

Thrivability

A Collaborative Sketch

Curated by Jean Russell

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First Glance

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*The following page is artwork
courtesy of Hava Gurevich.*





Introduction

Jean Russell, Thrivable.org - Chicago, IL, USA

Thank you for viewing this book. It comes alive in your gaze. I want to introduce you to thriving by answering some of the questions you have. I am guessing that they might be questions like - what is thriving and who are these people contributing to it?

What is thriving - a working definition

In the dance between the individual and humanity as a whole, there is an aliveness. In aliveness, there is a yearning for thriving. All living things strive to move beyond survival to truly flourish. Even in the development of this very project, the aspiration for thriving was clear — the enthusiasm of a very diverse circle of people focused on a simple idea: that the goal of evolving our behavior should be to thrive. And it gives rise....to this book.

Thriving is our path out of unsustainable practices toward a world where all people have a high quality of life, a voice, and a nurturing earth supporting them. Using whole systems approach, we evolve our way of being together, of collaborating, so that our collective wisdom and action bring forth a flourishing world and thriving life.

Why these words and phrases?

There is no single recipe or discrete list of requirements for thriving. However, I created several groups of words and phrases that relate to it in some powerful way. Perhaps they reframe a perspective or engage in a critical role. The contributors of this book refined and evolved the title words and phrases. It is an exploration they have joined me in, and I hope you will join us too.

A bit about our contributors

Our contributors are from widely different fields - from social entrepreneurship to philanthropy, from deep tech space to community activism, from neuroscience to labor and economic history, from social network analysis to storytelling. I expect that you, the viewers and participants, are a wide range of people too. Like you,

the contributors are from a vast array of places in the world from Stockholm, Brussels, and London to Thailand, Australia, and Uganda, and include Seattle, San Francisco, Portland, NYC, Los Angeles, Houston, Cleveland, Chicago, and Boston. From noted academics to get-your-hands-dirty entrepreneurs, from scientists to the tree-climber next door, we connect them together to lay out the general topography of a thriving world.

Together we sketch our view of thriving. We may not all agree. However, I think you will find, as I did, that while the field of interest may be different, the core principles, values, and beliefs about thriving come through consistently, as core words re-appear on other pages. Please enjoy this curated collaborative sketch of thriving. I invite you into the conversation.

What does thriving mean to you?

What does it mean for those of us who suffer?

Are we thriving already, only becoming less so?

How do you apply the idea of thriving in practice - in your life, at your work, in your community?

How is it possible to co-create a thriving world?

“A good question sparks more questions,” says one humble, extraordinary, and curious friend of mine. I think he is right.

In grace and with gratitude,
Jean Russell

Thrivable.org strives to equip agents of transformation in order to co-create a thriving world. We reveal the breadth of domains and their interweaving. We enable thrive agents to know where they are and what they can do and be for collective thriving.

The Case for Thrivability

Niclas Ihrén, Tällberg Foundation - Sweden

A path is needed.

Our global human (increasingly conformist!) society is like a huge train running at full speed. There are so many arms shoveling coal to keep the speed up that the changing landscape rushing by outside is hardly discernible. Yet we know, with increasing certainty, that we are running towards a cliff. We need not only to slow down, but to change course altogether. Not so easy when you are a train on rails.

We know that the current growth paradigm with growing population, growing economies and even faster growing overuse of our natural resources will leave us with a world deprived of all its natural richness. What used to be abundant are already becoming scarce: from oil, to minerals, fresh water, fish, animals, rainforests, fertile land.

We know where this development leads us, because it is a path followed by many human cultures before, although in smaller scale. The difference is that this time we have all the knowledge. We have the knowledge and power to change. We have to abandon growth for growth's sake until collapse (which is the logic of the cancer cell) in exchange for a development path based on humanistic values and harmony with our surrounding environment.

A path is needed, where we as a species can thrive in harmony with an environment which gets richer, not just in financial terms, but also including our natural capital.

We need Thrivability.



Photo courtesy of Jean Russell

The Highline in NYC, where an old railway was converted into a park.



Values

Photo courtesy of Hava Gurevich

Visit thrivable.org to join the conversation.

Clarity

John Steiner, mesh weaver, Great Freedom/Balanced View emissary - Boulder, CO, USA

Clarity: the particular use of this word, as part of a simple, yet universal language, is offered here on behalf of [Great Freedom/Balanced View](#) whose mission is clarity/awareness for the benefit of all and whose trainings support leaders and innovators in all fields.

One could say this movement is a reinvention of the perennial wisdom teachings for our era. From the vantage of the timeless wisdom traditions, who/what we truly are has been described as Awareness/Source/the View/God/Clarity/Love/Serenity/Essence/Vast Expanse/Peace/the Basic State of Natural Perfection...

- Once we instinctively recognize our fundamental nature as short moments of awareness/clarity repeated many times until they become continuous (the one simple practice)
- And understand that from this perspective all that's ever really going on is clarity/awareness and our points of view (all our thoughts, feelings, sensations, and experiences — any object of perception) and that our points of view/contents of awareness/clarity are the inseparable dynamic expression of clarity itself with no independent nature of their own,
- Then complete mental and emotional stability becomes possible. And one's capacity to contribute to the world enhances greatly from a reliance on clarity (and its inherent qualities of wisdom, love, compassion, natural ethics, and skillful means). Life becomes more thrivable, personally and professionally, and contributes to a thrivable world for the benefit of all. This work is like a jet fuel to enhance our natural strengths, gifts, and talents.

Clarity can also be understood as letting points of view be just as they are, with nothing to change, avoid, indulge or replace. Our basic state of natural perfection outshines our habitual points of view of imperfection.

Our common belief in the independent nature of points of view can be said to be leading us to extinction. An instinctive understanding of the nature of mind/reality (the simplicity of Clarity, of the View and points of view) offers a pathway to a harmonious, collaborative, thrivable future.

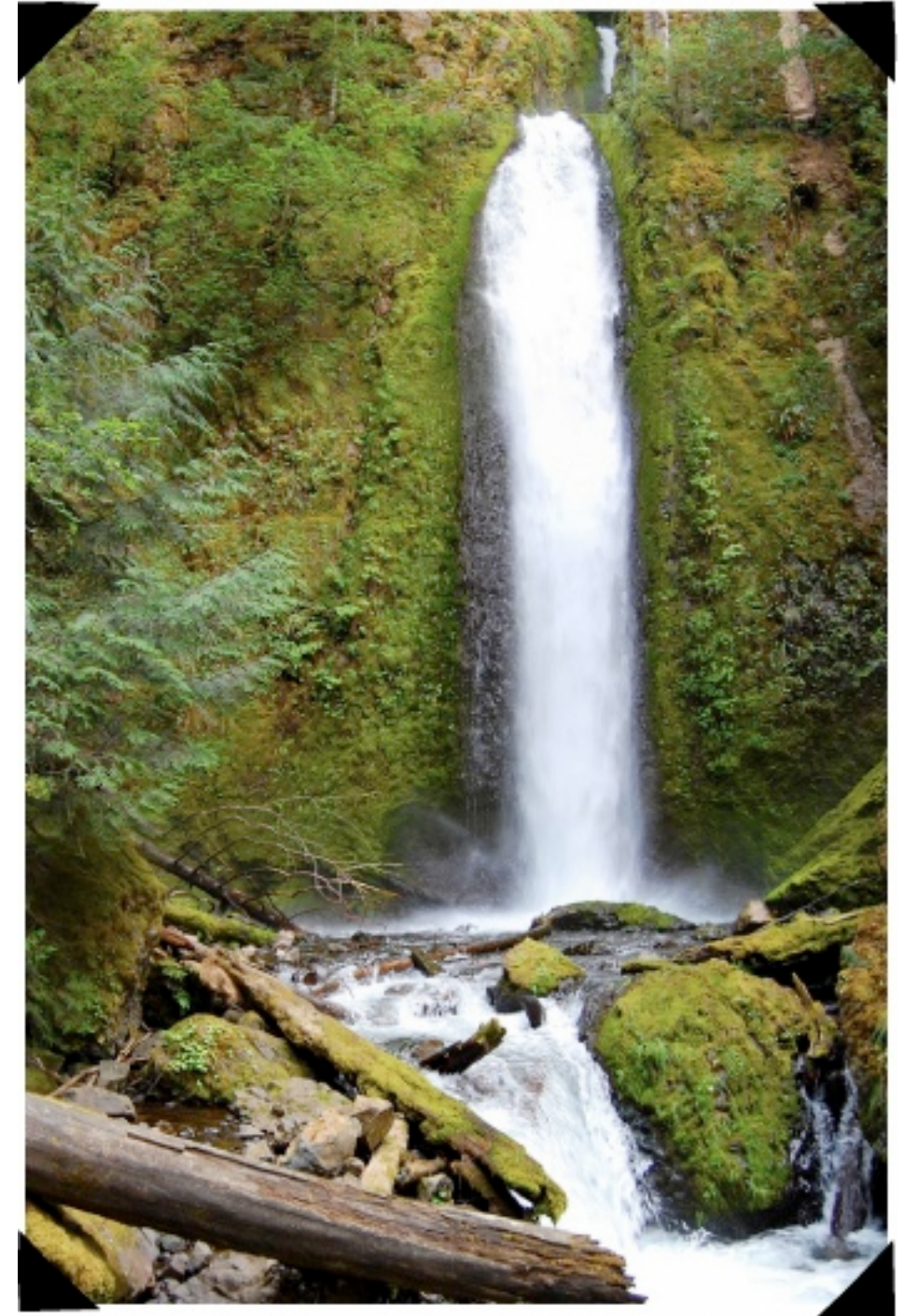


Photo courtesy of Mark Andrew Boyer for OrganicNation.tv

Connectivity

Clay Shirky, NYU - NYC, NY, USA

Connectivity is like vanilla extract, except when it's like a pick-up truck.

Vanilla first...while we were making a cake for her 6th birthday, my daughter asked me: If vanilla extract is so good, why don't we use more than just a teaspoon? I explained that some things are good in small amounts but not in large ones. (I'm sure I will have to re-explain this when she is an adolescent.)

Connectivity is like that, in both its technological and social manifestations. We are a social species, and the ability to connect to others is deeply appealing, so tools and techniques that make connecting easier make us connect more. (Facebook's business model in one sentence.)

The problem is that too much connectivity can have paradoxically anti-social effects. There's always someone new to meet, some new conversation to join, some new group to be part of, but if we avail ourselves of all the connectivity, we end up with lots of weak ties ("You have 1,536,755 friends!") while weakening our strong ties — the people to whom we're deeply, persistently connected.

Connectivity, like vanilla extract, generally flavors life best in small doses, leaving us with a balance of weak ties and strong ones. The strong ties rely on something social scientists call "bonding capital", that form of social capital that relies on deeper, longer lasting relationships. Bonding capital deepens trust and strengthens communities. If that were the only story, society would be better off if we all lived and worked in small clusters rich in bonding capital. That isn't, however, the only story. Having a small and stable group of bonded friends or associates is an essential component of human life, but it also creates risk of groupthink, while minimizing exposure to novel ideas.

There needs to be some way of moving new ideas into existing groups and some way of taking ideas from those groups and spreading them elsewhere. Fortunately, there is — the highly connected individuals among us who help keep ideas flowing, the people Gladwell calls super-connectors. Which is where the pick-up truck comes in.

When I was growing up, a friend of the family who owned a pick-up truck said he'd only learned one thing from the experience. Most people don't actually want to own a pick-up truck, but they want to know someone who does. These few super-connectors among us create "bridging capital", the kind of social capital that involves making novel introductions among otherwise disconnected groups. The tools we have today provide the technological means for all of us to be super-connectors. But the social skills and drive to do so remain rare and unevenly distributed. You may not want to be a super-connector, but you want to know at least one, or you risk getting too comfortable thinking that your worldview is the correct one.

Bridging and bonding capital are, obviously, in some tension with one another — novelty vs. familiarity, Chat Roulette vs. Yahoo Groups. We're in the middle of an explosion in bridging capital, thanks to a medium that makes proliferation of weak ties almost effortless, but the trick to making connectivity work is knowing when to use which strategy.

Creativity

Joe Bill, Power Improvisation - Chicago, IL, USA

Wonderful to hear from you Jean, and thanks so much for the encouragement and your obvious passion for this project. I'm not delighted at all by what I have, and I'm putting breathing space between what I did yesterday, and what I'll most likely write tomorrow before I teach.

I'm caught second guessing myself because I've been fixated on the existential dynamic between my objective and subjective relationship to thriving. And it FEELS now that THAT take is too literal, and something inside me wants to write a simple poem; even though I don't care for poetry, and I fear the literalness of my relationship to the topic is about to pollute what I write.

I will write anyway, and send what I write to you, because I know I must simply let what's inside me out, without judgement, and THAT'S why I'm taking this final breathing time, to help erase the chalkboard of discontent that currently hangs in my psyche, which contains the words "Selflessness and Futility" and in all caps, "AYN RAND?"

At least I feel profoundly more connected to you and the whole, in the spirit of ironic humor, since you wrote the instruction, "Playful is better than Intellectual"...and I'm very oddly thankful that you know me so well, though we've barely met! And WHY would the piece on creativity, as it relates to a thriving world, NOT simply BE the words: "Playful is better than intellectual"

Even more ironic is landing on the idea in this moment that accomplishing ANYTHING satisfactory or more for humankind, and in this case in the form of prose, usually involves some horrific rest stop of self examination, that only delays the road trip to the objective?

And perhaps what I've just written, in letter form to you, should actually be my submission?

Could it be that easy?

Much Love.

**Playful
is
better
than
intellectual**

Design

Joanna Guldi, Harvard Society of Fellows - Boston, MA, USA

The invisible frontiers are the zones where modernity has failed to make good on its promises: famines, wars, corrupt bureaucracies; ghettos without exits. For those who rest content in the faith that capital heals everything, the invisible frontiers remain invisible.

A drive through the wrong side of town shows the grocery stores closing, the encampments of homeless, the empty factories. A drive through the rustbelt shows the devastation hidden from coastal enclaves: entire neighborhoods, demolished. Closing schools. Closing hospitals. The invisible frontiers show what happens in the breakdown of capitalism and government: the societies of hobos, the existence of spontaneous guilds in trailer parks, child-care co-ops, community gardens, and utopian storefronts.

In general, invisibility happens because of lack of access to capital, social or otherwise. The health-insurance lobbyist can buy access to the Senator; devoted student activists cannot. People on the other side of the digital divide — the 12% whom the Pew tells us have not even a dial-up connection — cannot tell Silicon-Valley engineers to design community-participation software that runs off of cell phones.

Insidiously, however, the invisibility of people is usually mutual. Even if you volunteered to design infrastructure tailored to the people on the other side of the digital divide, they might have a hard time answering your questions. The uses of digital infrastructure are new to a people who lost their houses to concrete highways.

Landscape invisibility compounds class invisibility. Stockton, a foreclosure capital, is home to Hispanic truck-drivers and factory-workers who have lost their houses in great numbers. They are no different than other, better-known working-class immigrants in San Diego, Chicago, and New York. First, the poor lose their landscape;

next, they become invisible. Whatever capital has forgotten about dissolves like the soft paper of mid-century paperbacks, crumbling in the hand. On the digital landscape, the overworked and harried rarely contribute to community web2.0 bike-maps. They too become invisible. We keep planning, however, as if there were no frontier, and nothing invisible beyond it.

The truly sustainable — the thrivable designer — reaches hands across the invisible frontier. Reaching across the digital divide, the thrivable designer puts technology for rethinking government, energy, and food directly in the hands of those communities who live in food ghettos (where there are no grocery stores) and dial-up deserts (where one pays upwards of \$40/mo for a slow connection on a pc shared by 5). Thrivable design listens patiently, entering dialogue with potential users who find the new terms difficult.

Thrivability recasts the designer's place: no more in the halls of power, hanging out in shiny buildings with others of money; now instead, the designer belongs in the city, on public transit, or exploring the suburban ghetto. Thrivable design on the invisible frontier pays attention to all those details of life hidden in the landscape — the public places where strangers meet, the memory of people who have migrated a long way together, the corridors people travel who don't have access to funds.

The thrivable designer sees life — people trying to make a living, communities that need tools — where old-fashioned capitalists see only failure. Thrivability recasts the designer's role: no more the paid lieutenant of corporation and state; now, instead, the wanderer around invisible peripheries, the witness and facilitator of emergent states.

Diversity

Deanna Zandt, "Share This! How You Will Change the World With Social Networking" - Brooklyn, NY

What if I told you that I held the secret to innovation and a thrivable future for the world?

Then what if I told you that it wasn't a secret at all, that it's been staring us in the face since eighth grade biology class?

Diversity often conjures up the ghosts of the 1990s politically correct era, but if we dig deeper, underneath the sound-bites and preconceived notions we might bring to the table, it creates a platform by which we can solve innumerable problems. Come back to biology class with me: Creating a just and thrivable society is sort of like the evolution of a species. If you have a bunch of the same DNA mixing together, the species mutates poorly and eventually dies off. But bring in variety — new strains of DNA — and you create a stronger species.



Photo courtesy of Hava Gurevich

It's no different in idea generation. You get a bunch of the same people talking to each other and making the rules for a few millennia, and eventually you're going to end up with a lack of meaningful advancement.

More than ever — through social technologies and a deeper sense of the world around us — we have the ability create new mixes in our idea incubators. Moving our culture away from paradigms where the most "popular" — not necessarily the brightest or most talented — are repeatedly tapped for spokemanship and participation is critical. To do so, we all have a responsibility to ensure diversity in the conversations we're having — and to acknowledge the bias we bring to the table.

