

## **Beyond Reasonable Greed: Why Sustainable Business is a Much Better Idea!**

*By Wayne Visser and Clem Sunter (Human & Rousseau, 2002)*



~ COVER TEXT ~

"Greed is good". Remember the phrase immortalised by Michael Douglas who played Gordon Gekko in the 1987 movie *Wall Street*? Well, the world has more than lived up to these words by pursuing the principle that excessive greed is even better.

In an analysis of the principles driving modern business, Wayne Visser and Clem Sunter demonstrate that the predatory behaviour of the lion is symbolic of the way most companies are run today. But the world cannot go on like this. They argue strongly for an alternative and more positive vision involving sustainable business in both a social and an environmental sense. In order to achieve this, companies will need to change - as they call it 'shape-shift' - from the tooth-and-claw logic of lions to the more caring, holistic philosophy of the elephant.

The authors offer two scenarios for the medium to long term: *Oases in the Desert* where the corporate lions continue to rule, but their kingdoms are increasingly restricted by their own destructive behaviour and popular discontent; and *Plains of the Serengeti* where companies shapeshift into elephants which strive for a proper balance between cooperation and competition and a continuing diversity of species, large and small, strong and weak.

The conclusion of the book is that multilevel shapeshifting is required for sustainability. Apart from corporate transformation, it is up to governments on the one hand and each and every one of us as individuals on the other to adopt the persona of an elephant in order to pass on a worthwhile heritage to our children. Keep your trunks crossed!

~ AUTHOR PROFILES ~

**Wayne Visser**



Wayne Visser was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and attended Fairbairn High School in Cape Town. He obtained a Bachelor of Business Science degree with Honours in Marketing from the University of Cape Town and an MSc in Human Ecology from the University of Edinburgh. After working as a strategy analyst for Gemini Consulting and a co-ordinator for the South African New Economics (SANE) Foundation, Wayne joined the accounting firm KPMG where he is now Director of Sustainability Services. Wayne married Kathleen Patterson in 1994.

**Clem Sunter**



Clem Sunter was born in Suffolk, England and educated at Winchester College. He went to Oxford University where he read Politics, Philosophy and Economics. He has been with Anglo American Corporation since 1966, where he is now Chairman of the Anglo American Chairman's Fund. Clem married Margaret Rowland in 1969 and they have three children. He is the author of several bestselling books on South Africa.

~ DEDICATION ~

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO

*Our families for nurturing the elephant instinct in us;*  
*The others in the herd who have inspired us; and*  
*Those who professionally assisted us in trumpeting this message.*

~ QUOTATIONS ~

There is a lone hill somewhere,  
Without an elephant on it.  
People yearned for an  
elephant on that hill,  
In time their prayer was  
answered  
by a young equestrian artist  
who intended to draw a horse  
on that very site.  
A horse is no substitute for an  
elephant,  
But nothing is.

- **Spike Mulligan, 1999**

Akukho ndlovu isindwa  
ngunboko wayo  
No elephant is overburdened  
by its own trunk.

- **Xhosa Proverbs, Zolile Kalana, Kwela Books, 2002**