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# THIS CIVILISATION IS FINISHED

Conversations on the end of Empire—and what lies beyond

Rupert Read and Samuel Alexander  
with a postscript by Helena Norberg-Hodge

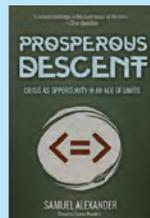
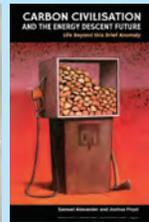
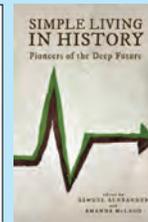
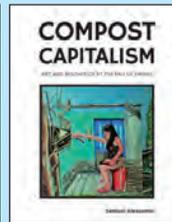
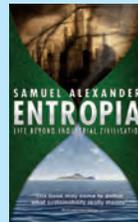


## Samuel Alexander

...broadens his extensive collection of works with this book co-authored with philosopher/activist and XR spokesperson Rupert Read. While addressing some challenging themes, this series of thought provoking conversations explore how we can negotiate what lies beyond the industrial growth civilization that we know today.



Other essays, collaborations and works include:



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## Permaculture Design

May/Summer 2020 Issue #116

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**June 1**

**#118 Wild Yields**

**September 1**



# *From Mechanistic to Wholistic Ecological Culture*

## **Accelerating Succession**

Jillian Hovey

**T**HE THEME OF THIS ISSUE is “Permaculture Works.” If you think about it, that phrase can be understood in more than one way. This is partly because “works” can be a verb or a noun. Here is an example of when “works” is used as a verb (as in something “works” well): “The permaculture site plan that Koreen Brennan designed for her client in Florida ‘works’ really well.” Here is an example of when “works” is used as a noun (person, place, or thing): “The permaculture ‘works’ at the Bullock Brothers are an outstanding example of what is possible in a mature permaculture site.”

If you drop the “s” off the end of the word “works,” and the phrase becomes “Permaculture Work,” the pattern is similar. As a verb, “work” is an action, which describes what something or someone (the subject of the sentence) is doing, as in “I work as a mentor to younger people to support them on their permaculture paths.” As a noun, “work” is a thing, as in “My permaculture work is international in scope.” It may be a bit unusual to start off a permaculture article in this way, but understanding the patterns in a landscape is a foundational practice in permaculture that helps us understand any ecosystem!

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**Many people  
hate their work.  
This contrasts with  
“permaculture work.”**

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### ***Definition of “Work” Does not Include Play!***

Work is defined as: the mental and/or physical activity done in order to achieve a purpose or result. Work can be a physical activity, like manual labor; it may also be abstract mental “work” (and can also be emotional “work”). Synonyms include: labor, toil, exertion, or effort. Interestingly, in the definition, the opposites of work are listed as: rest, play, or leisure. The fact that work is not seen as having these attributes underscores the point that work is often held as something negative and which has to be done. A lot of people don’t like to work and may not like their work; in fact many



*The author working with younger members of Auroville to design their new community pod of the larger 2,500-person ecovillage in India.*

people hate their work. This contrasts with “permaculture work,” where most people are drawn to it out of interest and are passionate about what they are doing. This is because much of their work is aligned with aspirational lifestyle values and a regenerative vision of the world. Indeed, rather than hating their work, many permaculturists love their work. This high-purpose work can be pleasurable, even if it is “hard work” sometimes. Permaculture can be a “Labor of Love,” and we can also include the regenerative practices of joy, play, fun, leisure, rest, and celebration in our work for it to be more generative!

### ***The Art of Reclining when Designing***

We have some permaculture sayings which are guides to permaculture philosophy and methodology. Back in the mid-90s when I was starting out in permaculture, one of the strongest “permaculture memes” was the saying that “A permaculture designer is an excellent recliner.” The message was that in order to be a good permaculture designer, you needed to spend a lot of time observing (i.e., in a reclining position in a hammock). This points to the foundational permaculture practice of protracted observation, which comes first and foremost in our permaculture work, and which then leads to thoughtful action. We have similar messages in other say-



*Tiny lot, but still space for the hammock! Tiny Diner Farm, Minneapolis.*

ings from the larger culture, like: “Look before you leap;” or “A stitch in time saves nine;” or “Measure twice; cut once.” They are not quite the same as the permaculture saying, but point in a similar direction.

Observation gives the space for connecting to the site, as well as for thought and reflection—which cultivates creativity—all of which are essential to our permaculture work. Observation is a part of “doing,” though not necessarily seen or appreciated as being part of “doing” in our dominant culture. We need to be aware that there are pressures to not spend quality time in observation from the culture many of us live in. Therefore, it is good to be prepared to set up the conditions for there to be space and support for that quality time observing and interacting with what we are designing for.

### ***Taking a Full Year to Observe a Site***

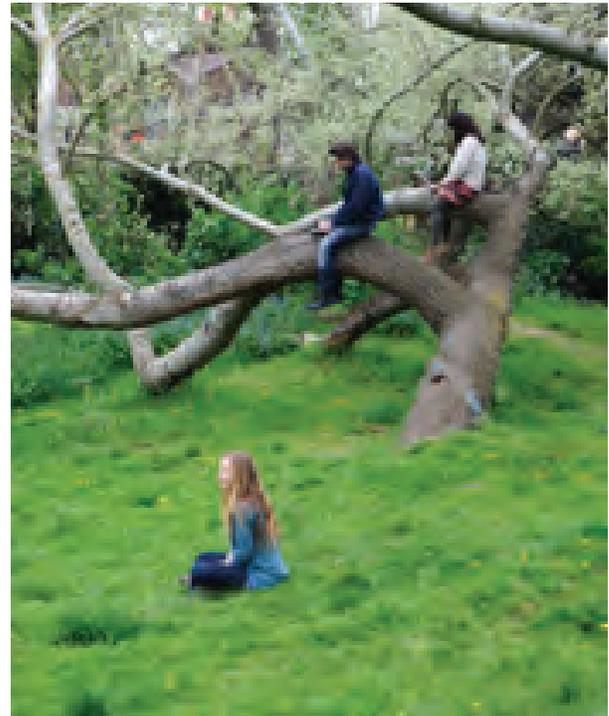
The very high value placed on leading with observation is expressed in another meme that was popular when I learned about permaculture: “Spend at least a full year observing a site before moving into action.” And though that may seem like a long time “not doing” anything, it was also acknowledged that even observing a landscape for a full year is not really enough as there can be a lot of variation between years. None-the-less, the message was to not just race into doing things on the land (or in whatever system you are working), but to start with lots of observation. This protracted observation gives space for creative thought connected with the realities of the site, and which would then inform “smart work” later on. Again, taking this type of time to observe is not the dominant cultural norm, which really values visible action and “physical progress.” Because of those norms, I think that it is good that permaculture education started people out with this strong message to take the time to observe, which helps to create new norms for how we do things in a permaculture way.

### ***Observe & Interact: Permaculture Processes***

As part of a mandate to engage in observation at the start of the design process, there was talk in my permaculture education about “hammock time” throughout the design process, as well as throughout the work of manifesting the de-

sign. Related to that is the first principle from the “Holmgren Permaculture Principles,” which is “Observe and Interact.” I like this expression of the foundational principle and practice of observation, because it allows “observation” to move from what could be understood as purely passive (and possibly static), into interaction, which is dynamic and engaged, and also goes beyond the initial observation and into the manifestation stage of the permaculture process.

This directive of on-going observation, ties back into the “recliner” meme, where the message was that “Reclining and observing in your hammock should be a regular part of your design practice, and a regular part of your manifestation work.” The intention was to make a habit of taking time to

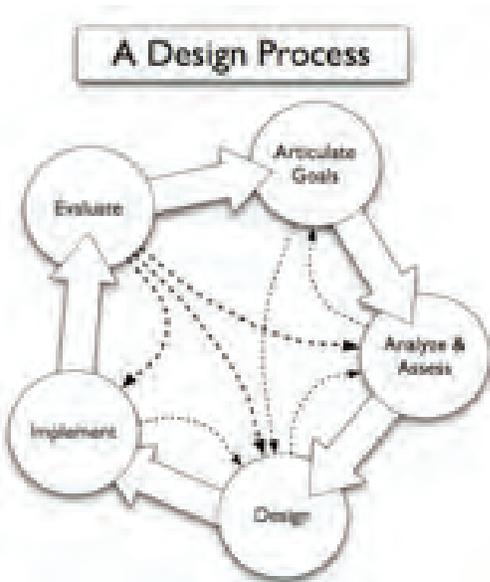


*Students observing a site during a PDC in Brixton, London, England.*

observe and reflect, as that helps us to stay intimately connected to the work that we are doing, and gives the opportunity to be present to the feedback from what we have done. And, creating space to listen to the intelligence of feedback, both positive and negative, allows us to tweak and refine our plans, which is an essential practice in responsive, emergent permaculture design practice.

### ***Learning from Feedback Loops***

These “feedback loops,” where we get feedback from what we have done and “loop” it around to inform our process, are critically important to the permaculture design practice. This feedback function is taught as being fundamental to the permaculture design process, but I find that we



*The dotted lines show feedback loops in the design process, from the lineage of Dave Jacke, and Walter Cudnohufsky and the Conway School of Landscape Design, [www.AppleSeedPermaculture.com](http://www.AppleSeedPermaculture.com).*

don't practice what we preach as much as we could. In my experience, we tend to forge on with a relatively linear plan that we became invested in, rather than really being open and committed to the practice of listening and feeling—and having feedback influence our thinking and plans as we go along. This type of emergent design process is often at odds with the dominant culture, which is structured more linearly and where there are strong forces to adhere to a pre-determined plan. Those forces dampen down intelligence that is trying to emerge, and are at odds with a dynamic permaculture design process.

I find that the teaching to support feedback loops is not emphasized enough in permaculture education, and I think that holds us back in becoming better permaculture designers. I encourage people to really take the time to be with the systems you are designing for—throughout the process of design and manifestation. This will create the space to build the skill to feel with your whole self, rather than just controlling with the part of your mind that is conditioned by culture to think and proceed linearly. I find this practice of “Being With” and learning to think and feel with your Whole Self, is uplifting as well as grounding for people, and overall, it helps people become more adept designers.

### **Need for Work Input Decreases Over Time**

Another understanding of “permaculture work” has to do with the work that we do to co-create permaculture landscapes. I use the phrase “co-create” rather just “create,” to honor the fact that we are working with nature. The systems that we can catalyze into being work with the patterns and

life force of nature. Those systems engage with the dynamic power of living systems and can increasingly sustain themselves over time with less and less need for input/work needed from us.

The adage that “A permaculture designer is an excellent recliner,” also conveys that well-designed permaculture systems ultimately do not need a lot of work to maintain, and that there should also be time to recline. While there is truth in our ability to co-create systems which require increasingly less labor input over time, there is also the potential to obscure the fact that there is usually a lot of work that is needed to set up systems—like in classical permaculture homesteading. I have experienced that there can be a “permaculture belief” that you can just put some seeds in the ground, stand back, and that an ecosystem will quickly grow up and support itself. Though I think there is truth in that belief, I advise some caution around this, as that perspective is somewhat skewed towards the warmer climates of where permaculture was conceived and emanated from (Australia), and where there is not many areas which experience freezing temperatures (whereas a large percentage of North America



*The author working with children at a school in Costa Rica to create Hugel Beds, which are an investment of intense work & materials up front, which will feed the system for many years to come, photo by Johannes Rakesh Hoerman.*

does experience freezing temperatures, represented in USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 1a through 10a, in a scale that goes up to 13b for the warmest).

### **Front-End Loaded Methodology**

Overall, permaculture is a “Front-End Loaded” methodology, where the majority of the input is most needed at the start and earlier phases of development, which then decreases over time. Even in social permaculture, lots of quality time is needed at the front end of a process, observing and interacting, and setting up systems which will facilitate the transition to healthier outcomes for all. None-the-less, in both

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traditional land-focused permaculture and in social permaculture, the need for work does decrease over time if the initial elements are done well. As the systems become established and mature, they also become more self-sustaining. So, permaculture “works,” but it usually requires work up front, which includes observing, thinking, feeling, and planning!

### **Relative Location and Zones**

Related to messages of having our work include lots of time for observation and reclining, to inform our “doing,” is another permaculture saying: “Start at your back door, and work outwards.” This additional adage directs us in working efficiently, and it brings in the old-school permaculture principle of “Relative Location,” and the attendant permaculture

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## **This strategic framework... makes for less work over thousands of trips in our lives....**

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methodology of “Zones.” The goal is to have an energy efficient landscape where elements are placed in relative location to each other. The strategy is to: 1. Have what we need and want to have the most connection with (e.g., herbs and salad greens), located close to our site’s main center (Zone 0); and, correspondingly, 2. Have things which need more of our time and attention (aka work), closer in to where we dwell, so that we can get to them more quickly and easily and they are well tended (e.g., baby chicks). In this site arrangement, the system’s need for work decreases with the distance you travel out from Zone 0.

### **Energy Efficiency**

This strategic framework, where the elements of a system are arranged by the principle of Relative Location, and which uses the methodology of Zones, makes for less work over thousands of trips in our lives between these points on our property. This energy efficiency approach is part of the heart of permaculture design practice, and is about being energy efficient in our work. In Social Permaculture, we also want to design systems where what we need and want, and what needs and wants us, is facilitated by a constellation of “relatively located” relationships, which are designed using the same tools.

### **Stacking Functions**

“Stacking Functions” is another classic permaculture principle which is connected with the principle of Relative Location. “Stacking Functions” also supports energy efficiency, but usually applies to more “vertical” situations, whereby we physically stack elements and use the force of gravity to be energy efficient. The classic example of this, is a series of ponds on a slope which catch and store energy before the energy of the water is degraded and lost by running downhill. This is because when the water runs downhill, the potential energy of the water is converted to kinetic energy and the energy available declines as it runs to lower heights. Whereas, if you invest work into creating storage (pond, containers, etc.) on the slope and can store water, more of the “potential energy” to do work is captured for use.

“Catch & Store Energy” is one of David’s Homlgren’s 12 Principles, as well as being one of the original principles (which is phrased as “Capture and Store Energy before it



*Zones in relation to Zone 0, by April Sampson-Kelly of Permaculture Visions in Australia. Used with permission, copyright PermacultureVisions.com.*

Degrades on Site”). Water is heavy, and takes a lot of “work” to move, so storing it before it loses its potential energy by running down hill is smart design. Stacking Functions is also another way of expressing the principle of Each Element Performing Multiple Functions, in that we “stack” multiple functions into each element in the design landscape. (This can also be used in Social Permaculture design).

### **Scientific Definition of Work**

The argument for the use of the permaculture design strategies of relative location, zonation, and stacking of functions to give energy efficient systems, is evident in and reinforced by the scientific definition of work, which is: “using a force to move an object a distance, when both the force and the motion of the object are in the same direction.” The need for “work” (the force to move an object a distance) is evident

in the preceding example of the work needed to move water. The second part of this definition raises the additional point that work is most efficient when it is aligned (i.e., the force and the motion are the same direction). In permaculture, we could understand that as being aligned with: nature, and/or the vision for the project, and/or a well designed site plan, and/or the vision of a regenerated planet—all of which are nested goals or fractals of the same intention. To be efficient, permaculture work also needs to be aligned with Permaculture Ethics and Principles. Work that is not in alignment with the core teachings of permaculture (and with nature), may be inefficient, and may even be detrimental.

### ***“My Permaculture Design Did Not Work”***

Another meaning of this issue’s theme of “Permaculture Works” can be straightforwardly understood as permaculture works, as in permaculture “functions” well. You could say that if you follow permaculture teachings, that it “works;” or, if you are a competent permaculture designer, things “work” well. Or, a permaculture site plan or system can be “working well.” This construct of things “working,” or “working well,” brings to mind a curiously unfortunate pattern that I have experienced a few times over the years. This is where a person comes to me and shares that they developed what they thought was a really good permaculture design, but that it did not “work.” If I wanted to be flippant, I could have said that “If it did not work, then it was not a good permaculture design,” but, as a teacher and mentor, I choose a more

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***I would say that  
we are not as good  
at actually practicing  
the fundamentals  
as we could be.***

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supportive response. I will share and explore why this might happen from a couple of different perspectives.

### ***“Working” the Permaculture Program***

A foundational aspect of perhaps why someone’s design “did not work,” is that they may not have been putting sufficient work into “working” the core principles and methodologies of permaculture design, such as the ones already described. We teach and talk about permaculture directives, such as stacking functions, making connections, being smart with relative placement of elements, etc. People “get” these teach-

ings, either right away (as some are fairly straight forward), or with a bit of support (as some take a bit more effort to grok). As people “get” them, they also get excited as the ‘genius’ of permaculture starts to be revealed!

Some of the concepts are fairly simple in some ways, so people can be quick to think that they understand them, but they have not really journeyed with them yet. In fact, what I find is that when designing, people kind of “jump over” what may seem to be simple concepts of some of the fundamentals of permaculture, and just give passing intellectual acknowledgement of the ideas, but they don’t really “work” their ideas and designs through the “jungle gym” of the fundamentals. Permaculture is not just about intellectual understanding of the concepts—it is about developing skill with core permaculture tools so that we can use them well. That takes practice, and is one of the reasons that we call it “permaculture practice.” Like in a yoga practice, we are practicing and developing skill with permaculture. And I would say that we are not as good at actually practicing the fundamentals as we could be.

In fact, what I have seen is that when designing, people largely revert to “conventional-culture” thinking, and they don’t really “work” the permaculture teachings as much as would be beneficial. It is understandable that we are vulnerable to resorting to using the patterns of thinking that we have learned in our culture (this is a normal human pattern which can be anticipated). So, it is important for all of us to create lots of opportunities to actually engage with, and practice using, the permaculture methodologies so that we can use them well and they become natural to us. Because, just “getting the concept” of the fundamentals of permaculture is not actually using them to create new strong permaculture patterns of seeing, thinking, and feeling, and your designs won’t be as good as they could be.

For example, a core function as a designer is to explore a wide range of functions that each element of a system can perform (the principle of Each Element Performs Multiple Functions). The corollary to that is that every function is supported by a constellation of elements (which is the principle that Each Function is Supported by Multiple Elements). If we take the time to actually engage these principles, we can weave a rich webwork of relationships that is the true fabric of effective and synergistic permaculture design; if you don’t, your designs will be weaker. We need to develop a habit of really using the core permaculture teachings as we envision and manifest designs, so that they become a new normal way of thinking and approaching things for us.

### ***Fundamentals Practice Starts in PDC’s***

Stating that it is important for our work to be aligned with the fundamentals of permaculture may sound obvious, but in my experience, we are not as strong on this front as would serve us. So, when I teach, to support people in developing the habit of learning and staying connected with the foundational teachings of permaculture, I bring in a set of cards that

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I created, called the *Fundamentals of Permaculture*. They have different categories and colors for all the various aspects of the permaculture fundamentals. I have everything discussed so far (the Ethics, Principles, Zones and Sectors, etc.), written out on different cards. I also have a rich variety of cards in the categories of People, Elements, Functions, and Emotions. (All of the above cards are part of the “Wild Design Game” which I wrote about in the previous “Emergent Design” issue of this magazine (Issue #115, Feb. 2020).

I use the cards in exercises from the start of the course, and incorporate them as we progress through various design exercises to the final design project. When circulating during design exercises, I carry cards with me, and as I listen to their discussions, I wordlessly slip cards onto the students’ work spaces to remind them to check in with the fundamentals as they develop their designs. I have had lots of feedback that “‘Aha’ moments” have come in response to those prompts, where the students experience the synergy that is generated when the permaculture “mojo” gets activated in their designs. This gets them excited, as they can feel the power of permaculture working. So, they are encouraged and more engaged in the design process, and permaculture teachings begin to really take root in them. That is Social Permaculture

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## ***I strongly encourage people to “work” these strands of the Permaculture Path.***

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in action—cultivating consciousness and skill in budding permaculturalists!

The entire class also uses the full set of cards in the final design presentations in Permaculture Design Courses. For each presentation, students draw a new group of cards from all the card categories. Their task is to watch for the fundamentals represented on their cards in the design while listening to their fellow students’ designs. As part of the discussion after each presentation, students share their thoughts from the stimuli of the cards, about how the fundamentals have been (and could be) brought to life in the design presented. This helps to train the individual and collective minds to return to the fundamental touchstones of permaculture design, and for it to become normal and natural to actively incorporate them in our thinking.

### ***Not Just for Beginners!***

Training ourselves to be able to see, think, discuss, explore, plan, design, review, and tweak our designs, will make our permaculture work much better as we go forward. And,

this is not just for “beginners.” When I started in permaculture, once you took your first PDC, it was common practice to be able to take other people’s PDCs without charge (except perhaps for food and lodging expenses). This community practice was encouraged, and the thinking was that the more you are exposed to the fundamentals of permaculture, the better you would “get” it. I heard some people say that they “got it” already and did not need to take another PDC. I would generally respond that I bet that if they took another PDC, that they would come out of it with more knowledge and understanding, and be better off for it. Additionally, it is very valuable to learn from different teachers. Indeed, to this day, I always enjoy experiencing how other people teach the fundamentals (and, really, all of the PDC), as I learn from them and it makes me a better teacher.

### ***Education Beyond the PDC***

The PDC was always intended to be an introduction to permaculture, to be followed by other supportive and reinforcing learning paths afterwards. In an “advanced course,” people have already had the overview through their PDC, so we can build on that and bring it to life more. As part of that, we revisit and actively use the fundamentals, and work them in a variety of ways as training to become better permaculture designers. I don’t have people complaining that it is boring, and they “get it” already—people are usually happy to have a chance to practice with support in a focused way. Other pathways for learning are apprenticeships and internships, working with mentors and teachers, doing your own projects, helping others on their projects, and doing your Permaculture Diploma. I strongly encourage people to “work” these strands of the Permaculture Path if they want to grow their experience, learning, and skills. A great way to deepen and give structure to your learning beyond the PDC is by doing a Permaculture Diploma, which is now supported by the Permaculture Institute of North America (PINA), as well as by other institutions in North America, and beyond.

### ***Human Ecologies and Invisible Structures***

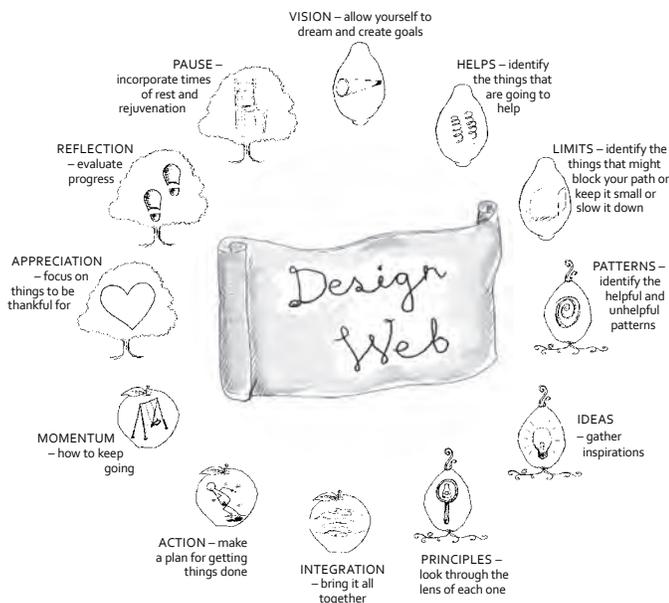
Back to the story where people have come to me and shared that their designs “did not work.” I think that another “meta level” reason why designs did not work is often due to the lack of a wholistic approach with regard to the social aspects of their permaculture design process. People are usually focused on the traditional biophysical landscape, and often don’t adequately take into account the human ecologies of a situation. This is culturally normal, and focusing on land and “Earth Care” has also historically been normal in permaculture education. We have talked about “Invisible Structures” in PDCs for decades. They sound sexy (and they are!), but I find that they are not taught as well as they could be, so students do not get enough support to learn about “Invisible Structures” and integrate them into their thinking and design approach.

## Patterns in Social Landscapes

Here are a few examples of social aspects of a landscape which will be problematic if not incorporated into the design: an elder who lives down the road who has knowledge of the site and/or the ability to block or hamper your projects, but you did not visit them to pay your respects and include their wisdom, needs, opinions, and influence in the design. So, they are potentially activated to oppose you (openly and directly, and/or covertly and indirectly). Or, possibly the plan was not grounded in a real estimate of the amount of time and interest the people have in growing a permaculture system. Instead, the client's hopeful estimates were taken as the truth that was designed for, and the plan did not work well. Perhaps the design developed was not sufficiently connected with the real and pressing need to bring in finances immediately, so the plan fell apart. Or, we can take the case of the conflict in the couple who own the property that was smoldering during the design process, which erupts and blows the

People & Permaculture

### Anchor points



*The Design Web*—a useful wholistic design tool from Looby Macnamara's *People and Permaculture*.

project apart after the design is “finished” (please note that working with conflict in a couple is a more advanced design process skill, and is not for everybody). These are common patterns that I have seen, and there are plenty more in our human ecologies!