To be clear, we won't ever eliminate our biases. But we can begin to be explicit about what we learn about ourselves and our social spheres when bias rears its ugly head. Opening ourselves up to that process and beginning to break out of the way we've been thinking about how we assume the world operates (simply because it's operated like that for a long time) is crucial. We need to listen as selflessly as possible to what others are sharing and make sure that we're not perpetuating the restrictive social structures that constitute the same idea-DNA mixing around.

Engaging with, listening to, and *hearing* people who have different backgrounds from yours starts a fundamental process creating paths to thrivability. The challenge is in your hands: Will you help create a world where people, ideas and change all find each other without barriers and borders?

Efficiency

Jerry Michalski, Sociate.com - San Francisco, CA, USA

We need to let go of efficiency as an ideal.

Efficiency is the engineer's goal. It means expensive resources aren't being squandered, duplication is minimized, inventory is as thin as it can be without disrupting production.

But Nature isn't efficient. It's redundant and confusing. It has many processes so complicated scientists still don't know how they work — and may never know.

Relationships aren't efficient. They're tangly and inefficient, sometimes full of words that are just filler, sometimes full of mistakes that are hard to straighten out.

Decisions aren't efficient. They're full of emotions and doubts. We second-guess, we consult, we torture ourselves over very hard decisions, then we rationalize why we made them later on.

The world we occupy today was built efficiently. Its parts and institutions, from highways to schools to governments, are meant to function like well-oiled machines... yet we know they don't. Often they seem to fail to achieve their efficient goals: smart students, low crime rates, engaged citizens.

Our path to a Thrivable future lies in not worrying so much about cutting away everything that isn't efficient, or designing for efficiency as a major goal. That will drive us toward centralization and cookie-cutter replication of "best practices." Instead, let's decentralize: let's trust local people in local circumstances to make better decisions on their own (once again). Let's allow them to duplicate efforts and explore new solutions, so others may emulate or appropriate their insights.

That's a path to Thrivability.



Photo courtesy of Mark Andrew Boyer for OrganicNation.tv

Harmony

Jessica Margolin, Margolin Consulting - San Francisco, CA, USA

- Who should I advocate for: my child or my child's school? Or the community of children in my area and the group of schools that serve them? Or schools tens of thousands of miles away who have an extreme need?
- If I think Big Oil's time is up, do I also have to avoid driving any gasoline-powered vehicle? Or is it acceptable to drive a Prius? Must I avoid using barbeque propane and immediately put up solar panels on the roof?
- I'm very sleepy, but others depend on my finishing this work by tomorrow. I need to control my sugar intake, but it's my birthday cake. I am running a fever but there's an exam at school.

We talk about alignment, and acting in alignment with our ideals. But in so many ways, we run into common connundra. How do I balance the needs of those I can protect and have authority over vs. the broader community? How much should I personally sacrifice if the sacrifice is mostly or entirely symbolic? How much should I sacrifice if the sacrifice isn't symbolic, but actually represents higher risk and lower resilience for me and increases my reliance on my community? And though I aim for thriving, I know that even on a personal level there are times when I don't even behave sustainably.

While I aim for thriving, I know that, even on a personal level, there are times when I don't even behave sustainably.

As a rationalist I have looked at this 20 years ago, proposing the idea that some mathematical combination of stakeholders' points of view be aggregated to determine what the concept of growth really means. How can we measure important components of sustainability? What is the Return on Investment in education?

Can we measure the reduction of risk based on meeting specific social goals?

I genuinely believe there are quantitative approaches to many of these crucial questions, though the models aren't developed and the data are scattered and suspect. It's just early.

But right now, today, how do I create a framework to approach these tensions between self and community, present and future, investment and risk?

I look to music.

"Harmony" is a musical jargon term, but for many it implies a sense of ease and flow. Even if my life is going every which way, how can I increase its harmony?

Musically, harmony is comprised of consonance (sounds that create peaceful feelings) and dissonance (sounds that create tense feelings). One of the more interesting things about music is that without dissonance music is boring! It's actually dissonance that gives music a sense of movement. It's dissonance that provides a sense of anticipation that consonance then resolves.

So to create harmony from areas that lack alignment, I propose looking at tension as something that ebbs and flows over time, sometimes resolved, sometimes tense, and the movement back and forth is a way of breathing between individuals and community. Then, whichever side of the conundrum we're addressing, we attend to the precision of the note, the richness of the tone: the beauty of the melody.

Integrity

Daniel Christian Wahl, PhD, FRSA - Findhorn, Scotland

Integrity and **thrivability** are intricately linked!

We will have to live our lives with a lot of **personal integrity** — each and every one of us — if we want to thrive in this fundamentally interconnected and interdependent world that faces an unprecedented era of transformation.

Integrity, well contemplated, can lead to a deep insight about the nature of being as being-in-relationship-to-a-larger-whole, and it can foster an attitude that helps us to dynamically steer our path into an unpredictable and turbulent future.

Integrity and thrivability are both linked to inner and outer (or systemic) resilience. In order to thrive, a person, community, company, bioregion, nation or civilization needs to be resilient to the influences of unpredictable, and sometimes disruptive, sometimes creative change. **Systemic integrity**, the pattern that connects, the matrix of wholeness that weaves the local, to the regional, and the global, is at the heart of nurturing and maintaining systemic resilience.

Integrity is all about wholeness. I mean real participatory living, transforming, ever-changing wholeness. It is about asking with every decision: does this serve the health and healing of the whole (community or planet). It is about salutogenic (health-generating) design, about scale-linking appropriate participation. **Thrivability** is about maintaining the **integrity** of the holarchy.

Integrity is remembering that as *individuals* we are *indivisible* from the whole process in which we are participating — the integral evolution of life and consciousness.

Integrity is about embracing the paradox that while most of us live our lives in a state of consciousness that separates subject and objects, self and world, even humanity and nature, there is a deeper ground of being and becoming — a quantum-entangled, implicate order of fundamental interconnectedness and co-creative reciprocity. We are *individual nodes* of consciousness. Each with our own unique co-creative agency, and simultaneously we are integral participants and emergent properties of the whole community of life, the unity of the universe transforming, consciousness evolving, being and becoming. “The seen and the seer are one.” (Bhagvagita)

Integrity is about honouring multiplicity in unity, about reverence for life, about recognizing — as late Thomas Berry put it — that “the universe is not a collection of objects but a communion of subjects.”

Integrity is at the heart of integral philosophy, integral psychology, integral spirituality, integral enlightenment, and all the other facets **integral theory and practice**.

Integrity is about living in congruence with the insight that, as co-creative participants in the world we live in, we can all contribute to the transition towards a sustaining, resilient and thriving culture, moving from the mess we are in, beyond sustainability, to the **thrivability of the whole community of life**.

In the end, as Buckminster Fuller said: “**Only integrity is going to count.**”

Intention

Kevin Clark, *Content Evolution* - Chapel Hill, NC, USA

“Man shapes himself through decisions that shape his environment.” [\[i\]](#) - Rene Dubos

Thrivability is fueled by **intentions**.

Intent

- Directed
- Earnest
- Engrossed
- Intense

Intention

- Aim
- Determination
- Planned
- Purpose

Intentional: done with purpose [\[ii\]](#)

...and intentions are **holons**.

Holons are both wholes and parts. Intentions nest as holons — as both wholes and parts. All the way up and all the way down.

We’re adapting and honoring a concept Ken Wilber has explored extensively in his book *A Theory of Everything*. He defines holons (a term first introduced by Arthur Koestler [\[iii\]](#)) as ingredients in hierarchies. Wilber says, “A *holon* is a whole that is a part of other wholes. For example, a whole atom is part of a whole molecule; a whole molecule is part of a whole cell; a whole cell is part of a whole organism.... Reality is composed of neither wholes nor parts, but of whole/parts, or holons. Reality in all domains is basically composed of holons.” [\[iv\]](#)

The same could be said of intentions, where every purposeful act is *nested in other holons of intention*. For clarity:

- A “*reference holon*” is the holon that forms the frame of reference as a single whole/part for looking at the smaller and larger world it exists in.
- A “*sub-holon chain*” represents the view of the constant holon down to smaller holon wholes/parts.
- A “*macro-holon chain*” is the view of the constant holon up to larger holon wholes/parts. [\[v\]](#)

Holons of intention can create chains of thrivability.

We as humans have the inherent capacity to be the most *intentional reference holons on earth*. Yet we seemed to be distracted and immersed in the unintentional.

Paul Hawken, the author of *The Ecology of Commerce* [\[vi\]](#) introduces a version of sustainability succinctly when he says in the preface, “Rather than a management problem, we have a design problem, a flaw that runs through all business.” He continues, “To create an enduring society, we will need a system of commerce and production where each and every act is inherently sustainable and restorative.” [\[vii\]](#)

Good, yet still not intentional enough for our inherent capacities. Sustainability language is frequently formed as an apology for the past and a prayer for methods to repair damage so we can learn to just get by.

Thrivability is more optimistic than sustainability.

Thrivability is about transcending and including the current fitness landscape with intelligence and grace.

Being *intentionally thrivable* is using the gift of collective intelligence we can harness to do better — and together do more.

[\[i\]](#) Lawrence J. Peter, *Peter’s Quotations: Ideas for Our Time*, New York: William Morrow and Company, p. 172.

[\[ii\]](#) Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984, p. 733.

[\[iii\]](#) Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine*, Macmillan Publishers, 1969.

[\[iv\]](#) Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality*, Boston: Shambala Press, 2001, p. 40.

[\[v\]](#) Kevin Clark, *Brandscendence: Three Essential Elements of Enduring Brands*, Chicago: Dearborn/Kaplan, 2004, p. 112.

[\[vi\]](#) Paul Hawken, *The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability*, Harper Business, 1993, p. xiii.

[\[vii\]](#) Paul Hawken, *The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability*, Harper Business, 1993, p. xiv.

Listening

Amy Sample Ward, Changemaker - London, UK

Listening for Action

We all know listening is important—we were told as much in school, in relationships, and in our work. We've heard all about listening. But, what's missing from what we do (that we may think is listening) that makes our work, our ideas, our conversations vital to changing and shaping the world? Listening for action.

We are told to listen.

Especially in the social impact sector, "listening" can mean so many things.

- 🎧 "Listen to your market, your community, and what they are saying about you." We are listening in order to know what people think about us and our work, our services or our products. We listen, track, make notes, even analyze.
- 🎧 "Listen to your competitors, listen to their communities as they are yours, too." We listen, make notes, make comparisons.
- 🎧 "Listen to your staff—they know more about what your organization does every day than anyone else." We listen, make notes, file papers.

This is listening to learn. It's incredibly important but it is lopsided. It fills us with information and data, ideas and understandings, and a lot more questions. We learn, but we don't share what we learn. We learn, but we don't grow on our own learnings.

We want to have conversations.

Some times, we listen enough that we start conversations (this is a good thing). We hear so much, whether it is directly about us or not, that we can't stand *just* listening anymore.

- 🎧 "Join the conversation that's already happening online." We know our work, our issues, our services, and our ideas are being talked about, and we want to be part of the community that's doing the talking. So we start commenting on the blogs, replying on Twitter, professionalizing our profile on facebook.

- 🎧 "Share your story." We get excited by the tools and opportunities for telling the story of our work. We let people know all about the impact we've made, the campaigns we've created, and the ideas we like. Our blog comments, status updates, and shared links bring people back to our message.

This is listening to share. It's incredibly important but it is just as lopsided as listening to learn. Just as before we were pulling everything in, now we are simply pushing everything out. Social media doesn't work this way. Communications don't work this way. Social change doesn't work this way.

We need to act, together.

Listening to act is the trigger to collaboration, to building a movement, to making change. When we listen to act, we don't make notes and go home, nor do we simply wait our turn to speak. Listening to act requires us to harness the power of our real-time Web and real-time global community to find and create opportunities for ideas and needs to connect with those who can make them happen.

Listening to act means listening to learn where the opportunities are for collaboration. It means listening to share the needs you have and the vision for the world you want to create. It isn't passive and it isn't blind. Listening to act is like thinking aloud, in public, with a community of people listening and suggesting opportunities to act together.

Listening is the only way we can change the world, but only if we listen to act.

Play

Evonne Heyning, Amoration - Los Angeles, CA, USA

Play is the act of participatory emergence. When we join in play we become a catalyst in a story, acting in countless ways to shift the situation. Every intuitive action charts the path ahead, offering opportunity cards for engagement throughout the emergent process.

As Tracy Fullerton notes in her book Game Design Workshop, “Play can be thought of as freedom of movement within a more rigid structure.” With one boring-looking box, anyone can manipulate and create thousands of potential stories. Participatory emergence within and beyond the system allows for personalization, the unique signature of an individual, to flow through as player and designer redefining what is possible between the worlds.

Think of a lifelong adventure game, either the board game of Life from childhood or your own adventure interactive story. What kind of character are you? What are you chasing and what is your goal?

Are you the:
SPARK?
STORYTELLER?
HERO?
ARTIST?
CHAOTIC FORCE?
ENGINEER?
DEFEATED?
WITNESS?

Balancing challenges, we learn to grow reputation and experience, value and trust within entangled networks. Every action ripples through these networks as systems flex and flow around our movements. Every play matters.

You can choose to spark a revolution and send a fire ripping through the fields of our everyday domain.

You can also play it chill, subtle or graceful through the quieter places, shifting the game-board as others move in predestined lines. You may be the one who throws out the rule-book and draws all over the board. Playful style introduces your sense of personal flair and identity that defines your role across many networks.

Discovery is a key joy button in play. People push new buttons because there is some extraordinary experience to share. The flexible freedom of playful space can be created anywhere, at any moment, where a smile and action take over.

Games create solutions with shared knowledge through dynamic tools for critical exploration. Play has many hidden rewards.

Experimentation in everyday play teaches adaptation and resiliency, essential for thrivable development. Active players learn to negotiate, solve problems, and strategize complex situations with friends. Cooperative play can encourage connection, bonding, and relationships that evolve with the world crafted in the game space.

The sensual types of play — including sex, intimacy, and the chemistry of bonding — includes intentional playful touches. Heart and mind engage fully when magnetic attraction zing takes over; tribal instinct plays with both rawness and great passionate emotion. How many times have you been distracted by someone who struck you as magnificent? How did you choose to play with them?

You have no idea what you can initiate; your playful signature echoes. Run for the finish line or enjoy the view — player's choice. Trust your intuition and be free to play: engage for the challenge or practice completing tasks by leveling up in daily life. Remember why you're really playing, and you can always win.

Place-Making

Bice C. Wilson, AIA - Bronx River Highlands, Meeting-of-Waters Bioregion, North America

All thriving occurs some Place -
In Community
Vast as the earth, Intimate as your heart.
You, sitting on that rock,
Your loved ones thriving in their dwelling places,

Always some Place,
Never alone

The extended pattern of life we inhabit
Our entire interdependent web
Ever evolves
Towards thriving.

Even when it's killing us.

This aspiration, an ancient desire,
as yet ephemeral,
Always ephemeral.
Creates by every action
The well-being of myriad Places
Every moment, every day

Places we are in, and Places seemingly remote yet
Always specific, knowable
These make our being
Before / Here / Later
Possible.

RIGHT NOW Unseen Places exist so we can thrive.

Beings sacrifice in our names,

Proffer gifts for our well-being.
Products of Place,
Nourishing us on their way to nourishing some Place else.

We can know and understand that web,
In ways our ancestors only hoped to –
Now knowing, we
Can take responsibility for all the Places ever
Aggregating in us,
That makes us Place-makers,
In every place-moment
Responsible

Joyful, mournful

Generative, even when destructive

SO, Here, Now, You,

There,
Reading This in That Place,
US,
together,
Reading This in our Place/Moments,
How can WE build Place-making culture –
Become ever more skillful Place-makers,
Ever enhancing the beauty of the pattern of life?

What are the skillful means we can avail ourselves of?

What do you know? Teach us. Join us.

Openness

Michel Bauwens, P2P Foundation - Thailand

I. Aspects of Openness

The requirement of inclusionality or open access; the demand for participation, i.e. permission-less contributions; the demand for holoptism or full transparency of that process, and finally, for full share-ability and 'changeability' of the common material. All these represent new social expectations, and are key ingredients of commons-based peer production as well.

II. Enablers of Openness

These aspects or fundamental characteristics of openness are then embedded in enablers or 'guarantors'. First are the Open Definitions, the social charters that determine the boundary conditions of the open communities and which define the minimal conditions for openness to be recognized; these are further embedded in open code, open licenses, and open standards; as well as the basic conditions which are open access and open data.

III. Infrastructures of Openness

To make it all real, we need infrastructures in which these enabling elements are embedded, i.e. we need open platforms, both virtual and physical, which allow us to produce in an open way: open collaborative technical platforms, open places where we can gather, open media and communication infrastructures we can use, open and free software, knowledge and scientific data; and the ability to live in open and free villages and urban spaces, which connect local production with global open design communities.

IV. Open Practices

All the preceding enablers, will allow us then to engage in open practices, especially open design and open manufacturing, but also free currencies and new forms of sharing (ownership).

V. Open Domains of Practice

Embedded in topical domains, such as education and science, these practices are contextualized and made real.

VI. Open Products!!

The actual 'social artefacts' actually created by the processes from I to V, i.e. the Apache server, the Linux operating system, etc.. All of the above gives us a circular process, leading to new iterations of open characteristics.

VII. Open Movements

New social movements, specifically dedicated to increasing 'openness' are also specifically tackling the social awareness concerning this shift, strengthening and increasing the numbers of people who see this as a new mode of life and ethical ideal, and as their default social practice. Like the P2P Foundation itself, they consciously work on creating open distributed infrastructures in all areas of life, interconnecting initiatives in global networks of experience sharing.

