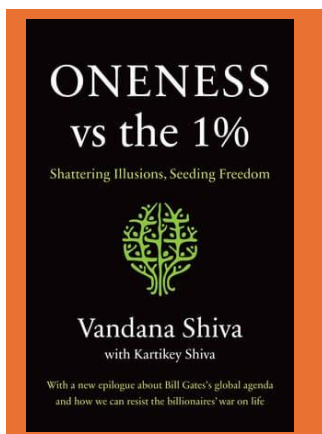




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Oneness vs. the 1% - Shattering Illusions, Seeding Freedom

By Vandana Shiva, PhD with Kartikey Shiva

Reviewed by Marisa Ortiz

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Why read this book? Urgent wake-up call that exposes how modern corporate monopolies and billionaire philanthrocapitalism quietly undermine global democracy, food sovereignty, and ecological survival. It shows how elite wealth dictates global policies on agriculture, health, and technology under the benevolent guise of philanthropy. It revives practical, time-tested Gandhian principles of self-reliance and Earth Democracy to empower grassroots action.

Date	7-Aug-26	19-Aug-26	4-Sep-26	16-Sep-26	2-Oct-26	21-Oct-26	4-Nov-26	18-Nov-26
Time	8:00 - 9:15 AM	5:30 - 7:00 PM	8:00 - 9:15 AM	5:30 - 7:00 PM	8:00 - 9:15 AM	5:30 - 7:00 PM		
Location	Zoom	Incarnate Word	Zoom	Incarnate Word	Zoom	Incarnate Word		
Book	First Friday Focus	Oneness vs. the 1%	First Friday Focus	Elysain Fields of Baseball	First Friday Focus	Five Dysfunctions of a Team	Mission Possible Gala	Unreasonable Hospitality
Author		Dr. Vandana Shiva		Nelson W. Wolff		Pat Lencioni		Will Guidara
Presenter	EBR Faculty	Marisa Ortiz	EBR Faculty	Nelson W. Wolff	EBR Faculty	Don Gleason		Mari Weymouth

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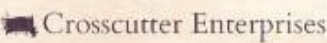
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The Book's ONE THING is about **shattering the dangerous illusion** that the **1%**—a hyper-consolidated elite of billionaire tech monopolies, financial cartels, and *philanthrocapitalists*—can artificially control global resources and human lives. True wealth and freedom are found by **seeding a resilient, circular economy**—one that treats local communities, sovereign individuals, and Mother Earth's living soil with equal reverence, prioritizing interconnected ecological growth over extractive commercial profit.



About the Author:

Dr. Vandana Shiva is an internationally acclaimed quantum physicist, ecofeminist philosopher, and global human rights activist raised in the Indian Himalayan foothills. She holds a B.S. and M.S. in Physics from Panjab University, Chandigarh, an M.A. in the Philosophy of Science from the University of Guelph, and a Ph.D. in the Philosophy of Physics from the University of Western Ontario, specializing in quantum theory. Her grassroots work in seed sovereignty and biodiversity is widely respected by indigenous communities and global institutions. She has authored over 20 books, and received more than 20 international accolades, including the Right Livelihood Award (Alternative Nobel Prize).

Book Structure: Four Chapters, One Illusion Shattered, One Solution Seed

Preface

- **Chapter 1: 1% vs One Earth, One Humanity**
- **Chapter 2: The Money Machine of the 1%**
- **Chapter 3: The Technology Machine of the 1%**
- **Chapter 4: How the 1% Subverts Democracy**

The book stems from these premises:

“We live in times of the possible extinction of our species, as the current dominant model of knowledge, of ‘wealth’ creation, and of ‘representative democracy’ violates planetary boundaries, the rights of the diverse species that share this planet, as well as the human rights and freedoms of most people. Times when the 1% controls the wealth and power to destroy our planet and our common lives, with no responsibility or accountability for their actions, because they have found clever ways to create illusions – of the separation of humans from the earth, and of the 1% from the rest of society, as if we share no common wealth, and no common future.” – vii

The 1% means the extreme concentration of global wealth. The number of billionaires who own as much as the bottom half of humanity plummeted from 388 in 2010 to 62 in 2016, and down to just 8 in 2017. By 2026, global billionaire wealth exploded by 81% since 2020 to a peak of \$18.3 trillion, with individual fortunes surpassing \$500 billion. In a single year alone, billionaire wealth surged by \$2.5 trillion—an annual gain equivalent to the total accumulated wealth owned by the entire bottom half of the human population.

“But we can seed another future when we deepen our democracies, reclaim our commons, and regenerate the earth rich in our diversity and freedom, one in our unity and interconnectedness. This then is a healthier necessary way forward where humans reconnect to other life. This is the Oneness we must fight for.”

Breakout 1: Introduce yourselves at your table. Have you ever heard of Vandana Shiva’s work before? What brought you to this book review today?



