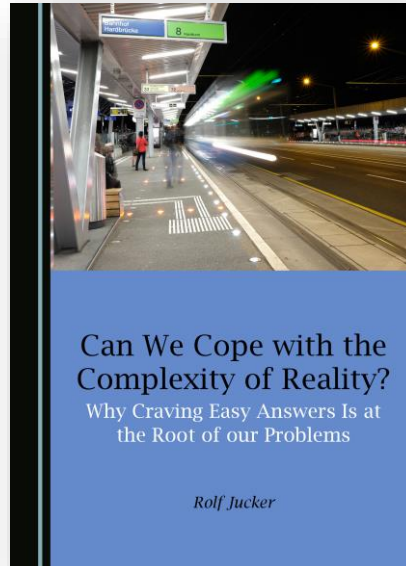


# Can We Cope with the Complexity of Reality? *Why Craving Easy Answers Is at the Root of our Problems* By Rolf Jucker



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## Book Description

Education for a viable future has never been more important than in our era of climate change, fake news, self-illusions, and political upheaval. Whether humanity will have a dignified future hangs in the balance. The urgency of finding sound solutions to a number of complex problems is obvious. We can't really allow ourselves to get it wrong, but the temptation to fall for easy, convenient answers is considerable. This book focuses on emerging insights from various fields which allow us to collectively build evidence-based and wise solutions. This requires us to clarify how to arrive at a sound understanding of reality, which belief-systems and ideologies impede this understanding, and which issues need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. We cannot solve the climate crisis or any other pressing problems besetting humanity by using mental models which are demonstrably flawed. We ignore important findings and insights in fields unfamiliar to us at our peril. Whatever our professional field, we need to self-critically reflect on the conclusions presented in this book in order to increase the quality and efficacy of our educational interventions for a better world.

## A Word from the Author

“Have you ever wondered why the discussions on social media and in politics are so far removed from the accumulated, evidence-based knowledge we have on so many of the issues concerned? This book tries to connect the dots and bring together insights from many different fields. It aims to resist the temptation for easy answers and poses some hard questions on the antiquated way with which we too often try to make sense of the world – despite better available knowledge. It is time to pop one's filter-bubble, to leave one's echo-chamber and embrace the complexity of reality and engage in some serious un-learning of deeply ingrained, but erroneous belief-systems.

This book should provide inspiration and food for thought for anybody who is seeking ways to engage with the future in a solution-orientated way. It is written for the open minded, irrespective of whether this mind belongs to a lay person or a professional or an academic of any discipline.

Unless we fearlessly face up to what we know about reality and about ourselves, *and* base our politics and actions on this sound knowledge, we will never be able to revert the current climate crisis. This also constitutes an urgent case for a dramatic shift in the way we practice education and in what we teach.

This book argues that we have to make a conscious effort to face up to the complexity of the world and ditch the false, but tempting, easy answers suggested by tradition, religion, ideology and the voices of power. Unless we start to base our politics, economics, and education on an evidence-based understanding of the world and of our cognition and its inbuilt flaws, we will not arrive at solutions for our most pressing problems – climate crisis, reinvention of democracy, abuse of power, overpopulation and overconsumption.”



## Critical Praise

“This cognitive dissonance between belief-systems and rational thought and action is a major issue for education and learning for a sustainable future. The book explores how intelligence can be a tool for both propaganda and truth-seeking. A cutting-edge book which all who promote education and learning as a major tool in influencing our behaviour and actions should read.”

**Dr Stephen Martin**, Hon FSE, FRSB, FIEnvSci, *Honorary Professor, University of Worcester; Visiting Professor in Learning for Sustainability, University of the West of England; President, Change Agents UK; WWF Fellow; Policy Advisor to the UK National Commission for UNESCO*

“Rolf Jucker skilfully interweaves findings from the philosophy of science, neuroscience, systems theory and social sciences. He outlines an inspiring framework, based on democratic reflection and educational insights, on how to tackle the great challenges of the Anthropocene. I recommend Rolf Jucker’s interdisciplinary approach and his plea for more rationality to all those who want to think outside the box and above all want to self-critically think about themselves: policy makers, scholars, professionals – not only in the field of sustainable development, but in any domain where complex problems have to be solved democratically and critically by people working together with people.”

**Patrick Zobrist**, *Lecturer/Researcher, School of Social Work, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland*

“The book not only presents evidence for the causes of the ecological crisis that threatens the long-term existence of the human species, but also explores why this is the case and why the response to the climate emergency and accelerating loss of biodiversity has been so inadequate...Rolf Jucker points us towards an evidenced-based position from which a more substantive response to our current predicament can emerge.”

**Dr Glenn Strachan**, *Independent consultant in ESD; Tutor and former Course Director, Education for Sustainability Programme, London South Bank University; Chair, Shared Earth Trust.*

“In various human systems such as the economy, agriculture and food, or democracy, contrary developments are underway and we are witnessing major changes. The “great transformation” that is necessary for the sustainable existence of human beings on earth must be negotiated broadly...Rolf Jucker’s book is important as it illuminates the connection between rational thinking, learning, knowledge and action – and does not shy away from disputed and ignored topics such as religion and ending population growth. He delivers essential input for opening spaces of differentiated dialogue, which are the starting points of change that manifests itself in action.”

**Kathrin Schlup**, *Director, sanu future learning ag, Switzerland*

“This book by Rolf Jucker is remarkable in that it exposes one of the central problems facing our modern societies, namely our individual as well as collective failures to critically assess information and to confront complex, problematic situations...A must-read for any person concerned about the current challenges facing our planet and its current inhabitants.”

**Daniel Kiper**, *Director, Life Science Zurich Learning Center, University of Zurich and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich*

“Prepare to be surprised. Do we get to choose between Zardoz and Soylent Green or something else? What will self-organisation and emergence bring? Rolf Jucker’s timely little book might stir you up a bit.”

**Henry Liebling**, *Retired Senior Lecturer in Education, the College of St Mark and St John’s, UK*

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## About the Author

**Dr Rolf Jucker** is currently Director of the Swiss Foundation for Nature-based Education (SILVIVA) and a learning for sustainability expert, having previously served as Director of the Swiss Foundation for Environmental Education from 2008 to 2012. Having gained an MSc in Education for Sustainability (EFS), he has worked extensively on education for a viable future and published widely on the subject. He is the author of *Do We Know What We Are Doing? Reflections on Learning, Knowledge, Economics, Community and Sustainability* (2014).

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