## Including Social Ecologies & Ecology of Self

Through guided conversation, I will go with the person into their design, and help them to see more of the whole landscape and make contact with aspects they might have missed. This also usually includes connection with the ecology of themselves as a permaculture designer. Without “self literacy” (knowledge of self), we cannot perform as well as a designer. Examples of our own patterns which may come into play as designers are: pushing our own agendas in a design in an unbalanced way (you might be “clever” or knowledgeable, but pushing your agenda is usually not a very effective design strategy). If we don't have a practice of good listening and acknowledgement skills, we may not be able to take in information well, so we can miss incorporating important strands of information into the design. We can also be unaware when we get triggered and react in ways that are not helpful (and which can be damaging).

If permaculture is going to “work,” we need to become more skilled at seeing, feeling, and working with the “Ecology of the Whole,” which includes the ecology of ourselves as designers. If we don't, we can easily get incomplete and unbalanced permaculture designs, which don't “work” as well as they could. Looby Macnamara, the author of the seminal book *People and Permaculture*, has developed a “Design Web,” which is a tool available on her website to remind and support us to look through various lenses, and use the array of permaculture tools, when designing permaculture systems. Ultimately, good design is aligned with and representative of the ethics of Earth Care, People Care, and Fair Share, and that any and all principles should be incorporated in our designs. You could look at the actual practice of working with the ethics, principles, design methodologies, etc., as “working” the permaculture teachings. Another way of saying that, which draws with respect on the pattern of the famous saying from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), is that: “If you work the ‘permaculture program,’ then it works.”

### Who Is Benefitting from The Work?

Going further on the theme of something “working,” it might be responsible to ask for whom it is working, as in who are the beneficiaries of the work? Also, something may “work” for me, but not for another person. And often the intended benefit from a design does not really come to fruition, where the actual yields do not measure up to the promise (this is very common in “aid” work). There can also be narrow definitions of something “working.” For example, the capitalist economic system “works,” as in, there are functions that are met; but, we can also see that there are needs that are not being fulfilled in that system. There are also extensive externalized costs of the economic system “working” as it does, such as environmental degradation, as well as the subjugation and impoverishment of people around the world. So, does the system really “work”? And, for whom?

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## **What Is “Success” in Our Work?**

If something is “working,” then we might also say that it is “successful.” That then begs the question of what constitutes “success”? In the dominant culture, being “successful” primarily pertains to being financially successful in a person’s work. If I look at my work from that perspective, then I have largely not been “successful.” I have worked for 30 years as a facilitator of regenerative systems, and I have done permaculture work, supporting permaculture works, in now almost 40 countries across six continents. Almost all of it has been unpaid service work. There was a lot of “success” in my work, but very little of it involved my work being valued financially.

### **Financial Economy in Permaculture Work**

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**We need to grow more of a culture of value and exchange around permaculture work if we hope to be part of a robust ecology of mutual support.**

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People have often said that the reason that I don’t make much money from my work is because I don’t charge. There is some truth in that, but I think the lack of financial economy around permaculture work is complex. It is not just about me—it has to do with the economic system that dominates the planet, which does not support much of what we as permaculturists are drawn to address in our work. In fact, that dominant economic system is the main driver which has created the damage and dysfunction that our current world is rife with.

People in “developing” countries don’t have the financial capacity to pay, unless we have input from somewhere else, and I usually end up giving money from my own meagre pocket in those settings, even after paying my own way there and working for weeks or months without pay. But, even in “wealthy” regions, like North America and Europe, there is still very little financial economy around the permaculture work that I (and others) do. This lack of ability to value permaculture work is not just about average people in our society—it also includes permaculturists. While we generally have less financial resources than average folks in

North America, I have also noticed that there is a culture in permaculture that does not really have much capacity to see and value the work of ourselves and others in our field. People have told me how much they value me, but that does not readily translate to a financial valuation of my time and expertise. While we should be wary of just adopting the dominant economic system to structure our exchanges, I think that we need to grow more of a culture of value and exchange around permaculture work if we hope to be part of a robust ecology of mutual support for us all. That said, I am an advocate for diverse streams of exchange, and I do “get paid” in some other ways, as I really do enjoy what I do, and I feel aligned and alive in most of my work.

### **Accelerating Succession as “Success”**



*Sharing and learning about Food Forest and planting the first banana, at Sandele, near Kortong, The Gambia, West Africa.*

I have been moving more into mentorship over the past years, which has brought me even more awareness that my work has been building the soil in our global community, where I have been planting and tending seeds so that future generations can work and make a living in this field. I want to support them to be holistically successful, where their healthy needs are met in regenerative ways, while helping other people to meet their own healthy needs in regenerative ways. Even though (and partly because), I did not get much support on my permaculture path, I am helping others to grow up around me, with the intention that they can help stimulate and have access to more abundance, synergy, and support than I have had. This is “human succession” at work, and where I am also co-creating the conditions for my needs to potentially be met in regenerative ways.

This positive feedback loop of co-creating the conditions for others to succeed, while endeavoring to meet our own healthy needs in regenerative ways, is a central tenet of regenerative succession. And, after all, permaculture is supposed to be about “accelerating succession,” which should

be a primary measure of what constitutes “success.” To be regenerative, it would be good to nurture the future while co-creating healing systems in the present, rather than raping and pillaging the planet for short-term gain and leaving a mess behind, as is done through much of the conventional capitalist economy. We are still in early stages of co-creating a robust and vibrant ecology of mutual support where we can all get our needs met in healthy permaculture systems, but like when we plant a fledgling food forest, we hold the vision for what we know is possible and are investing in right action now that will grow the future we believe in.

## ***Functions and Yields***

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### ***In unbalanced systems, there will be unhealthy “Shadow Yields” or “costs” from the functioning of that system.***

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Another way we can assess if something is “working successfully,” is by evaluating the functions that are being met by the system—in addition to its yields. If you take the example of my work, the generalized function of “making a living” is not being met, but there have been a lot of other valuable yields that are beyond the conventional yield of “making money.” Indeed, if my work had focused on the primary function and yield of monetary income, much of the regenerative yields I helped to catalyze would not have been generated. This is because the forces that created the degraded conditions were not conducive to the healing response that was needed in the system. In my work, I use myself as an instrument which helps to co-create ecologies for healthy shifts. This work of creating positive change in ecosystems is part of the essence of permaculture work. It is a “healing response,” which is acting in alignment with what is needed for systems to move towards greater health.

### ***“Shadow” Yields and Costs of The Work***

What I have shared about myself has started to lift up the concept of what I call “Shadow Yield,” which occurs in the shadow of the yields that we think the system is designed to serve. So, for example, in the dominant economic system, one of the “Shadow Yields,” is environmental degradation, as we did not create a system which had environmental

regeneration required as a yield or a function. Another way to phrase “Shadow Yields” is the “costs” of the functioning of a system. In unbalanced systems, there will be unhealthy Shadow Yields or costs from the functioning of that system. In the global economy, a cost is systemic poverty for much of the world’s people.

If we take the example of my life’s work, there have been Shadow Yields or costs from what I have done, many of which have accrued to me personally. I have been working without payment because there was little-to-no capacity to be paid. It was always good people and good projects, and I placed my value on doing the work rather than needing to be paid for it, and I have never refused service to anyone. I believed in what I was doing in service of a healing response in the world, and was prepared to bear the cost personally. As I have not been amassing personal wealth over the past three decades, I am constrained in what I can do on the physical plane in the conventional economy, like buying land or a house. This is a price that I may well be paying for the rest of my life, as many of my prime money-earning years have passed already.

Another Shadow Yield in my life, which is more abstract but very powerful, is that I have some feelings of inadequacy or failure because I have not made a living. I don’t have the usual comforts and securities of what people normally invest in, and which could support me in my “old age.” I do relatively well when traveling and working and living in permaculture projects and communities, where I am often treated like an honored guest and am housed and fed; but, I cannot provide well for myself in the fabric of regular society. I could get away with this when I was younger, but now that I am firmly middle-aged, I receive a lot of judgment from older members of my extended family because I did not do what they did, and do not have the finances to do what someone my age in my culture “should” be able to do. These judgments and the stories around them, are strong in my culture, and they can stimulate me to feel badly about myself. But, I know that I have done good work. I feel ready to invite more balance. My intention has always been to become part of a regenerative community where I can give from my gifts and experience, and help to weave a webwork of mutual support. I have helped communities like that to form, and to grow healthier, but none yet which I can truly call home. I hold that aspiration, and am open to input and feedback!

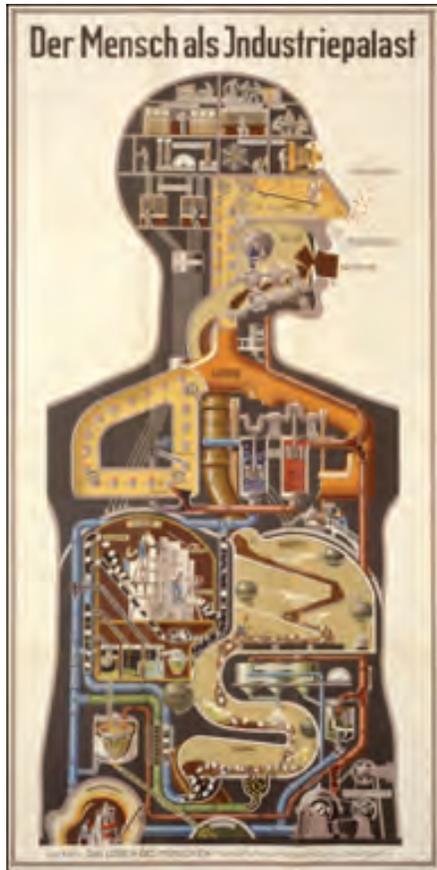
### ***The Work of Our Permaculture Elders***

I share this personal information to make more visible the systemic “costs” of our permaculture work for many of us. There are those among us who have been working without much pay or support for most or all of their lives. I stand on the shoulders of those who did similar work before me, many of whom are still alive and living very marginally on the physical plane. I appreciate their work in our global community, and one way I honor them is by speaking up so we become more aware of their service to us, and can come to

take better care of our Elders. Re-creating healthy inter-generational relationships in our communities is key to our success. There is much learning to be had. In a strong culture of “Doers,” we need to support our Elders and others to move away from the belief that if we can’t contribute as much through physical work, that we are not valuable. It is important to co-create more of a culture where concerns like that do not become deciders of how we think, feel, and live. It is time to have a culture where the Elders are well held, and can continue to express into the fullness of who they are, from where they are at in their lives. That is a strong way to practice perma-culture.

### **True Wealth of the Healing Response**

The permaculture work we do represents part of the heart of “Right Livelihood,” which is also a healing response in the world. There is a responsibility to cultivate economies which can meet our needs while we are doing permaculture work, because permaculture needs to work for us if we are to be “sustainable” and “successful.” One of the best ways we can insulate ourselves from the forces of the contemporary global economy is through permaculture work, and permaculture works, where we have the capacity to co-create systems of abundance and satisfy healthy needs in a rich webwork of mutual support. We need to take care in the nested fractals of our selves, our homes, our neighborhoods, our communities, our bioregions, our continents, and our planet. Learning how to do that is what permaculture is about, where we will cultivate “True Wealth” in regenerative ways. This is the part of the essence of what a permaculture activist does. Whichever level(s) of the fractal you are drawn to be active on, your work is valid and valuable, as perma-



*“Man as Industrial Palace” from the German *The Work of Men*, the National Library of Medicine.*

culture is some of the most important work that we can do to counterbalance the massively pervasive forces of the neoliberal economy in our lives. As permaculturists, we are part of these early stages of the awakening and stepping into responsibility as we enter a post-industrial era, which holds the potential to be ecologically-informed, and aligned with regenerating the planet as a fundament of our economy.

### **The Industrial Revolution and Colonialism**

As part of the process of exploring the constructs of “work” and “works,” a helpful permaculture strategy is to circle up to look at the big picture so we connect with the larger context that we are responding to in our permaculture work. From an historical perspective, I think that it is important to recognize that we are “products” of the Industrial Revolution, which emerged in the 1700s and marked the transition from Medieval to Modern eras. In that time, manufacturing machines became extremely powerful engines of production and grew the global market economy. And as part of those “engines,” people moved from working the land, to becoming wage-earning laborers in the industrial centers. England was a leader in this transition to an industrial, mechanized culture, and that leadership fueled their exploitive colonizing activities. The British, along with other European nations, built empires around the world. These activities moved us toward a global economy based on resource extraction and exploitation of human resources (part of which was the African Slave Trade).

### **Mechanistic Worldview and Cultural Values**

The mechanistic worldview which was developed during the Industrial Revolution became the dominant social frame.

## **A strong culture of value around “doing” can keep us in a mechanistic frame.**

It has deeply permeated our cultural fabric and its relation to work. The social patterns that are needed to support industrial ecologies, and that became core to our cultural values, are largely tied to work and what we produce. Much of our lives in the resource-exploitive consumer culture is structured around working for the accrual of wealth, material goods, and property. We measure our worth by those things, as well as by being “hard working.” We have cultural values such as the “Protestant Work Ethic,” and being “industrious” is considered a virtue. And, the “American Dream” says that if we work hard, we can become anything we want (if you don’t

count the embedded racism of White Privilege!).

## **Work = Doing**

Work is largely synonymous with doing, and the economy of value around what we do tends to be skewed towards the physical and concrete. What is valued in the world is still heavily oriented towards a long history of physical production, as well as masculine labor outside of the home, and these patterns still hold strong influence in our contemporary economy. For example, if your permaculture work looks like construction or landscaping, where the output or product (yield) of that work is physically oriented, it is easier to make a living. That work is similar to existing patterns that people are used to valuing monetarily. But, if what we do (our work) is more in the “feminine” realm (as in, oriented towards things that are relational, and not as physically concrete), an external market economy valuation of our work can be more challenging. If the work is about functions that were traditionally performed in the home, and were usually unpaid (and perhaps even “invisible”), it can be harder for the work to be valued financially, even in our alternative communities where we ostensibly value “invisible structures.”

## **Valuing “Doing” Above Ways of Being**

I have found in permaculture folks, that there can be a very high value around physical work and “doing.” While there are certainly beneficial yields from those things, I feel that a strong culture of value around “doing” can keep us in a mechanistic frame—one where we are not as connected wholistically to our bodies, emotions, and spirit, or to each other and the world around us, as much as would be healthy for us and the permaculture systems we are working so hard to create. There are such powerful values around the aspects of our lives which represent work and doing, there is often not space for other ways of being, so we are not being nurtured by other states of existence. This is a Shadow Yield, and we are all impoverished by it in various ways. Though we permaculturists are on the alternative end of our dominant culture, part of our “work” is becoming more aware of our internalized mechanistic ways of thinking and acting in the world so we can be better facilitators of this paradigm shift that we are in, with Wholistic Permaculture as a catalyst for it.

## **The Rise of Reductive Science**

Rene Descartes was an anchoring character in the transition to a mechanistic culture. In the first half of the 1600s, he espoused a philosophy that living things are like complicated machines. This helped to usher in the Scientific Revolution, which came to dominance over the course of the Industrial Revolution, and where the mechanistic worldview became enmeshed with the concurrently emerging scientific worldview. The rise of “Reductive Science” was focused on the

study of complex wholes by reducing them into their parts, thinking that we could then understand the world like a machine, and that the parts had no intrinsic value in themselves. This went as far of the meme of “Man As Machine.” The legacy of the scientific worldview has cost us dearly in our disconnection from the intelligence of whole, complex, living systems.

## **The Scientific Worldview’s Legacy**

The scientific approach is alive in the structure of permaculture education, where we study separate subjects to

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## **The legacy of the scientific worldview has cost us dearly in our disconnection from the intelligence of whole, complex, living systems.**

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understand the whole. And, though there have been some efforts to change the teaching approach, much of the curriculum is still taught in a head-oriented manner. More recently, science has been exploring complexity, but there is an inherent lack of capacity for mechanistic constructs to mimic the complexity of nature. In permaculture, we are learning to re-connect with the deeply intricate complexity of living systems and shift towards an emergent wholistic worldview that works with the intelligence of nature and sees it as complex, inter-connected fractals of diverse ecologies. And, we need to challenge and support ourselves to bring that inter-connected, whole systems complexity to how we shape our educational experiences. The young people especially, have a deep desire for this type of wholistic education.

Another legacy of the scientific worldview in permaculture, is how we as designers, have largely been invisible in permaculture teachings, and in our work—like scientists. There has not been the support to develop knowledge in the Ecology of Self, nor has there been much focus on the Human Ecologies of a landscape. Indeed, people who tried to bring in more of the human aspects to permaculture were often dismissed as being “Woo-Woo.” This perpetuated the oppression of the feminine as those messages were largely brought by feminine voices in our communities. Change in this regard has begun, which is in a positive feedback loop with today’s young adults, who are really wanting a permac-

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ulture approach which has space for the whole of the design landscapes, as well as for the whole of themselves and their lives.

## **Evolution Towards an Ecological Worldview**

Permaculture is rooted in a biological or ecological worldview, but there are still many aspects of the mechanistic worldview that are deeply ingrained in how we see the world, and how we think the world works. It is in our language, with many metaphors such as “like a well-oiled machine,” where our sense of a system “working well” draws from a mechanistic worldview, rather than a biological or ecological one. Permaculturists are leaders in shifting our metaphors to ones that are patterned on nature, such as “like a mature interconnected food forest,” or “like the mycelial web.” In fact, the fascinating realm of the mycelial network has quickly become a prevalent meme in our ecologically-inspired culture. We are becoming more literate in ecologies, which is helping to grow our worldview to one that is based in natural systems and is not just driven by the mechanistic ecology of machines. So, we will continue to transition from seeing something as “working,” to seeing it as “living” or “being alive.”

## **Transition to a Post-Industrial Culture**

Now, we have reached a point where we can see more of the costs of the industrial, resource-extractive economy—not only in terms of its short-sighted and extensive costs to the biophysical environment, but to us socio-culturally as well. We have begun to draw attention to the costs of colonialism and our roles as workers in the machine of the global market economy. We are transitioning to a Post-Industrial society, economy, and worldview, where much of the manufacturing of the past 200 years or more has been shifting away from Europe and North America. In this transition, there is an opening and a need to bring in the intelligence of ecology



*Transition to a Post-Industrial Culture gives us lots of room for edge and opportunity. Image CC0 via Pixabay.*

and create a wholistically ecological worldview.

We are in a cultural paradigm shift, of which we permaculturists are facilitators. We are transitioning from a mechanistic world view, to a post-modern one that is re-connecting with and honoring the natural world and our global ecologies. People are looking to their health, and there has been a tremendous rise in value of the memes of “green” over the past decade or more. That will continue to unfold over time, and a more wholistic understanding will hopefully emerge. We permaculturists are activists in that process. One way we can lead is by staying ahead of the curve by cultivating a more balanced and wholistic permaculture. Re-weaving the fabric of complexity, and co-creating new norms of wholism

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## **We need to “scale-up” our capacity to work with nature to a global scale.**

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in our permaculture, is a resonant and regenerative place to work from. And from that, we can influence science to explore and honor complex, whole ecologies, as we need to “scale-up” our capacity to work with nature to a global scale if we want to regenerate the stupidity and short-sightedness that our global economic activities have perpetrated. Permaculture *can* work at a global scale, and we need those permaculture works at a global scale.

## **Our Permaculture Work Going Forward**

This issue’s theme of “Permaculture Works” has more than one meaning, as does “Permaculture Work.” For permaculture “works” to “work,” we need to develop more rigor in engaging the core practices of permaculture. Permaculture thinking and methodologies can unleash a lot of intelligence for us, and we need to actually use the permaculture practices and develop skill with them if we want to practice effective, synergistic permaculture. Otherwise, we are vulnerable to reverting to normal, dominant-culture ways of planning and designing, and we lose the opportunity to co-create the magic of permaculture. Our work and their results will not be as vibrant and effective as they could be.

The patterns of mechanistic worldview are deeply ingrained in the dominant culture, as are the values of hard work. These values are alive in us as permaculturists as well and can suppress other ways of being. As a counter-balance, we need to prioritize high-quality space for connection and reflection, which is essential to permaculture work. We need to expand our understanding so that work includes play, creativity, leisure, and rest. Valid work is not just about “doing” and physical manifestation, but includes thought and reflec-

tion, and traditionally feminine aspects of our needs and functions as human beings.

As part of things “working well,” a foundational principle of permaculture is about cultivating ecologies that work with the intelligence of nature. This is not just a mechanistic view of “functioning well,” but one that is grounded in regenerative, ecological functioning. We can learn to work with the life force of nature, and have life-giving yields for all elements of a healthy system, and with practice it can become an art. Through growing capacity to be present to, and to facilitate positive and corrective feedback loops, we can co-create the conditions for more health and accelerate regenerative succession in a rich, webwork of inter-connections.

Much of what permaculture is about, is a healing response to those dominant system conditions and their negative effects on the environment. And, with the rise of Social Permaculture, the “other two” permaculture ethics of “People Care” and “Fair Share” are being lifted up beyond the “primary” ethic of “Earth Care.” We have begun to see the possibility of the “work” of permaculture being more wholistic and including more of the socio-cultural and “invisible” aspects of the design reality. We need to work together for it to be healthier for all. As we continue to work towards our vision of a regenerative future, may we continue to grow our understanding of “success” and accelerating succession. We need to mature so that committed Permaculture Workers and Elders have more pathways of support around us for the work that we do, and where we honor, respect, and acknowledge them more in our communities.

We are shifting to a Post-Industrial society, economy, and worldview. We are transitioning from a mechanistic worldview, to a post-modern one that is re-connecting with and honoring the natural world and our global ecologies. There is the need to bring in the intelligence of ecology and co-create a Wholistically Ecological Worldview, and permaculturists are players in that process. If permaculture is to “work,” we need to design for the whole, and include ourselves in the ecology. This includes becoming literate in “Human Ecologies,” including the “Ecology of Self.”

Ultimately, to have good design, and for permaculture to “work,” we need to design for a complex landscape of healthy needs being met in regenerative ways. We need to co-create homes, within neighborhoods, within communities, within bioregions, which are vibrant and regeneratively “productive”—where permaculture practices at all scales cultivate “True Wealth.” Permaculture holds the possibility to co-create regenerative systems where we not only survive, but where we can support each other to thrive! If we can support each other to learn to practice that, permaculture works, and we can be co-creators of Permanent Culture. Δ

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*The author, teaching with the materials at hand, Tulkarm, Palestine.*

*nationally, and has ongoing mentorship relationships with people around the world. [www.JillianHovey.com](http://www.JillianHovey.com)*

All photographs by Jillian Hovey, unless noted.

*Dedication: I dedicate this article to my father, who passed away while I was writing it. He was not a good father in many ways, and we were estranged for most of my life. But he called me to him when he knew the end was coming, and I cared for him in his last months. In that time, my father came to know me more, and to see what I have been doing with my life. In seeing images of my work around the world, he came to appreciate what his daughter has devoted her life to, and also wanted to see me move towards getting more of my own needs met. It has been a challenging time since his passing, with COVID-19, and not being able to leave the country as planned. And needing to find a place to live on short notice. The universe is showing up for me, as on my last day of writing, I have just moved to a suburban permaculture homestead in Guelph, outside of Toronto, where I graduated with my B.Sc. Agr. 25 years ago. This is one of the most mature suburban permaculture sites that I have ever seen, and I will now have a home for the first time in over a decade. It is time to rest, integrate, learn, grow, and ground. As I put spring seeds in the ground, and make plans for chickens, I also plan to do my quiet behind-the-scenes work, to create the foundation for the next era of my life and call in prosperity. May I do so and honor my father, as I do my work to heal the lineage I inherited from him, and continue to heal myself, so I can be a healthier version of myself and do healthier work in the world.*

\* Please note that I purposefully spell wholism with a “w”, rather than as “holism,” as I prefer that it include more of the word “whole,” which is its root.

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# Does Permaculture Work?

Milton Dixon

PERHAPS THERE ARE THOSE OUT THERE that are wondering if permaculture actually works? Why would anyone study and practice it? What is it about permaculture that makes it better than alternatives? Perhaps it would be helpful to share a bit of my own thoughts and experience.

Permaculture uses natural systems—do natural systems work? They certainly do, as evidenced by our very existence. My own take on this is that asking if it works is not the right question. We need to dig deeper.

How is success defined? Works for whom? On what scales are we talking about? Is it just less bad? Does it feed some of the beings? What is a yield and who is it for? How does it deal with intention, are some beings' intentions placed above others? Who is involved? Who is not involved but affected? It becomes a right mess.

Trying to grasp hold of it with the science mind necessitates reduction. Something is left out. Perhaps only one thing can actually be considered. The science mind is useful and can produce wonders. However, it also tends not to work well with others. It limits our considerations to one thing. Add more variables, more beings, and it becomes unscientific. The questions become unaskable. We can't consider that. If there are too many variables, we can't really "know" the answer.

In nature, the success of the whole depends upon the success of all the pieces—not just one. All the pieces have some sort of agency that works towards meeting both their own needs and the needs of the system. Allowing them to act should be our objective. Fortunately, as we are inseparable from nature, Nature has the same goals as us. If we can encourage and steer the things that we want to be successful without major (or temporary) impact on others, then we can exist as a part of the whole.



*Sunniest spot on the property, full of garlic.*



*Before I realized I didn't have to mow, perennials along the street. Boys playing in the grass.*

## Systems Dynamics

Is it better to obliterate an ecosystem and extract a yield from the remains or to interact with a space and allow novel ecosystems to form that naturally produce a yield? From my perspective, the answer is obviously the latter.