VIII. Open Consciousness

All the efforts from II to VII change our subjectivities and how we relate to each other, re-inforcing new iterations of the Open Cycle.

For full access: <http://www.mindmeister.com/28717702/everything-open-and-free>

The [mindmap](#) presents a condensation of the 3 years of research we've undertaken at the P2P Foundation. A special thanks to [Ben Dagan of Creative Commons Austria](#), who prodded me to undertake this visualization effort and added some extra visual elements already.

Resilience

Chris Watkins, Appropedia - Australian Nomad

Resilience is ancient wisdom and modern science. It is design, technology, integration, and action, that enables people and communities to absorb change and bounce back from shocks and hard times.

Optimization for the everyday leads to fragility in the face of the unexpected. Without resilience, highly ordered social structures are reduced to chaos and crisis in the face of adversity. With resilience, we create abundance in good times and security in bad.



Photo courtesy of Lonny Grafman for Appropedia

Resilience means being able to call upon resources we prepared beforehand. Our social capital gives us good information and communication, and our community shares and helps. Our design and preparedness strengthen us, and the diversity and creativity of our solutions respond to local circumstances.

Humans and nature make up social-ecological systems — an ecosystem of interdependent elements. Our systems are complex, unpredictable, in constant flux. There is no blueprint for being resilient, but a toolkit of solutions and a sourcebook and laboratory of ideas. Resilience is created through diversity, preparedness, wisdom and abundance.

Diversity. Each element in the system performs multiple functions, and each function is served by multiple elements. Diversity of action and design gives us choices and backups. In our gardens it gives us a variety of flavors, a longer harvest, and resistance to disease. In our living environment it gives us richness of experience.

Preparedness. Thinking ahead, conserving, studying and planning for our future.

Wisdom. Globally shared solutions to local challenges, a commons of tools and ideas, an understanding of context.

Abundance. Creating more than we need, a buffer against harsh times. Resilience is joyful, abundant living, creating more than we need — preparing for hard times whenever they come, and creating a thrivable future whatever may come.

Simplicity

Thank you Lonny Grafman for suggesting a this simple page.

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Wisdom

Todd Hoskins, - Chicago, IL, USA

“The world is not comprehensible, but it is embraceable.”
– Martin Buber

Information is abundant. The amount of data created already surpasses the amount of hardware we have to store it. Yet, even with our escalating zettabytes containing centuries of historical knowledge and potential insight, war, poverty, injustice, and widespread cultural malaise persist.

Wisdom is elusive. It is a drop of oil in a pot of water, the snowflake that melts before allowing my close examination, the cat that darts out the back door when opened. Striving doesn't help. It seems to appear and then vanish. The stories are well known: the king becomes the lunatic; the hermit becomes the sage.

Wisdom is dynamic. Policies and strategies that have succeeded in the past often fail. Context is in flux, and our wisdom must constantly adapt. Spiritual traditions and ideas that have survived have done so because interpretations have shifted, perspectives have been allowed to evolve. We cannot know timeless wisdom because we are inescapably situated in time.

Wisdom is not something to be possessed. We live in an ownership-obsessed society with dominion claimed on concepts, resources, relationships, and stuff. Our belongings offer us less belonging. Still, we want to capitalize, even on wisdom.

You cannot hoard wisdom. You can neither buy nor sell it prepackaged. Empires have fallen, companies failed, and families dissolved because they think they own the rights to protect and dispense wisdom.

Wisdom is relational, if at times only with ourselves. It is shared, between body and mind, person to person, human and nature. It is an arc of spirit that extends from one subject to another, being to being. Bending across geography and time, but more often eye-to-eye, or gut-to-heart, wisdom *occurs*.

It's an occurrence, one that we hope will last days or years, but sometimes it flashes like lightning. As a happening, I cannot carry it with me. We access it, experience it, witness it.

If wisdom exists in the spaces around and within us, why is the world not evolving as we desire?

I often turn the other way. I don't want to see it. In order for the arc to connect me to a book, a person, or the earth itself, I must commit to seeing things as they are, to being engaged and curious, and open to the transmission - willing to see the beauty and the pain, the divinity and the humanity, whatever is present.

There is no scarcity of wisdom. If we open to our hearts and our bodies, to each other and the world and face our situations squarely, we begin to thrive. Collectively, where there are arcs of wisdom in a room, in a community, solutions begin to emerge.

Qualities



Adventure

Maryann Fernandez, Philanthropy Indaba - New York, NY, USA

Day in and day out. It's about careers with extra projects on the side. It's about squeezing in "enough" time for family and friends. It's about schedules, procedures and deadlines. Rush, rush. Type, type. Tweet, tweet. These are busy days and challenging times.

WHEW! Even when it's good, it zaps the energy and erodes the soul enough to *finally* make you take notice.

So, every once in a while, create the opportunity for adventure. Give your soul the chance to leap, romp, frolic, and giggle. Let the overused part of your brain rest, while allowing the other parts to tingle and come alive. Shed the familiar and routine; step out and be bold.

Mmmmmmm. Do you feel it? Your boundaries are stretching.

Adventures come in all shapes and sizes. There are the grand adventures that require travel and a passport, that are physically challenging, or that allow you to spend time in a place of great beauty. But there are also the small adventures that infuse your weekly routine with a bit of inspiration. It could be as simple as trying a new cuisine in a different part of town, hanging out with a new friend or taking that tango class you've been secretly dying to take.

Perhaps adventure is a frame of mind or an outlook on life. But whatever your perspective, take time to replenish what the day to day grind wears away, because it's only when we have full hearts and joyful souls that we are able to offer our best to the world.



Photo courtesy of Maryann Fernandez

Abundance

David Hodgson, IdeaHive - San Francisco, CA, USA

Abundance is the tree that brings forth the fruit upon which life feeds and provides seeds to life anew.

It is the glorious dance of which we are all a part.

The flow of life in which we swim.

The water we drink, the air we breathe, the food we eat, the ones we love, the rich pageant of life that envelops us.

A gift freely shared by the universe in each and every passing moment.

And yet, and yet, held close in its warm, familiar embrace, we forget...

Abundance is the soil from which the plant emerges that brings forth the flower whose seed falls back into the soil's welcoming embrace from which springs forth life anew.

Abundance. Upward Spirals. Thrivability.



Photo courtesy of Mark Andrew Boyer for OrganicNation.tv

Cunning

Kaye Porter, kayeporter.com - Los Angeles, CA, USA

—noun

1. skill employed in a shrewd or sly manner, as in deceiving; craftiness; guile.
2. adeptness in performance; dexterity.
3. showing or made with ingenuity.
4. artfully subtle or shrewd; crafty; sly.

—source *Random House Dictionary*

Cunning exists in the world of strategy. It is behind the animal nature of survival. Archetypes, folk tales, and modern entertainment are full of stories of how animal cunning has tricked someone else out of an advantage: Loki, the cunning trickster, Jack, bringing down a giant, and cartoon rabbits outsmarting bumbling hunters. At heart, we're thrilled by the cunning. We're impressed by how they think on their feet, applaud their ingenuity, and we're glad not to be the target.

At its heart, there are two main themes in cunning: guile and ingenuity. Guile is covert. It is the crafty, animal nature striking to get ahead. Instinct sees having the advantage of cutting someone else out as a way to increase our own ability to survive. Cunning whispers to us: *if I have more than they do, then I'm more likely to survive*. Yet, when it comes to thriving, the nature of strategy and covert action make partnership impossible. Because who could trust a fox to be anything other than a fox?

The trick is to recognize the moment where strategies based in survival ultimately limit us.

At the same time, it would be foolish for us to say that cunning is a bad thing. All attributes exist for a purpose in our personal and cultural evolution. If we don't survive, how can we make the evolutionary leap to thriving? The trick is to recognize the moment where strategies based in survival ultimately limit us. Yes, we're still alive, but at what cost? If survival means access to resources, is time

better spent trying to collect all the resources ourselves, or could we "level up" even faster by collaborating with others? At what point do we recognize that covert strategy interferes with the greater future we're looking for?



Photo courtesy of Hava Gurevich

Adeptness and ingenuity is the second theme of cunning. There is skill in finding effective solutions that create an overall quality of life. This side of cunning goes beyond survival, into thriving. An ingenious solution to water purification allows millions of New Yorkers clean water every day from the polluted Hudson River. An adept modification of radar technology saves innocent life and limb in Africa, with removal of hidden land-mines. A cunning adaptation of the mirror in Indian hospitals allows for affordable treatment of phantom limb pain, so that amputees can have a quality life again.

When cunning focus evolves to adept ingenuity, the leap from surviving to thriving is made possible.

Dance

hanspetermeyer - Comox Valley, Vancouver Island, BC, Canada

I'm a passionate guy, and I'm obsessed with beautiful moments. The things I'm most passionate about: my family, marriage, dance, food, friendship, community. My love affair with dance goes way back, and threads through most, if not all, of my other passions. Dance is a way that I open up to the new. Dance is about change. Dance is about falling in love with the present moment.

It was in the moment of dance that I began to heal after a life-changing accident. At the traumatic end of one marriage, dance became my therapy, a path to a healthier way of life. Dancing that path, I discovered myself in the arms of a profoundly rich and beautiful reinvention of my family.

When I dance, I feel fully connected to what is real and true in my life. Even as that second version of marriage and family went into its "journey through the dark woods," even as I continue to navigate this forest, dance lights my way, teaches me how to trust, how to be trustworthy, how to hold on, how to let go.

It doesn't matter how I dance; what matters is... to dance. I am catholic in my devotion to dance: I will move to most any kind of music; I will dance with anyone who wants to dance - man, woman, or child; I dive into Argentine tango's deep waters and skip lightly through the shallows of salsa and foxtrot; I freeform and "modern" when the opportunity arises; I paint my body white and expose myself to the ritual-like meditation of Buttoh.

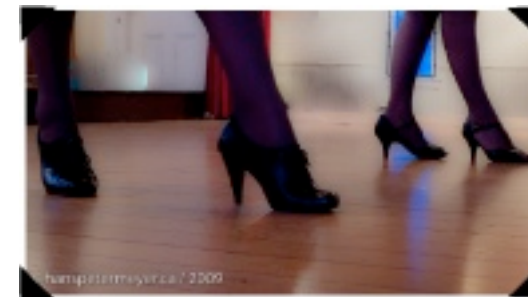
It doesn't matter how I move, how I dance. It is simply to dance that puts the tangles of my thoughts and feelings aside. Opening my body,

my heart opens. I am vulnerable, and malleable, open to change. I am alive; I am thriving.

The opening isn't singular. Dancing opens the hearts of those around me. Dancing through life's "dark woods" has given me a warm, loving community. We are very different: socially, emotionally, politically, geographically. Because we dance together, we've learned to trust each other. As we've learned to play well with each other, we laugh, and our play and our laughter spills over into other non-dance relationships and contexts in our larger community.

Are we changing our world, one dance at a time? I see the smiles on my dance partners' faces. I see the light in peoples' eyes, non-dancers (or, as I like to think, "not-yet-dancers"), when they talk to me about what they read of my dance experience and what they see when I'm dancing.

In our way, we dancing fools are opening hearts and minds in our community. Our openness and playfulness is fostering a spirit of receptivity that is hard to measure and hard to ignore! It's all part of a shift, a myriad of changes that are making our community more sustainable, a better place to call home.



(cc) hanspetermeyer.ca / 2010

Endurance

Thomas Kriese, Pathbreaker Consulting - Redwood City, CA, USA

Endurance is the ability to face adversity to reach thriving.

Adversity can be physical, like the last exhausting miles a triathlete must run on the way to the Ironman finish line. The adversity can be mental, like the shards of self-doubt and -criticism that rain down just prior to completing a book. The adversity can be emotional, like the evidence of indiscretions found while coming to terms with the end of a long relationship.

But endurance, at its core, is built upon the twin resources of hope and optimism. It's based on an unshaken belief there's something better just ahead, just across the finish line, just beyond those moments of doubt, just after the next sunrise. And endurance increases by working hard to get to where things are imagined to be better.

The key to building endurance is to constantly find inspiration to continue on from ever-changing sources. You've got to distract your mind from the unpleasantness at hand: the miles to go, the doubts looming large, the pains of betrayal, and put your focus on anything but what troubles you presently. What got you to the last corner or over the next hump isn't necessarily what'll get you to the next.

Some choose mantras; some choose math problems; some choose meditation; some choose therapy. All choose to endure. As Bengali poet Rabindrinath Tagore wrote, *"Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless in facing them. Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain but for the heart to conquer it."*

For the mental skills you use to convince yourself to go just a little bit farther, to hold space a little bit longer, to believe a little bit deeper are those same skills that will propel you to greatness when the burden eases... when the adversity passes and it's time to thrive.

The human brain is pre-programmed to pull you up short before your reserves are tapped. Your brain wants you to survive. When you're suffering, your brain isn't interested in thriving, it simply wants to keep firing to live another day.

But by building up your endurance, by pushing beyond where your brain tells you to stop, you can explore just how much farther you can go. We're all good at self-limiting, at playing it safe, at taking less risk purely as a matter of survival.

The attitude of endurance is a matter of pushing through the adversity and realizing what our true potential is. Because when the load is lifted, and eventually it always is lifted, we'll know what it means to thrive.



Photo courtesy of Lonny Grafman for Appropedia

Exclusion

Leif Utne, Zanby.com - Bainbridge Island, WA, USA

Ouch! Exclusion is such a harsh word. What place could it possibly have in a world that's open, inclusive, and thrivable?

Like a hammer, exclusion is merely a tool. In its unhealthy forms, exclusion is used to oppress, to avoid accountability, circumvent democracy, and maintain established economic and political order. It brings to mind secret societies, smoky back rooms, nativism, and dehumanizing the "other."

But exclusion can also be healthy and life-affirming. For individuals, that may mean choosing your conversations more wisely, lightening your load, de-cluttering your mental and physical space, eliminating distractions and focusing on what matters most. It means making space for solitude, contemplation, attention to yourself, to your breath, to nature, to being fully present.



Photo courtesy of Hava Gurevich

Exclusion is not a choice of whether to exclude, or not, it is a choice of what to exclude.

For groups, healthy exclusion means creating safe containers in which to share and collaborate more deeply. It means being intentional about who and how many you want to share space with. It's about creating and protecting sacred space. A good host has a talent for appropriate exclusion. It's the social artistry of choosing who you want at the party, and who you don't.

Every marketer knows that exclusion is a powerful tool. Done well, limiting access to a place, a group or a product makes it cool. Anyone who has launched a new online community can tell you that early on exclusion is vital — to set the tone and model the kind of interaction you want. It's a way of establishing a new culture intentionally.

Exclusion can be about useful constraints, which spur creativity, whether you're answering an essay question on a test or innovating new products. Imagine, for example, a candle. What is a candle without a wick? Without light? Without heat? Without wax? Such a thought experiment can help you identify which properties are intrinsic to something, and think creatively about novel ways to reproduce them.

Exclusion is part of evolution, particularly the conscious evolution we are living through now. It's about casting off outmoded, destructive ways of thinking and being. And it's absolutely essential to a thrivable future.

Fold

Amber Case, cyborg anthropologist - Portland, OR, USA

When people access digital pieces of us, our external bodies change. Many people access those external bodies before they meet the physical tangible bodies, they're meeting people inside-out.

I begin thinking about this concept before the Internet existed. When I was four or five years old, my father wanted to teach me about space and time. He began by drawing two dots on a piece of paper, one marked 'A' and the other marked 'B'. "What is the shortest distance between these two points?" he asked.

"A line," I told him, proud of myself for knowing that essential mathematical concept.

"In this case, you're not correct," he said, and folded the paper over so that point A touched point B. "The shortest distance between two points is actually a fold, or a bend in space-time, or a wormhole."

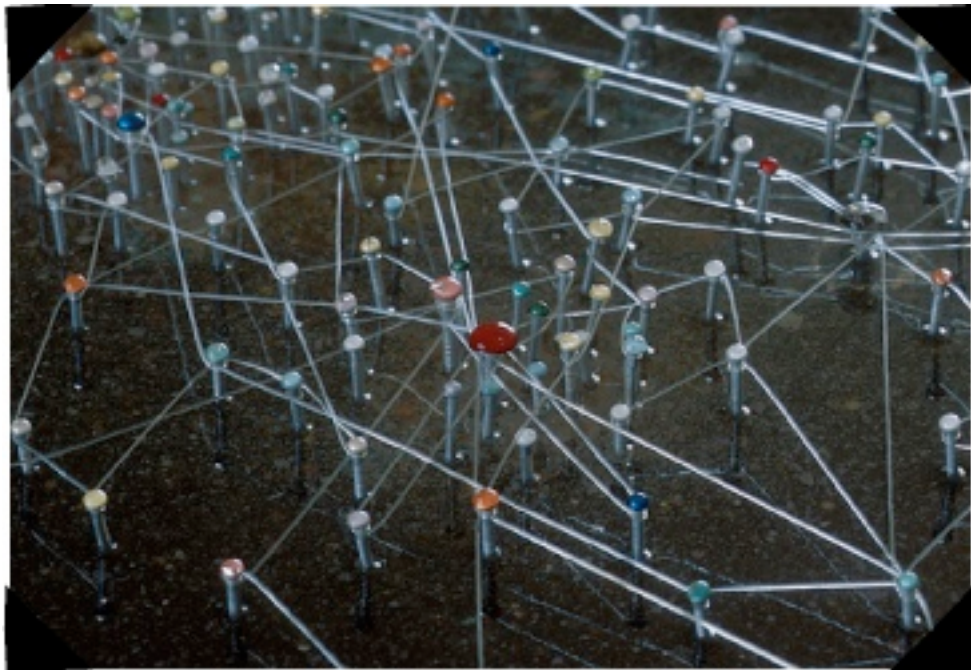


image courtesy of Darlene Charneco

When I first began to use the Internet, and then mobile phones, I realized that technology was taking the distance between two people and folding it. Technology was folding space and time so that geography did not matter. Technology was also doing something more; it was providing a way for people to see the internal before they saw the external. The world was folding, and the folding of the world was increasing the number of connections that can be made between people in different geographies.

