherents that we are a part of nature and should revere it, and yet here we have a claim that a separation is required between humanity and the natural world. If we are to look at this statement based on what Deep Ecology is trying to achieve then the following example should draw out a better understanding, and allow us to better position our understanding here: Suppose a wild Elk falls into a river and is clearly struggling and unable to escape. A human rescue party just happens by, and with zero risk to themselves or to the natural environment the Elk is pulled from the river and released back into the wild. This would seem to be the right thing to do (although we probably would not scold the human party for their inaction), quite simply the actions of the rescuers in this case are not at all destructive to the local environment, and simply allowed them to act upon their empathy for the elk. For those who take the idea of a separation between human society and nature to this extreme, they must ignore our capacity to empathise with other non-human animals. Our ethics can and does often extend well beyond other humans, through which we may extend concern for nature in a limited sense - as Peter Singer and the broader Animal Rights movement have argued for decades. However, this concern also seems to feed into our aesthetic appreciation of the animal - a fact often overlooked amongst animal rights activists, and is seemingly indistinguishable from an anthropomorphic bias for those animals which we extend a great deal of aesthetic value towards. This is not necessarily a bad thing to do on the condition we are able to extend that same sentiment to nature itself, fostering a care and concern for the natural world more broadly in this way.

However, a significant body of thinkers in Deep Ecology and other forms of environmentalism would very likely disagree, and argue that we have no right to interfere with nature at all - even in the case of the Elk. But in that same case let us exchange the Elk with a small child for instance and the course of action becomes excruciatingly clear, but still the situation is the same, and still describes a natural process that on this logic suggests we should not save the child - simply because this was an accident that occurred in and around

an unfortunate natural event (Rolston 1998, 163-164). A far more logical interpretation of this point is that the intrusion on nature by human civilisation on a macro level, specifically of deforestation and land clearing to make way for large scale agriculture, towns, and industry is a problem. This kind of separation is understandable and certainly is one we ought to address and assess in the form of population control and sustainable economic growth only. In the end this boils down to the satisfaction of vital needs, and the nature of capitalism which tends conflate all things into dollar sums with the claim that more is always better - specifically this refers to its tendency to do economic activity on a massively excessive scale.

*“5. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.”* (Naess & Sessions 1984, online)

The issue of population is one of the most politically contentious issues that environmentalism is concerned with and has over the years lead to numerous claims regarding the best way to manage over population and eventually reduce human global population to a fraction of what it is now. Population control is itself not necessarily a cause for great concern in the minds of most people, rather it is how one hopes to achieve this goal that is often challenged and typically cast aside in the political “too hard” basket. Few people would argue that population control is an overly controversial idea particularly if it is done in such a way that does not significantly compromise people’s personal liberties - indeed as many have identified there is a right and wrong way that this outcome can be achieved. It must be done in an appropriate and morally acceptable ways that do involve allowing people to suffer.

While there may be issues with claims regarding population growth, and few people would argue that less human’s means less environmental degradation - we would in fact require less land and use less resources – this is a statement of fact. But it is simply a false assumption to think that every person in world uses the same amount of food and resources to sustain their lives, and that the same levels of population reduction in one place would reduce the demands made on the worlds resources (say sub-Saharan Africa) as it might in a western country (like the United States or Australia). It is morally reprehensible to argue that a famine in Africa is just as good at reducing the environmental impact humans have on the world over decreased consumption and the reduction of waste and emissions in the western world - heaven forbid one of the world’s billionaires close down a single mine or factory. It is

demonstrably true that one average person in the western world consumes significantly more food and resources and produces many times the amount of carbon emissions as dozens of people in sub-Saharan Africa (Olivier, Janssens-Maenhout, Muntean & Peters 2013, online). These issues are never quite so simple, and why it is perhaps best understood as a movement that shapes the world view of its adherents towards an environmental consciousness rather than a particular political ideology.

*“6. Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.”* (Naess & Sessions 1984, online)

There is little doubt that a roll back of unrestrained and unregulated capitalism and neo-liberalism would have a dramatic effect on the modern world, not least of all environmentalism and the issues it most concerns itself with. The goal of political and social change that Deep Ecology has been attempting to bring about for more than thirty years, is most closely tied to this notion placing a great deal of blame for the current state of the nature on the kind of political model which has dominated the western world over the last few decades. A strong ally as such has been found over the years in socialist and communist movements that already seek to achieve both this goal - the results of which have very much been mixed throughout the last century. While there is little evidence to suggest that the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were any better at all regarding environmental issues, the Democratic Socialist countries of Scandinavia have emerged as world leaders in this regard (Pepper 2004, 217-231). The ideological values associated with neo-liberalism are deeply embedded in modern society and pervade notions of “reality” and “rationality” in ways that few political movements have done before - promoting itself as having “lifted the veil” of politics and telling us how things really are in a “natural” state. The people who support this kind of world view explicitly believe they are “removing the veil” from politics, and as it were, “revealing the truth” about politics and about human nature (Heywood 2007, p.51-2). While many of Naess and Sessions’ (1984) points previously had been implicit in their criticism of the modern world, and the kind of attitudes that pervade the everyday mindset of many people, point six explicitly articulates the need for social and political change for our own good as a species. The heavily indoctrinated masses of society and the major political parties largely in compliance with the current system making minimal changes except to further deregulate economic and social infrastructure. Green political parties, and environmentalism more broadly has been unable to