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Chapters 1: 1% vs. One Earth, One Humanity - *We are one earth family, one humanity. We are connected through our diversity, intelligence, creativity and compassion.* - Oneness is the very source of our existence, our interconnectedness with the universe, with all beings (including human beings), and with our local communities. Oneness is woven through our diverse living intelligence and creativity. It represents the confluence of our rich and vibrant diversities – biodiversity, cultural, economic, political and knowledge diversity.

Life is self-organized, life is intelligent. - Concern and care for our seeds, our soil, our air, and our water are the real test of our commitment to our future. The processes that are killing our soil, our biodiversity, our air, water and climate balance are also killing our humanity.

Both **ecology** and **economics** are derived from the ancient Greek word 'oikos' which means 'home'. Ecology is the science of the household, while economics is supposed to be about the management of the household. When economics works against ecology, it results in the mismanagement of the earth, our home. The prevailing climate, water, biodiversity and food crisis are the different symptoms of this mismanagement. We mismanage the Earth and destroy her ecological processes when we do not recognize nature's capital as the real capital.

Separation is an illusion, is violence. The 3 big separations: 1. Humans from nature (eco-apartheid) 2. Humans from each other and 3. From our sense of self

Colonialism led to the violent separation of people from their land, resources and territories...If the British grabbed land and institutionalized lagaan (tax) in India, the contemporary 1% are using "intellectual property" to create monopolies over our seeds and food, our communications, our financial transactions, and our friendships.

Chrematistics—the art of money-making, financial speculation, and resource extraction for its own sake. This worldview treats nature as a dead commodity to be exploited rather than a living system to be nurtured.

Chapter 2: The Money Machine of the 1%: The modern corporate "money machine" redefines wealth purely through artificial metrics like GDP growth and financial capital. Shiva argues that real wealth is measured by well-being: healthy soil, biodiversity, seed freedom, clean water, and stable communities. Measuring success solely through financial accumulation destroys the true ecological indicators of planetary and human health.

Modern tech billionaires act as "**The New Columbuses.**" Instead of conquering physical frontiers with ships, they use algorithmic finance, digital platforms, and intellectual property laws to enclose the global commons. This represents a new wave of colonization that encloses both the biological commons (patenting life) and the human data commons.

Philanthrocapitalism. By using tax-exempt private foundations to dictate global public policy, a small group of

Breakout 2: Do you see a negative impact of the 1% and Money Machine in any aspect of your life? Share with your peers.



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Chapters 3: The Technology Machine of the 1%

Our planet has evolved over 4-5 billion years and sustained humanity for 200,000 years. We have farmed for 10,000 years without toxins and poisons. Industrial agriculture started a century ago. Chemicals development to kill people in Hitler's concentration camps during WWII became the agrichemicals for industrial agriculture when the war ended.

In the fossil fuel age of industrial capitalism and in the age of 'digital data', data is being made the new oil, the new lubricant of the money machine. Technology is more than a tool now. It is an instrument of power and control.

Chapter 4: How the 1% Subverts Democracy: Gandhi's Teachings During Times of Hopelessness.

Swaraj: Self-rule, self-governance and basis of freedom. Human freedom is indivisible from the freedom of the earth and the rights of all her beings. Freedom is self-organization, autopoiesis. A society based on Swaraj is a true democracy based on the realization that people are in charge of their destinies. It involves periodic accountability of government through elections; it implies freedom from domination. Philosophy of participatory, direct democracy and democratic pluralism recognizes that diverse communities have diverse interests and in shaping national law and policy, they all have legitimate right of decision-making and self-determination through self-rule.

Earth Democracy: Local living democracy applicable to all societies and communities. Humans can't prosper if the earth that nourishes them is being destroyed. One species can't exploit or exterminate others; one gender, one race, one religion. Humans cannot become 'great' by denying others the freedom, respect and dignity that are their rights.

Swadeshi (Local Self-Reliance): local living economies that grow into national, and finally into planetary economy, in alignment with nature and people's real freedoms, real wealth creation, and well-being at every level. Gandhi defined it spirit in us which restricts us to the use and services of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote.' Localization is ethical and ecological, it reduces our footprint while opening opportunities for creative, meaningful work, producing quality, and enhancing well-being. It fixes the broken circle between production and consumption.

Satyagraha (Truth-Force / Non-Violent Resistance): non-cooperation with an non-participation in systems, structures, laws, paradigms and policies that destroy the earth and rob us of our humanity and our freedoms. It is the deepest practice of democracy, a 'No' from the highest consciousness, the moral duty not to cooperate with unjust and brute law and exploitative and undemocratic processes.

Will we allow our humanity as living, conscious, intelligent, autonomous beings to be extinguished by a greed machine that does not know limits and is unable to put a break on its colonization and destruction? Or will we stop the machine and defend our humanity, freedom, and autonomy to protect life on earth?

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