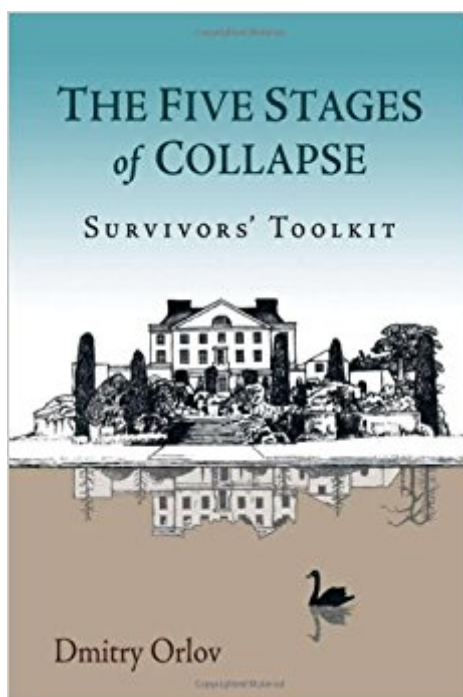


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The Five Stages Of Collapse: Survivors' Toolkit



Synopsis

In the face of political impotence, resource depletion, and catastrophic climate change, many of us have become reconciled to an uncertain future. However, popular perception of how this future might actually unfold varies wildly from "a severe and prolonged recession," to James Howard Kunstler's "long emergency," to the complete breakdown of civilization. In *The Five Stages of Collapse*, Dmitry Orlov posits a taxonomy of collapse, offering a surprisingly optimistic perspective on surviving the sweeping changes of the day with health and sanity intact. Arguing that it is during periods of disruption and extreme uncertainty that broad cultural change becomes possible, Orlov steers the reader through the challenges of financial, commercial, and political collapse. He suggests that if the first three stages are met with the appropriate responses, further breakdown may be arrested before the extremes of social and cultural collapse are reached. Drawing on a detailed examination of post-collapse societies, including the Somali people of Africa, the Pashtuns of Afghanistan, the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe, and even the Russian mafia, *The Five Stages of Collapse* describes successful adaptations in areas such as finance, self-governance, and social and cultural organization. These fascinating case studies provide a unique perspective on the characteristics that determine highly resilient communities. Shot through with Orlov's trademark dark humor, this is an invaluable toolkit for creating workable post-collapse solutions. Dmitry Orlov was born in Leningrad, Russia, and immigrated to the United States. He is the author of *Reinventing Collapse* and maintains the phenomenally popular blog Club Orlov.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

According to Dmitry Orlov, the financial collapse of 2008 could be but a mild precursor to a full scale societal collapse that could end with the survivors leading Hobbesian lives: "nasty, brutish, and short", illustrated by the starving Ik tribe of Uganda after its territory was converted to a national park. Along the way mafia rule might seem pretty good in lieu of a functional government, or perhaps a mild outlaw existence of the gypsy type. Orlov's Russian cynicism of government seems pervasive, except for the example of Iceland, which was small and nimble enough to escape from the clutches of big money. A professed anarchist, he defines anarchism as absence of hierarchy. Thus he holds up the example of Pashtun society as exemplifying many of his ideals, with councils of elders making most community decisions, supplemented by direct democracy on special occasions, all held together by strong clan and family codes of honor. But people aware of cycles of revenge in many honor bound societies may be less enthusiastic. Nor have anarchists demonstrated how to run a large society without organizational hierarchy (explicit delegation of authority), regardless of the method for making political decisions. Nor even a practical method of direct democracy for large societies, let alone one that would work better than a good representative democracy. Thus Orlov's collapse scenario would take us back to a very primitive existence, not just pre-industrial. Some how he imagines such an existence could support artists and intellectuals, but it is never explained how this would be economically possible. Even the city states he holds up as good examples had well defined hierarchies.

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