Mollison said that the yield of a system is theoretically infinite, but what does that mean? Conventional systems are static and finite. A permaculture system can and does grow and change. It is dynamic and fluid. It can respond to catastrophe. It never has to end, and new yields can forever be discovered for both humans and other actors in the system.

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## We can shape the content of the ecosystem so that it works for us.

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In a conventional system, effort is quickly replaced by the natural dynamics and forces acting on that situation. A corn or soy field left alone for any number of years would tend towards the local ecosystem. In my case, that's forest. A visit 100 years later would find that field vastly different than the original agriculture intended it to be. The lack of repeated cultivation and planting would allow first annuals, then shrubs, pioneer trees, and finally shade-tolerant trees to grow.

By creating changes that are in line with the local ecosystem, we can shape the content of the ecosystem so that it works for us. Doing this still allows room for all the other

actors to participate. With subtle changes in the initial state of the system, we can set up self-propagating waves of effort. This is how permaculture can work without us. We're working with and within already existing dynamics. Once effort is expended, it is kept in the system.

Permaculture is an ongoing process where we participate in the community of all beings. So, in permaculture any yield is part of the ecosystem. The ecosystem yields for itself.

## ***My Experience—Home***

I've lived in my current location for just over three years. In that time, I've done lots of observing, some interventions, and lots of harvesting. I got lucky that the former owner was a bit of a gardener and planted many perennials ahead of me.

I've learned many things about this new place. The majority of the yard is shady, with few places sunny enough to grow typical garden crops. I enjoy where garlic has naturalized and has bulbs deep in the soil (and also produces a big garlic crop if properly coached along). I know the best place to store mushroom logs. I've identified which parts of my yard require mowing and which do not. (I live in a city—cues to care is essential). I've observed a fig tree the previous owner planted (zone 5b/6a) and interacted with it to see if I can get it to overwinter better. I know that there can be a week where I go through the existing food forest stuffing my face with raspberries, gooseberries, raspberries again, red currants, and then black currants.

I've added three different varieties of strawberry, sorrel, nettle, comfrey, American ginger, everbearing raspberries, serviceberry, more currants, quince, thimbleberry, paw paw, and persimmon.

There are plenty of yields from this place and plenty of reasons to get my hands in the soil—to be a part of this place and its progress through time.

## ***My Experience—Cooperative at Dawn Farm***

Dawn Farm's cooperative is an evolving project involving



*Food forest at Dawn Farm before we got the sheep.*



*Sheep rotationally grazing at Dawn Farm.*

myself and some friends. Dawn Farm, itself, is an addiction treatment center in southeast Michigan. The Cooperative at Dawn Farm was created to steward the parts of their 64-acre residential treatment facility the facility was not actively using.

We transitioned the three, roughly eight-acre corn and soy fields into a food forest and two hay fields that are rotationally grazed. Every year, we harvest wood from the two wood lots to hold a mushroom log workshop fundraiser, sending participants home with their own mushroom log and generating a dozen or so logs each for the participating members of the cooperative.

We have almost an acre of garden including five hoop houses and eight people working on various garden projects: a plot testing garlic varieties (100s of varieties), a market gardener, home, and storage gardens. Sharing tools and a tractor to make the work so much easier.

Harvests from the food forest so far have included beach plums, black currants, wild black, and sour cherries, black raspberries, rotational grazing, and coppiced black locust.

The opportunities in this space are both physical yields and social. Bringing in the local shepherd to help maintain the fields; building a cob oven for baking bread, pizza parties, and garlic roasts; a walking trail around the farm—all add to our social capital.

In conclusion, there is a reason I practice permaculture. The choice to do so is where I find success. The results after that are an ever-improving footnote. Δ

*C. Milton Dixon is a permaculturist, forager, educator, and an all around computer savvy guy. He builds connections between people and the places in which they live. Besides creating online permaculture resources at [glpdc.info](http://glpdc.info), he is developing experimental soul permaculture at [gloriousdebris.org](http://gloriousdebris.org), and co-manager at the emergent [thecooperativeatdawnfarm.org](http://thecooperativeatdawnfarm.org). You can read his writings and about his other projects at [permacultureproductions.com](http://permacultureproductions.com).*

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# *It's not about you!*

## **Who is your permaculture for?**

Karryn Olson

*[Editor's note: This piece first appeared on the Regenepreneurs platform and is shared here with permission.]*

**I**T'S ABOUT "THEM"—the people whom you serve. That can sound harsh, and I don't mean it to feel that way. However, it's an effective mantra that I have found helps me avoid a certain mistake we can often make. When doing outreach about our regenerative work, it's easy to want to fall into the pattern of talking about what we can do for folks, or using jargon, or trying to prove ourselves with our many qualifications and the whiz-bang, cutting-edge knowledge and skills we have at our fingertips.

But all those qualifications don't matter if the person reading the materials doesn't feel (as my Sufi biz coach says) we are calling their name, and naming the problem that they want help with, or the desire they want to fulfill.

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### **You are offering something that only a few folks know they need.**

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When I got a frozen shoulder after breaking my ankle, I didn't care if the Physical Therapist (PT) I went to had some special infrared therapy machine in their office, or if they had triple certifications. I cared if they could help me fix my shoulder. (OF course there were other considerations too, like location, price, and being good at what they do. I'm making the main point: they spoke to my felt need).

But here's the wrinkle: back when I was a kid, my family wouldn't have known there was such a thing as physical therapy, so we wouldn't have know to go looking for it. Back then, a physical therapist who wanted to reach someone like me on a budget would have had to post a flyer in the places where people go who have broken an ankle or have frozen shoulders. They would have written some more word-crafted but still concise version of:

*"Are you unable to move your arm without excruciating pain in your shoulder? This painful condition can become chronic or be alleviated through prescribed therapeutic exercises. I'm a certified physical therapist, and with my help, you can regain full mobility and live pain-free again... I accept major insurance*



*providers... Contact me here...".*

See the difference? That physical therapist would have been not only speaking to my felt need but educating me about what's possible.

AND THAT's the challenge that most of us in regenerative fields face. You are offering something that only a few folks know they need. For example, only a few residential homeowners will hear the words "permaculture" or "ecological design" and know that they need what you have! Yes, you can market to that small group of folks, but are there enough of them to support your livelihood?

However, you can market to them and other green-inclined folks who would be likely customers if you write or speak directly to their felt needs. Think about what desires they want to fulfill, and pain points they want to alleviate. And write your copy based on that! [By the way, this approach works for any field, not just permaculture design.]

Here are the inside pages of a brochure that a friend who is an ace marketer made for me back when I started my first business. The text was written specifically for folks who want to learn and practice permaculture on their suburban site, but don't have time to attend a full PDC; or people who have studied a ton about permaculture, but feel unsure how to implement it. Briefly put, it wasn't written for everyone. It was written for a very particular segment of my potential customers. Based on my own thinking, I figured they cared about aesthetics, food production, saving time and money, do-able workloads and thus phasing. So, I wrote about that. I also educated them about some things that would resonate with them. They probably care about climate disruption, and I helped them see how this ties to their landscape: see the section "What can an ecological design do for you?" What else do you notice about how I tried to speak to their "felt needs"?

I'm not trying to say I did this all right, because I didn't. On the contrary. Although this is a great brochure (which was even selected by my local Alternatives Bank as one of the best brochures in their small business class), I created it with the help of a marketing expert before I knew about business models. To say it straight: this great brochure is tied to a service that would need to be priced very differently in order to be a real living.

Yep, you read that right.

The sad truth is, in 2015, in an effort to combine my many livelihood skills into a business, I created a great brochure for a service that has an unsustainable business model behind it. I spent money on this awesome brochure, business name and cards, and establishing an LLC. Only later did I realize that I'd never be able to sustain myself with this particular venture when it was priced in this way.

I could have avoided all that if I had done what's called in entrepreneurship "customer discovery." When done right, it allows us to co-create our services with those whom we want to serve. And that customer discovery gives us the exact language we can use in our outreach materials (which we would do if we decide that this is a validated business idea, not before)! Talk about stacking functions! But I didn't do customer discovery, because I didn't know about it. This is because I was allergic to business as usual. I didn't realize designing a sustainable business model is as important as designing a great offering. We can embed our regenerative ethics into our business model and not sell out. Putting all of that energy into something that's not workable is a very hard learning curve.

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## **We can embed our regenerative ethics into our business model and not sell out.**

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That's one of the reasons why I dove into learning all I can about entrepreneurship. I don't want to make this mistake again, and I can help folks who care about fast-tracking regenerative solutions to avoid these mistakes.

NOW I know that a person's real task is not to ask: "Can I build this?" but "Should I build this?" We can answer that by getting out and talking to real people before we build out a service that folks don't want and that we can't build a sustainable business model around. (P.S. We do this collaboratively in the "Sweet Spots" program. Contact me with a direct message in the Regenpreneurs Network or email me at [karryn@regenpreneurs.com](mailto:karryn@regenpreneurs.com) if you want to hear the next time it is offered.) △



*Karryn Olson is an Educator. Ecological Designer. Entrepreneur. Feminist. Leader. Mother. Mentor. Lover of Gaia and her diverse human family. My pronouns are she/her.*

Want your livelihood to be in service to Life, but you aren't sure how you can earn a living?

I can help you design an Abundance Model.

Coaching Consulting Courses Community



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## Bringing Self to the Work

# Learning by Doing: Permaculture for our Youth

Penny Kriebiel

I'M SPEAKING TO THE WORK of mentoring, teaching, and place through a personal narrative. In doing so, I'm expressing why I support sharing permaculture design with children and other adults via an educational experience.

I also want to represent and share some of the struggles and issues I see. Even though I have intentions of including all people in the People Care aspect of facilitating and mentoring permaculture, there are still people who are not represented in the "site-evaluation and assessment" in the distribution of permaculture education. My focus includes children and youth--but this also connects to issues of gender, class, racism, and land-ownership....

I'm entering the work and continued study and practice of permaculture as a privileged white woman and grandmother who lives on the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabek people. I begin by paying my respects to their elders past and present. I'm honored and dedicated to being a steward of this land I call home. I recognize that this privilege was afforded to me by many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring me here today writing these words; trying to get at something as a woman who works as a permaculture facilitator and mentor.

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## I was seeing a living system of connection and relationship of people, places, and things.

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I also identify as a divorced mother of two; a single, white, middle class person who is presently unable to afford owning a home or land and lives a form of voluntary simplicity. I have a known, personal family history in the Great Lakes region that reaches back into the late 1700s. I agree that Land Acknowledgement is not only a way of honoring the ancestral lands my family now lives on, but also that this naming is deeply connected to the work and sharing of permaculture education, especially for our children and youth, and is my responsibility as an adult, parent, and mentor.

I consider myself to be incredibly privileged. I've journeyed from growing up in a beautiful, rural farming and



*Exploring the mystery of place together supports our connection and belonging.*

working class community that I still have a loving relationship with, to taking my curiosity and learning adventure out into a variety of urban-city scenarios, with a blessed, diverse population of people, ethnic communities, and landscapes.

My first timid steps into the role of being a mentor and educator was as an artist and illustrator. I opened up my private studio to a handful of kids who were interested in drawing, cartooning, and painting and eventually to storytelling through puppet and mask theater. I moved even further into turning my work space into a "teaching" place, as my two children entered public school. I spent two years in this art studio with other adult artists. I then shared my idea about making more space for kids with a generous neighbor who became my landlord on a first floor urban studio building next to the Grand River in Lansing, Michigan. The first goal and intention of this new art-space was that when kids or adults walked through the door, they knew it was for and about creative-making.

My experience in connecting permaculture design and going "back to school" in my late 40s to my earlier training as an artist and illustrator was of WAKING UP. I was seeing a living system of connection and relationship of people, places, and things, and a design science involving living whole systems. To this day, I continue waking up, relearning, and discovering new ways to be a creative learner and a decent human being. With my creations and designs, I have responsibilities to people and the planet. At the center of my

passion is the concern that I continue to do the work that's needed to stay awake to what is happening in the world, and navigate through it as a responsible human being. It's a constant ride around a living-generational design cycle, from observation and goal setting, assessment and evaluation, implementation and maintenance, to the ever important pause for feedback and then right back around to tweaking what needs to be adjusted and on and on....

Like most mentors and educators, I think that there is an art-form and particular practice in supporting both a child's intellectual capacities and their inner life. Each child and relationship is unique. My intention and goal is to guide kids to stay connected to a sense of belonging and interconnection while discovering and staying steady on their own path. As they do so, they find a sense of purpose, meaning, and social consciousness. I find myself constantly asking: what does it mean to be a part of this big, wide, ever-changing world, and who we are sharing the land with? What do we need to learn: about the Earth, our planet home; the people—all of the people—those that are here and our ancestors; and the necessity and truth of the history of land-ownership, occupation, and sharing fairly? How are we going to be together, because we already truly ARE here together? And why do we have to keep asking these questions?

I believe we benefit from a serious review and gain a deeper understanding of social justice issues by examining learned patterns and behaviors that we were taught as acceptable, but truly are not. We benefit from finding ways to take action and dismantle what needs to be dismantled. Especially when it comes to child and youth education, I believe it is not an option to use outdated history that is rooted in white supremacy. Social justice and ecological justice are directly connected. We can contribute as permaculture designers, and as facilitators, mentors, and educators to this positive change.

Once we see it, we can't unsee it. Permaculture design methods, in theory, can be a good example of a positive structure, with the ethics, principles, and how-to/methods of design for our everyday lives. Permaculture is a place where we can teach engagement with the whole world and where white-



It is important to nurture and celebrate our youth through mentoring and action.

supremacy and all of the other “isms” should not exist. Presently, this is not the truth for many who may be interested in permaculture.

## Lifting Up Voices

I'm pleased to be considered a mentor of a young woman, Chelsea Coy, who has experienced this disconnect and says,

*“I believe the essence of permaculture is a reflection of the earth-based, indigenous ways of relationship between people and the land, before the rise of the capitalist patriarchy in all regions of the planet. Most permaculture courses are financially inaccessible to many of those within my age group, especially people of color and many of the working class who are desperately trying to break out of the capitalist system and return to nature. Permaculture is based on mimicking the patterns of Mother Nature. The key word being Mother, meaning feminine patterns of living design. I beg the question then, and I ask, “why is it that the dominant educational force in permaculture design courses around the globe are privileged white males?”*

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***I started to think about how we are driven by natural rhythms even in places we have been taught are unnatural.***

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*When I think about the permaculture phrase “We are nature working,” I'd also like to share another brilliant excerpt from an interview on Milkweed Editions by a powerhouse of a woman writer from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Erin Sharkey, is the editor of the forthcoming anthology of Black archival writing as it relates to the history of slavery and freedom and migration for Black life in Minnesota and in the wider country. My thoughts turn to how we reckon with what she deftly calls “the politics of nature.”*

Erin says:

*“The seed for this project was planted several years ago when I lived and worked for a time on an urban farm in Buffalo, New York, learning to grow food, living in a rich vibrant community. During that time, I became fascinated with natural life growing in the midst of a city—the plants, animals, pests, people, elements, and weather. I started to think about how we are driven by natural rhythms even in places we have been taught are un-*

natural.

*I am interested in the politics of nature—who owns it, does it need to be tamed, where is it, what role does it play in our lives, are we natural? I think that so often the images we are fed about nature have this colonial conquering energy—folks climbing to the top of a mountain alone and planting a flag—but I think that that story is old and wrong and problematic.*

*Too often Black people are left out of nature stories. The state has worked to distance Black people from nature in our imaginations and in practice. Think about the sundowner laws that enforced curfews to exclude Black folks from communities or the Jim Crow-era laws that made travel dangerous for Black adventurers through many areas of our country or the ways government relegates Black communities for the dirtiest industrial uses or redlining and racial covenants, designed to designate the least desirable areas to Black and Brown communities.*

*I am interested in evidence of the long-standing relationship of Black folks to nature. The ways we have stewarded the land, the ways we are reclaiming relationships disrupted by slavery or displacement. The archive provides this evidence.”*

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## **We have responsibility to diversity and to social justice in all learning spaces.**

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As parental units, permaculturists, facilitators, mentors, or educators, we have responsibility to diversity and to social justice in all learning spaces. To not only talk about it, but to believe in it and also model it.

When we plan a permaculture program or sharing opportunity, let's ask ourselves who is invited, with a checklist of questions:

- Is the venue fully accessible?
- Is it on the bus route?
- How can you advertise the event so people of color, people from minority ethnic groups feel welcome?
- Have you considered the needs of single parents?
- Have you considered the needs of people with visual or hearing impairments?
- Is the content relevant to people from different backgrounds and cultures?
- Are traditional and Indigenous sources of knowledge being acknowledged?
- Is the work of women and black, Asian, and minority people being included and acknowledged?



Our work is meant to be joyful.

- Are computers accessible in the community if the event is online?
- What else?

Focusing on who takes on the leadership role in a permaculture program, here's a checklist of questions to answer:

- Do the mentors/educators/facilitators include women?
- Do they include Black people, Asian people, people from ethnic minorities?
- Do they include people from working class backgrounds?
- Do they include people with disabilities?
- Do the mentors/educators/facilitators speak the local language(s)?
- What else?

Are you interested in exploring the connections of social permaculture, and facilitating educational experiences with children and youth? Consider attending a three-day workshop with Rhonda Baird and myself this summer:



Co-creation is the name of the game.

Bringing Permaculture to Our Communities; A Workshop for Mentors, Educators and Facilitators July 30-31, August 6-7; online. Engage in a nature-based approach to teaching, mentoring, and anti-oppression work, learning the basics of designing children and youth permaculture activities, through practice, design, and information share. Presented by Northern Michigan Permaculture, Little Artshram, and Sheltering Hills Design, hosted by Commonplace, a community innovation hub and co-working space in downtown Traverse City. Δ

*My name is Penny Krebiehl and I'm an artist, garden-farmer, mother, and grandmother and have been formally involved in the permaculture realm since taking a PDC with Starhawk, Penny Livingston Stark, and Erik Ohlsen in 2005. I'm passionate about bringing permaculture into the 21st century as an educational option that deepens the experience for women, children, and youth AND to shift, tweak, and fine-tune the facilitator, mentor, and educator roles while focusing on system redesign with social permaculture. I'm pleased to join other permaculture teachers who share an integrated anti-oppression, permaculture design language and approach while including children and youth rather than separating them from our living, learning, and doing communities. I'm one of 40 women teachers in an on-line Permaculture Design Course via the Permaculture Women's Guild, and a Co-Creator of: O'k CSA Cooperative, and Great Rivers and Lakes Permaculture Institute, Northern Michigan Permaculture. I'm the founder of Little Artshram aka Greater Lansing ARTSPACE, Permaculture Education for Children, Youth and Families.*

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4. Melanie Morrison, *Doing our own Work*, a program from *Allies for Change*. [www.alliesforchange.org](http://www.alliesforchange.org)
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Permaculture Education for Children, Youth and Families is a project created and supported by Little Artshram creating a platform for global networking with permaculture educators and learners, offering community discussion, designing learning opportunities, facilitator and mentor training with collaborative partners specifically in Michigan and the Midwest United States. The objective of this project is to design and develop the container/framework, process and content of a series of workshops, programs and training, using Sociocracy and Permaculture pedagogy as both a model for further K-12 education and development. We believe this project is developing the means to incubate nourishing, alternative learning opportunities for children, youth and their families at a critical time of need. With a long rich history of programming for children and youth in many Michigan communities for over 20 years, we are targeting the Summer of 2020 to bring permaculture design into a greater social-system and anti-oppression networking capacity, through facilitated workshops and introductions of leadership training. We are learning by doing. Δ

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## The Cart Before the Horse

# Putting First Things First in Our Work

Rhonda Baird

**P**ERMACULTURE WORKS. It does, and it doesn't.

Permaculture works fantastically well at solving complex problems. As a design system, its principles, strategies, and techniques can be used to establish beautiful forest gardens, heal waterways, build amazing soil, and retrofit neighborhoods into dynamic, vibrant villages, and regenerating local economies. There are so many possibilities, and those are very exciting to contemplate and plan for in a dynamic moment with new limits imposed on the world.

However, complex and complicated problem-solving (1) can only be accomplished if and when the problem-solvers practice self-awareness and develop personal and communal capacities that define edges and boundaries for problem-solving. In other words, what is the context? Where is the focus? A permaculture system on a property can work for the owners of that property, but how does that solve the problem of the neighborhood? The region? The country? The world?

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**Permaculture design offers a solid platform from which to develop novel responses.**

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Navigating the complexity can feel overwhelming. Permaculture design is good at solving complex problems, but how can it respond to chaotic ones such as the global pandemic we've been enduring?

I believe permaculture design offers a solid platform from which to develop novel responses—especially when it includes a wholistic approach to human development and health. My faith is in the capacity of human beings to grow and learn and make choices that bring them into right relationship (2) with the Earth and each other. On the road to right relationship, we have a lot of mending and healing to do within ourselves (3), our communities, and our landscapes. Our inherited civilization, which dominates the globe, doesn't work, and it is unraveling. (If you find yourself resisting that message, I invite you to consider why you do.)



*Violet-infused white vinegar for use in summer cooking on the way. This kind of self-responsibility can also play into gifting economies.*

It is time for the novel solutions to emerge. These may not be found within the permaculture message developed in the 80s or 90s. It is something which must continue emerging as a response to our current context of civilizational unraveling.

Years ago, Toby Hemenway recorded a talk (4) about how he was not interested in saving civilization. What we are clinging to is the comfort and safety of a system which has become the normal. It is normal to be able to buy a t-shirt on Amazon prime for \$7.00. It is normal to be able to go to three grocery stores to buy meat at one, veggies and bread at another, and our favorite desserts at the third. It has been normal to buy what's cheap and replace it as needed. How aware are we of our habits? Are our needs met? Our wants? Our whims? Are we aware of others' needs and the impact of our choices?

Increasingly, I find myself making the things I need and want for my household. It's not because I long to be a home economic queen, or a totally self-reliant person, but because I want to take responsibility for and intimately know what went into producing that item (food, shelter, clothing, etc...). It slows me down and helps me to distinguish needs from wants.

As someone who does love fiber arts, I have rhetted and spun nettles from my garden for fiber; spun sheep's wool, and run a "fiber CSA." I weave, knit, crochet, and sew. I understand very well what it takes to make a hat or a sweater

or a pair of pants. When I homeschooled my children, they each learned to spin with a drop spindle and to knit, so they understand these things as well. I wonder how we would be with our clothing, if we all had to make several articles of clothing as a child or on a regular basis. I do this because I enjoy it as a part of my creativity and relaxation. We don't have to use stone-age technology to solve the problem of weather-appropriate clothing.

We have several appropriate technologies to solve our problems on a physical level, but it is very evident that our civilizational experiment in either secular or religious capitalistic culture is failing spectacularly. Social technologies developed by indigenous cultures throughout the millennia have been torn apart by dreams of empire and conquest and righteousness. People have been pushed off land by policy and by violent conflict for millennia. Conversations have turned to arguments about identity politics.

Our capacity to govern ourselves and seek equitable return for our efforts has been undermined by growing gaps in the arenas of governance and economy. We bought into a story of righteousness based on differentiation and accumulation based on wants. We needed the means of meeting our real needs: actualization, connection, and mutual reciprocity. Who we are and what we own are relative markers based on who we are interacting with. This interaction is the place, I believe, from which to begin finding the path toward an emergent community.

### **Connection leads to emergent community**

Let's start with connection. I put forward the idea that we all long to be seen and honored for who we are. Our identities carry within them cultural stories. What we inherit, what we own about ourselves, and the radical practice of loving ourselves and each other help us to contribute in meaningful



*Communities are built through individual relationships and networks of overlapping relationships. If we can tend to those and take responsibility for how we show up, we can build strong foundations. Too much of our lives are spent in needless isolation these days (and some needed quarantine for safety). Image via Pixabay.*

ways to the communities we belong to. At the same time, we have particular skills, dreams, and choices which shape our path and allow us to support others. I know from experience that I can have a generalized love for humanity, but it is much more practical to give the love and contribution I have to share when I'm present with someone. This becomes the bridge across our differences.

Putting people in the "other" category, or highlighting our differences based on assumption creates division. If I tell you I'm a married woman with a family, you can make many assumptions about who I am. Many of them might be right. If I tell you about a past challenge or trauma, you might also

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## **As parents, teachers, and mentors, we have a responsibility to recognize the gifts and growing edge of our young people.**

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make many assumptions about my state of growth, personal development, or capacities. Based on my physical features, you'll make one set of assumptions. My language will indicate another set of assumptions. And we keep carrying on with layers of assumptions about the person we're encountering. To make matters more confusing, our own histories, wounding, and needs encourage us to continue projecting onto a situation. How do we ever relate?!

We succeed by getting curious about the person we are encountering. We stay open to what they are saying, and clarify what is needed in the moment. We connect—and we do so in a way that is in integrity with ourselves and allows others to be in their integrity. We do this even if it means disagreeing respectfully. Each time we are present with someone, we build our connection to them. As much as I might appreciate you, dear reader, we are only loosely connected through this medium. Wouldn't it be much more wonderful to have this conversation in person—maybe in a forest garden in bloom with a cup of tea?

