

We Can't Fix Society Because We Won't Question Money

Adam Tugwell | 22 January 2026



Everywhere you look, people are trying to fix society. Politicians, academics, thinkers, campaigners, charities, business leaders - all of them offering ideas, strategies, and “solutions” for the problems we’re facing.

And yet, for all the effort, nothing really changes. If anything, things seem to get worse.

People feel more frustrated, more exhausted, and more convinced that something fundamental is broken.

A couple of years ago, when I was doing a postgraduate programme at the Royal Agricultural University, I had one of those moments where something you've always felt suddenly becomes clear. I was surrounded by people who genuinely understood the issues around food, farming, and policy. They weren't clueless. They weren't uncaring. They weren't lacking intelligence or experience.

But when the conversation turned to solutions - real solutions, the kind that would actually change the direction of society and the industry and sectors they were teaching about, something became painfully obvious.

Everyone was thinking inside the same box.

Not because they lacked imagination. Not because they didn't want change. But because they couldn't step outside the one assumption that sits beneath everything we do.

Money.

Not money as a simple tool.

Not money as a way to exchange value.

But money as the centre of our entire value system - the thing everything else must revolve around.

And that's when it hit me:

We can't fix society because we refuse to question the thing that defines it.

The Paradigm We Don't See

People know society is broken.

They feel it every day.

They write books about it, make documentaries about it, argue about it online, and vote based on it.

But almost nobody questions the paradigm itself.

Every proposed solution - no matter how radical it sounds - still assumes:

- money must remain the organising principle
- the economy must remain the master
- value must be measured financially
- progress must be tied to growth
- risk must be calculated in monetary terms

- success must be defined by income, wealth, or profit

Even the most well-meaning reformers try to fix the system *from inside the system*.

And that's why nothing works.

You can't fix a paradigm from within the paradigm.

You can't solve a problem using the logic that created it.

You can't build a better world while clinging to the very assumptions that make the current one impossible to repair.

Yet that's exactly what we keep doing.

The Money and Economic System we have isn't Neutral - It's the Problem

This is the part people struggle with, because we've been conditioned to treat money as if it's some kind of natural law.

But money, as it exists today, isn't neutral.

It isn't harmless.

It isn't just "a tool we've misused."

Money today is the operating system of a harmful paradigm.

It creates dependency.

It creates hierarchy.

It creates artificial scarcity.

It creates fear.

It creates inequality as a mathematical certainty, not a moral accident.

It shapes our sense of value until we can barely recognise what matters anymore.

And because money sits at the centre of our value system, everything else - people, community, the environment - becomes negotiable.

Once something becomes negotiable, it becomes expendable.

That's why the system feels cruel.

That's why it feels rigged.

That's why it keeps producing outcomes that nobody actually wants.

This isn't a glitch.

It's the design.

Why We Stay Trapped

People can't imagine a world that isn't built around the money system we have now.

They can't picture value without price.

They can't picture security without income.

They can't picture contribution without employment.

They can't picture community without commerce.

They can't picture governance without budgets.

So when they look for solutions, they try to carry all of that with them.

They want a better world...

But they want to take the old world with them.

They want change...

As long as nothing fundamental has to change.

They want transformation...

As long as the money paradigm remains untouched.

This is why every solution ends up protecting the problem.

The Doorway We Keep Walking Past

There *is* another way.

There *is* a different paradigm.

There *is* a world beyond the money-centric system.

But you can't see it until you stop worshipping the current one.

And I'm not asking anyone to leap into the unknown or accept a fully formed alternative.

I'm not asking anyone to imagine a world without exchange or structure.

I'm not even asking anyone to agree with me.

All I'm saying is this:

There's a doorway here that almost nobody is looking at.

You don't have to step through it today.

You don't have to picture everything on the other side.

You don't have to commit to anything.

But at the very least, we should be willing to turn toward it and admit that it exists.

Because once you see the doorway, you can't unsee it.

And once you realise that every solution we've tried has been trapped inside the same room, the idea of looking beyond it stops feeling radical - and starts feeling like common sense.

We can keep rearranging the furniture.

We can keep repainting the walls.

We can keep arguing about where the chairs should go.

Or we can finally acknowledge that the room itself is the problem - and that stepping through that doorway is the only way anything truly changes.

Further Information

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