



# DEEP ECOLOGY AND LIFESTYLE

*Arne Naess*

THERE ARE A GREAT number of definite, more or less easily definable *tendencies* and *attitudes* which show themselves in the way people live. I am now focusing on the differences of lifestyles *within* an economic and social framework which the individual, alone, cannot be expected to change. Supporters of the Deep Ecology movement may be expected to at least try to live in harmony within what they accept as ecologically relevant guidelines, and to allow for more or less inevitable lapses. One should, of course, not look for "complete consistency," whatever that would mean. It would be practically impossible to formulate precise criteria for a consistent Deep Ecology lifestyle. Every formulation would have to be vague and highly dependent upon terminological idiosyncrasies.

It is agreed that it is important to clarify ecological consciousness and how it is revealed in action.

I have found it fruitful sometimes to simply list tendencies and attitudes characteristic of supporters of the Deep Ecology movement, focusing on Scandinavia, and freely enjoying my own terminological specialties. The order here adopted is not intended to reveal differences of importance, nor does it worry me that most items are overlapping. More worrisome is the methodology: I lean heavily on my personal observation.

1. Use of simple means. Avoidance of unnecessary complicated means to reach a goal or end.
2. Propensity to prefer activities most directly serving values in themselves and having intrinsic value. Avoidance of activities which are merely

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- auxiliary, having no intrinsic value, or being many stages away from fundamental goals.
3. Anticonsumerism and minimization of personal property. This negative attitude follows from points 1 and 2.
  4. Endeavor to maintain and increase the sensitivity and appreciation of goods of which there is enough for all to enjoy.
  5. Absence or low degree of "novophilia"—the love of what is new merely because it is new. Cherishing old and well-worn things.
  6. Efforts to dwell in situations of intrinsic value and to *act* rather than merely being busy.
  7. Appreciation of ethnic and cultural differences among people, not feeling them as threats.
  8. Concern about the situation of the Third and Fourth Worlds and the attempt to avoid a material standard of living too much different from and higher than the needy (global solidarity of lifestyle).
  9. Appreciation of lifestyles which are universalizable, which are not blatantly impossible to sustain without injustice toward fellow humans or other species.
  10. To go for depth and richness of experience rather than intensity.
  11. To appreciate and choose, whenever possible, meaningful work rather than just making a living.
  12. To lead a complex (not a complicated) life; trying to realize as many aspects of positive experiences as possible within each time-interval.
  13. Cultivating life in community (*Gemeinschaft*) rather than in society (*Gesellschaft*).
  14. Appreciation of, or participation in, primary production—small-scale agriculture, forestry, fishing.
  15. Efforts to satisfy vital needs rather than desires. Resisting the urge to "go shopping" as a diversion or therapy. Reducing the sheer number of possessions, favoring the old, much-worn, but essentially well-kept things.
  16. Attempts to live in nature rather than just *visiting* beautiful places, and avoidance of tourism (but occasionally making use of tourist facilities).
  17. When in vulnerable nature, living "light and traceless."
  18. Tendency to appreciate all life-forms rather than merely those considered beautiful, remarkable, or narrowly useful.
  19. Never use life-forms merely as means. Remain conscious of their intrinsic value and dignity even when using them as resources.
  20. When there is a conflict between the interests of dogs and cats (and other pet animals) and wild species, a tendency to protect the latter.



21. Effort to protect local ecosystems, not only individual life-forms, feeling one's own community as a part of ecosystems.
22. Not only to deplore excessive interference in nature as unnecessary, unreasonable, and disrespectful, but to condemn it as insolent, atrocious, outrageous, and criminal—without condemning the people responsible for the interference.
23. Try to act resolutely and without cowardice in conflicts, but to remain non-violent in word and deeds.
24. Participate in or support of non-violent direct action when other ways of action fail.
25. Vegetarianism, total or partial.

There are many publically available sources for the study of Deep Ecology lifestyles, such as naturalists' and alternative lifestyle periodicals. In Norway, the periodical published by *The Future Is in Your Hands* deals extensively with the problems of young people, seeking to form new lifestyles and circles of friends. Perhaps more important is the direct contact with people achieved in direct actions.

In recent years, the practical possibilities of a highly developed Deep Ecological lifestyle have been reduced in Europe by economic policies that ruin small-scale enterprises. There is also a dominant tendency to standardize and regulate education and conditions of work. In short, the structuring of society is more detailed, leaving less room for subcultural independence. On the other hand, the reaction against this trend is strong. It would have greater impact if those who support the Deep Ecological movement were more politically active. There seems to be a 26th tendency, however: to find politics boring and distasteful.

In the seventies, when the movement was new and exciting, there was a tendency to be dogmatic: one *should* use bicycles; one *should not* go by air. Bears ought not to be shot under any circumstances. Hunting, even for ecological reasons, should be avoided. One should not visit non-industrial cultures because it would tend to weaken them. One should avoid every sport requiring mechanical means. Agriculture ought to be biodynamic; no poisons should be used. Et cetera, et cetera. Today there is more wisdom, less rigid rules. And the old Indian prayer is taken more seriously: "Great spirit, grant that I may not criticize my neighbor until I have walked a mile in his moccasins."