

## Lawrence Bloom: Captain Planet by Alicia Buller

Meet Lawrence Bloom. His team invented today's ubiquitous hotel cards that promote towel reuse. But the businessman turned earth guru doesn't plan to stop there; he's on a lifetime mission to save us from ourselves. Alicia Buller reports.

One day, many years ago, Lawrence Bloom sat in his luxury Mercedes, parked outside his seven-bedroomed, three-bathroomed house in London's wealthy Hampstead.

"Is this it?" he asked himself, as a familiar charge of fear coursed through his veins.

"I had reached that material place where everybody aspires to be and, for me, anxiety was like a coat hanger: the jacket that I had worn before that moment was 'will I ever make it?' and now that jacket had changed to 'will I ever keep it?'"

In that moment his life changed forever. For the next three years, by his own admission, he got drunk. "It was the Seventies, it was very easy to hide it then as everyone was doing it.

"And then I realised what the problem was," Bloom pauses, "my soul wasn't being nourished. It was then that I decided to become a man of 'right action'."

Bloom is a man who has achieved much in the last 72 years. But perhaps his greatest feat is his radiating stillness; his daughter, the environmentalist Rebekah Bloom, describes her father as 'cosmic'. Bloom is a man who has truly discovered his life's course of action, and is both grounded and energised by it. It's infectious.

Ostensibly, Bloom is a man of great stature on the world stage: he's the chairman of Be Energy, a triple bottom line energy company; secretary general of Be Earth Foundation, a United Nations IGO focused on delivering sustainable goals; and an in-demand global speaker, board member, role model and mentor. But what binds all these personas is Bloom's deep and unyielding spirituality.

### SEPARATION PAINS

"Our current world lens is that we see ourselves as separate - separate from the earth which gives us life; separate from the cosmos that gave us birth; separate from each other, and without each other life has no meaning. Ultimately, many of us are even separate from ourselves. So we have lost our connection with our inherent nature," he says, slowly, melodiously.

"But every decision we make on the basis that we're separate is a fracture, a schism and a breakdown; while every decision based on the fact that we're one leads to harmony,

peace and a really brilliant future for our children.”

## DIRE CONSEQUENCES

Where Bloom really gets into his stride is when he talks about our generation teetering on the edge of a tipping point that will decide the fate of the human race. “As Winston Churchill said when we were approaching the Second World War, ‘the era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences.’ And that’s where we are.”

According to Bloom, the discovery of cheap energy “rocket boosted” us into an age where 1.5 billion of the earth’s population enjoys a standard of living beyond our parents’ and our grandparents’ wildest dreams – while many of the earth’s have-nots struggle even to eat. “Every time you drive a car that’s 180 horsepower, you’re as rich as a Roman emperor with 180 horses pulling his chariot, so that’s been a phenomenal advance for humanity.

“It’s also given rise to new forms of medicine, new understandings around health and quality of life. But the system that brought us those things, like the rocket booster, cannot take us any further because you can’t have infinite growth on a finite planet,” he explains.

## TIPPING POINT

Bloom says that hyper-capitalism and the fetishism of money have led to the onset of three crises: financial, social and environmental.

“It looks like those crises are separate but they are not, they are part of a deeper crisis, which is a crisis in values. But that crisis itself is the result of a deeper crisis and we are moving from an age of change to a change of age. In those moments the lens through which we see the world changes.

“Traditionally security has been about protecting ourselves against each other, now security is about coming together as a global family to protect ourselves against the very challenges that we have created. We must now view the future through the lens of a global society.”

In the next two to three decades our access to water and food is likely to become strained, says Bloom.

“As far as societal structures are concerned, they are so fragile they depend on long delivery lines and supply chains. Most cities have a couple of days supply because a lot of the food that’s going round in trucks is part of the just-in-time process where you minimise warehouse space.

“If there were a breakdown very bad things would happen very quickly. We haven’t yet understood that the imminent danger is not from somebody else, it’s from ourselves.” Bloom says he thinks there are many pieces in place for the development of a brighter, sustainable world but “at this moment, we just don’t appear to have the will to research and develop them; there are vested interests which are very powerful that are attempting to block progress on many fronts.”

## ENOUGH ALREADY

How much pain do we have to take as a society before we realise we have to do something? How many Hurricane Katrinas or Sandys, droughts and forest fires must ravage the earth before we realise we need to take crucial and critical action?

"We have made a god of the economy; there has to be sufficient damage to the economy through climate change to force us to wake up," Bloom says. "Things are getting worse and things are getting better; what's good is the things that are getting worse are getting more obvious - we had the scandal of the bankers, journalists and now you have the Volkswagen scandal. I wonder just how many other deceptions are out there?"

"I believe there are a number of things that have come together to reach a tipping point. My grandfather came from eastern Europe and he didn't even know the phrase 'tipping point' but sometimes he would say 'it's enough already'. "And it is, it's enough already. For the sake of our children, and our children's children, we, each of us, have to now stand up and be counted."

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□□□ Inside the mind of Lawrence Bloom  
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□□□ If I could rule the world, I would...

□□□ help people to understand the intimate connection we have with each other and the planet. If I help another it is not an act of love or even service, in the same way as if I hurt my finger and heal it. It is the simple recognition that I am healing my own body. Also this is truly a realm of love. Every act is either a gift of love or a cry for love.

□□□ I get the most out of people by...

□□□ recognising their purpose and talents, acknowledging them, and helping them express them in a way they find fulfilling.

□□□ Money is...

□□□ like fire: it's a great servant and a terrible master.

□□□ The biggest idea of our time is...

□□□ the quantum physics law of entanglement. It demonstrates oneness at the sub atomic level.

□□□ If today was my last day I would...

□□□ spend it in gratitude for my life and a profound intention to fully experience whatever realm the gateway to death revealed.

□□□ The best piece of advice I was ever given was...

☐☐☐“Don’t sweat the small stuff, it’s all small stuff!”

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