

PRESS RELEASE

THE POSITIVE DEVIANT: *Sustainability Leadership in a Perverse World*

Sara Parkin – Publication date: July 2010



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Book blurb and Table of Contents (click on 'Expand Contents'): www.earthscan.co.uk/pd

Chapter Summary: http://www.earthscan.co.uk/Portals/0/pdfs/Chapter_Summary_Positive_Deviant.pdf

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Let's be realistic.

Institutions and their processes will not change all that quickly.

We need 'positive deviants' who can implement sustainability solutions.

Despite the difficulties.

An economy low in carbon and high in life satisfaction will require thousands, if not millions of exceptional leaders. In [*The Positive Deviant: Sustainability Leadership in a Perverse World*](#), published this month by Earthscan, author Sara Parkin aims to inspire a generation of 'positive deviants' – sustainability-literate leaders who do the right thing for sustainability in a world that remains perversely intent on the opposite.

Despite the rise of corporate social responsibility and new roles for sustainability advisors, Sara Parkin says:

"Very few people in leadership roles today really get the magnitude of change needed. Many more feel they should know, but are too embarrassed to expose a lack of knowledge. And far too many do not consider sustainability as something to do with them - including the majority of courses on leadership and management, the worst offenders being the big business schools."

In a chapter entitled 'Business School Betrayal' Parkin offers a robust critique of business schools and corporate social responsibility in the private sector, arguing that very little about corporate social responsibility is close to the profound transformation needed.

This book offers an opportunity (significantly, a private one) for anyone in or aspiring to a leadership role to get up to speed on essential information very quickly (sections one and two), and, until there are many more suitable courses available, to design for themselves a journey to sustainability-literate leadership (sections three and four).



About Sara Parkin and the Forum for the Future Masters course on Sustainable Development: Sara is Founder Director, along with Jonathon Porritt, of the UK's foremost sustainable development charity Forum for the Future. She established the Forum's highly-rated Masters course on Leadership for Sustainable

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Development, now in its 14th year, and works with people and organisations around the world. Parkin draws on the Forum curriculum in the book – for example Chapter 7 uses an adapted version to help the reader arrive at a ‘good enough’ knowledge and understanding about ethics and values; people and communities; science and economics to underpin other sustainability leadership attributes. She also describes four habits of thought to guide day-to-day sustainability decision-making: resilience; relationships; reflection and reverence. And takes the readers through seven ‘principles of practice’ – areas where self-development “will make your leadership for sustainability more effective and improve your skills in the art of positive deviance.” A range of tools make it possible for the reader to get started on their own straight away.

Sara Parkin also sits on the board of the European Training Foundation and advises on science in society for the Living with Environmental Change research programme. She has recently completed terms on the boards of the Natural Environment Research Council and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

In various roles, she has campaigned for the environment and sustainable development for 40 years, including, during the 1970s and 1980s, playing leading roles in the UK Green Party and international green politics.

Sara is an Associate of the Engineering Council and honorary companion of the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Institute of Energy. In 2001 was awarded an OBE for her contribution to education and sustainability. She has written several books.

Extracts & Articles

Please contact gudrun.freese@earthscan.co.uk if you would like suggestions for extracts from the book or to commission an article.

Referencing the book

The Positive Deviant

Sustainability Leadership in a Perverse World

Sara Parkin

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