In the case of Skype or mobile phones, Twitter or Facebook, the shortest distance between two people was often technology. The fold also allowed one's social interactions to become multidimensional, creating an environment in which one could connect with multiple people in multiple places at one time.

Instead of walking down the street and seeing a stranger, the Internet allows one's internal thoughts to be displayed. This allows people to connect via interests that might not be expressed in local physical social geographies. Baudrillard calls this a 'forced extraversion of all interiority.' What was interior now becomes our techno-social selves. External bodies of our internal thoughts and interests. And with this forced extraversion of interiority, one can now hyperlink to a part of the memory of another and vice versa.

But there may be a flip side to being able to fold geography. When used correctly, with the right intent, one can connect to others that share their true interests. If one abuses the wormholes, the ability to create them may be shut down, denying access to the benefits that natural connectivity might provide. Does folding make us more connected overall, or are we isolating ourselves from our differences? Does technology allow us to only subscribe to our interests and ignore the rest of the world?

Will our wormholes, via technology, connect us to ourselves in way that make us more Thrivable?



Hope

Stacey Monk, Epic Change - FL, USA

I wish I could write about hope in some sexy, inspiring sort of way. Barack Obama's campaign did this exceptionally well. But not me.

To me, hope isn't sexy at all. Far from.

To me, hope is hard work. It's a little voice inside that whispers "get up" when every fiber of your weary being says "lie down." Weariness is not sexy.

Hope hides in every corner of this vast, beautiful universe, just waiting to be found. But it's only ever found once you're absolutely convinced that it's lost. Lost hope is not inspiring.

Hope is the realization that you are something when you think you have nothing at all. Having nothing at all isn't all that appealing either.

But there's something about being weary, losing hope and having nothing that reminds you: You may *have* nothing, but **you are something**.

In fact, **you are hope**. And so am I.

Which must be precisely what makes hope so. damn. sexy.



Photo courtesy of Lonny Grafman for Appropedia

Inspiration

Richard Zimmerman, Founder, Spiritual Wealth - NYC, NY, USA

When you become inspired you tap into a realm beyond your humanity and merge with the wonders of the Universe. Everything starts to flow as you shift from doing to being and from ambition to aspiration. You become lost in that magical moment where all possibilities exist and creativity abounds.

When you become inspired you are aware of all parts of you and in doing so become whole. You experience what it is like to truly live as a spiritual being - in wisdom and in love, in calmness and in joy, in creativity and in compassion. You become one with yourself and the world.



photo courtesy of Richard Zimmerman

When you become inspired time seems to freeze. You cease thinking about the past and worrying about the future and live fully in the present moment. It is there that you connect to your purpose, passion, and true power and live that way in the world.

When you become inspired you move from fear to love. Your mindset shifts from scarcity and competition to abundance and collaboration. You see wealth as a sacred current which flows in a continuous cycle of divine manifestation.

When you become inspired you take a courageous stand for your truth and boldly declare your dreams to the world. You become more conscious of your actions and make choices that benefit you and the world as a whole.

When you become inspired you commune with the beauty of nature and connect with all of mankind. You recognize the sacredness of our lives, our society, and our planet. You become an impassioned promoter for harmony and peace in your life and for all of the world.

When you become inspired you realize that force is an expression of fear while true power comes from a state of grace. You meet the world with an open heart and mind. You become less concerned with fixing and more about serving.

When you become inspired you love yourself fully and advocate for others freely. You go beyond the boundaries of place or state and take a stand for truth and justice for all.

When you become inspired you want the world to not only survive, but also to thrive. You shine your light as a bright beacon which illuminates an amazing existence for us all, a new way of being, and a glorious life to live.

Interdependence

Valdis Krebs, Orgnet.com - Cleveland, OH, USA

As a child I saw a constant parade of strangers arriving at our house, sharing stories, eating dinner, and retiring to our guest bedroom. Of course they were only strangers to me. This parade of visitors were connections from my parent's past. Everyone left our house fed, rested, and encouraged on their journey.

Did we run a Bed & Breakfast? No. We were immigrants.

Immigrants understand interdependence. Although many of their activities support *surviving* a new world, an immigrant's goal is to *thrive*. Many of their daily survival tasks set up the foundation for thriving. Their secret? Recognizing, accepting and using interdependence.

It often amazes me how my parents and their extended network intuitively knew many of the network concepts I study in my work and in academic papers. They were masters of using weak ties. Structural holes? No thank you! We close them and help someone connect to a useful other. Overlaps in networks? Yes, we know how to find and use them. While people searched for jobs, homes and partners in this new land, common ground was constantly calculated to make the right introductions.

These people who came here with just the clothes on their back and few photos, have built a thriving community with many successful offshoots. What lessons can be learned from these natural builders of community?

1. *Know when to leave.* Not all of your communities are built for thriving. Not all situations will permit building for the greater

good. Know where to build and contribute to yourself, others, and the planet.

2. *You never "make it" on your own.* Find common ground to bring people together. Individual success assisted by community usually flows back to the whole community.

3. *Close triangles.* Build a stronger community and distribute trust and knowledge by introducing those who can help each other. Weave your network – you and your friends and family will benefit. Join your communities – your city and region will benefit.

4. *Connect on your similarities and profit from your differences.* Everyone has knowledge and skills that can benefit others. Look for opportunities to build upward spirals via creative combinations of similarity and difference. Set up the conditions and connections for the success of your extended community – know when to reach beyond your immediate group to bring in diverse knowledge, experiences and resources.

5. *Giving results in getting.* Give others what they need. You create a better place for yourself by creating a better place for others. Your outflows affect your inflows. In an *interdependent* community it always flows back to you – so, it's better to create good, eh?

I am finishing this while in Chicago Midway airport. A mass of people are moving in all directions to their various destinations. I hope some of them are heading to stay with an immigrant family.

Mystery

Mushin Schilling, <http://blog.mushin.eu> - Berlin, Germany

Mystery lies at the very core of the polyverse we inhabit — even if we think it's a universe and started with the mother of all bangs - starting explosively simple and as an absolutely single matter in the beginning, growing ever more complex, intricate, diverse into every conceivable and inconceivable direction and dimension. Banging into being and exponentially expanding ever since is the Mystery of Thrivability.

No matter at what level we contemplate it — the empirical, spiritual, psychological, social, economical, ecological — it puts us in awe. It is completely out of control — put a lid on it, it thrives sideways. Explode it, and its fragments disperse spores all over the cosmos. Try to grasp it, and it wiggles out of your grip, sprouting between your fingers, using your suppressing power to fuel its thriving.



photo courtesy of Mushin Schilling

These last couple centuries, a belief flourished that at some moment we would be able to explain it all, we will arrive at a Grand Theory of Everything. But all we managed to do was to put a lid on common imagination, and diminish the power of the priesthood of traditional religion and feudalistic rulers. And the old clergy was replaced by the adepts of numbers, statistics, and physics. Matters that were allowed to concern us were either turned into a fact or a commodity, into something that could be manipulated, traded and studied. Everything else was declared to be “merely subjective” and therefore a negotiable matter. And all the while, the mystery was thriving under our subjective noses.

And now, in our 21st Century, like in Andersen's famous tale, the emperor's objective clothes turn out to be no cover at all! The naked mystery arises as thriving in the sciences, as co-evolution, drifting genes, fractals, parallel universes, social graphs, complexity, and in religion it comes as an explosion of spiritualities, in economy as the irrationality of consumers (and producers) behavior and in ecology...

Imagine a clearing in a jungle. The clearing is the space we can understand and control in a very limited way; it's the space most of us like to inhabit. And as the clearing grows, the interface between clearing and mysterious jungle also grows, exponentially. So for everything we find, we grow another mile of interface with the mystery. The mysteries thrive with the expansion of our knowledge.

Now imagine that we live in multi-dimensional space-time, endless mysteries surround us in every direction around every clearing we call our world. This is the mystery we inhabit, and it thrives from the very beginning – in fact it is the very basis of existence and being: The Mystery of Thrivability.

Power

Nadia El-Imam - Stockholm, Sweden

The first thing that came to mind when you asked me to write about power is Six Memos for the Next Millenium, a series of lectures by Italo Calvino on qualities of good literature.

When I thought about it, I realised that it is lightness and quickness, or agility, which define how I think about power. Power used to be old library furniture, British brown leather sofas and heavy oak bookshelves... a very European concept of history....a certain kind of establishment. Over time, my understanding and interpretation of power has changed. Power is agility, it is water not wood... with the ability to unexpectedly seep into places and effect change in ripples.... light, fluid. Power is in the third-culture kids who move between worlds and hold charge over their own identity and, in effect, of the future. Why? It is this fluidity in how one relates to others and the world that allows us to position ourselves in narratives that enable change. This resonates with with the yearning for transcendence that mystics, artists and philosophers have been turning their attention to since time immemorial:

"To be human, is to be limited by the transcendence of time, space, embodiment, alterity, society and nature. Yet, to be human is to be discontent with these limitations and to seek ways to be more connected to other beings, to other cultures and societies, and even to other provinces of meaning such as dreams or a God of religious belief. The experience of transcendence, then, it incorporates the ongoing paradoxical presentation of limitation and possibility, isolation and unification, which are always co-presented in all human encounters with the world." -Alfred Schutz

It is this fluidity in how one relates to others and the world that allows us to position ourselves in narratives that enable change.



Images at left are screenshots from the film: http://www.citiesonspeed.dk/citiesonspeed/Bogota_ENgelsk.html and at right <http://www.raphaelvarieras.com/blog/tag/latin-america/>

Agility not only in terms what our own personal identity is, but in how we imagine the identities of others can change lives of individuals, of cities and of the world. It was Antanas Mockus' belief that "we all have remedy, that we are neither good nor bad by nature and our behaviour may change" that led the transformation of Bogotá during the early nineties, and it would be fair to say that what makes Mockus so effective a leader is his ability to imagine things being different from the way they actually are.

The ability to turn imagination into reality may be fueled by heavy matter, but it is led by bits. Much like our identities and Italo Calvino's vision of the future.

Prudence

Samantha Sweetwater, Dancing Freedom - Oakland, CA, USA

Dear Prudence, the much maligned goddess of foresight! She was given a bad name during the 1960's when the Western World busied itself breaking apart Judeo Christian moral codes in the name of sexual and spiritual liberation. In the West, many of us have come to associate prudence with control, rigidity, aloofness and over-cautiousness. We have posed her against the lighter gods of levity, expressiveness and permission and attempted to seduce her from her lofty towers. We have chaffed against her restraint. We have positioned her in antithesis to freedom. We threw the baby out with the bath water.

Prudence is an eternal virtue and an ecologically integral value. To be prudent is to be willing to take a profound pause to listen to the greater context before we act. In so doing, we are empowered to choose wisely and to participate practically. Prudence is a quality of being that supports the path of thriving.

Prudence walks, slow and stately, on the high path of perspective and is unafraid of the small sacrifices made for the greater good. She's not a kill-joy. She simply doesn't get lost in immediate gratification. She is *response-able*: able-to-respond with appropriateness, measure and compassion. Qualitatively, holds down the fort when things get turbulent.

The life impulse is immediate. Prudence reaches across the flow of time, weaving past, present and future.

Desire fires towards its own satisfaction. Prudence invites restraint.

Play gifts levity. Prudence gathers gravity.

Fear instigates reactivity. Prudence counsels courage.

Consumption is a basic function of life. Prudence knows when enough is enough.

Prudence holds the patient counsel needed to co-generate a sustaining now.

To be prudent is to apply sound judgment in practical affairs with the long view in mind. Prudence is embodied in the ageless sage, the laughing grandmother, the responsive parent, the diligent gardener, and the exquisitely attuned child whose actions are lensed through a living sense of interconnectivity to the whole. Prudence is embodied by those who can see, feel and respond to life as an intricate web that requires stewarding. When we act with prudence, we are dancing with greater cycles. When we act with prudence, we engage with and celebrate our dependent co-arising with the One Great Life.

Thriving requires this long view. In the praxis of thriving, we are reverse-architecting a regenerative physical-psycho-social-spiritual ecology for humanity's place in the universe. We are living the question of how to co-generate coherency and balance in our personal and collective relationships with the More-than-human world. We are beginning to co-create regenerative culture.

Prudence knows that our freedom and survival are delicately interwoven with our responsibility and restraint. Practicing prudence, we do the "karmic math" in order to determine how our choices and our actions will influence tomorrow. We feel how this moment impulses out into the future for seven generations to come. We pause. We attune. And, we choose wisely.

Ripple

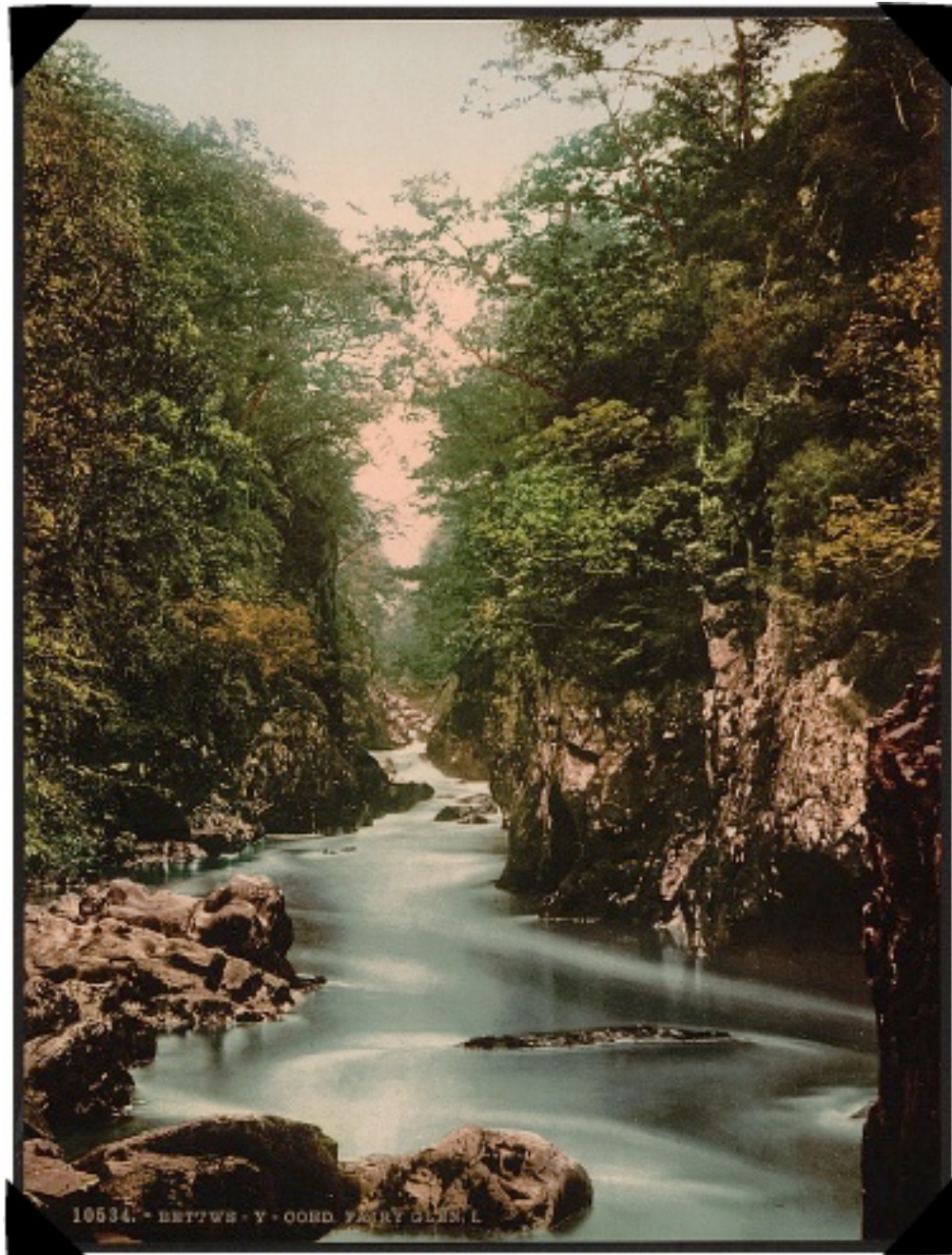
Greg Berry, w1sd0m - Denver, CO, USA



Uncertainty

Herman Wagter, CityNet - Amsterdam, Netherlands

The world is one big playground for every child — so much to discover, so much to get excited about. We all long for that state of mind, for the eagerness awaiting the thrill of a new experience.



http://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/3751651027/

It's the one thing we remember as long as we live and these are the memories that stay crystal clear and are romanticized as time goes on.

But as we grow older, we also tend to accumulate habits, dogmas, assets and obligations that weigh us down and make us shy away from really playing the discovery game again. We start to place more and more value on retaining and protecting what we have accumulated and less value on discovering and growing. We start to fear the uncertainty associated with discovery because we (wrongly) believe we have so much to lose. We believe we have to spend more and more energy in protection and insurance because our happiness will be embodied by assets. The real loss is not seen: the wonder of a child, seeing and experiencing this rich world and its inhabitants as for the first time.