### **Sharing our best gifts**

Now, let's turn to actualization. Every day we depend on others. Someone brought me my mail. Someone provides electricity, water, and internet service to our home. Someone grew the grains that went into the bread, and someone else raised the goats that went into the goat cheese I just put on

that bread. I hope so—I hope they feel an incredible sense of purpose in doing their work. I believe each of us is here on this planet for a reason right now. Certainly, there are enough problems to be solved—and each of us has an important part of the puzzle. We share that best when every part of ourselves is alive and humming with energy and intelligence. Counselors, mentors, and supporters—or a healthy community—can help you achieve that. It is very much worth building that support team (including people who can challenge you).

As parents, teachers, and mentors, we have a responsibility to recognize the gifts and growing edge of our young people. This is where we have to do our work, so that we are ready to support the next generation through times no one has seen before. In permaculture design, we speak of working from our home system outwards into the neighborhood and then into the larger community, region, and outward. In the network of permaculturists, we've bridged between communities in order to find mutual support. Support and understanding within our communities is sometimes mixed. But, now it's time not only to work from our home systems outward, but through the generations.



*Breakout session at a gathering of urban women farmers in Indianapolis. This gathering was so successful, it has inspired a mutual aid group sharing food, resources, seeds, and encouragement.*

## **Mutual aid: societies of the future**

This is where mutual aid becomes critical. The term “mutual aid” is used a lot these days. By mutual aid, I am referring to several things: mutually supportive relationships; systems that offer physical, material support leading to a sense of abundant well-being; and, services which support our needs. In the coronavirus pandemic, I have seen many people move forward very quickly with creating mutual aid groups.

Because I am connected to many communities throughout my region, I am pleased to see the formation of mutual aid groups in service to those neighborhoods and communities. It all happened very quickly, but I suspect if we look at who was involved, we can see the concentration of activity and focus among networks of networks based on the greatest need. There is a lot of gifting among these groups, and that is a beautiful thing to see. It renews hope and faith in the idea that our needs will be met if we just ask. Generosity is contagious.

## **A Brave New World**

We have many choices to make in the coming days, weeks, and months. Permaculture design, as a process grounded in ethics and principles has much to offer us. Perhaps it's time to re-evaluate and tweak the design of your life? Or perhaps your successful design and practice equipped you with surplus to share with others in your community? What have you mastered well enough that you can pass on to others?

As we emerge from our Great Pause, how are we improving our communication and presence with others? How are we fostering right relationship with the Earth and all her peoples? How could we bring the brightest gifts of ourselves to our communities? Where can we move into mutual support? When we've re-evaluated our personal designs and life, what help do we need from others? How can we keep mutual aid groups in good health and see if they might grow into something greater in our worlds?

We are in a time when households, neighborhoods, and communities are shifting, and people are open to trying something different than they are used to. For many of us, the grind of daily tasks has shifted, and we are waking up to potentially new patterns. Why not intervene in the flow of this to make the least change for the greatest good? Why not connect more deeply with people of all ages—even if it is at a distance or over a video call? It's a brave new world. Δ

*Rhonda Baird is senior editor of this publication as well as a permaculture designer and facilitator of educational experiences. She is excited about “tea time” with her neighbors over video this month, and very much missing the women farmers of Indianapolis.*

# Earth Systems; Our Systems

## Coronavirus and Our Immune System

Marco Chung-Shu Lam

*[Editor's Note: When the pandemic hit North American shores and quarantine was implemented, I reached out to Marco Lam, a permaculture instructor and practitioner of Chinese medicine. The following is the information he shared with me in late March.]*

The Mandala Clinic is actively monitoring new updates from China on how to effectively support our immune systems and fight off this pandemic in both ourselves and our communities.

In the ecosystem of panic and within the renewal of hope, each of us is on the front line of providing good counsel and compassion to the people we care for. I notice that I'm actively searching for good information in the soup of misinformation and wanting to know what I can do proactively to use my fear and worry to good ends. This is what I have found most useful so far.

This virus is moving through the US very quickly according to most data sources, and we should endeavor to be actively prepared as I believe we are still on the front edge of this pandemic that will most likely last the next several

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**We have an opportunity to slow the virus spread, boost our own immunity, and take time for reflection on this wild, beautiful, and highly interconnected world.**

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months. We need to overcome our normalcy bias by being both prepared on individual and collective levels. In the best of worlds, this strengthens our resilience in our communities and connects us back to the actual means of production within our ecosystems and local watersheds.

With 850 million urban dwelling Chinese workers in lockdown and 60 million Italians in country-wide quarantine, a good 18% of the world's GDP has been taken offline. If



*Elderberry has generally been an ancient and general support to immune systems. Image CC0 via Pixabay.*

you know and understand Chinese culture and its top-down government, you know that taking the economy off the rails is not done lightly. The old fortune cookie adage says that the Chinese word for crisis contains both character for "Danger" and the character for "Opportunity." We are aware that we have an opportunity to slow the virus spread, boost our own immunity, and to take time for reflection on this wild, beautiful, and highly interconnected world we live in. We have a danger of our collective ignorance spreading the illness, especially to our elders, and for great disruptions in our economy and governance.

We can learn from the response in China and use an integral view to combine the best of Eastern and Western approaches. What we don't hear much of in the news is that much of the treatment in China relies on using both microbiome-specific, plant-based medicinals and dietary therapy in addition to using Western protocols to treat the illness.

The benefit of the Western scientific tradition is that we know that coronaviruses are enveloped positive-stranded RNA viruses. Like most RNA viruses, they are in a constant dance of recombining their genetic code and will continue to make new variants of themselves. The challenge with viral infections is that the main weapon in the Western arsenal is immunization which generally takes a while to develop, while the virus continues to evolve. The first coronavirus causing severe human disease was SARS, but this new coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is a close relative called SARS-Cov2. It is a much more aggressive pathogen. We

know that when this virus invades, it stimulates coughing and sneezing which makes it able to invade more hosts. When the virus invades the lungs, it infects the cilia, the tiny hair-like cells that move mucus and particulates out of our lungs. When the cilia get too damaged, they cease to function, and our lungs start clogging up with mucus. This pneumonia caused by SARS-Cov2 is particularly difficult to treat, and the body sends out its messenger molecules (cytokines, etc.) which in the worst cases cause an inflammatory meltdown in the body. Once this virus gets into the body, it attaches to the angiotensin-converting enzyme-2 (ACE-2) linkages on the surface of cells. ACE-2 regulates the renin-angiotensin system (RAS) which includes the lungs, spleen, lymph nodes, kidneys, and the vascular system. This is particularly useful information because understanding how the pathogen hijacks our cells, how it reproduces, and how viral particles are released to new hosts lets us cross-reference data on herbs that affect those particular systems. Science also shows that *Sambucus spp* (elderberry), *Glycyrrhiza spp* (licorice) and many other plants help protect the ACE-2 linkages. For a more in-depth look at this aspect, check out Steven Harrod Buhner's link at the bottom. A particular question for me is whether patients on ACE inhibitors (the cardiovascularly compromised are already known higher risk cases) are impacted more by the virus.

My base herbal recommendations for healthy folks wanting to support their immune systems:

**A basic adaptogen herbal:** Consider Reishi, Astragalus, Gynostemma, Licorice, Codonopsis, and Atractylodes as the main backbones. I highly recommend a product I formulated: [www.performancetea.com/products/energy-jar-80g](http://www.performancetea.com/products/energy-jar-80g) Use the code "immortal" to get a friends and family discount.

#### **An Elderberry cordial**

**Yu Ping Feng San.** Known as the Jade Windscreen in Chinese medicine, it is a classic herbal formula to support upper respiratory immunity. This is an especially useful formula if you have been around crowds. Do not take this formula if you are



"Damp" in the human body shows us that we are out of balance. Image CC0 via Pixabay.

already feeling under the weather.

I have more complex recommendations for folks who are ill but please email, call, or text, and we can set up a Skype call. Chinese medicine doesn't have the cure, but it can ameliorate many of the symptoms, and it has been used very effectively in China to help people recover.

## **A "Damp Plague"**

The benefit of the Chinese medicine tradition is the ability to see complex patterns in complex ecologies and to treat them with complex plant-based medicine that accounts for both the patient's microbiome, the environmental factors, and the pathogen's virulence. From all the Chinese medicine doctors that I'm hearing from, one common pattern is at the heart of this illness. There is not a good Western analogue for it, but it translates as "dampness," and COVID-19 is looked at as a "damp plague." From the doctors in China, a useful early diagnosis is that the microbiome on the tongue changes and will develop a thick, sticky, white coating. I'm curious if the illness is caught early though telemedicine and by looking at a patient's tongues, can we use this pattern recognition to head off the current shortage of adequate antibody or polymerase chain reaction testing?

This concept of the "damp" biome is worth exploring from a Chinese medicine perspective, because I think it gives us both preventative steps to take individually and to understand where the illness will hit the most and which populations will be most impacted. Many Chinese medicine doctors are predicting that places with a cold and damp spring are most likely also to have environmental conditions where the virus outside of the hosts have a longer life span, and that it is likely we will see a rebound fall viral epidemic.

I've been explaining to my patients that "damp" in the human biome translates to a collection of mucus, bacteria, yeast, and viral factors that are imbalancing our healthy microbial balance. The questions that a Chinese doctor will ask to screen for dampness are usually around digestive health and they use the examination of the tongue to look for a thick or greasy looking coating. While the thick coating does not presuppose that you have COVID-19, it suggests an imbalanced microbiome that is more susceptible to illness and also can lead to the virus going deeper in the body.

The good thing about treating "damp" in the body is that it has a huge amount of ancillary benefits. Chinese medicine looks at "damp" as the beginning of many chronic illnesses. The treatment of it is in alignment with good commonsense recommendations that can boost your immunity and are worthwhile regardless of pandemics.

**Exercise is essential.** There is a saying that a damp cloth doesn't mold if hung out in the sun on a clothesline. Appropriate exercise moves more oxygen into the body.

**Avoid alcohol and tobacco.** Alcohol converts to glucose in the body and imbalances blood sugar and creates excessive "damp" over time.

*Avoid too much raw, cold, sweet or mucus-forming foods.*

Eat lots of fresh vegetables that are cooked as the cornerstone of any diet. Avoid soda, sugar, packaged foods, and industrial farmed meats and eggs.

*Add bitter herbs and vegetables that dry “damp”* such as pumpkin, amaranth, adzuki beans, celery, scallions, turnips, and lettuce. Slow cooked stews and soups are particularly helpful.

I hope this is helpful to you in these challenging times and I pray for your good health and that of your family. Δ

*Marco Chung-Shu Lam is Clinic Director, Mandala Integrative Medicine Clinic, and a permaculture educator in Colorado.*

Cc: Links and a prayer below. I've said this prayer out loud with friends over a meal and I highly recommend it. Positive psychoneuroimmunology is your friend!

Links:

Virus map tracking (updated)

<https://visalist.io/emergency/coronavirus>

Reports from doctors treating Covid-19 in China with Chinese Herbal Medicine. This is especially useful for Chinese medicine clinicians: [classicalchinesemedicine.org/report-from-front-line-wuhan/](http://classicalchinesemedicine.org/report-from-front-line-wuhan/)

Cytokine regulating properties of a traditional Chinese Medical formula. This is quite technical but useful for a scientific background on why Yu Ping Feng San is useful at this time. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3823765/](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3823765/)

Treatment on the frontline in China for practitioners [botanicalbiohacking.com/blog/2020/2/25/from-critical-condition-to-a-clear-ct-scan-integrative-medicine-vs-covid-19-coronavirus](http://botanicalbiohacking.com/blog/2020/2/25/from-critical-condition-to-a-clear-ct-scan-integrative-medicine-vs-covid-19-coronavirus)

The best of Western herbalism and a great science background on SARS group viruses: [stephenharrodbuhner.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/coronavirus.txt.pdf](http://stephenharrodbuhner.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/coronavirus.txt.pdf)

How SARS viruses attach to ACE-2: [researchgate.net/profile/Michael\\_Moore32/publication/8984205\\_Angiotensin-converting\\_enzyme\\_2\\_is\\_a\\_functional\\_receptor\\_for\\_the\\_SARS\\_coronavirus/links/557c5afa08aeb61eae236248/Angiotensin-converting-enzyme-2-is-a-functional-receptor-for-the-SARS-coronavirus.pdf](http://researchgate.net/profile/Michael_Moore32/publication/8984205_Angiotensin-converting_enzyme_2_is_a_functional_receptor_for_the_SARS_coronavirus/links/557c5afa08aeb61eae236248/Angiotensin-converting-enzyme-2-is-a-functional-receptor-for-the-SARS-coronavirus.pdf)

Our podcast: [modernimmortal.com/episodes/episode-4-corona-virus-special-edition](http://modernimmortal.com/episodes/episode-4-corona-virus-special-edition)

I was inspired to write this article by a prayer from Navlyn Wang:

## A PRAYER

*I call on my ancestors*

*I call on the sages and enlightened masters from the past thousands of years*

*I call on the spirit of the noble dragons*

*I call on Heaven and Earth*

*May my family be healthy*

*May all of the common people be healthy*

*May all the doctors, nurses, caretakers working tirelessly on the front line find courage*

*May all who have lost someone they love find peace and serenity*

*May all who are infected find faith*

*May all who lost income have a warm place to sleep and enough food to eat*

*If suffering is necessary, may it also be accompanied by openings to deeper love and wisdom*

*May the suffering required to ride this crisis be as minimal as possible*

*May this be an opportunity for the realization of more love and compassion*

*May this be an opportunity for the realization of more wisdom and clarity*

*May this be an opportunity for the discovery of more aligned ways of being*

*May we learn all the lessons meant for us*

*May the Tao be with those in power*

*May the Tao be with us all*



*Exercise is vital to our health and well-being during this time of quarantine and pandemic. Image CC0 via Pixabay.*

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# Building Skills for the Future

## Staying Grounded

Debbie Tremel

[Editor's Note: This article is a combination of writings woven together and printed with permission.]

**T**HE CORONAVIRUS HAS MANY PEOPLE feeling a bit ungrounded at best, and near panic at worst. The most important skill we need for survival though is to remain calm and be able to assess our situation. Although most of us are safe in homes, with food, utilities, and everything we need, we are still left feeling ungrounded and unsure of the future. Following are some suggestions of things we can do for ourselves and families to help us stay grounded and positive during this difficult time.

*Stay informed, but don't obsess on the news.* I get my information from sites I trust and read the information. I saw the news once and can understand why people who watch it are panicking. Remember—their job is to sell news. It's sensationalized and focuses on the worst-case situations. Learn what is really going on where you live and what you need to do to remain safe. Then let it go—don't make the virus the center of your world.

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### Use this time to find your inspiration, to find your connection with the Earth.

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If the virus has exposed you to the reality that you wouldn't know how to survive and care for your family if things fell apart, *use this time to learn.* There are countless resources online to learn about wild edible and medicinal plants, and survival skills books you can order. Choose a topic and begin learning. Remember, the sacred order of survival: Shelter, Water, Fire, and Food. Focus on these skills. There is nothing more grounding than actually taking action to make yourself more self-sustainable. I'm part of a group that created a website, [www.centralfire.us](http://www.centralfire.us). It has a wide variety of videos, articles, books, and recommendations for a wide range of primitive-living skills.



*Slow down to the rhythms of the Earth and a different way of relating to time.*

*Use things around your home to practice these skills.* Just from watching a video, you could try your hand at making cordage from string or corn husk. You could practice making a coil pot from playdough. You could make a model debris hut or shelter. Use the information you're learning and create something! Making things, using our hands, being creative are all very grounding. Involve your whole family.

If you need entertainment, consider shows like *Alone* where you can observe and evaluate how the skills and mental attitude of the contestants helped them thrive or fail. Read books about survival, spirituality, or other topics that help you think through survival situations. Might be a good time to re-read *Seeds of Hope!*

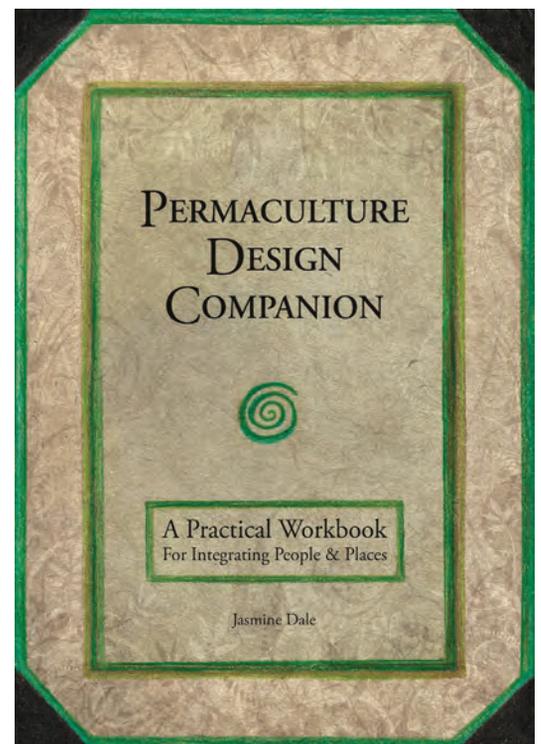
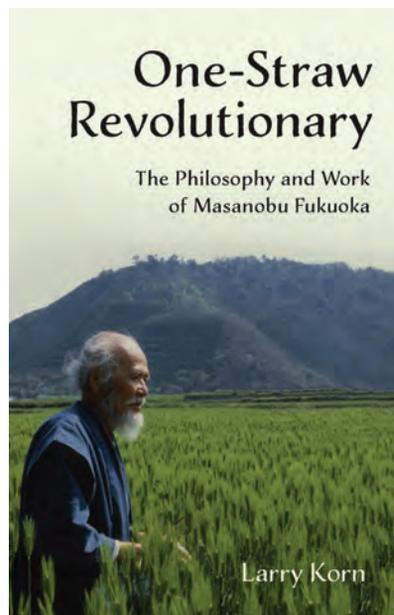
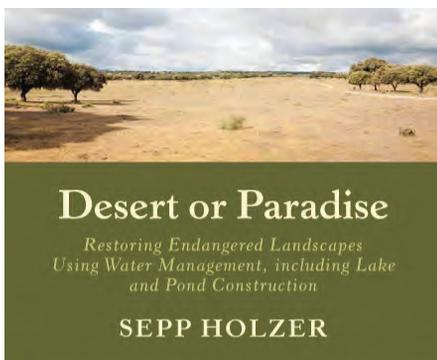
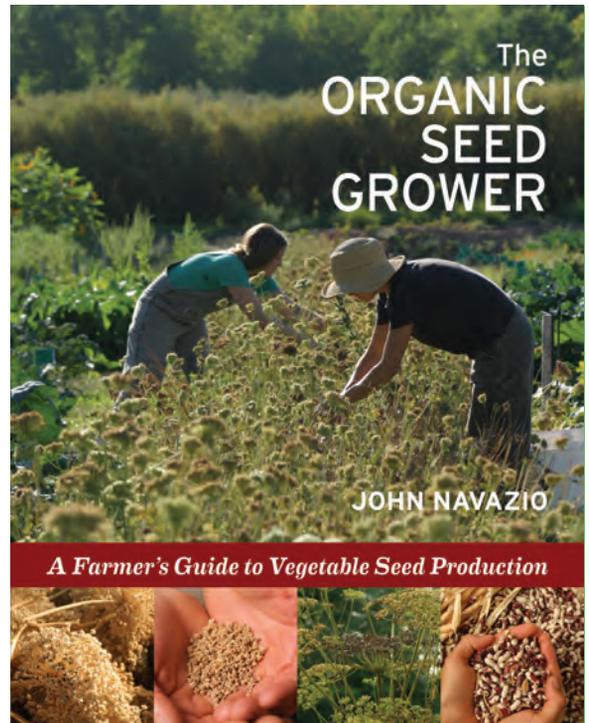
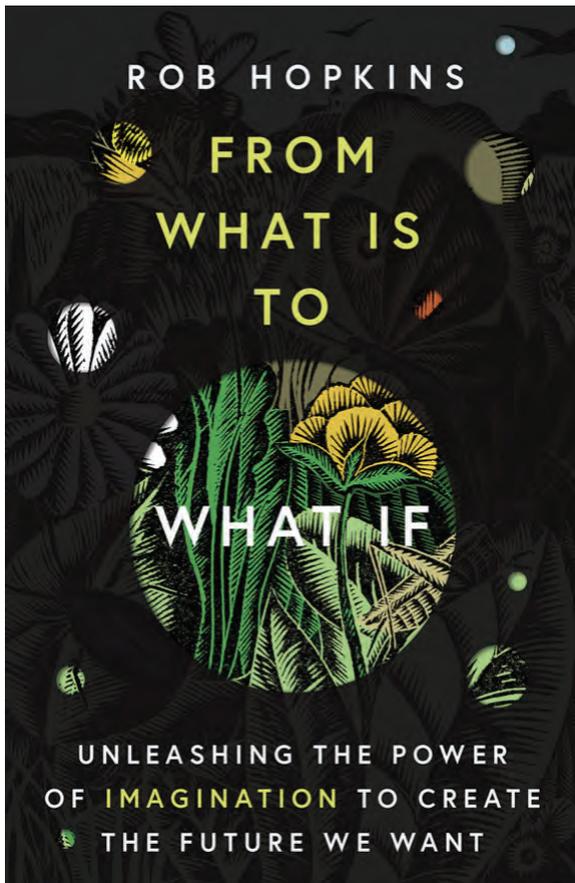
*Slow down.* What a wonderful opportunity this is for many. If we step away from the fear and worry, we are left with time that is not usually within our grasp. I keep hearing about boredom, but that is a choice. Consider this time a gift and meditate, breathe, go outside if that's possible, walk slowly, and become aware of everything around you. Take the time to access your life. Are you really happy? Are you doing what you love? Is your life just a routine that you find boring? What is it that you really want to be doing? What gifts do you have to bring to the world? Use this time to find your inspiration, to find your connection with the Earth, to find the path you want to be walking.

