



The luxury of being green

Posted by [Yankee](#) on June 28, 2005 - 4:31pm

Many of you might have missed [this exchange](#) down in the comments section to the post called "[Unwelcome Developments...](#)", but I think it's important, so I'm going to repost it up here. In reacting to some comments about changes we should make in investing for retirement and whether it's likely that the financial system is going to collapse, Dave writes:

I'm going to say it again: most Americans are at the cliff's edge right now, any large negative perturbation (significant devaluation of the dollar, even higher energy prices) will push them over it. I'm talking Great Depression II here, no nonsense.

I get a little peeved, as I did with ianqui's post "Make your list and check it twice", based on some horse manure by Dave Pollard, about how we can all adjust our lifestyles to get ready for the crash, e.g. using less energy at home, buy organic et. al. Most people don't have anything resembling those options. I know I don't. Ianqui, if you're reading, don't take this personally -- but most Americans are struggling and this reads like a manual "100 ways to save the Earth from Global Warming" by running your dishwasher less often or some nonsense like that.

This is the Peak Oil site, if we can't deal with reality here, where can we do it?

You can read [my reaction here](#). Don't worry, I wasn't bothered by Dave's criticism. I think he's right, actually. It's true that many of the potential "solutions" we've been talking about are steps that people can take only if they're in a comfortable enough position *now*. But just because only some proportion of the population (30%? 40%?) can afford to buy a Prius*, go to Whole Foods, and install fluorescent lights in their lamps, does that mean we shouldn't do it? Does it mean we shouldn't spend time trying to think about alternatives if they're only practical for some people?

I would argue that it's this 30-40% who are spending the bulk of the resources with their big Hummers and driving all over town to run errands and ferry the kids to enrichment activities. So if those people are able to curtail their energy usage, then we're probably doing a very good job of conservation, and hopefully keeping the prices lower for people who do have fewer options.

If anyone has numbers to back that up, I'd love to see them.

*It must drive Honda nuts that people always refer to the general class of hybrid cars as a Prius. I wonder if they regret their decision not to give the car its own name.

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