But we do feel the loss somehow. Some seek substitute experiences that will give us a thrill without the uncertainty. Rides, games, movies, substances, fan clubs, sports — all substitutes for the real thing. Others grow frustrated and experience what we call a mid-life crisis or follow a spiritual leader who promises nirvana in the next life if new dogma's are adopted.

Old people are seen as old not because their biological bodies change, but because they have stopped growing. They seek no more discoveries, are afraid of any uncertainty, do not want to invest energy for dealing with uncertainty. They stop listening and complain about the world that keeps on going forward, wishing it would return to the state it was (or as they remember it being).

Embrace uncertainty and enjoy the thrill, the excitement of discovering the unknown. It's what life is all about.

Like a mental spring cleanup, look at your habits, dogmas, assets and obligations. Choose what you want to retain and start an expedition of discovery to replace the rest.

Wonder

Jill Palermo, WeAddUp.com - Long Island City, NY, USA

I grew up in suburbs of Cleveland. After college, I traveled to the wilderness of Oregon. Looking up at the stars for the first time there, I nearly fell to the ground because there were so many, and they were so bright.

Sometimes, the light pollution clouds our perspective to see the beauty that is right in front of us — a miracle that happens every night. What is out there that is waiting to be seen if we simply change some of the conditions? Perhaps a solution that is right in front of us. An answer that is waiting to be heard. Why did I have to wait 22 years and travel over 2,000 miles to know how miraculous the stars are? And now that I am back in a city — the biggest and brightest city in the US — how often do I remember that, even though I look up and do not see them, they are still there?

I wonder what else there is, already in existence, that I cannot see because of a cloud in my vision.

I wonder: If I could see through the cloud, or around the cloud, or if a great wind came and blew the cloud away, what would be possible then?



Photo courtesy of Steve Crandall

Cycles



Photo courtesy of Steve Crandall

Visit thrivable.org to join the conversation.

Adaptation

Meghana Bhatt, Human Neuroimaging Lab - Houston, TX, USA



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/reighleblanc/3854685038/>

Adaptation is not only the key to survival and the source of much of our creativity. Adapting often requires us to use tools, objects, and even our brains in new ways. The most powerful tools are usually the most general. For example - our hands - while wings and fins evolved from the same basic structure as our hands, they evolved toward specialization while our hands evolved toward generality. We can use our hands for the most delicate of tasks, as well as those that require force. Most importantly, this generality gave us our ability to manipulate the world around us in a conscious way.

We've also generalized our mental functions. Since ancient times people have used "memory palaces" to leverage our amazing spatial processing and navigation skills into a means to remember speeches, epic poetry and oral histories verbatim. Now, our ability to image the brain has allowed us to study this form of adaptation more thoroughly. Eleanor Maguire showed that world memory champions use navigation areas like the retrosplenial cortex and hippocampus during memorization. Studies show that these navigational areas are also active when people imagine the future, while another new study by Knops et al. indicate that we use parietal areas involved in eye movements and spatial coding during mental arithmetic.



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b5/Hand_I_1.jpg



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/compujeramey/80029334/>

Our ability to generalize and adapt doesn't stop with our anatomy. In the last decade we've developed more and more general tools. By generalizing the way we deal with data itself, we can build tools that are capable of manipulating text, images and video, perform sophisticated mathematical analyses, and allow us to communicate with each other. Applications like Google Trader are allowing people in sub-Saharan Africa to buy and sell goods to each other without using the middle men who have traditionally reaped all the profits from these transactions. Evolving technologies are helping to vitalize and define new economies in these countries.

Blockage

Scott Reynolds Nelson, historian, College of William & Mary - Williamsburg, VA, USA

We know about the good times. In upturns, commodities and capital flow freely. Prices increase, people buy second houses, spend beyond their means, take risks. They cultivate wasteful habits, dream about the future. They often do not save.

Times of blockage are periods when everything stops. We call them Depressions, and America has had a lot of them: 1819-21, 1837-8, 1857, 1873-79, 1893-96, and 1929-33. What happens in blockage? People doubt the value of stocks, land values plummet, they hoard gold. Commerce slows to a crawl. They are frightening times of unemployment, shattered state services, weakened institutions and riot. Donations dry up. But times of blockage are also times to rethink, to take some time to ponder, to innovate. It was during the crisis of 1857 that the previously ignored insights of a long-haired mathematician, abolitionist, and utopian socialist named Elizur Wright were finally recognized as critically valuable for economic stability.

In the 1840s and 1850s, Wright had tried to convince the state of Massachusetts that life insurance needed reform. As a mathematician, he had been asked calculate the present value of any given policy based on the premiums paid in, a calculation that British mathematicians had called impossible. He created a rule-of-thumb called “net present value” (NPV) to determine the value of a flow of resources in a single instant (present value) and then to subtract operating costs (net).

But the more Elizur calculated, the more troubled he became. Many companies by his calculations spent so much on advertising that they could never pay off their policies. Others profited by canceling policies for those who missed a single payment. The effect was often to end a policy a year before death, leaving families with nothing. Wright fumed, but in vain. In the go-go 1840s and early 1850s, no one would listen to his criticisms and only a few would accept his principle of valuation. But through the 1850s he returned to the

Massachusetts legislature with a blueprint for reform. When the Panic of 1857 hit with the failure of a bank called Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, Elizur was prepared. This blockage of trade and transport, Wright declared, was a result of distrust. Insurance companies needed reliable accounting practices that would allow Massachusetts to calculate net present value, and internal rate of return. When trust returns, Wright assured them, the blockage will be over.



Unconvinced but without options, Massachusetts adopted Wright's blueprint, preventing any company from selling insurance in Massachusetts that did not provide complete financial information. NPV offers transparency of obligations. The panic was short-lived, and Elizur Wright's accounting principles became the basis of what we now call Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, adopted by millions of companies, states, and non-governmental organizations throughout the world. MBAs take credit for it, but a long-haired radical gave us cost accrual accounting.

Wright took advantage of blockage to identify its root cause – a distrust of opacity. Increased financial transparency was the solution; trust collapses without it. Blockage can let us make institutions open up and make them thrivable.

Breakdown

Gil Friend, Natural Logic - Berkeley, CA, USA

Consider the pain of breakdown.
Thwarted, stymied, blocked, diverted.
But what I intended was so important - at least to me.
What stops me is my enemy.

Consider the subjectivity of breakdown.
Unexpected upset, or delight.
A flat tire on the freeway on the way to a date: a disaster
On Highway One at sunset: a gift

Consider the word breakdown.
Broken down.
Break it down.
Take a break. Sit down.

Consider the challenge of breakdown.
Now what?
Push on? Rethink? Change course?
Look deeply? Find a way?

Consider the opportunity of breakdown.
To see what your focus & drive didn't enable you to see.
To recognize your concerns and commitments.
To see a better way to realize them.



photo courtesy of Darlene Charneco

Breakthrough

Leilani Rashida Henry, Being & Living Enterprises, LTD - Denver, CO, USA

5 Principles for Quantum Movement

Brain Jewels™ made from Henry Bergeson Kaleidoscopes

Enjoy the journey!

Intention



What's the essence behind what you are planning, thinking or doing? How does your unique passion contribute to a greater good? Align with the intangible, positive power of your intention to bring integrity into your process. Have courage. Immerse yourself in your intention. Know that whatever happens, it serves a purpose toward accomplishing your outcome.

Build your capacity for ambiguity and uncertainty. When you believe in synchronicity, it gives more vitality to your idea.

Interconnect



There is a larger energy field that surrounds your idea. You can tap into it for inspiration and information. Whom does your idea impact? How are you in touch with them? Use the collective intelligence, experience and creativity of others. Welcome feedback and dialogue about your outcome. Pay attention to your judgments. Free yourself from a stance of "right or wrong". Spread appreciation widely.

Be open to what shape things are taking. The outcome can take on a life of its own. Use all your senses and signals in the environment to help you respond and redefine your outcome.

Imagine and Evolve



What is first imagined becomes reality. When we incubate on our ideas and apply fertilizer (curiosity, patience and excitement), Breakthrough is inevitable. Stay inspired and committed to evolution by giving up what no longer serves you.. Accept that something larger can be working on your behalf. Trust that things are moving forward under the surface of your consciousness.

Initiate



What do you need to learn to accomplish your idea? Maybe you need to undo or unlearn something? Keep moving, even when the barriers you face seem insurmountable. Look at your challenge from all sides. With a leap of faith, you can find what is on the other side of the challenges that arise from doing something new. Thank your heart and mind for birthing your idea!

Innovate



Change your environment often! If you are indoors frequently, get outside. If you are typically in the city, get to a rural setting. If you are mostly at a desk, get up and move. Balance productivity with recreation. Give in to play and spontaneity. Even irreverence has its' place to shake things up! As you get closer to what you want to create, allow for break downs. Open the space for change to enter. You may be surprised at how naturally your outcome shifts for the better.

Many times breakthrough happens when you least expect it.



Creative Destruction

Chris Byrne, MBA, Byrne Green - Mendicino, CA, USA

Progress comes from the Latin *progressus* 'an advance,' from the verb *progredi*, from pro- 'forward' + gradi 'to walk.'

In modern western culture, this "walk forward" may be described as moving from a disparate or unrefined state to one of greater order. Here the cultural memory develops and is conserved; values and morals are established; institutions are forged; infrastructures are built; fortunes are made; and an inertia of history "progresses" into the future.

However, progress is the result of a non-linear dance of an adaptive cycle of growth, conservation, release, and reorganization, not the one-way flight of time's arrow. This nuanced understanding has great implications for the idea of progress and how we hold the role of destruction in the process of creation.



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For example: fire is an integral aspect of "unmanaged" ecosystems. On regular occasion, a fire will burn through a landscape, disrupting niches and upsetting the established order. Indeed, some plants require fire to reproduce. When this relationship is intact, after a fire, the greater ecosystem is typically preserved, while providing an opportunity for the niches within it to reestablish, either by the same species or a new entrant exploiting the disruptive opportunity. In this way, the Earth has evolved by dancing with Kali — the goddess of creation and destruction.

In the modern human construct, there seems to be a mortal fear of destruction, or a desire to overcome it, or both. We avoid Kali. Because of this bias, we struggle to avoid the inevitable, to suppress the fire in both our inhabited landscapes and our social institutions. In the absence of the "cool" seasonal fire of rebirth, ecosystems become crowded and in danger of a catastrophic generational fire. Likewise, corporations become "too big to fail" for fear of the consequences of what their absence may do to the larger business ecosystem. But "business as usual" is itself a cultural construct: the idea that you can predict the curves and trends ahead by driving through the view of the rearview mirror.

This destructive force is not necessarily something to be wished for, but inevitably it will come. However, once it arrives — in either the greater society or the personal realm (such as a lost job or ended relationship) — embracing its role in future advancement may be a more fruitful path than denying its potential or resenting its appearance. In this way, we can embrace the creative "re-struction" as a component of developing a more thrivable relationship with each other and with the Earth we call home.

Emergence

Jon Lebkowsky, Worldchanging - Austin, TX, USA

Buckminster Fuller famously talked about "emerging through emergency," and we certainly have no end of emergency in the 21st Century. I think of our conversations at Worldchanging.com after the Southeast Asian tsunami, and again after hurricane Katrina. Our first thought was of what might emerge from self-organization in the complex, chaotic wake of profound disaster: innovative new architectures and cultural transformations are at least possible when legacy structures are wiped out.



Photo courtesy of Hava Gurevich

Similar thinking around climate change: we have those who deny the problem, and we have those who merely fear it - but we also have those who see the problem of climate change as very real, and as an opportunity to create more sustainable methods for managing (producing + using + conserving) energy. Given sustainability, what of thriving? How do we become resilient and prosper in a "post-carbon" world?

Complex systems and patterns emerge from simple interactions and rules; the future will emerge from patterns of interaction and coevolution according to rules we establish and goals we set now, and will be more or less chaotic based on how coherent and focused we can be. If we lack focused goals, we can expect chaos and entropy as our energies and processes will lack coherent patterns, properties and models for self-organization. In other words, we can have the future we want, but we have to be clear about what we want - shared goals - and we have to work within well-defined ethical frameworks - rules that bring focus.

In this context, I see a connection between emergence and collaboration. Collaborations are successful when they are structured around common goals and clear communication protocols that are defined up front and refined as we go. Successful action emerges from coherent collaboration.

Thriving as a goal depends on the emergence of actions, systems, and processes that are driven by goals that we have defined as relevant. This emergence is the product of collaboration around objectives, within a well-defined context for communication, where there is a shared set of ethics, principles, and protocols. If we are to create a thriving movement, this collaboration is our first step, and it begins here.

Exploration

Dr. Ashis Brahma, physician, teacher - Kampala, Uganda

Near the diving Mecca Dahab, Red Sea there is a dive called the Wall. As you drop 36 meters in a crevice you end in school of Glass Fish. Transparence, even illumination, with a slightly giggling mind.

In my garden in Kampala, a sunbird is taking nectar from the flowers of the male papaya flowers. How I wish I had those green metallic wings and dazzling red breast — flapping them hard to impress my female consort.

As the patient peers into my eyes, the nurse translates what this young boy is saying: “Everything will be all right?” All I can muster is, “We try our best.” Boundaries: death & life always end in the first.

In Oure Cassoni refugee camp in Chad, everyday towards our departure Mohammed with the big teeth asks me to play football. Most days, I get some minutes in — exploding joy for me and the boys.

Some days, the awareness of nature and people is lesser than other days. Time to implore. Those days, moon nor sun, bird, nor kid is seen. Go on, explore the interior.

Glass fish, sunbird, boy patient, interior, exterior and Mohammed equals “Same same.”

One I see with my Inner Eye guided by the Inner Child; it sees what I cannot when I try looking for it.

The majestic nature of All and the opportunity to be fully part of it. Enjoy it! Explore it! Thrive on it!

You are that (Tat tvam asi).



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<http://www.flickr.com/photos/olivierregloff/4251596678/>

Integration

Gibran Rivera, Senior Associate, Interaction Institute for Social Change - Boston, MA, USA

The sages of Kashmir describe the universe as a divine pulsation, Lord Shiva's dance, a blissful play of consciousness through which the one becomes the many only to become the one again. God loves to recognize herself.

Last night I was chanting at the meditation center I go to, and I had this deep awareness of my inner stillness. It was exactly then that the little voice inside my head decided to go off. I started to really wonder how to stay in touch with that silence even as I go about my day. I started to worry; I started to wonder; if I could be both still and active, I wondered if I could possibly produce anything without being a complete subject to the ongoing chatter in my mind.

Wouldn't silence just make me be still? Too still?

This would probably be the best form of integration, more evolutionary than revolutionary. It would bring these poles together; it would be a simultaneous grounding in that total stillness that always is while also thriving in the forward flow of my evolutionary impulse.

The sages of Kashmir talk about this too. They speak of Lord Shiva as the primordial stillness, the emptiness that is, before the beginning and after the end, eternal silence, always still. And they also speak of Shakti, who is his consort, his beloved, and the one who gives rise to all that is – manifestation – she herself is manifestation. And the whole of this universe is their divine dance. It's not like there is an empty place and a full place, and they are separate from each other. *There is total integration* of the two, it's happening all at once – we are their thrivable act of love.

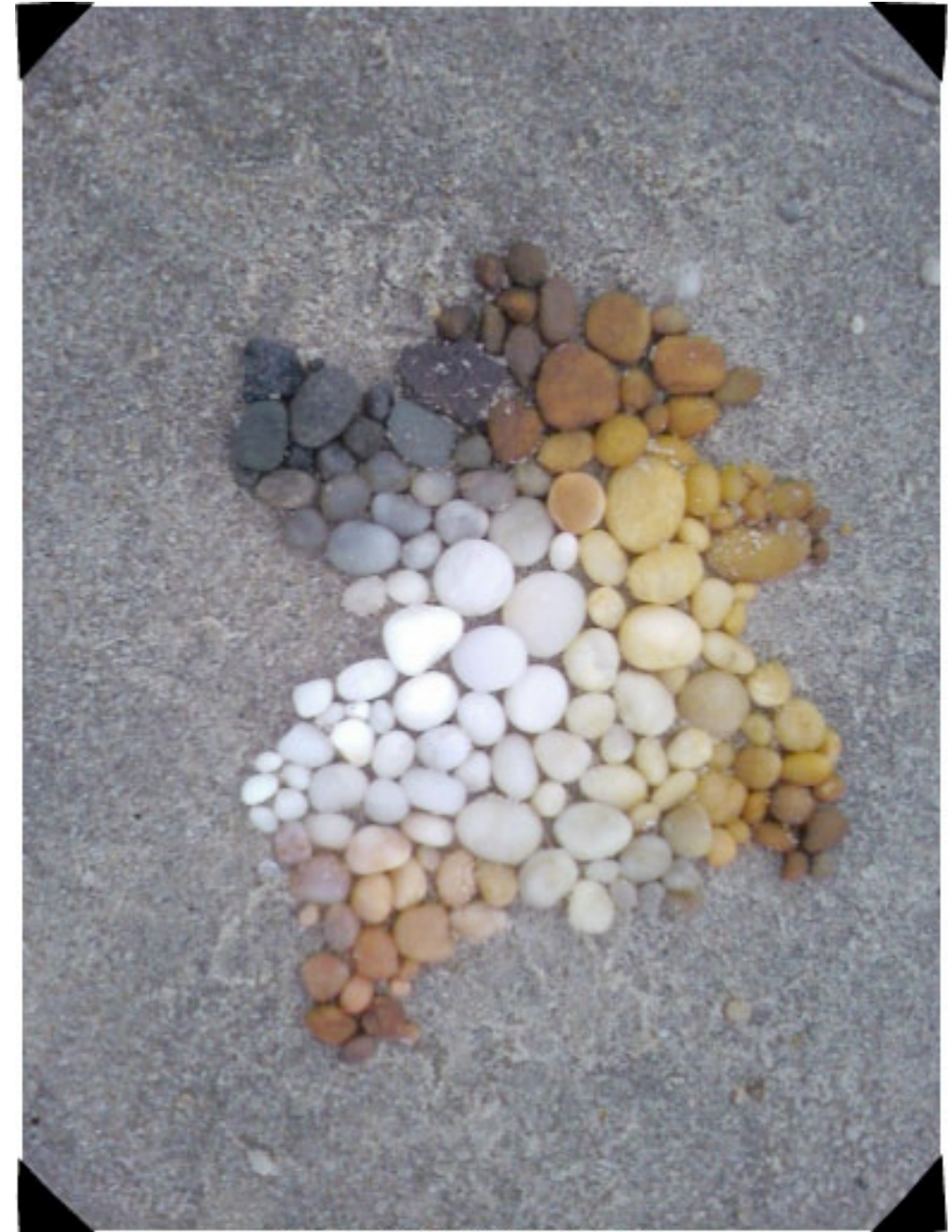
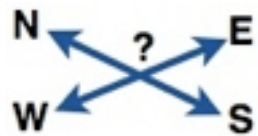


Photo courtesy of Hava Gurevich

Intersection

Ken Homer, *Collaborative Conversations* - San Rafael, CA, USA



The first image that springs to mind when contemplating the word “intersection” is a crossroads – a choice point.