We can look at this pandemic only as a curse; see only the pain and suffering, look only at the inconveniences it's brought. Or we can use it to see more clearly the world we've

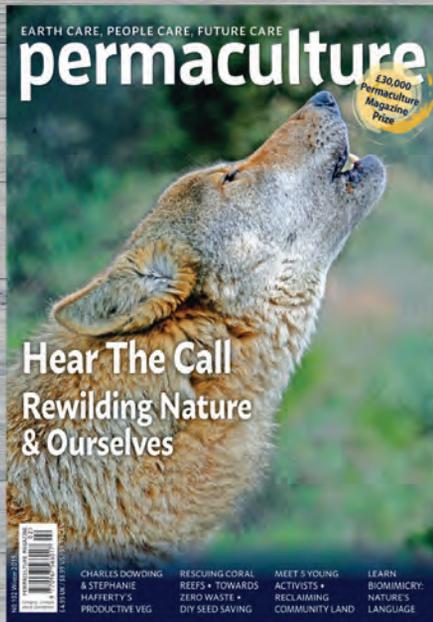
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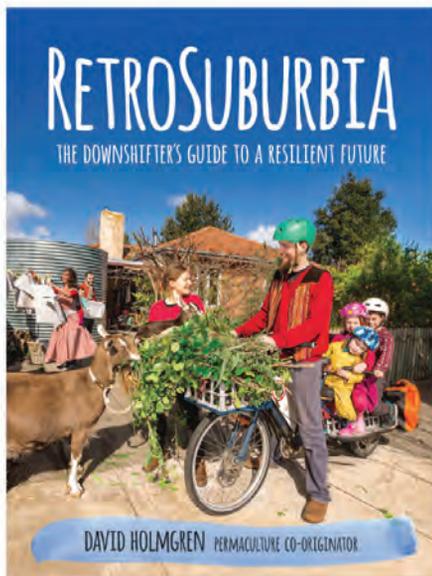
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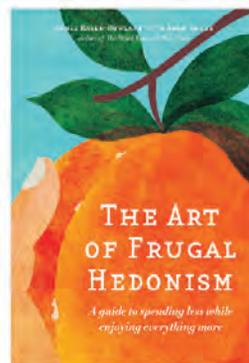
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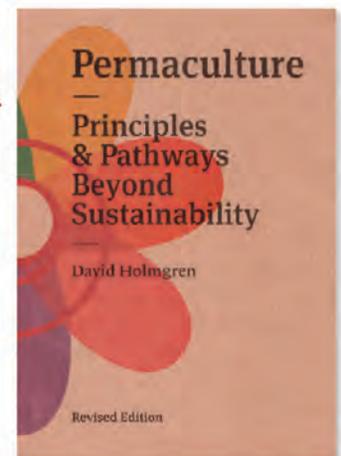


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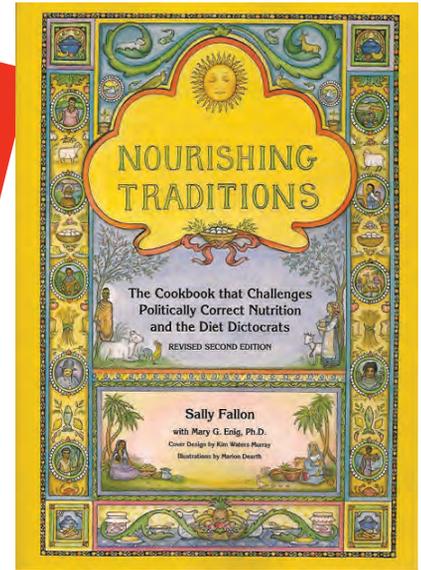
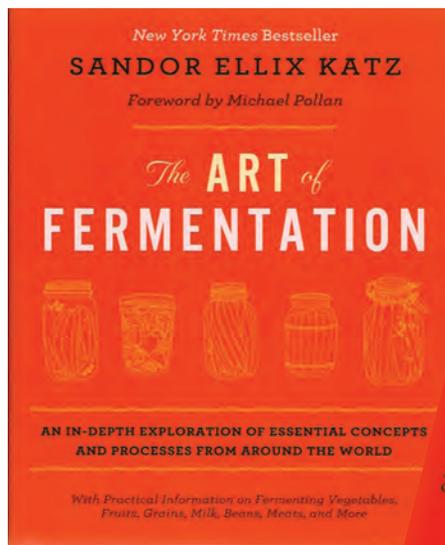
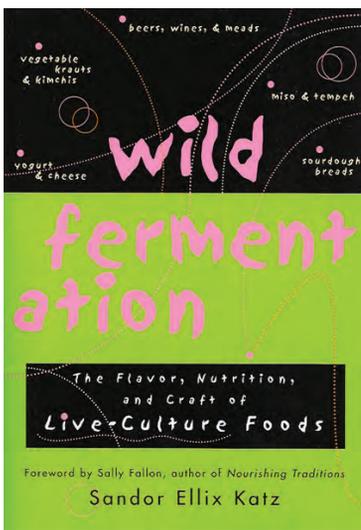
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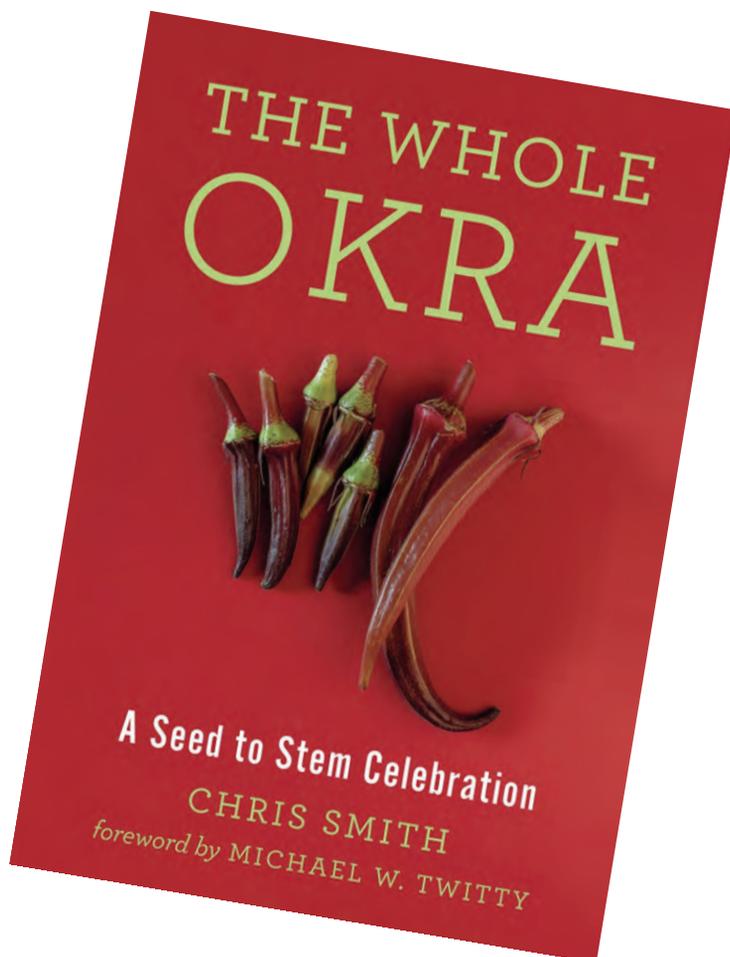


**The ART of FERMENTATION: Essential Processes from Around the World** by Sandor Ellix Katz. A masterwork on fermenting vegetables, fruits, grains, milk, beans, meats, and more. (2012) \$30. hardcover. illus. color plates. 498 pp.

**WILD FERMENTATION: The Flavor, Nutrition & Craft of Live-Culture Foods** by Katz, with 99 recipes. (2003) \$22. paper. 187 pp.

**QUICK-START BOOKLETS**  
*Wild Fermentation*  
**\$8 ppd. (US)**

**NOURISHING TRADITIONS**  
by Sally Fallon and Mary G. Enig  
2d ed. (1999) \$16. paper.  
illustrated. 668 pp.



**THE WHOLE OKRA: A Seed to Stem Celebration** by Chris Smith. (2019) \$25  
Chris Smith brings okra to the masses. In *The Whole Okra*, he covers an amazing spectrum of delicious ways to cook and eat it, along with ingenious and surprising ways to process the plant from tip to tail: pods, leaves, flowers, seeds, and stalks. Smith talked okra with chefs, food historians, university researchers, farmers, homesteaders, and gardeners. The summation of his experimentation and research comes together in this lighthearted but information-rich collection of okra history, lore, recipes, craft projects, growing advice, and more. Beyond the edible, Smith covers the history of okra as a fiber crop for making paper and the uses of okra mucilage (slime) as a preservative, a hydrating face mask, and a primary ingredient in herbalist Katrina Blair's recipe for Okra Marshmallow Delight. Directions for saving seed for replanting, pointers for a breeding project, or making okra oil, flour, tempeh, and more.



**“Community has to be the future if we are to survive. COMMUNITIES plays such a critical role in moving this bit of necessary culture change along.”**

—Chuck Durrett, The Cohousing Company, McCamant & Durrett Architects



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created, the damage we've done to the Earth and the tremendous need for us to change. Just look how nature has responded to the pandemic—cleaner water; more wildlife; sea turtles laying countless eggs undisturbed; air is clearing; CO<sub>2</sub> levels are dropping. In just a few weeks, we are already able to see evidence of the tremendous negative impact we've had starting to improve. What can we learn from this? Will we just go back to the way things were? Or will we join together to change the way we, as a society, live our lives? Hope can be the most grounding force of all.

### ***Prioritize What You Practice***

Experience is everything, and sometimes experience is limited by time. It only takes a few cold nights in a debris hut to learn to make modifications that make it much more comfortable, but some skills, like plants, have built in time restraints. Most plants have a limited time, sometimes only a couple weeks, when a certain edible or medicinal quality is viable. If we don't learn it this year, we have to wait another whole year to try again. Or gardening. I've tried two summers for a forest garden, and have learned a great deal, but have yet to have a successful garden. When you start looking at how many years it could take to learn something, you begin to realize that all human life has a limited number of years. So it's best to start new skills now if we ever want them to be useful to us. You can build a debris hut any time, but spring shoots are gone in a blink of the eye. Visit our website for some great books on edible and medicinal plants!

### ***Emergency Preparations!***

From my blog a year ago: "Just got to town after 2½ weeks being snowed in. I learned a lot about emergency preparedness, so thought I'd share some of my experience. First know,



*Dogbane, an important plant for cordage, requires knowledge and care in handling..*

this storm was not forecast at all, and in this area, if we get 6 inches of snow, we think we've got a lot! So when 2½ feet of snow fell in two days, the area was totally unprepared. Because of the lack of normal snow, the area is also not prepared with snow plows and other things that help people get back to normal and since the trees are not used to this much snow, there was an incredible amount of tree damage which also took out the power. There are people who will not have power for a couple more weeks yet.

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## **So I had a little situation— no real danger yet, but I needed to take care to conserve water and stay warm.**

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My situation is a little different since I already live off-grid, but I had challenges others didn't. My first challenge was the yurt itself. I'd already recognized a problem with the installation—the door opens out onto a small deck with no room for snow—so I was diligently opening the door throughout the day to make sure I could keep it open. I did this last at 1 AM and drank water so I'd wake up soon, but unfortunately I slept 6 hours and by the time I got up, the door was blocked—I was trapped inside the yurt. I had just brought in two gallons of water (and emptied the compost toilet) the day before, but usually I have a full five gallons of water available. I was almost out of propane for the heater—there was a full tank in the car, now inaccessible, and all but three pieces of my firewood were outside under tarps and now under two feet of snow. So I had a little situation—no real danger yet, but I needed to take care to conserve water and stay warm. By day four, I was getting low on water, so decided it was time to use my last resort plan on the door. As I said, there was very little propane left and I'd saved it to try this. I pointed the heater at the door hoping the warmth would help melt the snow. It certainly wasn't enough (especially with the added snow from the roof which had slid down), to get the door actually open, but because the door's bottom hinges were unattached (due to previous problems) I was able to get enough to melt so I could get my arm out enough to use my machete to break the icy snow and scoop enough to basically push the top out a bit over the snow. This was enough to climb out and go to the car where I had more water (and cat food).

Then it was time to just wait for the snow to melt. It froze

every night, and most days didn't get above 35°F, so, as you can guess, the snow was going nowhere quickly. Without phone or internet, I was anxious because I knew my sister would be really worried. A week in, a Tracker friend, Michael, and two of my neighbors whom I didn't even know, made the mile-long hike through deep snow to come up and check on me. I was so incredibly grateful. Michael had brought some supplies and took a message out to my sister. They helped clear the porch and get my other tank of propane up to the yurt.

Then the days just went by with very little movement from the snow. I ran the car for a while every afternoon to charge my Kindle so I could read at night (I read 14 books during the time there, and listen to the news on the radio. I kept hoping for more on the weather, but very little was provided. We finally had a couple days in the low forties so I had hopes... but so little melted every day. I had to bring up water



*Emergencies can come in all forms, and thinking through different scenarios is helpful in preparation.*

from the lower shelter where the rain barrels are, and it was a bit unnerving, because even then, the snow was up over my knees. I started to slip once and had images of breaking my leg out there alone by myself. I took great care, but accidents could happen. I'd create scenarios of what I would do just in case something happened. It snowed again on day 10—got a bit depressed, and my heater quit working. I had only used it a couple hours first thing in the morning, but a little heat is better than none.

By two weeks, I was starting to count my food. I am usually better prepared, but the recent loss of my mother had my schedule a mess as I dealt with the many things needed to handle her estate. I had planned to shop the day after the storm hit, so I was low on fresh food to start with. This was one important lesson about making sure your emergency foods are really kept separate and that you don't start using them for convenience. I had just added a bunch to my stew though so that did well for a long time, and I just kept adding



*Debbie outside the primitive shelter she built and lived in for a year and a half.*

what I could. Finally, amaranth and quinoa made it a breakfast soup. I did end up eating it all eventually, so my “unending stew” ended at 6 months—I'd hoped to keep it going a year—just keep adding.

So the last five days I spent shoveling snow (with a regular shovel which was all I had) to try and get the center mound down and where it was deeper. There were many small trees caught in the snow and ice which I had to dig up and many others that had to be cut or moved off the quarter mile driveway. I finally decided to try and drive out (low rider car with no chains—but all-wheel drive). Getting down the first part wasn't too bad, but when it started uphill, I'd get going, get stopped, back up, and try again. Slide around. Get out and dig. Try again and I was gradually making it up the driveway. Then at one point, I accidentally got off the gravel and was quickly mired in mud. I tried everything I could to get out, but finally gave up and decided I'd have to walk out and get help the next day.

The next day was constant alternating pouring rain and hail. I decided to wait and see if that helped melt the snow. The next day was bright, and when I started out, I planned to try the car one more time with little hope. I said an impassioned prayer for help. And miraculously, with some maneuvering, I actually got the car out of the mud and back on the snow-covered gravel driveway. I had hopes the gravel road would be better than the driveway since it got much more sun. It was better in most places and in some completely clear. The guys had told me a big tree had come down but one of the neighbors had said he'd try and get it down—he hadn't, but what I discovered was it was high enough that if I cut some branches, I could make a little tunnel. There were other numerous downed trees, but they were small enough for me to saw and move. Then almost down to the road, there was an apple tree across the road. I was able to cut enough back that my car could squeeze by—thank god for small cars! Getting on the road and driving and going to town was a bit surreal but a welcome relief. The shower, groceries, and communication with folks was outstanding!

## Lessons for Emergency Preparedness:

\* Keep dedicated food and supplies separate from your normal supplies so you know it's there when you need it. Not just food, but toilet paper, Kleenex, coffee, whatever is essential to you.

\* Keep these things together in a tote (or more if you have more people/supplies). This can be loaded in a car if you need to quickly leave in an emergency.

\*\*\* Check the calories! I was surprised to find many of my soups had very few calories—as low as 100 total for the two serving size. The highest count was 270 calories. If you eat soup three times a day as your meals, you will be getting less than 1000 calories. This may be fine in the summer, but staying warm takes calories as does any physical labor. Boxed rice and pasta have more calories—especially if you can add butter or oil. These, however, require water and cooking, so a balance is good. I was thankful for things like almond butter—fat and calories and wished I'd had more carbs available. Dried fruit is good, as is canned fruit. Having dried grains—I had amaranth and quinoa, and Michael brought beans. All good. Also granola bars or other protein bars which have needed energy.

\* Don't underestimate what might happen where you live. The Earth is changing. The weather is changing. Think beyond the normal threats to your region.

\* Know your water sources. I know when I lived in Washington, I was surprised when I lost my well water when the power went out. Don't forget rainwater. Rain collection isn't legal everywhere, so check, but if possible, collect rainwater. In addition to your garden, it is usable by humans. It's actually what I use all the time. I use a Brita filter for drinking and don't even filter for cooking. So it would be good for you in an emergency at least.

\* Make sure you have a good emergency kit—candles, fire making, a means to cook (I use a GasOne propane stove which could be used in a house), a means to stay warm, books, cards, games—especially if you have children. There are comprehensive lists available—make sure your home is prepared.

\* Make sure you have plenty to stay warm—blankets, sleeping bags, more blankets. I spent most of my time in bed with the covers over my lap and a wool blanket over my head and shoulders—in addition to hats, gloves, and layers of clothing.

\* If it's really cold, eat something before you go to sleep—you'll find it helps you get the bed warmed up. Notice in the morning how much colder you feel—even if it's not even actually colder. Eat something—warm if possible—and the same temperature will feel much better to you.

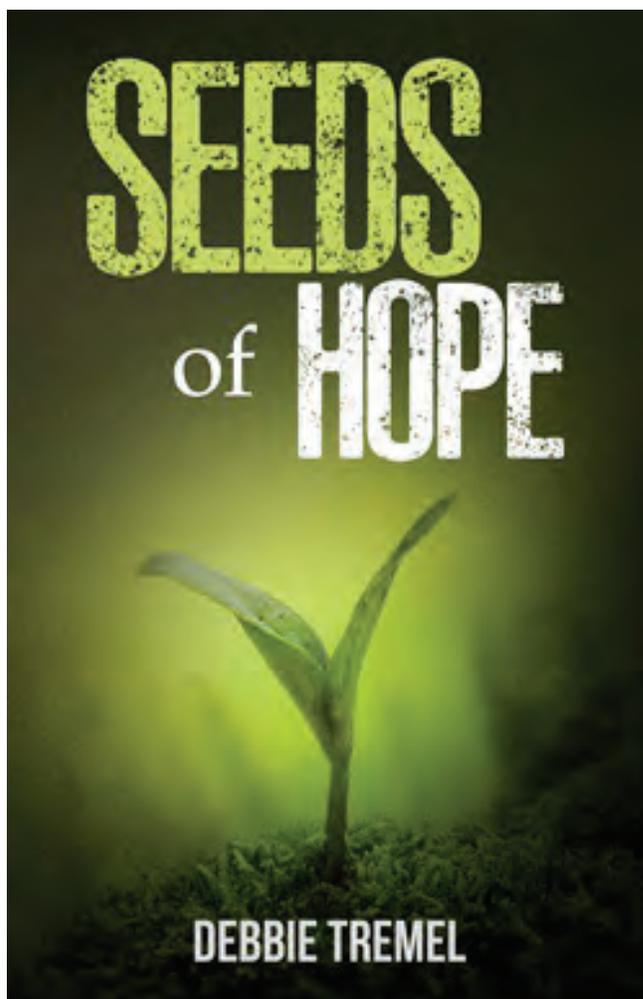
If something happens, and you've prepared, you'll be safe and have a surprising change to your routines. In many ways, these little emergencies can be fun—problem solving, something new—just try and stay positive, don't panic, and see what you can learn from the situation.     Δ

*Debbie Tremel has relished the outdoors since she was a young child. She has been teaching nature connection through various programs since she was 16 years old, including over 20 years with the YMCA, with The Children of the Earth Foundation and most recently with Ways of the Earth Living Museum. She has studied primitive skills with Tom Brown Jr. and the Tracker School for 20 years and worked at the school for 8 years.*

*Debbie's novel, Seeds of Hope, published in 2018, is a story of a group of families who flee a quickly decaying society to live in the wilderness. Their goal is to live close to nature with primitive living skills and help create a new world. The story is part adventure, part sharing the beauty of these ancient skills, and part a study of what it might take to create a world of peace for all future generations.*

*Debbie has a new children's book coming out at the end of 2019, A Home for Harley, which is a story of one young girl's journey to understanding and becoming part of the natural world.*

*You may contact Debbie with questions or comments by writing to [info@seedsofhope.live](mailto:info@seedsofhope.live).*



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## Loss of Reverence

# A Native-Born Outsider's Insights & Observations

Adam Turtle, FLS

**M**Y FATHER WAS A BOMBER PILOT IN WWII, as were most of his friends. I remember after the war how closely and even nervously they followed the Nuremberg trials hoping that carpet/fire-bombing cities would not be a prosecuted war crime. Now it is dismissed as just collateral damage. I guess the state of the world's ecosystems is just collateral damage from how we have chosen (individually and collectively) to live. They need not have worried as it turned out to be political theater, mostly for show, but I didn't know that then... and I took it to heart as a moral and ethical lesson. I espoused the concept that silence in the presence of wrong is immoral. From around the same time in my life, I can still hear Mama telling us that if we found ourselves with other kids who were doing things we knew to be wrong, "you come home."

Those memories plus spending summers on my uncle's small farm in north Florida helped shape a sense of who I was although they were of little help in negotiating the (to me) seemingly insane society surrounding me. So I lurched from crisis to crisis—also known as, opportunity to oppor-



*The nuclear age opened Pandora's box and impacted the childhood of a generation, and some of us found permaculture as an answer.*

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**We all depend on healthy, functioning ecosystems. We used to respect them.**

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tunity—trying to find a viable path through the maze. I was both blessed and limited. I see in *gestalt*, in patterns and relations, but am socially inept. Today, I'd have been placed on the autism spectrum or Asperger's.

Among my gifts was being very sensitive to patterns and hyper-conscious of time and space relations. This natural ability allowed me to sweep the board in archery awards at summer camp. In recognition, I was ceremonially "adopted" by White Bear, our advisor, as an honorary member of the Sauk-Fox tribe. Just for show maybe, but it resonated in my heart... and later provided a desperately needed alternative cosmology.

About the same time, they began building what is now called the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System. Then it was known as Limited Access Military Corridors—"to cordon the country into a 200 x 200 mile grid in case of invasion

or insurrection!" (It was the McCarthy era.) And this allowed our rail system (from which most of the big profits had already been taken) to wither. Our affair with recreational fuel burning had begun—the highway was fast and convenient! We were "free" of time and distance constraints... but our "freedom" soon degenerated into a frivolous "license" (to commit the present). Also, more nukes were being tested. And they still are! Remember the 'duck and cover' drills?

I never really had any personal ambition other than trying to watch and learn and get good at whatever I set out to do. So in my early 20s after the army and a couple attempts at college, I jumped a freight train and dropped out to go "on the bum" working at whatever came along... cowboy, fisherman, trucker, cook, fruit picker, etc. Each offered unique viewpoints and frames of reference.

We all depend on healthy, functioning ecosystems. We used to respect them. We knew we are not separate from our environment: we are imbedded, co-participants in an ongoing dynamic relationship. Today, it seems hyper-"me"-ism prevails to the extent that we no longer regard as important the health of the systems that provide us with air and water and healthy food-producing soil. We've lost our spiritual relationship to our mother. What we are doing to future generations is shameful.

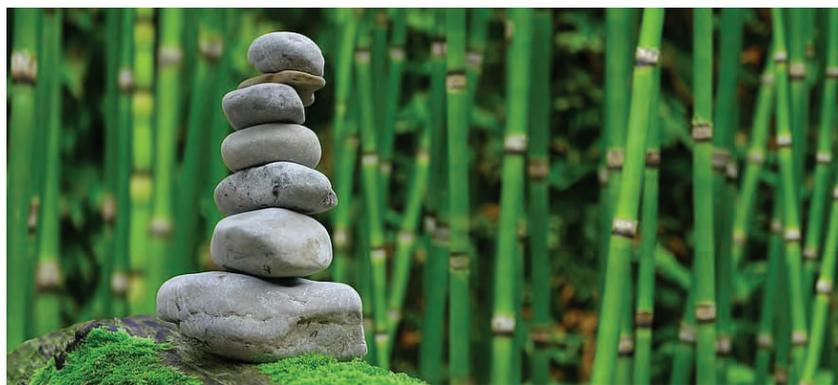
By my late 20s, my time/space gift had brought me to a successful career as a sculptor of wood in Coconut Grove near Miami. In the fall of '69, friends came by the studio to invite me to join a protest at the new nuclear plant on the

Savannah River. I had begun reading at age three and was particularly drawn to popular history and later multicultural deep history. Raised in a military household, I was a bit too conversant with nukes. At the time, I had been head-down and focused on my sculpting career for several years, and so I was out of the news loop. My friends left me some anti-nuke literature. Wow!

I don't know if my jaw actually dropped, but I was taken aback to say the least. How could "they" choose so foolish a path? Then, a motorcycle accident gave me several months of enforced contemplation. During this time, both Mama's teaching and the ethical implications of the Nuremberg trials convergently resurfaced and led me to the course I've been on for the last 50 years. I walked away. I "went home." I had nary a clue of just how I would live or even if it could be done. But, I was committed to seeking to discover just what might actually constitute good stewardship... and how such a life would be implemented.

I did not "protest." Instead, I unplugged, largely demonetized, and more or less seceded—no car, no job, and sometimes no address. I spent the next 18 years hermiting, relearning gardening and needed self-reliance skills. This was punctuated and contextualized by reading science fiction by a kerosene lamp most evenings. In the middle of this, I had the good fortune to spend two intensive weeks in rural Kentucky with Bill Mollison and Andrew Jeeves at the second Permaculture Design Course offered in the US. I traded a small carving for tuition and camped in an old Chevy station wagon my mother had given me.

Along with the Sci-Fi (not rockets and robots but more the "what if" variety, what in the mid-60s was termed "ultimate logical conclusionism" in Greenwich Village coffee houses), I had also studied ecology, integrated pest management (IPM), organic farming/gardening, ethnobotany, and deep social and agricultural history (it was 1798 by the way when both Malthus [on population] and Humboldt [on environment/climate relationship] published their observations). So, I had a lot of unorganized information and insight. Permaculture provided the organizing principle illustrating and emphasizing connections... while tying up loose ends. It blew me away. Still does. Thank you, Bill and Andrew!



*Bamboo has a lot to offer the world and being involved in educating people about bamboo's variety and utility has been a joy.*

In '88, I was aware that I had achieved a degree of personal comfort. I also acknowledged that my life, while interesting and pleasant wasn't of much immediate benefit to others. So, I bought an old pickup truck and reentered the world. That first foray was to the Permaculture Convergence at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. I met Sue there. We decided to pool our resources and collaborate to spread permaculture. A year later, we married, and the serious fun began. Sue is an organizer while I'm a dreamer—both of us possess a strong work ethic. We bought a rough piece of abused forest as a living lab to test our theories on Earth healing and systems recovery. Earth Advocates Research Farm was conceived to discover, implement, practice, and teach "good stewardship."

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## Our society may soon realize we need its many direct uses and ecoservices.

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In my ethnobotanical studies, it had become evident that the bamboos, besides being the fastest growing, were probably the most versatile and useful plants on Earth. So we undertook bamboo species performance trials as not much was then known in the West. In 1990, Sue and I formed the Southeast Chapter of the American Bamboo Society and in '93 began publishing *Temperate Bamboo Quarterly* on a much mended shoestring and with no practical experience. We tried to provide insights, fill gaps, and debunk errors in available information. While it was very satisfying, after six years we had to admit *TBQ* was not economically viable. For funding we operated as 'Our' Bamboo Nursery (denoting the bank was never involved) and worked mostly with zoos and landscapers to identify and provide appropriate species for various applications and climatic regions. For a while, we even had a USDA Bamboo Import Permit and an official quarantine facility. Worldwide, there are more than 1,500 species of bamboos representing over 80 genera. Of these, between a quarter and a third are tolerant of temperatures down to 0°F—some much lower.

Our society may soon realize we need its many direct uses and ecoservices. Unfortunately, while bamboo is the most productive and versatile of all plants, it also requires 10 years' lead time to fully establish and realize its potential benefits. This is too long for greedy investors.

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Also, there is still too much misinformation in what is believed or “known.”

Amidst all this activity, we also built Earth Advocates Research Farm (E.A.R.F.) from scratch. We are over a mile from the blacktop, without debt and off-grid (using solar photovoltaics). We use only harvested rainwater in order to demonstrate it is possible to live comfortably on our real “income.” We raise most of our food (which protects us from issues of food safety, variable nutrient content, residues, and availability or fluctuating prices). One day a week (on Saturdays), we vend plants for integrated edible landscaping a la’ permaculture at the Franklin Farmers Market to help others reconnect with the Earth and grow at least some of their own food. Actually, we are environmental missionaries masquerading as plant peddlers.