gain a political foothold through which it can engage in the many issues that the movement seeks to address; it is increasingly difficult even to voice its concerns without the ridicule from mass-media and mainstream politics, as such protest and civil disobedience has become the norm for many people involved. This has become the mouthpiece through which the Deep Ecology and the Green movement's representatives have been forced to fight most of its battles. The unfortunate state of the modern world is that many of the modern environmental concerns and the solutions to them involve a shift in the mindset of people towards nature and the world around them, and this often means challenging the way the modern political paradigm thinks about certain political issues such as economic growth being intrinsically good.

*“7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.”* (Naess & Sessions 1984, online)

This is perhaps the key point of Deep Ecology that essentially means to act on something that many of us are already innately aware of on some level. That our happiness and our well-being are not contingent on our material wealth or social status, rather it comes from a sense of who and what we are, and the contribution we make to the world around us. It is a sign that we are indoctrinated and embedded in the ideological framework of modern society that we think material wealth and luxuries can in some way give us that sense of worth - this kind of combative and competitive social framework where the one that has more wealth when they die wins the game. We seem to know intuitively that this is not the case, and indeed in a poetic sense it is such a cliché, that “money does not equal happiness”. It is not necessarily that Deep Ecology is advocating for a minimalist lifestyle or kind of voluntary poverty, on the contrary, Deep Ecology in this sense identifies one of the key flaws with our modern sensibility, and its “plastic” notions of reality, its skin deep, shallow appreciation of the world around us, and is never more evident in the way we treat our aesthetic senses.

This is a sense a transcendental approach to the nature of the modern world, where we are in a way overcoming the “natural” state of being in the current system. It is not a minimalist sentiment so much as it is a kind of identifier of our lack of awareness of the nature of reality and the world around (including the reality of nature), this point hints at what forms the basis of living in the kind of change that Deep Ecologists seek to make the world

view of society at large, and encompasses a similar approach taken by the likes of Aldo Leopold (1966) and Joh Muir (1901) for whom it is clear that the basis of their appreciation for, and justification of the preservation of nature is essentially an aesthetic claim that nature offers us something that we cannot artificially create. As Holmes Rolston III (1998) later suggests “Forests are not haunted, but that does not mean there is nothing haunting about forests”. It’s not that we should live in voluntary poverty as some might suggest (though it has been done), but simply that we should recognise the luxuries and optional extras of our modern world for what they are - unnecessary optional extras that often blind us to the true beauty of the world around us. Nature provides a point of escape from the demands of the human world and reflection on who and what we are, through an experience where we are not led around by the demands society and the world we have created places on us. The whole point of this concept is to challenge our understanding of the world, and awaken us from the drifting malaise that the modern world creates in many people who simply drift from day to day through a monotonous existence.

*“8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.” (Naess & Sessions 1984, online)*

The idea that we would be deeply moved to action by an experience as powerful as the aesthetic experience of nature is by no means contentious, one need only converse with someone who has really seen nature through a deeply aesthetic interaction. However, it does not necessarily mean that all people should be involved politically in bringing about the changes Deep Ecology would like to - rather it is simply about inviting others to experience nature and assist in awakening them into a Deep Ecological understanding of the nature of the world around them. It is not a necessary component of being an environmentalist that each one of us should as it were, man the blockade, rather it is most important that we each do our part and live according to the mindset that the previous points identify. While political and social action are very important and critical in bringing about large scale social change in the modern world, it is not all that there is when it comes to Deep Ecology - rather, it is a lifestyle, and a worldview that is propagated through a deep engagement with the natural world on a “peak” aesthetic level (Lynch 1996, 147-160). After all, helping to bring about a large scale social change is one thing, but more important is the idea that people for the most part should choose to live in a way that is compatible with a Deep Ecological world view rather than force people to, it is as important a component to Deep Ecology as any other. It is

important to educate people and provide the means for people to truly engage with nature, to show them what Deep Ecologists see and provide the means for others to see it also, and enable them to sincerely want to make this change is vital. Not so much for nature itself which will simply shake us off and start again if need be, but for ourselves and the future generations that will follow us. Deep Ecology can help in the formation of a more holistic worldview towards nature and our place in it that may help us as a species to form a healthier relationship with it.

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