



## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

# WELCOME TO THE WECONOMY

By Craig Kielburger, Holly Branson, and Marc Kielburger

*In the WEconomy, you can make money and change the world — you can make money by changing the world. It's that simple.*

The WEconomy is an emerging economic system driven by purpose and profit. It reflects the interconnected nature of our economy, environment, and social welfare so that business works in the interest of the greater good.

We live in turbulent times. As antiglobalization forces have so visibly impacted the world, so many are understandably afraid that humanity is moving backwards when it comes to helping the planet's most impoverished and disadvantaged. Problems that should unite us, like climate change and a growing wealth gap, are abandoned to partisan politics. World leaders promise to build walls, exit political unions, and retreat from economic alliances, withdrawing inward. So many of us are divided along racial, religious, and political lines that the rise of the individual and a “me first” mentality seems inevitable. It's enough to make even the most optimistic idealists furrow their brows.

But progress happens in fits and starts; this too shall pass. We're firm believers that the “building walls” sentiment is a blip fostered by fear and

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misunderstanding, and that humankind is generally on a march toward a more open, interconnected world. Our global village is smaller than at any other time in human history. Individuals are connected and empowered by more knowledge, more information, and more tools, and can more easily mobilize around a cause. Across the globe, millions of individual volunteers and people in business, government, and nonprofits are committed to making the world a better place.

***“I truly believe that if every company in the world adopted this philosophy, all of the world’s problems could be solved.”***

—Richard Branson

So, despite what may seem like doomsday headlines, it’s not the end of the world as we know it. Why? Because many of us are focused on moving the world forward, on fostering progress, not just by engaging politically or reaching out to our neighbors, but also by turning business into a force for good. It’s now possible to build companies and social enterprises that tackle the planet’s most dire problems. Workers can now bring their personal values to the office, giving back on company time.

Most people are driven in varying degrees by the need to do good, balanced against the need to be financially successful. We came together to write this book because we all learned, despite our different paths, that choosing profit or purpose at the expense of the other is a false dichotomy. You can do both. You should do both.

When purpose and profit unite—and we will show you that they do—the economy, the individual, and the community thrive.

Changing the world shouldn’t be a task saved for extreme altruists working without pay. The best and brightest from all economic and social sectors can survive and thrive while tackling our planet’s biggest challenges.

As three thirty-somethings on the cusp of this new movement, we are in a unique position, each bringing a different voice from the big three players in the WEconomy: business (Holly Branson), charity (Craig Kielburger), and social enterprise (Marc Kielburger). Over the past



couple of years, we've pored over countless business books, but never found one that brought together voices from all three sectors. We each have our own experiences to draw from (you will hear a lot about Virgin, WE Charity, and ME to WE). We write about what we know—drawing from our mistakes and learnings. We'll, of course, introduce ourselves properly, but first, we would like to introduce you to our mentors—those who helped us recognize the power of purpose and profit combined.

## **Our Big Three Inspirations: Oprah, Richard, and Jeff**

We are lucky to have picked the brains and learned from three prominent innovators in the worlds of business and social enterprise. These titans were the forerunners of the WEconomy, and as such, we tip our hats to our favorite teachers.

Not many of us would mind being Oprah Winfrey, Richard Branson, or Jeff Skoll—at least for a few days anyway.