

Chapter 1 -- “The problems of water are, for the moment, mostly invisible” (p .8), and “all water problems are local” (p. 19). Discuss why water issues should be visible and discussed nationally.

What are the benefits of a national or international conversation around water, even if the problems are local?

Chapter 2 -- We were reminded in this chapter that most of the water on Earth does not exist in any of the three familiar states (ice, liquid, vapor) (p. 32), that most water exists in a fourth form, locked in the rock deep in Earth's mantle. The chapter also discusses the importance and significance of biological water (p. 36).

So should we redraw the water cycle? How or why not?

Chapter 3 -- Las Vegas has an obsession with water – displaying it, unfurling it, playing with it, flaunting it (p. 53). The Strip is a demonstration of water imagination, of water mastery, and also of absolute water confidence (p. 54). Face it – we love Las Vegas, a place that gets 36 million visitors a year – 86% of whom are Americans. In fact, 10% of the country visits Vegas every year (p. 55). But with washing all of those hotel linens and watering the golf courses, Las Vegas has a water emergency. Can there be a balance reached for tourism versus water use? Or should there be laws and strict regulations for water use in Vegas, even if it impacts tourism?

Chapter 6 -- Understanding the experience of Toowoomba, and of Australia, is so important. They are a window to the future for the United States and the rest of the developed world (p. 152). As with many other things in modern society, we are more comfortable in ignorance (p. 157). But Australia has taken their urgency about water issues and created a cabinet-level minister for water/climate change. Water is a topic of daily conversation, debate, worry, and speculation, and written about in Australia's major newspapers every day (p. 166). Would this approach work in the United States? Can/should we create a high-ranking government-level position? Would daily mass media blasts be effective?

Chapter 7 -- In Chapter 7, we meet Laurie Author, a rice farmer whose “two chief weapons he deploys against the drought are an absolutely unrelenting work ethic... and an equally unquenchable good cheer” (p. 188). But the chapter continues to say that water scarcity always creates water consciousness (p. 189), and water envy becomes more than a matter of resentment, social friction, and stands in the way of making good choices (p. 193).

So do you agree with this statement...
water is a sociology problem? (p. 211) Why/why not?

Chapter 10 -- The theme of the book is “our relationship to water” (p. 308). The author states that we all need to update our idea of what “clean water” means (p. 304).

So how would you define your relationship to clean water, and what that relationship means?