There are innumerable crossroads on the journey of thriving, and we need access to guidance as we travel. We need to know where we are, and how to track our progress. Some ways are newly invented, others quite ancient. The Taoists, for example, recognized that where Heaven and Earth intersect, People come into being. They created the image at right as a way to show our profound connection to the Earth and solar system.

When we reach a crossroads, the first inquiry is:

Where do you want to go? If you don't know where you want to go, then any road will get you there. The next inquiry is: In what direction are you facing? Each direction offers intelligence for us as individuals, as people in communities, and about how our work changes the world.



The East is where we witness the Sun breaking on the horizon. East represents Dawn, Spring, and Birth, the element of fire, the



energy of newness.

- ☯• What new thinking will help me to thrive?
- ☯• What new behaviors will create thriving relationships?
- ☯• What new work can I undertake that will support the thriving of Earth's ecosystems?

In the South the Sun is directly overhead; it's Noon, Summer and the peak of growth – the element of water, the energy of cyclic flowing.

- ☯• How are my ideas about thriving growing and changing?
- ☯• What in my relationships is growing and thriving?
- ☯• What is thriving in the world as a result of my work?

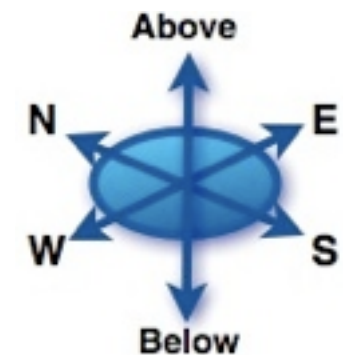
In the West the Sun has descended and now lies on the horizon about to disappear from sight. It is Dusk, Autumn, the time of Death and Harvest, the element of Earth, the energy of grounding.

- ☯• What thoughts, ideas and concepts about thriving do I have that need to be harvested and released?
- ☯• What patterns in my relationships need to be harvested and released?
- ☯• What fruits of my work now need to be digested and allowed to integrate?

In the North the Sun is directly below us, it is Midnight and Winter – the time of Regeneration and the element of Air, the energy of clarifying.

- ☯• What supports my mind in regenerating?
- ☯• What supports my relationships in regenerating?
- ☯• How do I partner with the Earth in regenerating life?

We can also add a vertical axis – yielding the directions of Above and Below.



Below is Earth Home, Nature, the only known Life in the Universe, the energy of Life.

- ☯• How do I ground my thinking?
- ☯• What is the ground of my relationships?
- ☯• How is my life supporting All Life?

Above are the Heavens Our connection to The Immensity of The Universe, to All That Is, and to All That Is Unnamable.

- ☯• Who am I?
- ☯• Who are others?
- ☯• What am I to do?
- ☯• How now shall we thrive?

Pathfinding

Peter and Trudy Johnson-Lenz
- Portland, OR, USA



*You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.
You're on your own.
And you know what you know.*

And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go...

*You'll get mixed up of course, as you already know.
You'll get mixed up with many strange birds as you go.
So be sure when you step.
Step with care and great tact
And remember that Life's a great balancing act.
Just never forget to be dexterous and deft.
And never mix up your right foot with your left.*

-- Dr. Seuss, Oh! The Places You'll Go! (1990)

Our topsy-turvy world is even more complicated than Dr. Seuss's was 20 years ago. He exclaimed, "You're off to Great Places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So, get on your way!" The mountain still waits, but getting there takes more street smarts, fluid thinking, and nimble strategies. And along the way, you may even decide that mountain isn't really such a Great Place to go after all.

Everything keeps changing, faster and faster -- including our goals. We're in times of urgency, high stakes, and uncertainty.

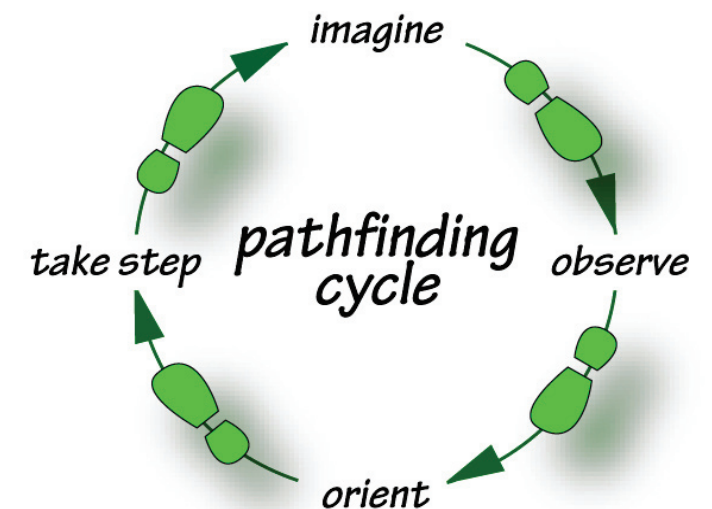
So what's the secret to thriving in this "new normal"?

When there are no maps, pathfinding is the only way. When best practices don't apply, pathfinding uncovers "next practices."

Pathfinding may well be the most important 21st century skill. Few organizations understand this, but those without it won't survive the next 20 years, when the need for individuals and organizations to master this skill will grow exponentially.

Pathfinding is ...

- moving into uncharted territory, eyes wide open for which way to go
- applied innovation, adapting or inventing whatever you need whenever you need it
- a strategic role for organizations to cultivate from the top-down, bottom-up, and the middle-on-out
- orienting and accelerating innovations for building a smarter future



Nobody can predict the future, but we can create it together. Or more accurately, we can discover it one step at a time. It's learning our way forward -- keeping our eyes on the prize, taking our best shot, seeing how well that worked, making adjustments, and trying again -- building on each trial & success.

Pathfinding means learning to do this even better, smarter, and faster -- on our own and in collaboration with others along the way.

So roll up your sleeves and lace up your shoes, the future is here and there's no time to lose!

Reflection

Gerard Senehi, Founding Member, EnlightenNext - New York, NY, USA

Reflection is an essential component of thriving because in order for things to move towards higher levels of order, beauty, and goodness, consciousness must continue to evolve. Deeper reflection makes *conscious* evolution possible.

Reflection happens on different levels. At the more surface level, reflection is simply the awareness of one's experience, one's thoughts and one's feelings, not necessarily with any perspective or context. As reflection deepens with maturity, one gains a psychological understanding of oneself, of one's thoughts, feelings and inner experience and attains a new degree of freedom of choice. And as reflection deepens even further, one gains a spiritual understanding of oneself not just of the objects of consciousness but of consciousness itself. Aware that we are aware in the most profound sense, infuses us with that an even greater degree of freedom.

This spiritual understanding puts our experience and our psychological understanding within a much larger context, connecting us to the fact that we are a part of the evolving cosmos rather than seeing our own experience as existing in isolation and within confined boundaries. When this happens, rather than seeing ourselves as possessors of consciousness, we see that we are channels through which consciousness can reflect upon itself. This insight is explosive and transformative. It gives us an extraordinary and profound understanding, while also giving us a very practical knowledge of ourselves. Psychological conclusions that we often make, then, no longer remain the ultimate conclusions about who we are but can be seen and questioned within a much greater picture in which the evolution of consciousness and culture are part of this extraordinary journey.



So let's look further into what the evolution of consciousness and the evolution of culture means. The act of looking at that is also the process of reflection itself. One way to contemplate the evolution of consciousness is to reflect on both the limitations and the vastness of our own perspective of our sense of who we are. Consciousness is much more profound than the experience of being a separate individual with clearly defined boundaries, and extends beyond our sense of individuality. The evolution of consciousness would therefore reflect an increasing expansion, from the individual being aware, to the individual being able to reflect upon him/herself, his/her inner experience. and the greater picture... to the Universe being able to reflect on itself through the individual...

As consciousness evolves through us, our very real preferences about life and the choices we make shift and there emerge new values, worldviews, preferences and ways of being.

As this happens among different individuals these external changes in values, worldviews, preferences, and ways of being, are a reflection of the evolution of culture – as the interior of the Universe evolves, so does the exterior.

One of highest acts we can realize as human beings is to reflect on *who we are* and what that means in terms of *how we are...together* – an ongoing interplay in the relationship between the evolution of consciousness and the evolution of culture.

Our interest in deeper reflection is arising out of the self reflective nature of the Universe itself. I ask myself, "How conscious am I?" So *WHO* is it that is asking the question? It's me!

Release

Clare Mulvany, One Wild Life - Dublin, Ireland

I'd love to say that my pebble throwing could cause a wave,
whisking up a flattened lake into a storm cloud-
thunder blue, tempestuous, and deeply noted.
But no. There are just ripples. Little ones
like merry-go-rounds
spinning some happy swirls and pretty patterns
on the surface of things.

So instead, I'd love to say that my ripple making could stop walkers on
their tracks, stalled with the sight of movement and magic.
But no, they'd only see the ordinary, the everyday.
And even if they took a second glance, the ripples would have tip-toed
out of sight, their memory now enmeshed in what they'd call the lake,
the shore, the very definition of their Sunday stroll.

But who am I to say I'd love these things?
And who am I to question pretty patterns?
Because sometimes we just need to let go,
to release the pebbles with our best shot, our best fling.
And then who knows-
maybe just the surface will be skimmed,
and maybe for just a fleeting second
but for those moments, as the pebbles greet the surface,
sunlight dances, physics and water flow,
and all that was ordinary is suddenly lost to the altogether new.

It will be still again.

Until, that is, your next throw.
Until, that is, when the very surface is altered,
not with storms or thunder,
but with the repeated act of letting go,

letting your grip on the stones fly to the wind,
letting the pull of gravity make itself known.

And before you know it,
there is a mighty splash.
Again
and again
and again.

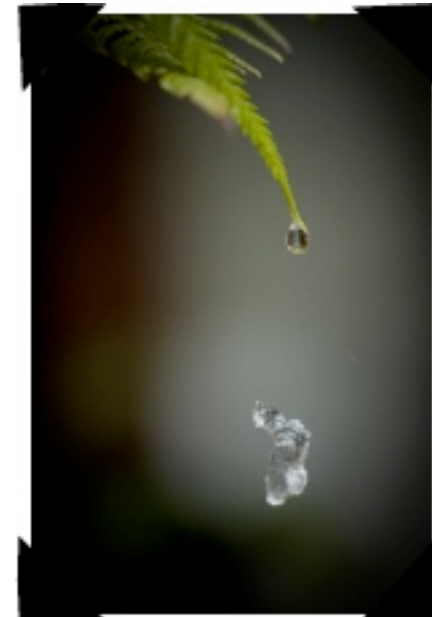


Photo courtesy of Clare Mulvany

Photo courtesy of Clare Mulvany

Shift

John Hagel - San Francisco, CA, USA

The Big Shift can be deeply challenging. The Big Shift suggests we are moving away from a world where stocks of knowledge and short-lived transactions are the key to success. In its place, we find a world where participation in many, diverse flows of knowledge and long-term, trust-based relationships determine success.

Relationships and Dynamics

We can each look at the same scene and focus our attention on something completely different. Individual idiosyncrasies definitely play a role, but broader patterns of perception are at work as well.

virtuous cycle

The Big Shift

Progression Performance Connecting

Not predictable Risk Taking Authenticity

Big Shift will also transform how we communicate with each other. We are moving from a world of deep analysis communicating explicit knowledge to a world of rich, personal narratives communicating tacit knowledge.

Stories emerge as an increasingly central form of communication in times of rapid change because they so richly reflect the needs of the time. In particular, they help us to shift our perception from static objects to dynamic relationships.

Pursuing Passion

I am focused on the passion of **explorers**. These are people who see a domain, but not the path. The fact that the paths are not clearly defined is what excites them and motivates them to move into the domain. It also makes them alert to a variety of inputs that can help them to better understand the domain and discover more promising paths through the unexplored terrain.

if passion and profession can be integrated, stress turns into stimulus.

...passion provides a pull-based foundation for community building that liberates...

Shifting Identities

In a constantly changing world of shift and flows, finding (or founding) a passion-based community may be one of the most significant factors to staying oriented, rooted, and poised to grow.

passion holds the key to creating and shaping relationships that will help us thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Network Creator

By cultivating a view of creativity as sacred, we reinforce a sense of wonder, curiosity and, most of all, humility that will help us to become even more creative.

the central role of agency in emergence

The Sacred/Creative



Stuck

Mark Grimes, Ned - Portland, OR, USA



Stuck (in the box)

Ask new questions. get new answers. Ask better questions. get better answers. Ask the single best question you can ask that no one on earth would have ever considered and get an answer that will reveal a whole new level of insight, creative options, and opportunity. Don't just think "out of the box", strip off your clothes until you're buck naked, smash that fucking box with your bare feet while drinking Wild Turkey straight from the bottle and howling at the moon.

Success

Kevin Doyle Jones, Good Capital, San Francisco, CA, USA

Success is something I enjoy. It does not scare me when I see it coming. I welcome it and have fun with it. I think that is the biggest thing I see as a key factor of success. It is a flow of momentum and energy and resources coming your way that you have to have fun with, let it wash over you and not get attached to it as it goes up and down. Be a happy swimmer in multiple currents, that's the thing that has helped me succeed a lot of the time. Some people actually take momentum, when it starts to hit, as a problem. Momentum is part of the solution, and it has to be welcomed in incremental stages, with it's progress announced as if it were a royal procession coming through town.

Success these days also means thinking about your impact. In my earlier days in business I only worried about three things: more money coming in faster at higher margin. Sometimes I did not want a financially sustainable business, but rather to ride the market's momentum to a timely sale. That was the only other variable I applied when I measured success. Now I think about environmental and social impact first, actually, and use business to get toward those goals. I am also learning to live more easily with philanthropy and realize that giving can be regarded as an input: a reliable resource that can play a part in the success of a social venture.

Creating venues for people to give and invest alongside each other...The planet is in the sort of pickle that it requires assembling all the resources at hand in order to create a thrivable future. So success to me is a broad set of partnerships, from discovery phase to cooperation and then coordination that puts our collective best effort toward the goal of a fecund future that is more than sustainable, more than just a viable baseline, to a future in which we all thrive.



Photo courtesy of Mark Andrew Boyer for OrganicNation.tv

Transformation

Tracy Gary, Inspired Legacies and Inspired Philanthropy - Houston, TX, and No. CA, USA

“We are all connected, underneath.”

From the poem *Islands* by Muriel Rukeyser

We dance to connect. Our hearts soar with purpose. When purpose and dancing unite, we have magic.

Years have taught me that truly blissful love, that which is sustainable and infinitely replicable, is the love for ourselves, our families, our communities, and our world.

Nothing gets us there more profoundly than listening. Once we listen to what's needed, from within and without, we are transformed. When we **really** listen, whatever is old that has protected us, falls away. We are present with presence.



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/quinnanya/4389264674/>

If we take action, inspired by the critical instinct to be present, to extend, to give, to share, to help, to partner with that magic, then we have what it takes for transformation: for ourselves, our planet, and all people everywhere, to survive, evolve, and thrive.

Half of life is figuring out the right closeness and distance from the people and organizations we love most. For what is most essential is to keep growing, to be true to ourselves and our highest potential; there-in, can we be free to be the greatest service in the world.

What we want is to keep in relationship to our passionate purpose and call, and to **LOVE** those in the mix who motivate and **STUN** us and make us **R E A C H** for all that needs doing.

Recognizing which are our beloved sources of inspiration and partnership, and **nurturing** those relationships, is the greatest work of being and becoming. Let us then work to transcend our egos, to get to the real stuff of tending well to the birth of this huge shift that is all around and in us.

May we show up fully present for the creative and cultural revolution that is happening right now. But we've got to rest and we've got to move. We've got to mix-up fully to whom we listen and how and with whom we partner.

Do it now. Commit to staying on path to growth. And then, drop down, slowly...then Hula. Keep your eyes and soul on the hearts of others and **be** healed/**be** healing.



Actions

Breathing in Gratitude

Liz Strauss, Founder of [SOBCon](#) & Author of [Successful-Blog](#) - Chicago, IL USA

When I was a child, I thought that gratitude was held inside the words "thank you."

They were two words packed with incredible meaning. As a shy child, I struggled to find the voice that carried my depth of feeling. I worried that people might not feel the heart behind my words. My gratitude sometimes seemed too huge, too hard to express, with people until long after I could have said something.

