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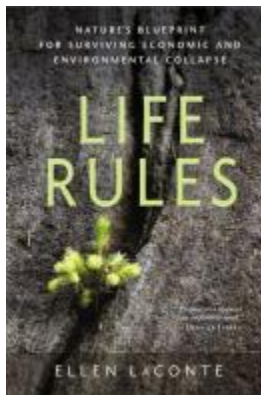
## Life Rules. We Don't.

by: Catherine J. on 09/10/2012

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In *Life Rules: Nature's Blueprint for Surviving Economic and Environmental Collapse*, environmentalist and journalist Ellen LaConte uses AIDS as a metaphor for the corporate capitalism that is ravaging the Earth, and analyzes the symptoms we face as a result, from economic collapse, to environmental degradation, to climate change, to the end of fossil fuels. LaConte sees this "critical mass" of problems as overpowering the immune system of the planet because we are living beyond earth's means, and offers *Life Rules* as a blueprint for change.



Acting Director of the [Earth Walk Alliance](#) and a writer for various magazines including *Green Horizon Magazine* and *TheEcozoic*, LaConte explains successful natural laws and how they translate to our needing "a transition to self-sufficiency in food; multiple forms of renewable energy, locally and regionally controlled; a transformed transportation system; locally and regionally controlled schools, water systems, currencies and banks; a resurgence

of art and craftsmanship of integral aspects of a community's life; and sustained support for locally-owned small business."

By making the universal personal--no one wants to be a victim of AIDS--LaConte urges upon us a deeper understanding of Earth's compounding problems. "Like the diverse parts of the AIDS patient's immune system, every challenged, besieged place on Earth has lost in some measure the ability to protect itself from and minimize infection, to the extent that every part of the Earth's immune system is being weakened."

The comparison becomes conspicuously relevant when she offers the following eight, inseparably connected symptoms of Earth's sickness:

- Food Concerns – when there is a shortage of food, or food is toxic or has no nutritive value.
- Water Shortages – "Privatization of urban and regional water supplies has made water too expensive for many of the people who need it most and has increased poverty and illness, placing a drain on public monies, social services, aid organizations, and economies."
- Pollution – freshwater unfit to drink; air unfit to breathe; toxic soil unfit to plant.
- Hyper-urbanization – half of the world's people live in cities that cannot sustain themselves. For instance, Tokyo City has a population of 35 million and "is almost completely dependent on imports."
- Joblessness – one third of working-age people worldwide are unemployed or underemployed.
- Poverty – "Almost half the world's population, 3 billion people, live on less than US\$2.50 a day."
- Dislocation – When concentrations of uprooted, desperate people converge (for instance, refugees of war), shortages of housing, food, water, medical care and social services can reach fatal proportions.
- Disease is a constant companion of poverty.

LaConte borrows the term "Critical Mass" from nuclear physics where it means, basically, the point of no return after which "something new emerges or is created." It serves a dual purpose: "It can be used to name not only the crisis," she writes, "but also its cure." So if AIDS is the equivalent of Earth's present malady, the new emergence might be the remedy. If we make it so.

*Life Rules*, is now off press and will be available shortly from your favourite bookseller and is available online now at: [www.newsociety.com](http://www.newsociety.com)