We also can’t help but wonder, “How did we get in this environmental/climatic dilemma?” The government alone didn’t do it, but they could and should help with the repairs. The corporations alone didn’t do it. Ditto. Even “Bad people” did not do it. Ditto again. We did. We are complicit by our unrealistic values and selfish choices, and like Esau we traded our birthright (of a clean, healthy, diverse “creation”) for a mess of cheap, flashy, poorly designed, and unrepairable stuff. You and I and Uncle Bob did it as a consequence of our cumulative individual and collective behavior...when we lost our sense of respect and reverence... by drifting along... by “going along to get along”... by mental and ethical sloth, we ratcheted along to the here and now. We seem to be besotted with our sense of entitlement to more stuff. However, we are also the only ones who can do something

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***It would not help now  
to fix the blame,  
but we can at least  
address the problems.***

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about it!

All of our other issues and concerns will shrink in relative importance if we do not immediately and effectively begin addressing our environmental crises (particularly the climatic aspect).

It would not help now to fix the blame, but we can at least address the problems... by each of us accepting responsibility for the consequences of our own individual behavior, which collectively brought us to this precious moment. If enough of us make the effort, we might even achieve a “hundredth monkey” type change.

Recently, two of my siblings came to visit. At supper, we were discussing how desperate things have gotten... and



***Our individual choices make a difference. Our participation in larger systems feeds those systems, and they are changing rapidly now. Small actions, like mending, allow us to take responsibility now.***

what we as individuals could do about it. Less petro plastic, check. Less flying or driving, check. Less stuff, check. And so it went. But how do we decide??? There is no readily accessible quota system.

Rather than a math problem, i.e., how much is okay? I suggested that the “rules” approach couldn’t work because rules can be “gamed.” Morality has never been successfully legislated. But attitudes can be learned and shared. So I blurted out, “let’s go native!” I didn’t mean with teepees and beads, but in revisioning our cosmology with a loving and reverent attitude toward our mother Earth. Let’s relearn being indigenous—being “of the place”... and its systems. Funny, both native moral philosophy and Judeo-Christian-Muslim scripture reference “seven generations.” Convergent wisdom or a coincidence?

Yes, human history has cycles, but we can no longer ignore that there are also cumulative consequences.

Right this red hot New York minute, I am asking each person reading this to examine his or her long-term commitments and daily choices. Does “this” (the behavior in question) help our society, our environment, our planet? Or does it contribute to our problems? Don’t buy into the “it’s just a little thing.” That is magical thinking: there are no little things. Multiply any considered act by 7 billion. If it is not okay when everyone does it, how is it okay for me or you... or us?

So what is your “footprint?” No, I don’t want to know—I want you to know or at least think about it. How many other peoples, or species, or system losses can we try to rationalize as okay? In the face of our individual and collective pollution, resource depletion, and ecosystem disruption, how is health or peace or a quiet conscience even possible? No wonder many young folks are “acting out.” Greta is right, from their perspective, these are perilous and threatening times and “change is coming whether or not we like it.” It is time that we “adults” acknowledge our responsibility for the perils and go a bit out of our way to help address the challenges.

How do we reconcile the US population of around 4½% of the world with our consumption of over 25% of production? We (most US citizens) say we are against war (although short term it is “good for business”), but do we really believe that without the world’s biggest military, the planet’s other citizens would choose to not only allot us so large a share, but also allow us more pollution per capita than anybody else?

The 70s “back to the land movement” more or less failed due to lack of social support since “things hadn’t yet gotten bad enough.” Most were pre-empted or “bought out” by more money, more excitement, more stuff... and lack of

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***We’ve had enough of all the “me” stuff and pushing the limits. Now the limits are pushing back.***

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appreciation for critical thinking. Our global society is now more frantic, desperate, and splintered than ever.

I don’t know to what extent we can ever truly “fix” things by changing our behaviors now—although we can certainly slow down the rate of deterioration, so some consequences won’t be as severe. I believe (or at least hope) it is time for the social pendulum to swing back toward sanity and a renewed sense of community. We’ve had enough of all the “me” stuff and pushing the limits. Now the limits are pushing back.

Let’s encourage young folks to scan the horizon for opportunities to be of service rather than for personal material advantage. In light of the times and the increasing fragility of our supporting ecosystems, it would behoove each of us to weigh each and every decision or impulse in terms of impact... or at the very least become well informed and reverent. Then we couldn’t get in as much trouble.

If this resonates, I suggest that each of you reading this find ways to strengthen an existing neighborhood or community and contribute what skills or abilities you have. Alternately, form small, diverse, viable (multi-skilled) rural communities. Become a regional co-producer. You’ll find it is a healthier, less conflicted, more spiritually rewarding, and satisfying way of living with less info glut. Acting locally while thinking globally will reduce negative impacts on the Earth and her systems. As Napoleon famously noted, over-long supply lines are untenable long-term. If you can track down a copy, I suggest viewing Noel Coward’s film: “No Blade of Grass” from the 60s for a preview of the potential social upheaval likely in response to the environmental catastrophes that lie ahead.

If you can first find your own personal center so you

know who you really are... then your light will shine in true SOLIDARITY! △

*Adam Turtle, FLS*  
 Co-Director, Earth Advocates Research Farm  
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## 14th International Permaculture Convergence

# The Long Road There

Catherine Dolleris

**I**PC 14 IN ARGENTINA, planned from 28th November till December 4th in 2020 will be postponed to November 2021.

*Dear friends of the Permaculture World, Children and Youth Groups, Indigenous- and Rural—and all Communities Everywhere!*

The IPC-14 Argentina will be postponed to November-December 2021 due to the consequences of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic.

This new date for 2021 is a first step, a guide for the coming months during which we will continue to observe the development of the pandemic to be able to make the best decisions.

Our wish is that the 14th IPC sees representatives attending from many different places in the world and for that to happen we need to regain our health, the possibility to travel and our economy, among other factors. And—looking further into the future—we will use the time to explore additional online participation opportunities in many different ways.

We acknowledge the importance of permaculture and the need to share this way of life with all world inhabitants. What better opportunity to do that than at an international gathering such as this one?

Very soon there will be a cycle of online activities organized by a team of permaculture members and collaborators of IPC-14, in order to weave and strengthen the network, maximizing this time of change that we are in.

Firstly, the facilitators of the IPC-14 courses will offer some talks, presenting permaculture as a solution to what is happening in the world now. At the same time there will be videos shown of different inspiring projects in the world that are facing the crisis in an incredible way.

All updates regarding these events will continue to be shared on the official webpage [14ipc-argentina2020.org](http://14ipc-argentina2020.org) and on social media.

Sending you light, blessings, and warm regards from the place each one of us is located now.

*14th IPC Argentina Organizing Committee  
International Permaculture Convergence Council  
Friends of IPC*



*Tierra Martínez and Beatriz Ramírez,  
Mexico, 2001.*

## The road to the 14th International Permaculture Convergence

Tierra Martínez and Beatriz Ramírez are the Founders of the Ná Lu'um Permaculture Institute. This Project was born 18 years ago in the heart of the Riviera Maya in Mexico, in a Mayan Community in Noh Bec-Quintana Roo.

Tierra Martínez, from his love for the earth and his example, always teaches integration of the permaculture lifestyle. As a family, we began to practice this methodology in our every step. Soon after, our daughters Itiba and Sophia were born, they gave us the impulse to continue, with the purpose of leaving them a better world and teaching them to take care of it and take care of themselves.

We left Mexico with the idea of expanding this movement, and sharing this methodology with all the people who were, like us, searching to reconnect with nature.

## Tierra = Earth

We felt that something was missing to connect this methodology with the regions of Latin America. We therefore took on the task of learning more about our indigenous peoples and combining that ancestral wisdom with permaculture, in order to learn how to care for the territories we inhabit. We found that we could link permaculture with that wisdom and thus began to introduce ancestral methodologies in our courses, sharing ways of connecting with that subtle energy.



## Beatriz

We began to be thankful for all that Life gives us. We also began to remember that we are part of the Earth, and through songs, meditations, and pre-Hispanic musical instruments, we understood the importance of recognizing the four elements (Water, Fire, Earth, and Wind), the four seasons, and the four cardinal points that, together with Heaven and Earth, gave us other points of view on what surrounds us and is part of us.

And so began a quest for the integration of further knowledge, strongly connected to alternative education and other learning methods, in a constant search of movements that were more united and support working together.

After an intense process, Tierra has a dream and begins to go to national, regional, and international meetings, where his idea was



Beatriz.



The family, 2016



Permaculture Design Certificate course, Colombia, 2018



Ná Lu'um Permapprentices, Argentina, 2016

to propose Argentina as host to the International Permaculture Convergence (IPC). He participated in the IPC Cuba in 2013, where India was selected to host the IPC in 2017. It was in Cuba that Tierra understood that, to be able to apply for Argentina, it was very important to organize an international event. Thus was born the idea of organizing the 4th CLAP (Latin American Permaculture Convergence) in 2015, during which there was clear support from the Latin American network for the IPC to take place in Argentina. After that meeting, Tierra travelled to the IPC UK in 2015 where he proposed Argentina as host, and that time the nearly 1,000 people who were in London at the Convergence Assembly agreed.

In 2017, Tierra and Beatriz presented at the 13th IPC India the proposal of what the 14th IPC Argentina would be in 2020.

This step encouraged us as a group to develop many extra activities within the Ná Lu'um project and gradually begin to shape an event of these dimensions.

Throughout the World Tours, we have developed in recent years, searching for more learning and understanding, and wanting to share this, we realized that we need to primarily know how to transmit this knowledge to children and young people so that it will last, and they will continue with this movement. In that way, they will come to respect and interact with the world, because much of this can only be transmitted through creating an education that regenerates human beings, society, and landscapes.

It is here that we feel it is important to understand that from an educational perspective we have been trained to live in fear and not act in search of something better, but settle for what is not even basic for our personal and collective process.

This is how we chose the theme of the 14th IPC "Children, Youth and Regenerative Education," inviting people who can inspire us on these topics.

Along the way, and while promoting and listening to our permaculture colleagues, we realized that the movement in the world is fragmented and that humanity and the world are going through a very difficult time. Neoliberalism is numbing us; the loss of biological and cultural diversity is leading us to create a monoculture that is disconnected from the needs of the earth. We do not realize that we depend on the resources that the earth provides and are devastating them; it is no longer the problem of a few but of each and every human being that exists on Earth. Global warming is accelerated by the indiscriminate felling of our forests. Extreme poverty, violence, and globalization keep us very busy, trying to survive and reach the end of the month. It is ever more difficult to live with dignity.

The resulting stress is generating disease, food is contaminated with agrochemicals that are harmful to both nature and all of us. Because we are so busy with feeling good, we do not realize that we are pulling down with us all Life on Earth. It is no longer enough to apply the learned techniques, now we need to reconnect with the pain of the world and how to regenerate life on Earth.

As general coordination team of this IPC, we feel that



*Children of Ná Lu'um family and of participants of PDC course in Colombia, 2015*



*Tierra Martínez facilitating a Bioconstruction session in a PDC course in Guaporé, Brazil, 2015*

there is still time. We feel that it is possible to stop fighting with governments, to learn from our differences, and to listen to our wise elders who are still in the Territories; and that it is possible to unite from the heart for the purpose of the regeneration of the social fabric within permaculture throughout the world, as well as with many other movements that seek the regeneration of life.

Everyone does what they can based on their experience, but by wanting to change and knowing that in the differences lies our strength, we can unite to develop a global design that allows us to go beyond sustainability.

The initiative is to regenerate movements, starting from the local and spreading to the global. We do not want to go out to protest without a proposal of change, let's go out with



*Permaculture Diploma, Eco-Centro Madre Selva, Misiones, Argentina, 2018*

concrete solutions and actions.

The Organization Team of the IPC Argentina invites you to be part of the change, joining with your colleagues in your country to generate local, united, and alive movements. This way we protect ourselves, help each other, and design the steps for a more lively and united movement.

We invite you to generate processes to identify representatives of your country or region to attend the International gathering in 2020, so that together we can design the deepest foundations of the World Permaculture Movement, based on genuine and coherent alliances.

The event will be held at the Eco-Centro Madre Selva, an Experimental and Educational Center, as well as the home of the Ná Lu'um family, the host of the IPC in the months of November and December 2020.

The Madre Selva Project born two years ago (2018) is a 22-hectare plot in the jungle of Misiones Province, in the heart of Colonia El Paraíso, near El Soberbio. Colonia El Paraíso is a settlement that needs help with the recovery of family and organic agriculture, where the indigenous Guaraní tribes are being displaced from their territories by the government and the large transnationals who devastate the land.

This family project seeks to be the example of sustainable practices where children will have artistic and cultural classes, women can learn crafts to generate cooperatives working with local products; it is where an Eco Neighbourhood generates jobs for the people of the settlement and where the Ná Lu'um Eco-School receives young people who want to learn permacultural practices.

The main focus of this project is the impact, at the local and personal level, of the existing population, and on the strengthening of the family nucleus, thereby generating food sovereignty, decent housing, and stable and fulfilling jobs.

Today, 20 people work in the Madre Selva center, both local residents and foreigners wanting to learn and teach.

In the area, there are several Guaraní Mbya villages, the

ethnic group from the Misiones (also called Paranaense) Jungle, which covers areas of southern Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. This culture is still alive but struggling for the conservation of its territories. These tribes are slowly disappearing and with them all the knowledge of a livelihood in the jungle, where they have been guardians for generations.

We need the Guaraní communities to persevere and continue with the transmission of their culture and the care of the Misiones Jungle. The intention of the IPC is to invite them to talk to us about their knowledge, and to come together to help them and help us.

The IPC Argentina Council is pleased to invite you to our house, your house, so that together we can work on the re-generation of the social fabric of the worldwide permaculture movement.

The Madre Selva project, the headquarters of the Ná Lu'um Institute, invites you to join the change we want to see in the world.

See you on the way.

△

*The IPC Argentina Organization Team:*

*Tierra Martínez*

*Beatriz Ramírez*

*Luciano Kordon*

*Cándida Shimm*

*See next page for more information on the convergence.*



*Ná Lu'um is host to the 14th IPCC.*

## More information on the convergence:

Website – <https://14ipc-argentina2020.org/en>

Email – [contacto@ipc14argentina.org](mailto:contacto@ipc14argentina.org)

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/IPC14Argentina>

Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/ipc14argentina>

Youtube – <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRYJTzB-cXK1x0rOje1uBw>

This article was first published on the site of the European Permaculture Network. [https://permaculture-network.eu/uncategorized/the-road-to-the-14th-international-permaculture-convergence/?utm\\_source=mailpoet&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=eupn-newsletter-winter-2020\\_47](https://permaculture-network.eu/uncategorized/the-road-to-the-14th-international-permaculture-convergence/?utm_source=mailpoet&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=eupn-newsletter-winter-2020_47)

# Back Issues of *Permaculture Design*

*Note: Some early issues are out of print and are available as photocopies only.*

- I,1 July '85 **Permaculture in Oz**  
II,1 Feb. '86 **Garden Design**  
II,3 Aug. '86 **2nd Int'l Pc Conference**  
II,4 Nov. '86 **Fukuoka, Keyline**, Genetic Conserv., City Farms, Oceanic Pc  
III,1 Feb. '87 **Networking**, Natural Farm'g, D-Q Univ., Children's Pc  
III,2 May '87 **Wild Land Restoration** III,3 Aug. '87 **Planting Cycle**  
III,4 Nov. '87 **Trees for Life** IV,1 Feb. '88 **Mktg. Pc Products**  
IV,2 May. '88 **Urban-Rural Links**, Economics & Community Development  
IV,3 Aug. '88 **Soc. Forestry**, Gabions, Jap. Org. Ag., Prod/Consum Co-ops  
IV,4 Nov. '88 **Multi-Story Tree Crops**, Green. Domin Repb., Runoff Gdns  
V,1 Feb. '89 **Permaculture: A Designers Manual**, Tree Bank, Water in Pc  
V,2 May. '89 **Plant Guilds**, Roof Gardens, Small Livestock  
V,3 Aug. '89 **Rainforest Conservation** in Ecuador, Gaia, Weed Gardens  
V,4 Nov. '89 **Earthworks & Water Conservation**  
VI,1 Feb. '90 **Household Greywater Systems**, Soil Imprinting  
VI,2 May. '90 **Insectary Plants**, more Greywater, Land Use for people "  
VI,3 Aug. '90 **Water**: Forests & Atmosphere, Catchment, Pond Design  
VI,4 Nov. '90 **Urban Pc**: EcoCity Conf., Soil Detox, Suburbs & Pc  
#23 May '91 **Politics of Diversity**, Greenhouse Market Gdn, Pc in Nepal  
#24 Oct. '91 **Creativity in Design**: Case Studies, Index to Issues #1-23 \$5  
#25 Dec. '91 **Design for Community**: CSA Restoring Forests, Gdn Ecology  
#26 May '92 **Soil**: Our Past, Our Future, Fertility, Worms, Cover Crops  
#27 Aug '92 **Integrating Pc**: Deconstructing Utopia, Grassroots Organizing, Garden Polyculture, Pattern Learning, Living Fences  
#28 Feb. '93 **Structures**: Comm'ty Dsgn, LETS, Industry, Strawbale/Timber-framing  
#29/30 Jul. '93 **Networks**: Media Reww, Rural Reconstructn, Leaf Concentrate, Comm'ty Food, Palestine Pc, Do-Nothing Educ, Feng Shui, Pc Academy  
#31 May '94 **Forest Gardening**: Energy & Pc, Mushrm Cultivation, Robt.Hart's Forest Gdn., Spp for No. Cal., Alders, Agroforestry: Belize & China, Honeylocust, Nitrogen-fixers  
#32 Apr. '95 **Animals & Aquaculture**: Animal Polyculture, Sm-scale Cattle, Goat Dairy, Keyline, Feral chickens, Bee Plants, Constructed Wetlands  
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Round Beehive, Water Catchment  
#54 Nov. '04 **Fire & Catastrophe**: Design Beyond Disaster, New Opportunities Globalizatn, Invasion Biology, Street Orchards, Food Security  
#55 Feb. '05 **Learning from Our Mistakes**: Petrol Dependcy, Village Design, Australian Lessons, RTFM!, Trial&Error, Forestry Experiments, Owner-Bldr, 10 Mistaken Ideas in Pc  
#56 May '05 **Tree Crops & Guilds**: Pine Nuts, Tree Vege, Acorns, American Chestnut, Honeylocust Silvopasture, Broadscale Agroforestry, Bamboo, Willow, Social Forestry  
#87 Feb. '13 **Weeds to the Rescue**: Managing Weedy Spp, Favorite Weeds, Weed Wisdom, Paulownia, Grafting onto Weed Trees, Polycultures, Burdock, Reputation of Weeds, General Index to PcA #41-58.  
#88 May '13 **Earth Skills & Nature Connection**: Mentoring, Cultural Repair, Connecting Youth to Nature & Self, Living with Wild Animals, Observation Skills & Design, Oyster-tecture, Personal Forest.  
#89 Aug. '13 **Practicing Democracy**: Slow Democracy, Seed Libraries, Rhode Island Prosperity, Lessons from the Iroquois, Community Gardens, Entrepreneurship, Social Pc, Pastoralism, Sweet Cicely  
#90 Nov. '13 **Appropriate Technology**: Technology & Culture, Zone 4 Tools, Rocket Mass Htrs, Solar Pump, Solar Food Dryers, Social Sharing Software, Oil Presses, Woody Ag Trials, Scythes, PV Dbl. Cropping  
#91 Feb. '14 **Seeds**: Arizona Seed-Sheds, Seed Saving Primer, Leucaena, Volunteer Plants in the Garden, Seeds of Cheese, Seed Banks, GMOs in Uganda, General Index to Issues #59-74.  
#93 Aug. '14 **Experimentation-Science in Pc**: Method & Theory; Dynamic Accumulators.; Experimentation; N-fixing Vege.; Biochar & Soil; People's Science; Malawi; Pc & Academia; Soil & Biodiversity Tests  
#94 Nov. '14 **Seasonal Cycles of Work**: Festivals & Forestry; High Desert Homestead; Market Seasons; Wisconsin Gdn. Cycles, Seeds; Energy by Seasons; Homestead Resilience; Forest Gdn. Research  
#95 Feb. '15 **Perennial Crops**: Perennial Cultures; Hybrid Swarms, Hickory-Pecans; Perennial Sugar; Haiti; Perennial Veg.; Perennial Cereals; Guild Patterning; Hardy Kiwi; Foraging; General Index  
#96 May '15 **Building the Solar Economy**: The Gross Society; Bioshelters & Greenhouses; Passivhaus =Design; Citrus; Community Advocacy; Solar Business; Perennial Grains, Pt. II; Peer-Driven Pc Organz.

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# What's Old is New Again

## John Wages

What can I say about COVID19? Plagues have made the rounds since the dawn of recorded history—the Plague of Athens in 430 BC comes to mind, and the parallels to the Black Death have been noted. Still, this is A plague, not THE Plague, so there's some hope—as long as it doesn't come for you, and then you find out you had a preexisting condition that puts you in the hospital in this country without a national health plan. Reading the stoics, especially Epictetus, provides some comfort in the midst of this pandemic: <https://thetyee.ca/Analysis/2020/04/09/Get-To-Know-Ancient-Stoics/>. At least it's easier to get your hands on a copy of *The Enchiridion* than a box of N95 masks. So, in between writing and working outside, I read Epictetus and wonder how big the stoic literature once was and how much is left. Most of it was probably destroyed in the book burnings of the late Roman Empire... stoicism didn't have enough magical thinking to make it useful to the powers that be. Like permaculture, much of it seems like common sense, and yet once you read words like, "Be content with what you have," you feel your arteries start to relax, and your blood pressure goes down. Stay at home. Focus on the meaningful tasks that are within your power. We've been keeping our trips into town to the minimum—amazing how a 5-mile trip to the Post Office can turn into a whole morning running errands—but we have to go about once a week to check the PO box and mail packages that are too big for the giant mailbox I installed. It was a good buy... without it, we'd have to go into town several times a week.

Marshall Sahlins, best known for *Stone Age Economics*, recently wrote something that cuts to the heart of the problem. While pandemics will always be with us, one might expect that humanity in its supposedly advanced civilized state would be able to deal with it better than it is. The economy has collapsed far more rapidly than I would have expected, suggesting to me some underlying problems (i.e., not a virus) like the change in our economy from one that made real useful stuff ("durable goods," for example) to one that services debt, and the problems in the energy sector and, more broadly, resource depletion. Sahlins says that economics (I would add Big Business as applied capitalist economics) is out of touch with natural and unavoidable limits. Natural sciences like physics, chemistry, and biology, deal with absolutes—laws that if transgressed have real-world consequences. Overshoot leads to die-off, for example. So here is the short piece by Sahlins for your enjoyment: [www.counterpunch.org/2020/02/04/why-economics-is-an-impossible-science-in-one-paragraph/](http://www.counterpunch.org/2020/02/04/why-economics-is-an-impossible-science-in-one-paragraph/)

*In a word, Economics is an Impossible Science because by its own definition the determining conditions of the economy are not economic: they are "exogenous." Supposedly a science of things, it is by definition without substance, being rather a mode of behavior: the application of scarce means to alternative ends so as to achieve the greatest possible satisfaction—neither means, ends, nor satisfaction substantially specified. "Exogenous," however, is the culture, all those meanings,*

*values, institutions, and structures, from gender roles, race relations, food preferences, and ethnicities, to technical inventions, legal regulations, political parties, etc., etc. The effect is a never ending series of new theoretical breakthroughs, each an Economics du jour worthy of a Nobel prize, consisting of the discovery that some relevant little bit of the culture has something to do with it. Only to be soon superseded and forgotten since the continuous development and transformation of the culture, hence of the economy, leaves the Science in its wake. An impossible Science, by its own premises.*

Other than "read the Stoics," what does your Publisher have to say in these trying times?

1. Self-reliance is important. "Just in time" for the delivery of essentials has failed. We can rail at capitalism 'til the cows come home—an interesting expression in this case because we really need the cows to come home. We need to be more self-reliant. Start with food. Well, that's the permaculture way. Start with a garden of size appropriate to your site and needs. If you don't have room for a garden, grow something in a pot.
2. Take the time to slow down. Do some reading. Write a letter or catch up remotely with a long-neglected friend. There are lots of new permaculture and organic gardening books. Take a look at the wealth of information online. There are elderly, experienced farmers who would love to hand off their legacy to the right hands. Start planning your escape.
3. Be prepared. If you haven't already put together at least a month's supply of staples, start now. Don't neglect basic medicines like aspirin and analgesics like calamine lotion if poison oak is a problem for you. Mosquito repellent of some kind is a necessity and will be more important going forward—malaria was once endemic to all the lower 48 states. A medicinal herb collection is also a very good idea. Start learning. Start slowly. See what works for you.
4. Start growing outward from a controlled front. Get something to make use of your food wastes: a pig, chickens, or at least a worm bin.
5. Don't forget, "Many hands make light work." Build a community of sharing while keeping social distance. Not everybody can grow or have access to enough staples. Share the harvest. Check your neighbors. Build meaningful relationships.