That was childhood thinking. Children experience a world in which they are the main story.

When I became an adult, I learned two more words -- *inspire* and *aspire*. One means *to breathe*; the other means *to breathe toward*. I began to realize a life is inspiration, breathing, and dreams are breathing toward what life could be.

Now I think gratitude is better held inside the word "gratis" -- given freely in appreciation. I breathe in and breathe toward the incredible meaning packed in the experience of a world filled with so much more than me. And I hope my voice will carry and express the depth of my feeling that is the joy of a life fueled by gratitude.



Photo courtesy of Mark Andrew Boyer for OrganicNation.tv

Build Capacity in Dependencies

Beth Kanter, Beth's Blog - San Francisco, CA, USA

You help build capacity in dependencies by listening, synthesizing, and feeding back to your audience. Through this, you are uplifted, and they too are uplifted. By synthesizing the wisdom you pick up from the people who interact with you on Twitter or elsewhere on the social web, and feeding it back to the whole, you help all the people you are connected to. Yes, it can involve introducing them to each other. Yes, it requires listening (it's a core competency of network weaving). And the synthesizing and feedback part is crucial too.

What you need is a listening post. I set up my listening post 5 years ago to scan for people, trends, and ideas related to social media and nonprofits. Listening and engaging with people has been critical to any success I've achieved as a social media practitioner – whether I'm blogging (<http://beth.typepad.com>) or fundraising for Cambodian children (http://www.businessweek.com/innovate/content/feb2009/id2009029_776708.htm).

A Simple Definition: Listening

Listening is knowing what is being said about your organization, field, or issue area. Listening online uses monitoring and tracking tools to identify conversations that are taking place on the social web. It is a prelude to engaging with your audience. At its most basic, listening is simply naturalistic research, although more like a focus group or observation than a survey. The value of listening comes from making sense of the data and using it to inform your social media strategy and response.

Understanding the Value of Listening and Engaging

The value of listening is more than “free market research,” although listening through social media channels is priceless because you can hear what people are saying in their natural environment. Listening

is typically used by nonprofits to help improve programs and identify misconceptions.

Finally, it isn't a matter of just collecting data, someone will need to transform it from a river of seeming noise into useful insights – and this takes a particular skill: pattern analysis. And then you need to share it back out with your network. This builds their capacity, which returns to you in a feedback cycle of helping and sharing.

Far more important than our choice of tools for the listening task, are your listening literacy skills. These include composing and refining keywords, pattern analysis, and synthesis of findings. There's also a fourth skill: Effectively engaging. Listening is not just quietly observing, sooner or later you need to interact with people and build relationships. Working out when and how to respond is an important technique that needs to be mastered.

- 🌀 How will you engage once you find people talking about your issues or concepts?
- 🌀 Using your listening, how can you help those who are helping you?

Collaborate with All Stakeholders

Christina Jordan, Evolutionize It - Brussels, Belgium

I love to imagine what could happen when organizations engaged in global development, the donors who fund them and the communities they aim to serve would engage in open collaborative discussion about programs, projects and desired outcomes.

- Organizations would minimize conflict between what their donors think they want to pay for and what their beneficiaries and staff really understand about the kind of work that's most needed to effectively redress some of our world's most unbalancing imbalances;
- Donors - who have, most often, lived a completely different global community reality than those whom they aim to help - would broaden their own insight into the complex issues they hope to impact, and learn to better invest in addressing root challenges with informed, passion-based creativity and intellect;
- Beneficiary communities would begin to feel like they actually matter as partners in a shared desire to help our world thrive, instead of as numbers reported to donors that justify long-entrenched, dependency-based global power relationships (arguably, one of our world's most unbalancing imbalances today lies - and lies to us - in the very fact that the world does not yet hear the unfiltered voice of those whom global development efforts aim to serve);

With openly communicative relationships between all of those who aim to play a part in achieving balance and well-being in our global communities, positive change would become a living, breathing, undeniable human story. It would be a story with more creative minds writing the twists to it's plot, more hearts exerting love on the rendition of it, and more souls believing through seeing that

change really is happening in our world - one lost voice heard, one friendship forged, and one micro-success celebrated together at a time.

More faith in our world's thrivability will unlock every door to achieving a thriving world: open communication channels between all stakeholders in global development efforts, large and small, would give us that. Today, every organization has unprecedented tools available to make that level of inclusive stakeholder collaboration possible (opt-in-avoidable, even). How long will it be before we begin demanding it as a new norm?

I love to imagine what could happen...



open space conference Kampala, Uganda

Contribute to the Commons

Ruth Ann Harnisch, Harnisch Foundation - New York, NY, USA

When I arrived in Beijing in the early 1990s, the air was *visible*. People routinely wore surgical masks on the street. In that smog, I realized that boundaries between nations, and indeed between people, are illusory and ultimately unenforceable. The boundaries of nations had no impact on the movement of air, and China's pollutants could not be confined to the nation that produced them.

Whether we acknowledge it or not, the world is "The Commons." Our actions and our ideas cannot be bound by so-called borders, and each of us constantly contributes to the commons. The question is not, "Will you contribute to the commons?" The question is, "What are we contributing to the commons, and is our contribution what we intended?"

What can we intentionally, purposefully, and consciously contribute to the commons for the good of all? What do we contribute to the commons that creates pain for others and does not advance civilization?



- Ideas – Are you selfish with your ideas, always trying to corner a market and make a profit, or do you freely share? Check out creativecommons.org and see how others are dealing with this challenge.
- Waste – Are you careful with your resources? Do you buy more than you need? Do you buy more than you use? Do you hoard your surplus? Or do you share creatively, freecycle, couchsurf, potlatch?
- Money – Your checkbook and your credit card statements tell the story of your life. What do they say about your contribution to the commons? Are you putting your money where your values are?
- Service – What can you do to assist others? Do you give more than you take?
- Attitude – Do you contribute negativity to the commons, or are you a positive force? Your attitude is contagious and affects many others. Are you contributing to a climate of respect for all? Do you treat others with the dignity that is their birthright, or do you contribute to a climate of disrespect? What effect does your hatred for another have on the commons? How does your love make a difference? Are you contributing small and large acts of kindness and generosity of spirit, or are you contributing to the overall rudeness and depersonalization of daily life?
- Integrity – Are you contributing to the commons by telling the truth, accepting responsibility for yourself and your actions, keeping your promises, and doing the right thing, or are you contributing to the sense that nobody can be trusted?

Each of us is an inevitable *contributor to and recipient from* the commons. Each of us is invested with the power to make a difference in the commons with our every thought, every action, every omission.

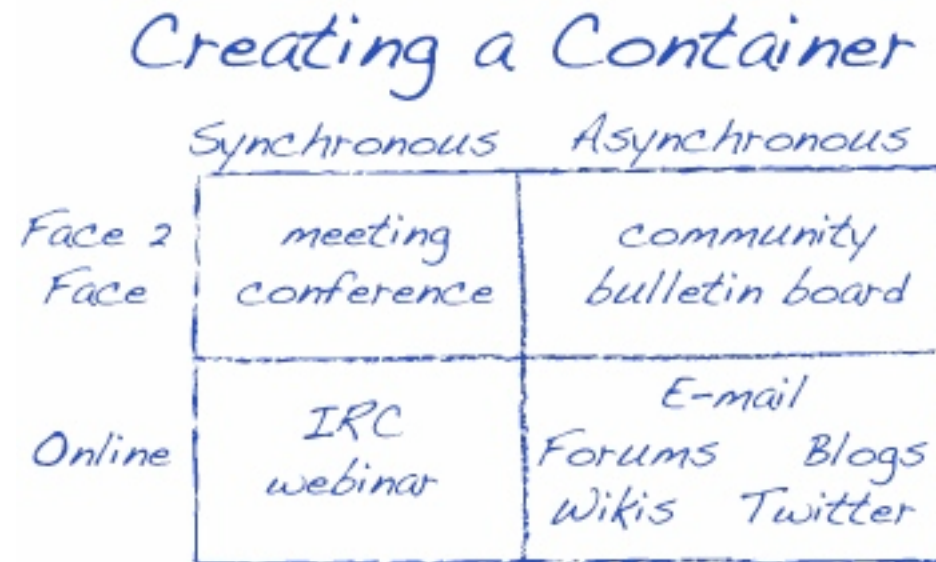
What are you contributing to the commons?



Create Appropriate Containers

Kaliya Hamlin, IdentityWoman - Berkeley, CA, USA

In the process of creating a thrivable world we live, work, and celebrate together. We create containers in time and space within which to do these activities together.



Conscious thought in creating containers for the task at hand can enhance their effectiveness. The container of shared space is more than just the physical or online context. It begins when you start imagining bringing people together — these initial thoughts begin the container-creation process. It is a holistic practice involving many dimensions of human gathering. Here are a few different ways to think about creating appropriate containers:

On the space plane — Use the appropriately sized space. Holding a dinner party for 12 people in a hall that seats 150 people isn't an appropriate container. Nor is 150 people in a 12 person conference room.

Online — Use an appropriate tool as a container. If you want to collaboratively edit documents online then an appropriate container is a wiki or google wave. An exploratory discussion fits best in a blog with comments or an IRC chat.

In the time plane — We need to consider time when creating a container for people to work together. Do we need a day or an hour to accomplish our goals? Is the length of time that people speak to a whole room balanced with enough time for those gathered to connect amongst themselves? How much time do you have to introduce people. If you have 60 people and you give them each a minute, it takes 1 hour. Is it appropriate to take up that much time?

In the physical plane - Does the layout of the space and the seating available match the purpose of the gathering? Is it welcoming and comfortable?

On the human to human agreement plane — create shared agreements and norms for the space you are in together. Is the conversation confidential? Is it Chatham House Rules (quotable but not attributable)?

Creating an appropriate container for a gathering can be grounded in the practice of a facilitator who is an anchor for the group.

You can read more about containers at the Group Pattern Language Project http://grouppatternlanguage.org/wagn/Creating_a_Container

Create the Future

Hildy Gottlieb, "The Pollyanna Principles: Reinventing 'Nonprofit Organizations' to Create the Future of Our World"

You and I are creating the future right now, whether we do so consciously or not.

We can create that future by seeking to end what is heart-breakingly wrong with the present — ending poverty, ending sickness, ending war.

Or we can seek to create what is joyfully right for our future, solving our problems along the way.

Creating a peaceful, healthy, humane world for our grandkids and their grandkids is not a Pollyanna pipe dream. It is instead the very real path humankind has been moving along for thousands of years, made all the more visible in our own lifetimes.

200 years ago, citizens of the slave-trading-nation that was the United States of America would have declared it impossible for a black man to be president.

100 years ago, citizens of the world would have declared it impossible to put a man on the moon.

How easy it is in hindsight to trace the path from
 "impossible dream"
 through *"problems to be solved"*
 to *"reality simply taken for granted."*

Imagine if those paths had been walked with clearer intent! Imagine that intent informs the path we will begin walking now!

We have all the tools we need to build that path. They are the same tools we use to get the airport in time for a flight, or to ensure dinner is ready when our guests arrive. Working backwards from those events, we think nothing of creating a path that will lead to the future.

That same reverse engineering of cause-and-effect steps is waiting for us to use it for this far greater purpose.

You and I are creating the future right now. The choice, then, is ours.

Will we continue to take steps to sustain our planet as it is, one by one eliminating what is wrong? Or will we tether our steps to a future that will allow our heirs to thrive?

If we aim at thriving,
 and create a path to thriving,
 we will thrive
 because every step we take
 is creating the future
 right now.

Fostering Serendipity

Steve Crandall, physicist - New Jersey, USA

On a brilliant Winter day the thought occurred that I should be able to make fire from ice. Simple — fashion a lens from ice and use it to ignite some dry kindling. Three lines of calculations said it should work; but having something on paper and watching smoke rise from kindling are two different things.

You need very clear ice. I used a bucket to collect snow melt the day before. The night was cold enough to freeze it nicely and clearly. About half the ice was very clear and the rest cloudy. I only had a piece of metal to use as a chisel and a little hand saw. Several hours of play convinced me that a convex lens was too difficult to make, and hot chocolate is really excellent.

I took a walk and talked to a friend, telling her what I was doing and my difficulties. She does not have a physics or engineering background, but she knows me well enough to play along. Soon the conversation turned to the heaviness of the snow and how it was perfect for snowballs.

Aha!

I could make a spherical lens. I carved a small cylinder and then worked on making it into a rough sphere. Then I polished it like I was making a snowball. My gloves were just abrasive enough to do a really nice job. Once I knew what to do, I could make beautifully smooth ice sphere in under ten minutes. I held it over the kindling and adjusted its distance until the sunlight was brilliantly focused into a tiny spot — this was an excellent lens.

After thirty seconds there was a bit of discoloration — another twenty seconds and the first whiff of smoke appeared. Patience and a few minutes was sufficient to generate enough heat that a small fire began to thrive.

Of course I had to announce this to my friend. As she walked along a street in San Francisco, she thought for awhile and then asked: "is this why plants burn if you water them on a sunny day? Could the tiny dew drops be acting like lenses?"

Indeed.

Serendipity is everywhere. The tools are curiosity, an open mind, and like-minded, but diverse collaborators. Know when to focus and concentrate, so you can devote yourself to the task. Learn how to play and enjoy what you are doing. As you play, realize the little failures you have are not failures but useful bits of information. Use that information to inform your play. Know when to listen to others who are different from you. Celebrate their differences. Learn how to play with them. And share your discoveries with those who are the same and different, as there may be new directions that you haven't considered.

Give Graciously

Phil Cubeta, Gifthub.org - Philadelphia, PA, USA

What are the gifts you have received?

Life?

Love?

Friendship?

What investments were made by others in you as a child, student, or member of a club, school, or religious congregation?

What flows through you that you did not create, like genes, blood, breath, like language, phrases from old books, gestures from those you admired now dead?

What will you live; what will you give?

What will die with you and what will live on?

We thrive in community with others, or we live and die impoverished and alone.



Photo courtesy of Hava Gurevich

Go out on a Limb

Jheri - København, Danmark

I love trees. To me this means being under as well as **in** them. Up in them! I love to climb trees.

Proper people don't climb them I'm told, but these people don't know the beauty of branches and leaves all around you and the peace that can exist even in a big city. People told me girls aren't supposed to do unladylike things, but it is something I've done since I was a little. Tell the right girl she shouldn't be in a tree and you find a woman in one. This is a girl who ignores convention and thrives.

People may tell you to stay out of them, but trees are for almost everyone with a bit of adventure in them. Boys, girls, men, women and people who act their shoe size. ;-)

If you decide to try, please be careful and make sure you are and the tree are both in good shape. Find a strong tree. Find one with large branches that can support your weight. I hang from the branches and see how they bend. Try some stretching first and loosen yourself up. Use a knot, hole or branch for a foothold, reach up and grab a branch and make believe you are an animal. I'm pretty tall and that gives me good reach. If you are a kid or a smaller adult, you have advantages too as you can move around in tighter areas better. Some trees fit better than others, so do some scouting and find yours.

I usually wear gloves, thick jeans and a thick long sleeved shirt to prevent cuts. Some people use ropes and go way up, but I just like to get into a place there there are leaves everywhere. When someone gives me a strange look, I look straight into their eyes and tell them I study trees. This is true - I really **am** studying the trees!

A few trees have nice places that cradle you and allow you to sit. There are several very nice ones that I climb and love so much I consider friends.

I have learned nature exists all around us and that it is beautiful. I have learned I can be away from people and closer to nature for awhile and focus on important thoughts. I have



Photo courtesy of Jheri

learned I can take someone into the tree with me and watch with delight as they discover and grow along with me. I have made other people smile

Jheri says go climb a tree! It is better than television and will connect you with nature even if you live in a city. You can take a good book and spend hours up there. The leaves blow around you, the limbs gently sway, squirrels do squirrel things, and sometimes birds fly by you. The smell and feeling takes you from your worries and makes you realize what beauty is. You are instantly a child with all of that imagination and wonder. You are a scientist discovering new and wonderful things. I have gone up with a proper checkered tablecloth, silverware and candles for a formal dinner with a friend. I have sat through warm rainstorms shielded mostly from the rain pounding down making a noise even I can hear. There is a different world that is so close and it is only a short climb away.

This perspective can inform your life if you just listen. To thrive you need a variety of perspectives. This is mine that partners with nature.



Make Sharing Agreements

Bruce Campbell, Campbell Law Group - Boulder, CO, USA

Kendall Theissen, Transideation - Denver, CO, USA

If for-profit corporations working in market-based systems can positively impact intractable social problems, can legal agreements among collaborators perform a useful function – and even a thrivable one? Consider agreements between collaborators—let’s call them “sharing agreements.” So, what is in these agreements and how do they come into being? The specific content and path will vary, but here are some general principles:

As with anything, the energy you put into your agreements will determine what you get out of them. If you view them as an opportunity to deepen and secure a relationship, you will likely end up with a different outcome than if you view them as a hassle or an obstacle. And if you view the developmental process for your sharing agreement as an opportunity for relationship building, you may find that you will end up with both a more effective agreement and a stronger partnership.



Leveraging the Structure Provided by Sharing Agreements

Sharing Benefits

Clearly outlining benefits insures that each party will receive what they need.

Sharing Accountability

Explicitly defining what each party will do avoids misunderstandings. Keeps everyone aligned in execution.

