



ASIA: INDIA

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

Scarcity of Resources: The resources needed for survival are either being depleted or are, at best, a constant quantity, but demand continually increases through population growth and improved living standards.

Although oil is a very important resource it is relatively easy to replace it, so let me take one which is more essential to life: water. The quantity of water on the planet is constant, but only a small percentage of it is potable. The rest is either inaccessible (like ice caps at the poles) or unusable (like seawater), so we need to protect the precious little water we have at our disposal.

However, more is needed to increase food production to sustain a growing appetite for “luxury” foods such as meat. A recent article published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* estimates that the US food production system uses about 50 percent of the total US land area, approximately 80 percent of its fresh water, and 17 percent of its fossil energy. For the water specifically, producing 1 kg of animal protein requires about a hundred times more water than producing 1 kg of grain protein. Livestock directly uses only 1.3 percent of the total water used in agriculture; however, when the water required for forage and grain production is included, the water requirements for livestock production dramatically increase. And by the way, the amount of grains fed to US livestock is sufficient to feed about 840 million people who follow a plant-based diet.

We are also not very good at preserving the water – we pollute it without much care and we do not ensure that it comes back to its source; roads, cities, houses are all blocking the water’s natural cycle back into reservoirs. And while we’re at it, we pollute the runoff from all such surfaces with chemicals, carbon residues, harmful bacteria, etc.

Water is only one resource; oil is another, and what about iron ore, which is used for construction, cars, ships and so on, but is also limited in quantity? That a resource is limited does not mean we should not use it, but we need at least to avoid wasting it: use-and-throw, excess packaging, laziness, etc., are all part of modern life.

One aspect of wellness is an awareness of nature and its finite resources; how to spend our lives well and avoid wastage, whether in time, calories, fossil fuel or water. Wellness is about balance in all aspects of life.

What do you see as the main innovations happening around the world, those which are game changing and/or disruptive?

Although the Internet is certainly one of the most significant things that happened in my lifetime, I believe that even more important is the change of proprietorship when it comes to information. The Internet not only gives everyone access to an unprecedented amount of information, but also offers effective sorting devices or search engines – and all completely free of charge.

Imagine what one had to go through before the advent of the Internet when looking for something? A trip to the library was mostly free, but results were often limited. Otherwise, one had to find a domain specialist and pay the applicable fees and charges to get information.

However, the most significant innovation is how business models have changed for content providers. Once you had to pay before you could watch a movie. Now one only has to go to YouTube to get entertained for free. To stay in touch with friends, family and even with customers, just log on to Facebook for free; no stamps required.

Want to live a healthy life? Every day you can get free health tips, partake in virtual yoga classes, learn to cook healthy food and even how to organize your work – all for free!

What do you see as the main innovations in the spa/wellness industry (existing and future)?

Actually there is very little innovation of the core of the industry - and that's great. Life is simple and all we do most of the time is complicate it; the spa and wellness industry constantly reminds us of our roots because wellness is not about the latest fad or trend; it's about being natural, back to nature, so to speak.

Look at the icons of the industry, the original destination spas that were all about teaching people how to get back to a healthy path; the ones that stayed the course are still icons, and the newer ones which got inspired are continuing to improve on the execution, but never changing the core value of true wellness, which is simplicity.

What do you see as the greatest opportunities/challenges for the global spa and wellness industry?

Initially the name was The Global Spa Summit, today it has become The Global Spa and Wellness Summit and I believe in a few years it will become The Global Wellness Summit. The traditional "spa" is no longer sufficient; while massages and pampering are essential elements of wellness, we need more than that.

"Holistic" is a term used very frequently in the spa and wellness industry, generally meaning a concept of well-being that considers the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of life as closely interconnected and balanced – on an individual basis.

However, the industry needs to embrace the entire spectrum; to be truly "wholistic" wellness needs to consider the broader aspects of life, such as food sources, water life-cycle, energy-usage optimization, and so on.

The wellness industry is probably not going to save the planet on its own, but it could induce changes to people's mind-set by leading with research, innovation and education. There is already a strong trend towards using natural products, towards minimizing energy consumption and looking at alternative ways to reduce pollution.

Many spas and wellness providers are using organic ingredients both in their spa cuisine and as treatment components.

What are some practical ways for businesses to create a climate for creativity and innovation?

The Summit must stimulate out of the ordinary contributors and ideas and seek to invite thinkers who may not have a direct connection to the industry, but who may inspire the industry to think outside the spa and wellness box.

Spa and wellness businesses must do so too by engaging with matters beyond their day-to-day business focus. Businesses must be involved in their local communities and closely observe larger trends.

I also believe it is important to get new people attracted to the industry, to bring in new perspectives, to find new ways to spread wellness and permeate through many more layers – and to make wellness a choice available to anyone, irrespective of age, income, race, color or gender.

To achieve that we need fresh blood and new perspectives from people who have no spa and wellness baggage, but plenty of energy.

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