The pages of *Permaculture Design* have always held a wealth of information on self-sufficiency, as well as community, including water catchment (see the many articles in the issue that are in our Water Bundle—you can also order each back issue separately), food storage, seed-saving, "permaculturing" your kitchen, low-impact food production, and small-scale home energy systems. Taking care of ourselves, instead of relying on corporations or government, is going to be a bigger and bigger part of our lives in the future.

Writing from my office, looking out at my backyard green with spring, I find myself wondering how I missed the last of the redbuds. My mom always loved to see them in the spring, bright spots in the woods when not much else had any leaves or flowers. One day, I looked out there, and they'd dropped the last of their flowers for another year. This world spins faster than I realized. Keep your eyes open, or you'll miss the important stuff.

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## Permaculture-based Community Empowerment

# Hopewell

Rhonda Baird

**W**HAT IF WE APPLIED PERMACULTURE to our community-scale projects? There are several examples of this happening. Here, we'll look at one group's defined process and consider how it can serve us in this moment.

Permaculture ethics and principles make sense to us. We want to care for the Earth, each other, and the future. People want to see how we can repair the earth. Energy-smart buildings that are healthier for people are practical. Living within the ecological budget of the sites we inhabit is an interesting and worthy goal. We want healthy waterways that nurture biodiversity. Using an ecologically-responsive setting to foster well-being, support livelihoods in the community, and celebrate artistic and civic life is exciting and engaging.

### *Hopewell*

When a neighborhood leader in my community reached out to see about a short presentation to a gathering of neighborhood residents last December, I agreed. The evening's set up was for there to be four speakers giving five-minute short sessions about their various "sustainability-related" topics. Discussion followed, but it was clear not everyone in the room felt equally empowered to speak. People with strong ties to the city government who were involved in decision-making and had access to information defined parameters

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## These two neighborhoods surround a 23-acre site.

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of what was possible or not. This felt really inappropriate for a group that was in the stage of exploring what it wanted. We happened to be sharing space with two neighborhood associations due to a scheduling mix-up, so there was quite an audience.

Afterward, I connected with the two leaders of the group and met up for tea. In our discussion, it became clear the group, Hopewell, was on a path to clarify their vision, but didn't have a process in place to do that.

I learned more about the Hopewell group. It's an informal group of people from the two historic neighborhoods of Bloomington, Indiana. Hopewell, is the original name of the group which developed the first hospital for the city, and it is



*Rhonda facilitating a group process for 150 people at a GRLPI gathering in Akron, Ohio in January 2018. Photo by Sabrena Schweyer.*

also an homage to one of the indigenous groups which lived in this area hundreds of years ago.

Prospect Hill Neighborhood and McDoel Garden Neighborhood both have historic neighborhoods and very active neighborhood associations. They lie near the center of town—just off the busy urban core, along an economic corridor, and not far from the rail-to-trail which runs through the city connecting the new multi-million dollar Switchyard Park project to other city investments in arts and entertainment and a tech park north of the urban core.

These two neighborhoods surround the 23-acre campus of the current city hospital and medical specialist offices. IU Health is building a new hospital structure on the east side of the city and negotiated sale of the site to the city. IU Health required tearing down all structures except the four-story parking garage, and the city has hired a master planner and company to oversee the redevelopment of the site. All of this includes citizen input and oversight as well as millions of dollars of investment.

The city has already identified interest in commercial office space—which is short in the city for medium-sized businesses—as well as, affordable housing, a health clinic for accessibility, retail space, arts and education spaces, community gardens, reconnecting streets through the campus, etc.... A lot of ideas have been thrown around. In 2019, the Urban Land Institute was consulted by the city and issued a report suggesting many of these components and urging strong



*Rhonda facilitating a group process for 150 people at a GRLPI gathering in Akron, Ohio, in January 2018. Photo by Sabrena Schweyer.*

citizen input.

This is where Hopewell group comes in. This group of people whose lives and properties will be affected by the decisions made have been meeting for months. Through an open process of discussion and collaboration, they had already built trust among a group with diverse experiences and expertise.

As an experiment (with good theory and practice behind it), I suggested leading a series of three meetings through January and February to help the group solidify its platform for advocacy using the design process combined with tools from sociocracy. My yield for the effort was to be able to write up my experience as part of my master's degree work in Eco-Social Design with Gaia University.

### **Empower groups with design process**

Initially, I could see that the group was interested in permaculture, but not conversant in its aims and strategies. Since there wasn't time or opportunity to provide a full permaculture design course, we used a survey, resource readings, and conversation in the first meeting to draw out the ethics and their possible applications at the hospital site from a permaculture perspective.

The plan was to use the first meeting to identify goals. From there, we could use the second meeting to research and analyze the context and how the goals fit. In the third meeting, we could begin to form a concept for what was needed. The first 90-minute meeting was held at a local art gallery. I used two methods from *Liberating Structures* to draw out the interests and priorities from the group. This became the basis for the survey sent out to city residents (but primarily filled out by Prospect Hill and McDoel Garden residents). Two participants from the first meeting took on the responsibility of compiling results from the survey.

In the second meeting, we clarified the priorities and goals identified. This feedback from the larger community helped the Hopewell participants see how their ideas were reflected in the community and what was important to people. With this information, we turned to asking "What do we need to know now?" We generated several key questions to research and analyze and divided the work up among the group in pairs for accountability. They had until the next meeting to do their research and report back to the group. We could see that this would be a longer process with so many perspectives (our group regularly had 12-15 people or more participating). My own homework included developing, as a consultant, recommendations based in permaculture design for each of the redevelopment goals the group had identified. Our hope was that this would become the core of the conceptual design recommended by the group. Because it is grounded in the feedback from the first meeting and the survey, and I know the community well, it is a good first draft for the group.

In the third meeting, everyone reported back, and we were able to begin processing the information. While we

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## **They were planning THEIR next steps and excited to meet again.**

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didn't clarify the concept completely in 90 minutes, we did select a group of seven people to carry forward the discussion and act as coordinators for the advocacy effort needed to see the platform accomplished. My own recommendations for best practices were turned over to the group for them to use and modify as they got new information.

It was very gratifying to see the group lively and animated at the end of that third meeting. They were planning THEIR next steps and excited to meet again.

At the same time our process had been unfolding, various city council people, the architect with the group chosen as master planners, and numerous community advocates participated or observed our collaboration. By the conclusion of our third meeting, the master planning group had been chosen and a timeline announced for citizen input. Participation from community leaders and other players also seems to have empowered the group of organizers and bodes good things for the process which will be moving forward over the years ahead.

### **Sociocratic methods clarify aims**

As a permaculture designer, educator, and community organizer with 25 years of organizing experience, I feel

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confident about supporting group process. When I joined the Great Lakes Permaculture Design Collaborative, I was introduced to *Liberating Structures*, as a set of tools for the classroom. These tools for group discussion are useful for learning situations, but they work really well for group process and advocacy.

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## Things are safe because our group dynamics make them so.

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Working with the Hopewell Group, I used *Liberating Structures* to ask clarifying questions in small groups, and then sociocratic process for rounds and consent to gather feedback and find a path forward. Because our group was relatively large for a working group, the breakouts and rounds gave everyone opportunity to share and still brought forward the key ideas everyone could agree on.

I used a similar process at two Great Rivers and Lakes Permaculture Institute convergences where the groups were of 150 and 50 people. It's pretty amazing to see the empowerment of large groups and the energy generated. Those moments are only useful, though, if that energy is moved into action and leaders can sustain the project through to completion.

### Stepping back when it's time

This experiment with Hopewell was designed for me to step back after the third meeting. Rather than take on another community organizing project, it was appropriate for me to support (and continue mentoring as needed) the leadership identified and already in place within Hopewell. They have capacity, passion, and attention for the road ahead with the city and the developers. I was honored and humbled by Hopewell's trust, which

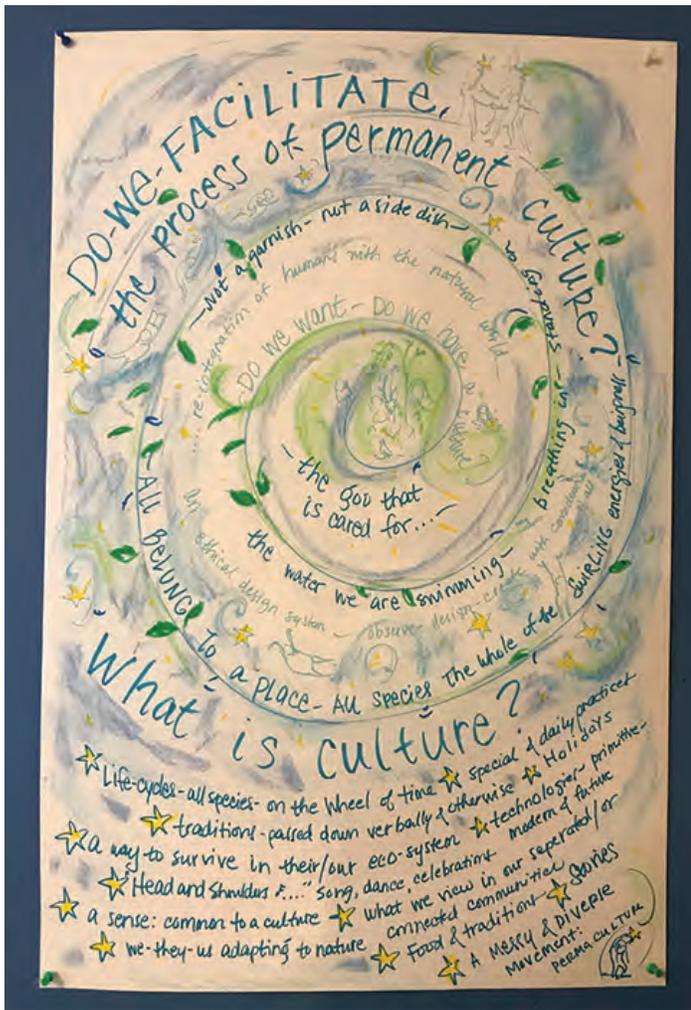
I found was not given easily. I found my own transparency, honesty, and belief in the group and in what we were doing earned that trust. In the end, at the last meeting when everyone was buzzing with excitement, I packed up my things and left the room quietly. It was a perfect ending to this phase of their project.

### Community empowerment; cultural change

This experience of serving as a facilitator, mentor, and empowering consultant to a group seemed to come out of nowhere and uplift everyone involved. In a rare few moments of chatting before the monthly SoFA (Sociocracy for All) Permaculture Circle meeting, I mentioned this project. It turns out Les Moore of the British Permaculture Association, is facilitating a similar conversation about a redevelopment project in London. He also remarked on the trust placed in him by the group—when other actors were not trusted to do the facilitation. We agreed that the principles and values of permaculture combined with those of sociocracy create a solid foundation for doing “the good work.”

Jerry Koch-Gonzalez and Ted J. Rau begin *Many Voices, One Song*, by saying that “Sociocracy is a set of tools and principles that ensure shared power.” They go on to say that “Power is everywhere all the time, and it does not appear or disappear—someone will be holding it. We have to be intentional about how we want to distribute it.... The only way to counterbalance the concentration of power is intentionality and thoughtful implementation.” (Page 1)\*





This beautiful poster was created by Penny Krebiehl acting as a graphic facilitator of a session taught by Rhonda Baird in a Permaculture Teacher Training course. The poster captures the conversation among everyone in the room.

A group has power, but it is only able to do effective work when there is good organization and leadership. It is only able to sustain that power and effort when the group is aligned behind the mission and vision (and acting so consistently) and power and responsibility are distributed.

Whether groups use sociocracy or another set of decision-making tools, my hope is that many groups like this will emerge. Already, in the onset of the pandemic, I see many mutual aid groups coming together across many communities. Those I see are already aligned to permaculture, or run by former PDC students. Sustaining the groups will require group empowerment, good leadership, and the capacity to hand off leadership to others. My hope is that permaculturists can help to seed the novel, practical cultural responses needed as our mainstream culture changes.

My project with the Hopewell Group helped to align the aims of the group while also bringing out competencies, building group trust, and establishing patterns of flow in

communication and decision-making. I learned that I saw success because I was competent, trustworthy, and able to successfully communicate what I had to offer.

Our work as leaders and cultural change-agents requires us to be in integrity with our profession of permaculture ethics and practice. From the foundation of our integrity, our individual capacities, passion, and vision can lead us to the right arenas for action and service. I am convinced that the days of leadership for the sake of ego and extracting power in self-serving ways are short.

I introduced Hopewell to the phrase I learned in SoFA's leadership training program: "Good enough for now, and safe enough to try." Among a group learning to embrace group power and practice care of each other, this phrase allows us to move forward among living systems and learn from feedback. Things are safe because our group dynamic makes them so.

No one is coming to save us. We don't need them to. It's time to reclaim our power and invest it in each other. What if—to use Rob Hopkins' title—all over the world, PDC grads and permaculturists stepped into their communities and empowered groups to act on solutions which nurtured the elements of a dynamic, new culture? △

*Rhonda Baird is senior editor of this publication, as well as a cultural change agent. Her work is done primarily through Sheltering Hills Design, but also in collaboration with others. You can find out more at [shelteringhills.net](http://shelteringhills.net). If you want to explore these ideas more, find out about the "Touch the Earth" project and community.*

#### Resources:

1. *Liberating Structures*: [LiberatingStructures.com](http://LiberatingStructures.com)
2. *Sociocracy for All*. [SociocracyforAll.org](http://SociocracyforAll.org). Ted J. Rau and Jerry Koch-Gonzalez, *Many Voices, One Song*, 2019.
3. Great Lakes Permaculture Design Collaborative, [GLP-DC.info](http://GLP-DC.info).
4. Great Rivers and Lakes Permaculture Institute, [greatriversandlakes.org](http://greatriversandlakes.org).
5. Rob Hopkins. *From What Is to What If*. Chelsea Green Publishing, Vermont, 2019.

\*Unfortunately, in much of my experience with groups, everyone is scrambling to "just get things done." This saps that intentionality and capacity. Those who hold onto that intentionality often hold power—and too often, everyone is happy for them to do so whether this is appropriate for the group or not. We can become more competent in our ecological designs.

"... having a vision and manifesting it in reality is nothing less than revolutionary. Pioneers are visionaries who take the first steps into new territory, unexplored country where the risks are great and the rewards are unknown."— Richard Reames, Arborsmith, [www.arborsmith.com](http://www.arborsmith.com)

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## From #101: Permaculture at Work

# Developing the Permaculture Workforce

Erik Ohlsen

**F**OR YEARS, I've been asking myself the following questions. How do we scale the solutions that permaculture design and techniques offer? How does permaculture evolve from an exclusive, hobby-like solution in the Western world to a professional movement relevant to the regeneration of our planet?

To quickly move permaculture into the mainstream, permaculture design and practices must become viable career paths for committed people who want to make their living by healing the planet. How do we make that leap? What patterns and structures need to be put in place for permaculture to “grow up” like this? How do we speed the training of new designers and practitioners? How do we most effectively train skilled professionals?

For the past few decades, permaculture education has primarily focused on the two-week Permaculture Design Certification (PDC) course.

The PDC is widely seen as a wonderful introduction to permaculture design strategies and installation techniques. While it inspires and energizes people, many students will need much more experience and support if they are to become effective professionals.

The incomplete professional competence of PDC graduates has sparked an important discussion about how newly certified students sometimes interact with established farming and landscaping communities. Some overly passionate students demonstrate dogmatism when critiquing established operations. This reflects too shallow an understanding of permaculture.

I am in no position to assess all the PDCs these students may have taken, but in any PDC I teach, the most important takeaway is that you need to take time to listen and observe before critiquing or intervening in any system. I believe this



*The skills needed to design and install systems like gray-water plumbing cannot be conveyed in one quick installation during a class. To build competency requires multiple days of learning with the opportunity to make mistakes and to receive feedback.*

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## Integrating ecological economic development with educational development provides a synergistic edge.

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is the most important lesson that can be learned at a PDC. If students come out of a PDC without understanding the site-specific nature of every enterprise or project—whether a landscape, farm, economic model or cultural container—then we've truly lost the foundation for good permaculture design.

Going beyond this specific issue is the sheer lack of experience that a two-week PDC offers. Students need experiential learning and professional development to successfully make a career path in permaculture.

We need new educational models that supplement the PDC and establish professional vocational standards to develop both viable career paths and relevance in the mainstream culture. Many such models already exist in the permaculture community, but they are the exceptions, not the norm.

For the past 10 years, I've been experimenting specifically with new education models for permaculture. If we apply the "least change for the greatest effect" principle, it's clear that many viable educational models already exist in design and building disciplines. We can draw on successes in other fields and apply them to the permaculture education model. But we also need to take it a few steps further! I've found that by applying the principles of design to the development of new educational models, we can create dynamic systems that both incorporate high-level training and forge new regenerative business structures that generate career paths where newly trained students can find meaningful work in the community.

What I've discovered over the last few years of working with these models is that integrating ecological economic development with educational development provides a synergistic edge for the creation of a powerful regeneration tool.

More specifically, my colleagues and I in Sebastopol, California, are showcasing what I like to call a regenerative business cluster. This business cluster (or guild) includes a design/contracting company (Permaculture Artisans), a vocational training school (Permaculture Skills Center, PSC), a new-farmer-incubation program, a land-holding company, and a social organizing model that has made possible a cultural center within the cluster where other organizations and entities can function.

Within this regenerative business cluster are a variety of

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## Part of the mentor's role is to create a safe space for mentees to process the issues that come up as they learn and grow.

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new and old educational models that are playing out in a dynamic system. These educational systems include vocational training, one-on-one mentorships, peer-to-peer mentorships, workshops, courses, professional development and on-the-job training.

Let's unpack some of these educational models and see how they can develop a permaculture workforce!

### **Mentorship**

After thousands of years, the mentoring model still provides one of the best training mechanisms for aspiring new designers and practitioners. A series of mentors in my life played a vital role in my own development.

The mentorship model is not solely about imparting information and know-how. A good mentor is also an advocate and a support system. Good mentors provide mentees with critical feedback that highlights where they need to improve and encourages them to expand their comfort zone in order to learn and grow. These can be tense relationships. I remember many times when mentors would shoot down an idea or reprimand me for a misstep. While they mostly supported my ideas, every now and then, I'd come up with something that made no sense or might even have landed me in trouble. At first, critical feedback hurts and makes you uncomfortable. But after a while, I was always grateful for it. In retrospect, I realize that these were some of the most teachable moments.

But the mentor isn't the only actor in this model. The mentee also plays a key role in the success of a mentorship. It's important to trust the mentor, accept critical feedback, and push yourself past your perceived limits. A good mentor can see the potential in someone even when the mentee doesn't see it for him- or herself. People are often limited by personal stories and beliefs. A good mentor will help lead them past these obstacles so they can be free of self-limiting



*Skills for listening and observing, together with an appreciation of the need to observe deeply before critiquing or intervening in any system, are the most important lessons from a PDC.*

thought patterns.

A good mentor also creates a safe space for a mentee to process the emotional pain that can arise amid the trials of learning new skills and new ways of seeing the world. This doesn't always manifest itself in tears or other emotional experiences. Sometimes it may come out as anger, depression, unwillingness to complete a project, or a weakening of the relationship. While this is a very touchy situation, good mentors will know when they can and cannot provide support. Sometimes mentors need to walk away to protect themselves. Sometimes a mentee just isn't ready to take the steps needed to follow a mentor's directions. In all cases, part of the mentor's role is to create a safe space for mentees to process the issues that come up as they learn and grow.

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Mentors also receive much critical feedback. Their own weaknesses are often highlighted in a mentor-mentee relationship, and it can sometimes be hard to create healthy boundaries while simultaneously providing strong support to a mentee. Everyone develops his or her own mentoring style, and a diversity of approaches is necessary. Because there are so many kinds of people, both mentors and mentees should seek partners who are a good match with their personality.

My personal approach—a hands-off approach—is sometimes difficult for those I mentor. This model provides just enough support for a mentee to do well, while avoiding handholding, micromanaging, and providing all the answers.

I want my mentees to make mistakes. I want them to feel the discomfort of having a project go awry or dealing with an

this. In many cases, the people I'm mentoring don't even realize they are being mentored. They just see it as their job and do the best they can with very little management from me. But this is actually an intentional setup to provide a high-level training mechanism that turns out highly skilled and effective change-makers. Over time, some folks learn enough and leave to create their own successful businesses. That's one way I know a mentorship has succeeded!

### ***Mentorship from outside permaculture***

We often persuade ourselves that we need like-minded people—permaculture professionals—to train the permaculture workforce. This is flat-out not the case. We can learn many of the technical skills required to scale-up permaculture by working with non-permaculture professionals. The skills thus gained can then be applied, with the help of permaculture principles and design methodologies, to any situation.

The more we build relationships with other professionals, the faster we can train confident permaculture practitioners. Architects, engineers, plumbers, general contractors, medicine-makers, and any number of other professionals are a major asset for aspiring permaculturists. Skills newly gained from such outside professionals, coupled with a permaculture mindset, application of permaculture principles and an observational approach, produce effective permaculture designers and practitioners.

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## **All our vocational training programs endeavor to [provide] skill sets for social organizing, business development, and personal development.**

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unhappy client. Not because I want them to suffer, but because these experiences will actually impart the skills and knowledge required for later success.

I provide just enough support so that nobody fails miserably, and I'll always jump in if things get too bad, but as much as possible I like to put my mentees through a bit of fire. I give them challenging projects that stretch their capabilities and stand by to provide backup support when needed. I like to let them stretch and push themselves so that when the project is successful, they own it.

I think letting people own their own work is an important part of mentorship. At Permaculture Artisans (my design/contracting company), we have a strong culture of creating leaders. Almost everyone who works for me is a leader in their own right and has been empowered to work with clients, take on projects, manage communications, and make decisions that affect the health and success of the project.

While this can be difficult at times, most of my staff have become incredibly competent, empowered leaders in their fields. They're able to take on projects from start to finish and succeed. They can discuss issues with clients and help chart a course through challenges. This is how a successful permaculture designer and practitioner develops. On-the-job training is an educational platform. We need more professional settings where people gain skills on the job and learn through mentorships like

### ***Professional development***

Understanding how to work with people, operate a business, and build a reputation are key skills needed to succeed, especially in the Western world. The existing PDC curriculum barely touches on the social applications of permaculture, resulting in a gaping hole in what should be a holistic educational experience for permaculturists in training.

At the PSC, all our vocational training programs endeavor to fill that hole by providing skill sets for social organizing, business development, and personal development. We have found that basic skills—e.g., understanding business structures, working well with other people, tracking time, talking about money, working within economically and racially diverse communities, and implementing a strong work ethic—are important to learn if people are to succeed in their lives and careers and are virtually required to build regenerative businesses. Yet a typical 72-hour PDC course provides little of these skills, which is why they have become foundational in all the trainings we offer.

### ***Vocational training***

Beyond social and business-organizing skills, we also focus on competency training. This means we expect students not only to learn concepts, but to know how to confidently and successfully apply them in the real world.

For example, a student may want to learn about designing and implementing a graywater system. It is not enough to spend a few hours talking about it and maybe installing one in a class setting. This will not provide the level of competency required for a trainee to leave the program and build a system on his or her own. It takes multiple days and the opportunity to make mistakes and get feedback to develop competence in skills like this. That is why many successful vocational training programs last for weeks, months, and even years.

Vocational training models exist throughout the world. Many other disciplines employ this approach to develop professionals. A great example is massage therapy, where, to be certified, a trainee has to do over 1,200 hours of massage. The permaculture community has a diploma program that is even more rigorous than massage certification. Regrettably, the diploma program hasn't gained widespread use by permaculture educational organizations and is thus largely irrelevant, at present, in the development of new permaculture professionals in most of the world. If we adopted standards like these, I believe permaculture practitioners would be more

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## Understanding the site-specific nature of every enterprise or project is the foundation for good permaculture design.

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effective in their work, making fewer mistakes and providing greater value to the community.

Setting up vocational training is not simple. It is not about getting people to pay you to come work on your farm or landscape. For people to actually gain proficiency in a variety of areas, training modules need to give them actual usable skills and technical abilities they can apply outside the classroom.

Having students move piles of material or put plants in the ground isn't enough to provide the skills they'll need to be professional and confident either as employees or business owners. They need to know the technical aspects of systems, like how to plumb a rain tank, how to graft trees, how to build fences, and a myriad of other activities that can be the subject of well thought-out vocational training modules.

Be clear on the educational outcomes you want your students to achieve so that you create a learning experience rather than pointless work. At some point, inevitably, almost everyone hits a wall when they're trying to learn new skills.

As students keep being asked to push the envelope, they are often tempted to give up. In many cases, they stop believing in themselves.

Vocational training is great, but just having technical knowledge and experience may not be enough for everyone to be successful. Something more is needed to create a holistic learning experience, and it has to do with the trainees' own personal development.

### **Personal development**

In the many years that I've taught PDCs, mentored trainees, and directed vocational training programs, one major pattern has emerged: the limitations we all put on ourselves. This pattern caused me to stumble in my own personal development, and I continue to work on it.



