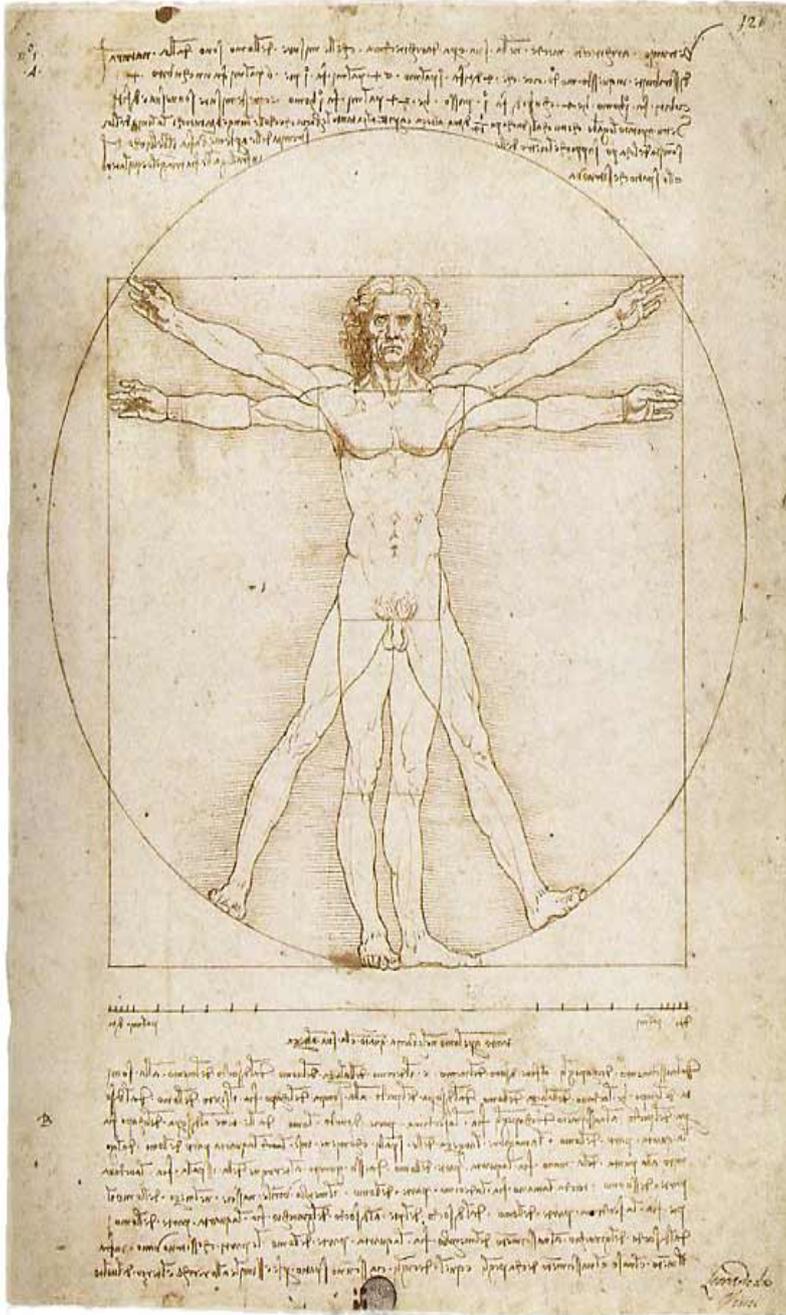# Deep thoughts: How can we change the world?

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LONDON -- There's no sense starting the year off modestly. No one thinks that 2009 will be a modest year anyway.

A website that I hadn't previously heard of, called Edge, has asked the simple question "What

will change everything?" And over 100 luminaries have answered. I haven't read them all (no sense lying.) But there are some interesting ones. Have a read.

"Big institutions, because they operate on longer time-scales and require structures of social trust, don't cohere. There isn't time for them. Long term projects are abandoned—their payoffs are too remote. Global projects are abandoned—not enough trust to make them work. Resources that are already scarce will be rapidly exhausted as everybody tries to grab the last precious bits. Any kind of social or global mobility is seen as a threat and harshly resisted. Freeloaders and brigands and pirates and cheats will take control. Survivalism rules. "

I know this quote sounds ugly and apocalyptic. But I find it great grist for the mental mill. What if businesses didn't know how to maintain social trust? What if long-term projects were abandoned?

What is the role that business has in up keeping and sustaining society? What role does it have in ensuring we continue to evolve?

Not much that it has to consciously or conspicuously maintain or support. Because there's no structure or 'super-ego' there to manage that kind of process. If business does anything it is as a by-product. But there's no denying that business DOES support society and our social evolution. Books like [The Corporations](#), [Tescopoly](#), [No Logo](#) and others -- a genre we might call *capitalism-horror* books -- suggest the opposite.

I think it's worth a longer conversation. Particularly now that many, many more things that we hold to be true, seem to be up for discussion.

What do you think?

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