

THE HIDDEN MONETARY COSTS OF NOT USING RENEWABLE ENERGY

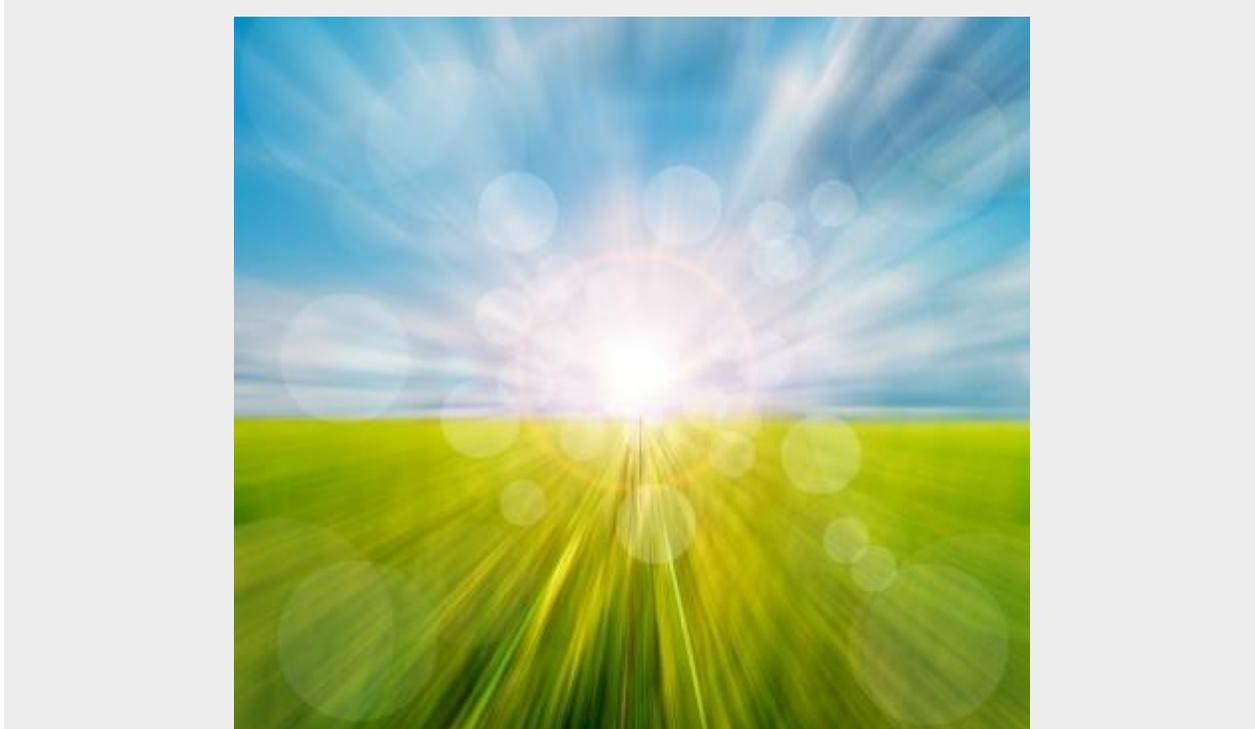


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by [Rachel Simmons](#)

Over the weekend, I watched *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* for the first time. I know, can you say behind the curve? Unfortunately (or not) that's often how it goes with me and movies. Which is what Netflix is for, I say.

The central plot – in case you, like me, are also behind the curve – focuses on two characters, played by Kate Winslet and Jim Carrey, who (though both perhaps a little unstable) enter into a relationship that's happy at first, but eventually devolves, ending in a sudden and disrupting breakup. The pain experienced causes first one, then both characters to try an experimental procedure to erase all memories of the other from their brain.

Chaos ensues as the trappings of such an experiment play out, and even with their memories erased, the two characters are drawn to each other. We're left wondering, are we always supposed to meet the people we meet? And even if relationships end badly, are they never mistakes, because mistakes are never mistakes if you learn from them?

Relationships are like that: many of them we think or feel are infinite, and are let down when they end, proving to be, in fact, finite. But if a person and your relationship with them has left their mark on you, as they inevitably will, then is the relationship really finite, even if it has ended?

Finite vs. Infinite Energy Sources

Energy is like that too. We all need it; it powers America and it is the lifeblood of commerce. We turn to a variety of sources for our energy needs, each with different strengths. And in recent history, we have turned to largely finite energy sources. Sources such as coal. We use it as fuel, and then move on, sourcing more. That's a seemingly infinite cycle, though it doesn't make the source of fuel infinite. But does the use of finite resources actually have far-reaching costs associated with? Not just environmental costs, but *monetary costs*?

The World Future Council released a study [PDF] recently that examines for the first time *the monetary cost of using finite fuels* for one-time energy use, versus in the future as commodities with high industrial value to other industries, such as in the petro-chemical industry. Are they actually more valuable when used as resources for other industries, especially when we can realistically shift to using clean, renewable energy from infinite resources like the sun?

There are, of course, costs associated with change. Investing in solar to power your building has great financial returns, but can sometimes require a significant initial investment, requiring financing. But what this study points out is that there are also costs associated with no change, or with the status quo:

“Protecting the use of increasingly valuable fossil raw materials for the future is possible by substituting these materials with renewables. Every day that this is delayed and fossil raw materials are consumed as one-time energy creates a future usage loss of between 8.8 and 9.3 billion US Dollars. Not just the current cost of various renewable energies, but also the costs of not using them need to be taken into account.”

Costly Capital Destruction

WFC calls this “costly capital destruction.” Once we use these resources as fuel, they're gone. Their value, therefore, is diminished due to their short-term, one-time use, especially as they could be used in alternative situations for “non-energy related purposes.”

It's true that whether it's foreign or domestic, clean or dirty, renewable or not, every business and organization – every industry, for that matter – depends on energy to make their impact on the world.

It's a dependency. But what if that dependency could change; if energy could change from a mere necessity – and expense – to be an asset, and a clear, competitive advantage? To be an asset, energy must be controlled in every aspect: production, consumption, and distribution. This is only possible with clean, renewable energy.

We believe that each and every organization should possess the same power over their energy and when they do, we will have an energy democracy. An energy democracy means energy independence – something that makes sense for both our economy and our environment. Especially if finite energy sources hold value for other industries, for other purposes, and for a longer period of time than a one-time energy use.

Source: <http://brightergy.com/media/blog/the-hidden-monetary-costs-of-not-using-renewable-energy/>