Sharing Trust

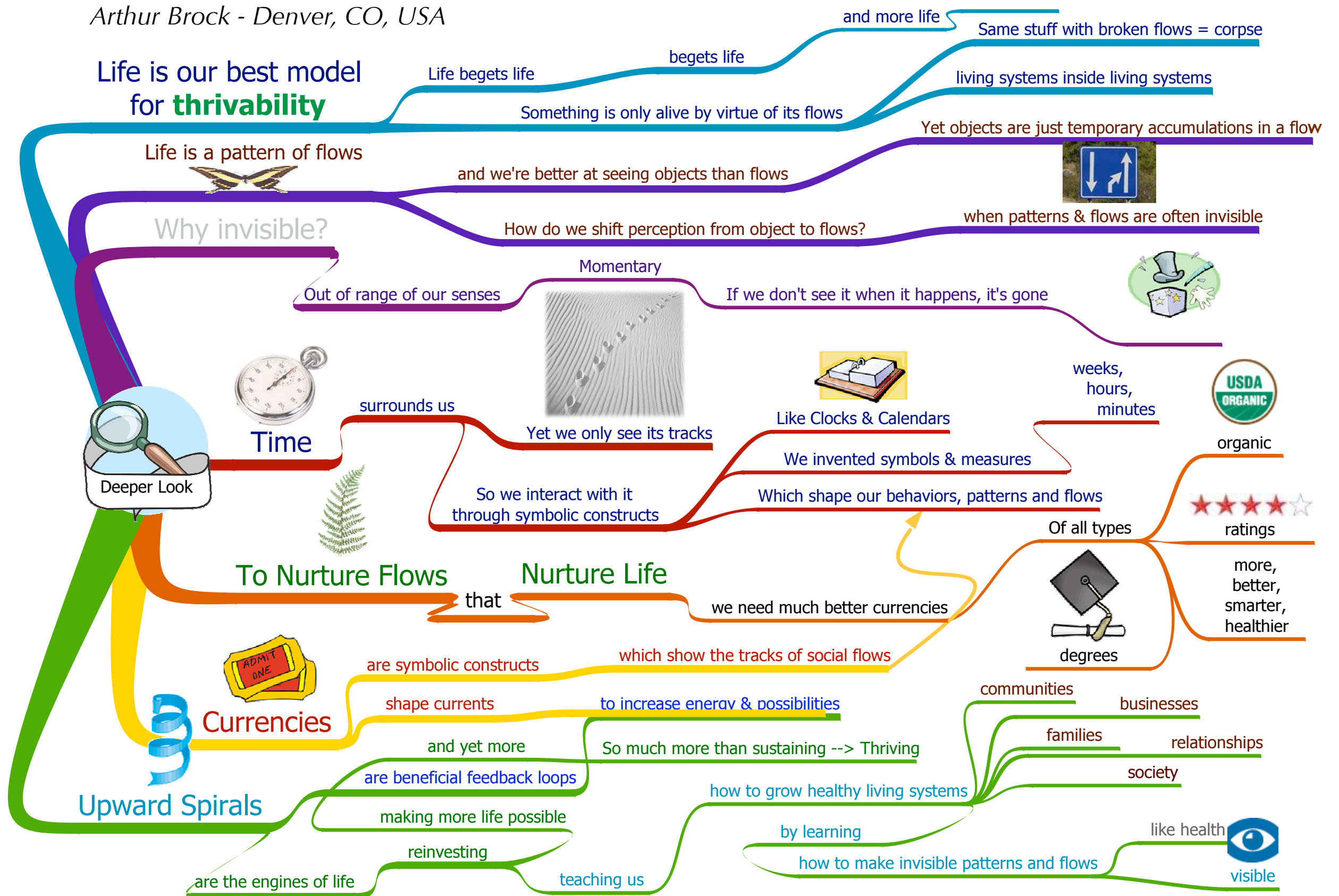
Confidentiality provides a legal basis for a trust relationship and protects both parties from inadvertent disclosure of valuable information.

Sharing Vision and Values

Recording the shared vision and values that are the basis for the relationship helps keep the parties focused on what matters. Building those values into a dispute resolution mechanism avoids hurtful and damaging conflict.

Make the Invisible Visible

Arthur Brock - Denver, CO, USA



Model Nature

Chazz Levi, The Corcoran Group - NYC, NY, USA

Black tar spread onto earth

Tires rolling over

Slowly

A new growth pushes through

Nothing teaches thrivability better than mother nature it serves as a model for everything we do.

Even our language uses metaphors from nature to express discipline and success.

When you look at a tree it will tell you a story — it might be about renewal, or ancient history but it will always be about growth.

It is human nature that makes us want to thrive in our environments. Whether we plant the seed for an idea or a seed for our sustenance we must tend and cultivate our goals in order for them to thrive.

And we must also pay attention to how mother nature reacts to our footprints if we want to continue to exist.

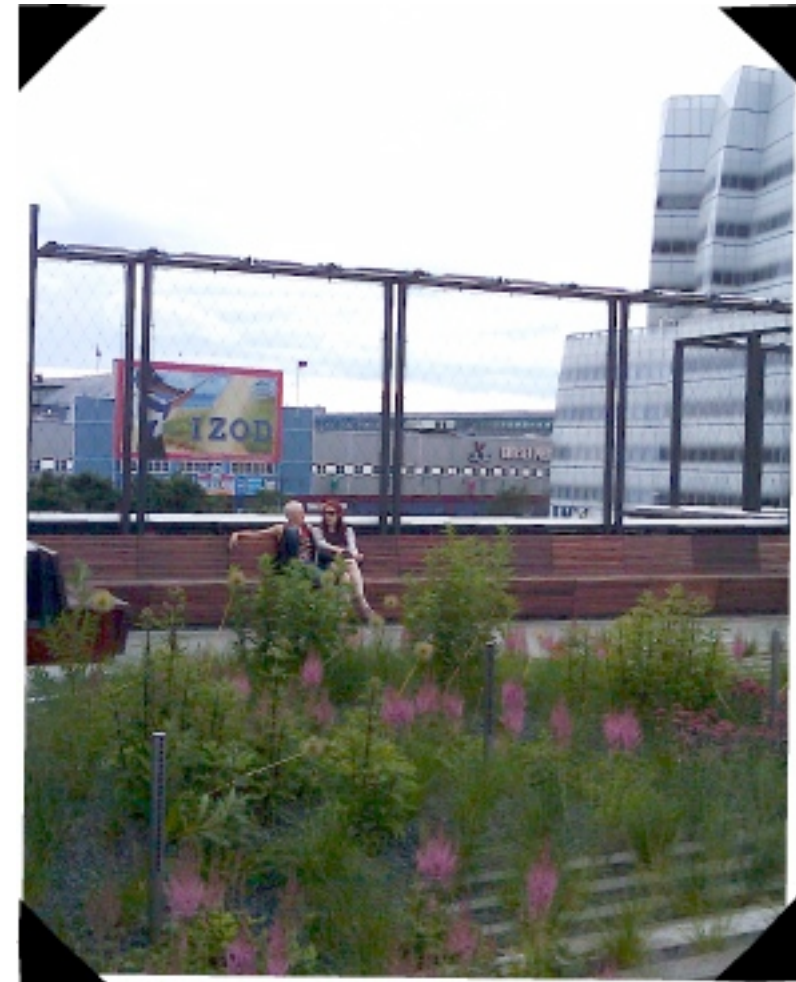


photo courtesy of Jean Russell

Open Space for Many Voices

Christine Egger and Peter Deitz, Social Actions - NY, USA

Stay process-centric

Remain comfortably incomplete, a work in progress. Ask for the voice to participate, rather than for a particular message or tune. Use more verbs than nouns in your invitation, more questions than statements.

Think fractal-ly

Think about points of engagement at every scale of your organization or project or idea. From one person to one million, create an on-ramp for each level of scale at which your opportunity-for-participation operates.

Articulate empathetically

Being really clear about the opportunities you're creating is only half the picture. The other half is being clear in a way that reflects how well you understand the perspective, the desires, of the one is invited.

Empathize. Articulate. Invite.



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Push Power to the Edges

David P. Reed, creator of Reed's Law - Cambridge, MA, USA

For an organism or ecosystem to thrive, strength and power are not enough. Adaptation and evolution seem to be far more important processes that confer huge advantages on systems, whether living or not.

Adaptation and evolution in the face of unpredictable change, uncertainty, and other sorts of shocks to the system are so important that mankind and its societies ought to be studying how to implement them. However, too often we view evolvability and adaptability of systems as processes to be analyzed, rather than properties to be synthesized and maximized.

What makes a system like the Internet so adaptable and evolvable? That it has adapted and evolved is unquestionable – today's Internet looks entirely different than the Internet we conceived and designed, starting with Taylor and Licklider's paper "The Computer as a Communications Device" in the mid-1960's; yet in a very real sense it is the same system, much evolved.

A primary reason is that at every point in its evolution, power was pushed to the edges. Rather than a centralized control hierarchy, the Internet is a voluntary assembly of parts. Some of the parts evolve using markets to allocate resources, other parts adapt using culture and social connections to direct attention to changed conditions and coordinating ad hoc or persistent responses. It has evolved sophisticated signaling and sensing mechanisms that are dispersed among its parts.

Mammals thrive as individuals because of their immune system. The power in the immune system is inherently decentralized. As we continue to study the immune response at all scales, we see evolution and adaptation processes at all scales, but what is constant is that the power to respond is organized at the edges, with little or no center, and certainly no central control mechanism gives them their resilience.

Similarly, we wonder at the adaptability of a rather simple organism – the slime mold *Dictyostelium discoideum* – that thrives, depending on its environment, as a collection of single amoeba-like cells, a multi-celled mobile slug, and a plant-like stalk that disperses spores on the wind. Our bias towards seeing power as a centralized phenomenon led scientists to believe that certain mold cells must be the "leaders" coordinating these actions, until Evelyn Fox Keller demonstrated that any cells can begin the processes that lead to transformation of shape and function, depending on conditions.



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/myriorama/58736549/>

Again we see that "power at the edges" promotes surprising adaptability and evolvability, conferring a resilience upon the system.

What's wrong with centralized power, though? It's certainly easier to comprehend the workings of a society or a system by studying a central controller, ignoring the vast web of parts that it controls. But we make a mistake by confusing comprehension with effectiveness. The problem with centralized power is that it weakens the system, as a bottleneck and an easy target.

Thrivability requires understanding how to decentralize power in systems, a process that need not diminish power – when coordination and power move to the edge, they are amplified.

Share Stories

Jeannie Yandel, A Guide to Visitors - Seattle, WA, USA

We've all heard that we're natural storytellers. It's how we've passed on histories and lessons and warnings through the ages — via fables, myths, narrative.

But our connection to story becomes a need to talk — a need to be heard.

So the greatest gift you can give someone else is, hear them. Listen. Let them talk.

You probably already have plenty of outlets in your life wherein you can talk about yourself; can you say the same — with certainty — about everyone else you talk with?

Ask questions, and listen to the answers.

Let the people you meet tell you their stories.

Imagine what you might learn, and be able to pass on, because you gave someone the gift of your receptive, curious silence.



Photo courtesy of Maryann Fernandez

Weave Networks

June Holley, NetworkWeaving.com - Athens, OH, USA

It was a blue-sky October afternoon in 1995, and Bill – network weaver extraordinaire – was standing on the loading deck of the newly completed Kitchen Incubator where start-up entrepreneurs came to make their specialty food products. Craig, from Frog Ranch Salsa, was loading cases of his award-winning product into his truck and grouching about the high cost of jars.

Right then, another truck pulled up to the dock, and Betty – one of the owners of another salsa producer – hopped out and started unloading cases of empty jars that would be filled later that day. Bill immediately introduced Craig to Betty, encouraging them to compare notes about the quality of tomatoes that season and local bands that were playing in town that weekend.

Network Weavers are continually making connections between people – but they are always connecting strategically. They point out commonalities that create a foundation for mutual benefit. They also help people figure out if they have the kind of personal and emotional connection that will enable them to do things together.

The two were now laughing and joking, so Bill introduced an opportunity. They both used the same jar for their salsa. Couldn't they order jars together and significantly lower the price? Craig and Betty both thought this idea had some real potential, so Bill helped them figure out how it might work.

Network Weavers help people self-organize. They start with twosies – fairly simple activities that benefit both individuals. They coach rather than run the show. As a result, the two individuals are more thrivable: together they have freed up more money for their businesses and they now have a set of collaboration skills that can be used in many other situations.

The first order worked out without a hitch. The next time Bill saw Betty, he suggested that they might want to include several other businesses who used the same size jars in the next order so they could lower the price even more. Soon the joint orders filled an 18-wheeler and the cost of the jars was one third the cost they had paid when they ordered singly. Now they got it: they could come up with all kinds of ways that they could improve their business and the community, find others to join them and make something happen. In the next few years, the people involved in the jar orders became Network Weavers themselves and, with many others, organized two different festivals, a regional brand, a loan fund, a food policy council, an innovation fund and many more collaborations.

Through modeling and coaching, Network Weaving encourages people to act their way into a new way of being. Network Weaving increases thrivability both for individuals and their communities as people gain the framework, skills and processes they need to co-create wonderful communities.

Gratitude

Jean Russell, Thrivable.org - Chicago, IL, USA

My profound appreciation to Valdis Krebs and Tracy Gary, who both independently recommended I do a project like this. I offer much gratitude to Todd Hoskins for holding my hand along the way and helping search for sponsors to support the project. My warm thanks to my champions, who seeded the book and moved thriving forward: Arthur Brock, Evonne Heyning, Jerry Michalski (first contributor of content!), Jill Palermo, Gil Friend, Ken Homer, Kevin Clark, Kevin Doyle Jones, Leif Utne, Tracy Gary, and Valdis Krebs. Hats off to Jon Lebkowsky, without which there would be a whole lot less energy and visibility for pursuing the meme spreading of thriving.

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Photo courtesy of Hava Gurevich

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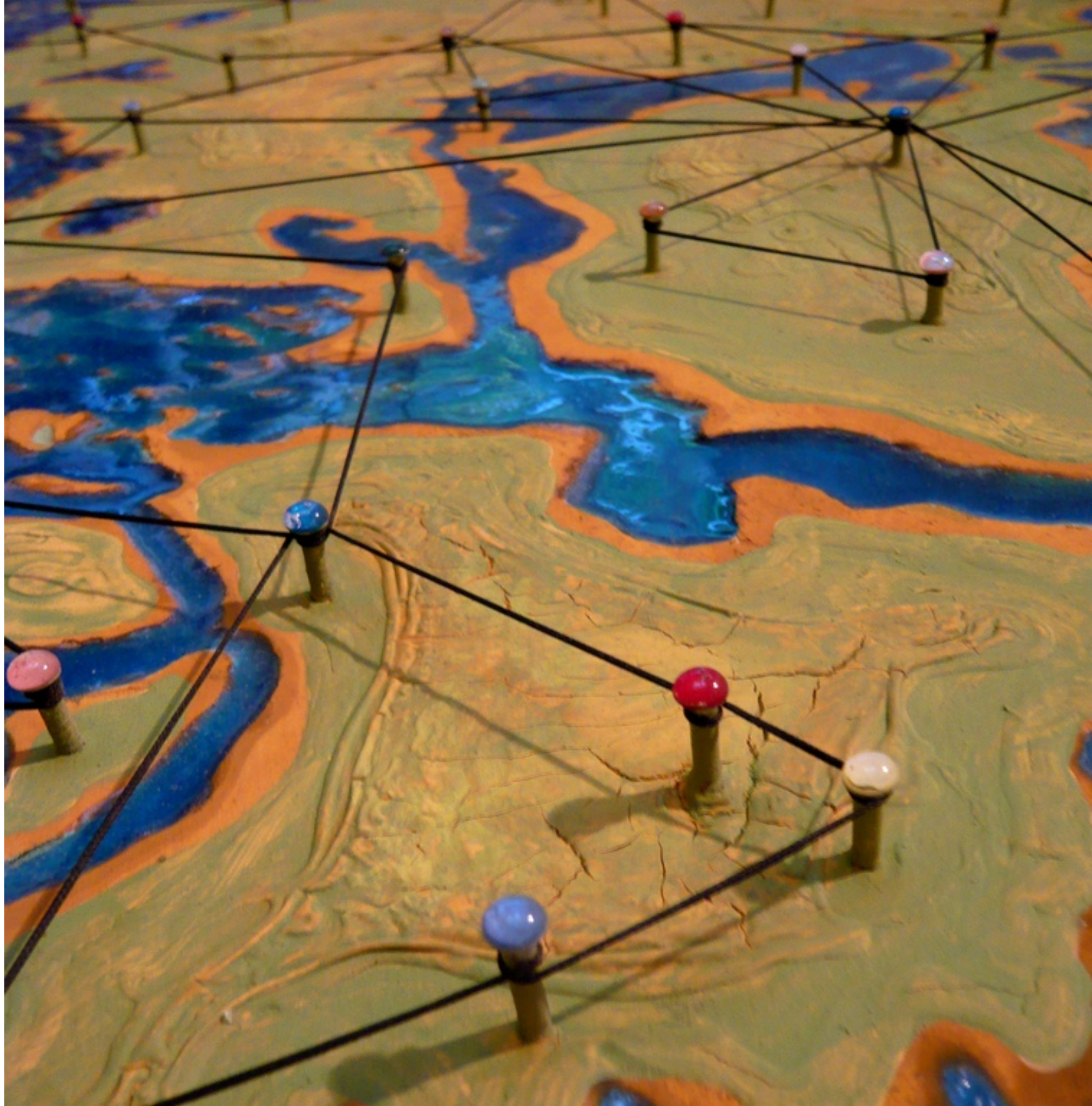
Thank you twitter friends, you know who you are, for your advice and good cheer.

Thriving does indeed emerge from a community! Thank you!

Novus Corpus

detail

*Darlene Charneco -
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