

# THRIVABLE INSIGHTS FROM THE THRIVABILITY MATTERS WEBINAR

Hi, passionate thrivability enthusiast. We live in unprecedented times. The numbers prove that climate change is here to stay. Social injustices corrupt the very fabric of our society, and misinformation and false narratives clog our devices through mainstream and social media. It's important to have reliable information from people who stand to gain nothing from sharing it with you. A person's agenda defines their motivation. THRIVE's agenda is to assist others to build a thrivable future, while our passionate volunteers walk the talk to deliver an authenticity that is difficult to find elsewhere.

Every month, THRIVE delivers a knowledge-filled [webinar](#), straight to your screens, providing statistics, facts, tips, tricks, and hints on how we can solve the problems our world faces everyday. from new innovations and discoveries, to the actions that people and communities take every day to make our world just a little more thrivable.

Each month, a particular solution is unpacked, disseminated, and investigated, to see how it applies to us and how we can play as a global team, on the playing field of Earth, to reach these goals. It isn't enough for us to sit passively by and let governments and businesses make our decisions for us. After all, their motivation is driven by their agenda. What does that mean for us?

Our aim is to arm you with the knowledge to change from being simply sustainable to terrifically thrivable. Therefore, I'd like to introduce you to Dr. Richard Denton. He was an esteemed guest for the December 2024 Thrivability Matters Webinar, who spoke to us as part of the *SDG 16 & 17 - Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions, AND Partnerships for the Goals // Sustainable Policies* theme. Richard's focus was on the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons, and the need to resolve conflicts between nation states through diplomatic means. The thrivable insights that

follow are his precious pearls of wisdom that he generously shared with us during the Q&A session that follows every webinar.

## INTRODUCING DR. RICHARD DENTON



Dr. Richard Denton feels that as a doctor, he has looked after his patients and their families. As a mayor of Kirkland Lake, he has sought the welfare of his community.

Now in his retirement, he is working for common security—the mutually assured survival of all sentient beings.

He formerly served as the North American co-chair of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, an organisation that was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985.

Prevention is the only answer to nuclear war as there is no treatment post-war. We must learn to settle our conflicts through diplomacy and nonviolence.

## Q & A

***There is depleting trust among nations and increasing belief in holding nuclear arms to ensure security. My question is, what can be taken to rebuild trust and encourage concrete actions toward nuclear disarmament?***

Excellent question. Yes, "trust" is very important and it takes time to build but can be destroyed quickly. Working on treaties is one way to build confidence and trust in the "other". Unfortunately, most of the treaties that have been established, have now been abandoned and states have backed out of them.

The START treaty is the last in this regard and it is threatened to not be renewed in 2026 when it expires. As I mentioned in my talk, there are treaties that have been signed but not ratified yet, but still carry much social influence. An example is the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty that has prevented countries from testing nuclear weapons. North Korea unfortunately, backed out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2002 and tested nuclear weapons from 2006 to 2017 and has now said that it has stopped testing in 2018. That is encouraging.

Using inflammatory language by leaders does not help, of course. Keeping the lines of communication open is helpful. Closing embassies is not. Lifting sanctions would encourage dialogue. Removing illegal nuclear weapons in Europe (Russian missiles in Belarus, and American nuclear weapons in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey) would also be helpful. Taking nuclear weapons off hair trigger alert would be helpful.

Making statements like “no first use” would be helpful. Stopping the modernisation of nuclear weapons, though it would be expensive, would also be helpful.

***Artificial Intelligence has been taking centre stage in all domains, and you rightly pointed out that militaries and wars are no different to it. What can international organisations and governments do to monitor and control the development and spread of such advanced technologies in wars and ensure global security and ethical usage?***

Good question - governments usually don't want people monitoring these types of activities. It is “classified”, top secret.

Thus, NGO's and the United Nations does the monitoring as best they can. There are many organisations that do this, and they look at a focused particular aspect to find this information.



***How can sustainable policies ensure long-term peace, justice, and equity while balancing economic growth and environmental sustainability?***

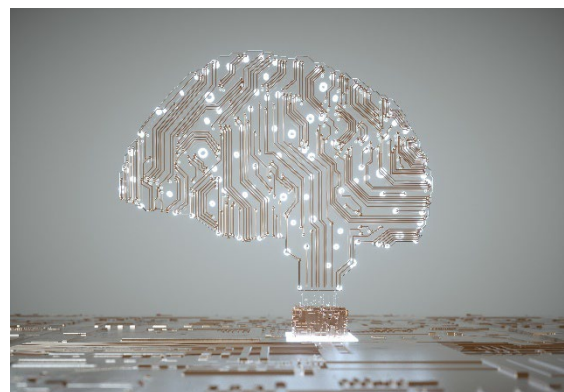
Another great question. The defence industry in the USA has manufacturing plants in all the states to encourage their sustainability.

But more jobs are created in non-military manufacturing and in health and education and the environment.

We must spend money not on national security but on human security. We need to spend the money on research, education about the climate crisis, pandemics, poverty, etc.

Kasha Sequoia, a Gen X film director, is making a movie, “1.5 Degrees of Peace,” that points this out by interviewing Gen X people as well as others to point out how the military is harming our economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Some people say that we can't afford environmental controls but we are finding out that more frequent and severe climate changes are going to cost us a lot more. We cannot afford not to restore our environment.



***How do we strike balance between technological advancements and ethical responsibilities when it comes to AI / military tech / sustainability / security?***

A great question. This is best done through education, through conferences, through having ethical experts discuss these issues and then create treaties to enforce the guidelines. You are correct that AI can be used for good and evil.

Unfortunately, scientists develop the technology without looking at or

realising the potential problems. Creating nuclear weapons is a case in point.

***How do you see the role of education in increasing awareness and fostering solutions to challenges like climate change/atomic weapons/AI?***

Education is the most important area to foster solutions. We need to be teaching this in our schools.

Unfortunately, big businesses, like General Dynamics, are now going into the schools to instil their viewpoint that students should be working for them to make more military "advances".

In Canada, our National Research Council used to fund basic science but now, like in the US, funds practical applied research.

Universities, due to underfunding, also do research for the military that funds them. They also try to patent discoveries so that they can make more money.

As above, we need to think about ethics of research. I think that we will see a big change in education in the US in the next four years, and I don't think that it will be for the better.



***What is one positive trend or innovation you've seen in your field recently that gives you hope for the future?***

There are many things that give me hope. We have gone from about

70,000 nuclear weapons to 13,000. South Africa had nuclear weapons and dismantled them under the auspices of the IAEA. Canada and Greece, Kazakhstan and Ukraine sent "their" nuclear weapons back to their host countries (USA and Russia respectively) and yet have stayed on friendly terms with their hosts.

Finland and Sweden on joining NATO will not host nuclear weapons.

Various countries are attending meetings of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as observers. More countries are signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Various cities and states in the US are signing on to Back from the Brink Pledge and cities around the world are signing the ICAN Cities Appeal that supports the TPNW and are becoming International Cities of Peace.

I remain optimistic.



If you found value in this webinar, and loved it as much as we did, please register for our next exciting webinar at [thrivabilitymatters.online](https://thrivabilitymatters.online).

We can't wait to see you there. Keep on thriving!

# Thank You

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