

My name is Barry Koren. My calling: to create a better, more resilient, more local world. My work: marketing of architectural and related services.

My primary client these days is a very talented architectural firm which has won a number of national design awards. In the current economy (2011), there are relatively few strong prospects for traditional work.

This problem my client and I face in our marketing work is similar to the problems faced by the millions of Americans who have no job or are afraid of losing their job.

At the same time that my client and I, and millions others, are looking for work, there is an enormous amount of work to be done everywhere I look--bridges are crumbling, schools are in disrepair, roofs need to be repaired, homes need improvements. Improvements are needed in the use of land and energy.

This undone work is a symptom of the enormous problems that we face in the US. Unemployment is dangerously high for our political stability. Many people are unable to pay for their mortgages. We are in three wars though there are no foreign militaries threatening our shores. The waste we create threatens the environment and we are threatened by violent weather and global warming. We feel natural and competitive threats to our energy supplies. And we hear that there are simply not enough resources in the whole world to support the appetites of both the US and China.

The traditional tools for tackling these problems are weaker than they've been. The political system is more corrupt and dysfunctional than I've ever seen it. Communication from traditional sources--newspapers, TV, magazines--are becoming more eye-catching entertainment and fragmented into niches. They're no longer sources of shared info that can bring us together and be a trustworthy source of information that can guide people's action.

The bottom line is that the present course is not sustainable--and major changes are almost in view.

The blessing in this is that we have the opportunity to channel this change: to create a better future by keeping only the best of what we now have and harking back to an earlier, simpler time to create a more resilient, more local world.

My vision for this simpler future is this: by the year 2030, when my grandsons will be 19 and 22, to create a world or place where most people can sit around the kitchen table with loved ones eating locally grown food and where there are no more garbage trucks because people have become masters of unwaste.

Whereas there's a scarcity of traditional work for my architectural client, there is a world of work to be done in organizing and building this vision -- certainly for my talented client and me. Whereas our present and unsustainable course scares me, building more resilient ways of living and a new, better culture inspires me. My task is to join with others of similar mind who want to channel the change in a positive direction.