*Working collaboratively on a site design during a PDC can help overcome the feelings of personal limitations that often hamper beginning permaculturists. Mentors should strive to encourage self-confidence in their trainees.*

In my opinion, our own perceived limitations are the single greatest obstacles to achieving success and becoming effective change-makers in our communities. Our own personal stories (and grievances) shape how we see the world, and they can sabotage our success. The stories we carry inside are rooted in how we grew up and the cultural programming we experienced in school, at home, in church, or in community. I can't tell you how often I've heard people say they're just not able to do this or that because of some story they have about themselves. How often I've heard people say there's no way they could achieve their greatest dreams! There's no way their life could change so dramatically that they could be highly successful designers, practitioners, or entrepreneurs.

How many times have I heard people defend the very beliefs that make them unhappy?! How many times have I seen people fight for precisely those beliefs that keep them from becoming who they could be?

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We can teach people how to harvest water, build soil, and heal the planet. We can teach people how to design and develop businesses and how to train others. In many ways, skills like these can be easily imparted to others—and happily received. But no matter how many classes or courses people take, no matter how much mentoring they receive, if they are still holding themselves back with their own negative thought patterns, none of it will matter at all. They will continue to spin and turn with no change in trajectory.

It deeply saddens me when I see amazing people go down the path of depression, self-sabotage, or just plain giving up. If we truly want to develop a civilization that can heal the ecological processes of this planet and create peaceful, just societies, then we have to address the cultural and emotional wounds we carry around with us. In my view, this is the greatest obstacle we face.

This is why a good mentorship model is so important. Opportunities for learning communities to come together to share their fears and their hopes are vital to the glue that makes a learning community thrive.

I don't think people can thrive in static learning environments. We need to create learning environments that bring the entire person into the process. We need to create space for people to share what's truly going on for them and find the kind of support that helps them move through self-sabotaging obstacles.

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## Let's embrace the diversity of cultures, races, organizational models, focuses, interests, services, products, and communities.

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I'm not advocating some sort of permaculture therapy sessions. I'm not saying that we need to incorporate spirituality into every training program. I'm simply saying that whatever is appropriate to a particular learning community is what will be right. It is community and culturally specific. There are thousands of different ways to create opportunities for healing. Each community, culture, and organization can discover what that is for itself. It can be as simple as an evening fire circle where folks share their fears and dreams, and everyone else listens attentively. It can be having students take time to sit quietly in nature and reflect on their lives by journaling. It can be one-on-one walks with a mentor where

students can reflect on their life goals. Whatever the method, this, in my experience, is what we need to get right.

### **Professionalizing permaculture**

Part of the challenge in the permaculture community—gaining relevance in the mainstream—is the perception of our community as a subculture. While there is an alternative lifestyle and cultural aspect to permaculture-inspired communities, this is not the full picture or an absolute truth. There are many highly professional people working in a variety of cultures, businesses, communities, and religions who are providing great value to the world through a permaculture lens. Sometimes I think we focus on what we don't like to see rather than highlighting the many positives around us.

A huge opportunity is now upon us. Permaculture is gaining more and more acceptance throughout the world. As permaculturists, we know the potential of the design system. Applications of these principles have an uncanny ability to create regenerative communities.

Let's put our differences aside. Let's embrace the diversity that is this global movement. Let's embrace the diversity of cultures, races, organizational models, focuses, interests, services, products, and communities. Let's elevate the quality of permaculture education. Let's create a regenerative economy for everyone. And let's develop educational opportunities to roll out a massive workforce of empowered, skilled permaculture professionals who will heal this planet and bring peace to our global community. △

*Erik is an internationally renowned certified permaculture designer/practitioner and certified permaculture teacher, who has been working within permaculture and activist movements since 1998. Currently, he is the Executive Director of the Permaculture Skills Center, a vocational training school in Sebastopol, CA, which offers advanced training in ecological design, landscaping, farming, and land stewardship. He is also the Founder/Principal at Permaculture Artisans, a fully licensed contracting firm specializing in the design and installation of ecological landscapes and farms throughout California.*

[Editor's note: this piece from issue #101, though four years old, seems more relevant than ever. Let's take action. We find that much of the content from our back issues is still very pertinent, indeed. ]

Permaculture Plant Profiles: Let us introduce you to...

# Daylily

## *Hemerocallis fulva*

### Just The Facts

**SAY:** *hem-eh-roh-KAL-iss FUL-vuh*

**AKA:** Daylily, Tawny Daylily, Orange Daylily

**DESCRIPTION:** Tall, clumping, perennial flowering forb, with long, arching, strap-like leaves and large, showy orange blossoms.

Thin, tuberous roots naturalize freely.

**HARDINESS:** Zone 3 - 9

**FAMILY:** *Asphodelaceae*

pronounced: ass-fod-ul-AY-see-ee [no longer considered in Liliaceae family]

**ORIGIN:** China/Japan introduced from Europe



*Daylilies come in many colors. Image via Pixabay.*

### Why we love this plant...

Produces gorgeous, edible buds and flowers steadily for 6-8 weeks. Robust, low maintenance, tolerates a wide range of well-drained soils with low water demand, happy in sun or partial shade. Flowers more profusely in full sun in cool climates. In hot climates, afternoon shade prevents flowers from fading. Virtually pest-free but not deer-resistant.

In July/August, tall leafless stalks tower over foliage, producing copious buds and flowers opening 1-2 at a time, each lasting only a day.

Lovely cut flowers 3-5" long and up to 6" across with almost no scent. Stalks 4-6' high.

*H. fulva* flowers can be eaten fresh on salads or battered and fried. Buds are great fresh, sliced and sautéed, or dried. Both have delicious, green-bean kind of flavor fresh. Buds and flowers can also be pickled or brined. And they add zest and color to kimchee!



*Image of Daylilies via Pixabay.*



Photo by G. Flora

## Cultivation and Care

Daylilies are famously resilient, hardy, and largely carefree in almost every zone. Any soil that's well-drained will work, but the better the soil the more robust the growth. Do protect from deer with natural deterrents or fencing. Rabbits aren't interested.

Daylilies are challenging to start from seed and don't always remain true to parent. Far easier to plant from local bare-root or readily available container stock, 18-24" apart. Water well in times of extreme heat.

Plant in full to part sun, as a border, backdrop, or focal point. Naturalizing and massing easily, daylilies can be tucked into difficult spaces, but if you plan to deadhead (clip spent flowers for looks and vigor) or harvest buds/flowers, make sure the location provides stable footing.

Allow enough space for their height (foliage to 4' high x 2-3' wide) and spreading habit. Divide crowded plants in early spring or late fall, usually every 3-5 years. △

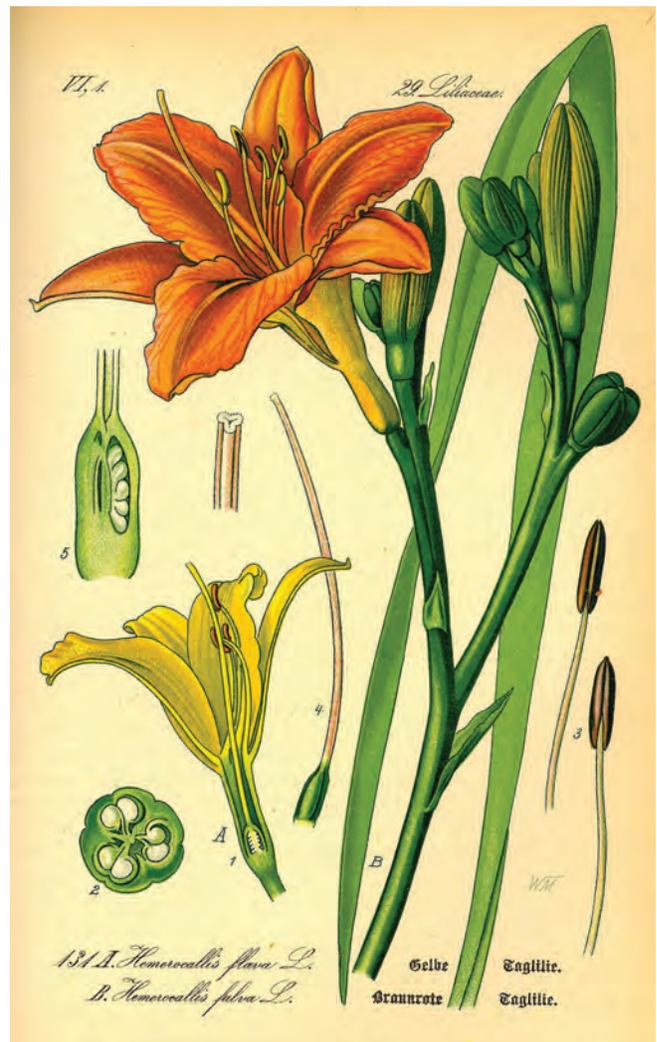
## Related Species

There are literally thousands of daylily hybrids and cultivars in a wide range of colors, sizes, and scents.

Don't confuse with other types of lilies which have short leaves up the flower stalk instead of 2"+ long basal leaves. Common daylilies have no spots on the petals, and flowers tend to face skyward.

If you plan to eat your daylilies, stick to *H. fulva*—the common orange daylily. Other hybrids are questionable, and lilies can be poisonous.

Can be aggressive, do your local research and plan control measures, just in case.



Public Domain: O. Thome: Flora von Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz 1885

This article was produced by Gloria Flora, who regularly contributes to this section. She lives in the Pacific Northwest.

# Exploring the Third Ethic of Permaculture

## Finding a Sense of Surplus

Toby Hemenway

[Editor's Note: This story was originally printed 19 years ago: in our issue #46, July 2001 when the theme was *Good Work and Right Livelihood*, and the late Toby Hemenway was editor.]

IT'S EASY TO GRASP THE WISDOM in the first two of permaculture's three ethical principles. The benefits of "care of the earth" and "care for people," are obvious, and it's not a difficult step to put those principles into practice. But then comes the third, more challenging principle, "share the surplus." That's where some of us waver a bit. How large a pile do we need to store up before some of it spills over into the category of surplus? What if we give the surplus away and then badly need it tomorrow?

Even if we are able to see the intelligence in sharing the surplus, doing it is a tough step to take. In a culture that exhorts us to be sharp investors and to save for those ever-looming rainy days, and that equates our worth with our bank balance, what heresy it is to urge that we give that valuable surplus away!

How can we show how much is enough and learn to share the remainder? I'll start by offering a practical reason to abandon the urge to hoard. From a simple, physical viewpoint, a surplus is a bother: it must be stored. Storing something is expensive and nearly always causes it to lose value. Think of hiding money in a mattress while inflation chews away at it, or having food rot in the cellar. The value



*Through the pandemic we've seen hoarding and scarcity, as our sense of uncertainty grows. Photo by Mick Haupt on Unsplash.*

of most goods comes not when they are stored, but from use, from the benefits of flow. For example, the fertility of soil isn't properly measured by the amount of nutrients present—many are in unusable form—but by the flow of those nutrients to plants and soil life. Likewise, money best retains its value when it flows: when it is exchanged for useful goods, employed as capital, or invested in a bank, business, or government which will then put it to use.

Thus, surplus money must come out of the mattress and be made to work. However, when money is invested, it can

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**In part, the insecurities that drive people to hoard stem from our transition, long ago, from cyclical to linear time.**

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do great harm. What business are we comfortable owning stock in? How about government or corporate bonds? Land, an investment option I often hear suggested, is not a liquid place for savings. To get cash back from land, the property must be sold, and usually on contract (banks rarely loan money on raw land), so the seller carries obligation and risk for decades. And whenever land is sold—as I know from bitter experience—it is logged or otherwise developed, because land only has monetary value when it is consumed by the economy.

Also, it's easy to become obsessed with shepherding our surplus. A wealthy relative of mine, a brilliant and creative man who retired young, now spends his days watching the stock channels. His surplus controls him. Holding more than we need means devoting concern and effort to its care.

### **The Uncertain Line of Time**

However, I doubt if practical arguments will persuade people to share the surplus, because the desire to hoard isn't really grounded in reason. In part, the insecurities that drive people to hoard stem from our transition, long ago, from cyclical to linear time.

Archaic humans experienced time as cyclical, where events weren't singular, but recurrent. Time seemed not to progress so much as to loop. Human activities were embedded within cycles of sun, moon, tides, solstice and equinox, and other patterns of return. A hard and hungry winter was inevitably followed by a gentle spring and bountiful summer. People knew that times of scarcity didn't last forever. During a grim season, their comfort came from the certainty that lean times had always ended in the past, and would end this time, too. Hence, they didn't need an eternally expanding storehouse to reassure them, merely enough to get through the drought, the deluge, or the winter. For these people, decrease and increase ebbed and flowed in a timeless and familiar rhythm. Each person's life was safely embedded in a well-worn pattern of cycles within larger cycles.

But we have unwound these comforting cycles and hammered them straight, into the arrow of linear time. We see each event as unique, separate, and not enmeshed within a larger periodicity. For us, the past recedes into dimness, and the future extends toward uncertainty. Linear time offers no recurring pattern of birth, maturity, death, and renewal, only the whirling of numbers—bank balances, dates, odometer mileages, the NASDAQ index—that mount or diminish. Having lost the knowledge that this, too, shall pass, and that tomorrow always brings renewal, we can only gird ourselves against the worst possible case, and here our imaginations are fertile. No storehouse or bank account can be large enough to protect us from a murky, unraveling eternity where anything can go wrong, and stay wrong forever.

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## With no faith in renewal, it's easy to believe that we could lose everything.

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With no faith in renewal, it's easy to believe that we could lose everything. This fosters the illusion that we live in a world of scarcity. Economics itself, our secular religion, is defined as "the allocation of scarce resources among competing demands." That's a bitterly Darwinian view of human interactions. If we limit ourselves to that world, where armored ATM machines parcel out twenty-dollar bills in miserly dribbles, we can be fooled into believing that scarcity is the rule.

But scarcity is not life's law. Outside my window as I write this, high spring-time is turning the corner to summer. A foot or more of new growth shoots in a green fountain from every tree branch, seed heads hang heavy on the tall grass, and



*Apple butter and other handcrafted items make great gifts or items for exchange.*

nature's fecundity is a palpable presence. Nature's model is one of supreme, unbridled abundance. It seems ironic, then, to live in an economic system based on lack. When a single ear of corn can yield hundreds of grain-stuffed plants, how puzzling to find that our economy is based on a science of scarcity.

### **Economic Myth-making**

Yet economics, whose own practitioners call it the "dismal science," has at its core a number of untruths. One is that, in any transaction, it is a deep trait of our nature to squeeze every ounce of value from the exchange. We've all been taught a homey little myth to reinforce this point. It says, in olden times people used to barter to exchange their labored resources: I'll make you a pair of shoes, you trade me





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in the immaterial, in our disconnection from spirit and the resulting sense of loss that our corporeal existence forces on us. Since this spiritual emptiness can no longer be filled with spirit, we look for completion to the only things we believe in: goods, endless activity, and most of all, money.

Goods and activity quickly reveal themselves as unsatisfying, but money never seems to. When we are bloated on food, we stop eating. After busying that vacation home, most people cease acquiring real estate. Sex and drug-taking pale after a while, or cause enough damage to drive us into a 12-step program. But money... money is something different. Money is nonmaterial—it merely represents wealth, and is convertible to wealth of any kind—and thus holds the most promise to fill our non-material, spiritual emptiness. And being non-material and limitlessly convertible, money

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## Only by understanding that today we have enough can we abandon our empty, ceaseless striving.

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never tells us when we have enough. A story told of Andrew Carnegie is that a reporter asked him, “Now that you’re the richest man in the world, how much money will be enough for you?” He answered, “Just a little bit more.”

We have traded our gods for cash. Today we worship at a less satisfying, less meaningful shrine, but one that is difficult to turn away from. The gleam of gold holds the eye, and watching the pile grow larger is nearly irresistible. During a controversy over whether Christians should accept interest on invested money, a 5th-century Syrian bishop, Jacob of Sarug, had a vision of the devil, who was all in favor of interest. “I do not mind,” the devil told the bishop, “if the priest uses the interest he draws from his money to buy an ax with which to smash the temples of my idols. The love of gold is a greater idol than any image of a god.... They have cast down the idols, but they will never cast down the coins that I shall put in their place.”

Without a relationship with spirit to make possible the divine exchange of surplus for the gift of wholeness, we have little choice but to store up all we can in an attempt to fill our emptiness. That rainy day looms too ominously for us to be generous. Of course, whatever we hoard still isn’t enough—how could mere matter or money fill that spiritual hole? So in misdirected hope, we work harder, produce more, earn more, and mound up our nest egg.

The result of this is the growth economy. Only by believing in endless growth and progress can people be certain



*Natural cycles are abundant. Drawing from their patterns, we can learn to abide in cycles of time and place which feed our whole selves.*

they’ll soon have still more, that tomorrow will surely be better than today. If I didn’t believe that tomorrow I’ll get a raise, that next year I’ll live in a bigger house, that someday I’ll have my boss’s job, I would have to look around me and be miserable at the sight. Without the promise of growth to distract me, I’d be forced to see what I had today—that crummy job, the ugly house, the abusive boss—and realize that it was horrible, wasn’t going to change significantly, and was a result of a dismal system in which I was trapped. And that would be a revolutionary discovery, one that the advocates of growth have not made or pray we won’t make. If we believe tomorrow will be better, we can acquiesce to today’s injustices and inequities. But the truth is that tomorrow we will still be mired in the economics of scarcity. Tomorrow will be very much like today. Only by understanding that today we have enough can we abandon our empty, ceaseless striving.

### ***A permacultural view***

It would be pleasant to wrap up this essay by offering a simple solution that everyone can adopt and instantly be cured of a sense of emptiness. But I can’t offer a fail-safe technique for developing a sense of surplus. The solution won’t come from outside. However, let’s take a permacultural view of the problem. One of permaculture’s strengths is that its solutions are not one-size-fits-all techniques, but derive instead from a way of looking at things, and at this new vantage, many problems dissolve into solutions. Permaculture suggests that the best solution to most problems is to observe, and to model designs and actions after natural rhythms and time-tested ways. Learning to share the surplus follows this pattern. By observing the consequences of the need to hoard, it becomes obvious that the cost is high. But recognizing a surplus is not done only by measuring and counting. It comes



*Our connection to the nature and our own healing of past wounds create a foundation from which to move into care of the future more easily. Photo by Shane Rounce on Unsplash*

with a deeper observing: understanding where the sense of “not enough” stems from. That emptiness comes from inside. It can be relieved in part by reconnecting to the cycles of natural abundance through a closer relationship with nature. Perhaps more importantly, inner emptiness and the resulting drive to hoard can be alleviated by reconnecting to the divine, whether it’s spiritual practice, some form of talking therapy or experiential self-exploration, Earth rituals, or a few visits to the church of your childhood. By linking to natural cycles and the constant flow of gifts from spirit, it’s possible to know how much is enough, to give away the surplus, and to be sure that the gift will be returned. △

*Toby Hemenway is the author of Gaia’s Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture (Chelsea Green, 2001) and The Permaculture City (Chelsea Green, 2015). He was an associate editor when this piece was published in issue #46, in July 2001.*

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## Agroforestry News

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**Acorns as a commercial crop**

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Volume 28 Number 2
February 2020

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# EVENTS

## Permaculture Design Course Online

**Description:** Oregon State University's online Permaculture Design course is a great way to build essential sustainable landscape design skills in a convenient online format. After ten weeks, you will complete a finished design with:

- \* One-on-one guidance from experts who will walk you through each assignment.
- \* Timely feedback on your individual project from your designated instructor. \* Low student / teacher ratio to ensure individualized attention for you.

Also, since the program is entirely online, you can access our expert-led courses from the comfort of your own home.

**Instructors:** Andrew Millison and others

**Contact:** [pace.oregonstate.edu/permaculture](http://pace.oregonstate.edu/permaculture)

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## Permaculture Design Course France

**Dates:** August 1-16

**Location:** Lamentargue, Maritime Alps, France

**Description:** Using a variety of learning techniques and strategies, this workshop will present permaculture in all of its applications. Class time will consist of traditional lectures, guest presentations, group discussions, games, exercises photo shows, and movies. We will focus on land systems with as much hands on work and examples as possible. Many discussions and examples will be explored of possible applications in 'Invisible Structures', those social, cultural, political, and economic structures that shape much of our world today. The course will not only teach permaculture, it will also model it by its structure and the environment we create together during the course. The curriculum for this course covers the core content expected in the PDC as well as Urban Permaculture and Community Scale Design, Toxins and Bio-remediation, Invisible Structures and Social Permaculture, Alternative Economics, Peak and Post Petroleum, Permaculture in the Majority World, Permaculture and Organizations

This course is taught in English only. French and Italian co-teacher will help with specific translation if needed.

**Instructors:** Rico Zook

**Cost:** 750 € / Meals and accommodation are included for 16 days of training. Meals are prepared by a cook onsite with local and organic food.

**Contact:** +33 (0)760 875 710

[contact@permacultive.org](mailto:contact@permacultive.org)

Find all informations and registrations on our website:

[www.permacultive.org/permaculturedesigncourse](http://www.permacultive.org/permaculturedesigncourse)

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## Food Forest Course Online

**Dates:** foundation-self-paced;

Practicum: September 28-November 1

**Description:** What are the Benefits of a Food Forest? A food forest is a sustainable and natural way to produce healthy and organic food. By learning how to tend your specific soil and develop plant communities you'll be able to improve your yield and provide nourishing and healthy food for you and your family.

**Instructor:** Marisha Auerbach

**Contact:**

[workspace.oregonstate.edu/course/Permaculture-Food-Forests](http://workspace.oregonstate.edu/course/Permaculture-Food-Forests)

**14 IPC  
(International Permaculture  
Convergence)  
Argentina  
postponed to  
November-December 2021**

**IPC 14 in Argentina,  
planned  
November 28-December 4  
in 2020  
will be postponed  
to November 2021.**

All updates regarding these events will continue to be shared on the official webpage [14ipc-argentina2020.org](http://14ipc-argentina2020.org) and on social media.

## North American Leadership Summit

Climate Crisis,  
Transition and Earth Repair  
August 19-23  
Online

For information:  
Permaculture Institute of North  
America: [pina.in](http://pina.in)

## Permaculture Design Course Washington

**Location:** Rochester WA

**Dates:** August 14-30, 2020

**Description:** VETERANS' ECOLOGICAL TRADES COLLECTIVE (501c3) provides support for veterans and allies who want to begin or develop careers in Conservation, Agriculture, Forestry and Ecological Design. During this two week intensive held at our 120ac farm, we will cover the PINA Permaculture Curriculum, and introduce veteran-specific training and resources for farm start up and development. Design-Build elements will include creation of a camp hearth meant to support future events.

**Instructors:** Rick Valley, Deston Denniston, and others.

**Cost:** US Military Veterans: Because of a grant received, we are able to offer this course to veterans at \$100-\$500 depending on worktrade hours made prior to course;

Non-veterans by application on sliding scale, \$750-\$1250. Significant others, family members, caregivers, and business partners to veterans given preference for allied enrollment.

**Contact:** [www.veteransetc.org](http://www.veteransetc.org)  
[vetscafeolywa@gmail.com](mailto:vetscafeolywa@gmail.com)

## Permaculture Design Course Online

**Dates:** Ongoing

**Description:** Our course is the classic, official 72-hour Permaculture Design Certificate Course (PDC) as taught by the founders of permaculture.

This course involves study modules supported by practical exercises, fieldwork, and videos.

**Instructors:** Dr. Alan Enzo, Jessica Enzo, Steven Cran, Steve Hart

**Cost:** \$550

**Contact:** PermacultureEducation.com  
info@PermacultureEducation.com

## Permaculture Design Course Online

**Dates:** Aug. 1-2, 29-30; Sept. 19-20; Oct. 3-4, 17-18; Nov. 14-15; Dec. 5-6.

**Description:** You're invited to join us for our next design course! Over seven weekends, we will share the standard, PINA-approved curriculum in addition to a deep dive on social permaculture. Through readings, dynamic discussions, and activity, your design skill will move beyond foundations into practical work in your own life and collaborative projects. Your instructors bring a wide variety of experiences from hyper-urban community to rural life into the mix to provide perspective no matter your background or what you're dreaming of. We cover:

- Ecological systems and earth repair
- Forest garden design;
- Evaluating buildings for retrofit and design optimization, as well as new construction
- Social permaculture including: financial, community, collaboration, mutual aid, and sociocracy
- Designing for your life and next steps, and much, much more.

Every course is responsive to the collective design of the group in this dynamic experience. Former students often join in, and you're invited to be a part of our growing design community. More than 15 years of taking and designing online/distance learning experiences, including PDC's, we understand how to support you well.

**Instructors:** Rhonda Baird, Milton Dixon, William Faith

**Cost:** sliding scale, \$700-\$1,400

**Contact:** william@geniuslocipermaculture.com  
glpdc.info

## Permaculture Design Course British Columbia

**Dates:** June 20-July 4

**Location:** Linnaea Farm, Cortes Island, British Columbia

**Description:** Explore processes of ecological regeneration in the wake of human disturbance, and learn how to assess, design and implement systems that are truly sustainable.

Our teachers share results of their cutting-edge work and how they've embraced Nature's unsurpassed ability to adapt and thrive in the most adverse circumstances.

We'll cover:

- Reading the landscape
- Working with Water
- Integrated livestock systems (for yards of all sizes!)
- Design for climate change
- Disaster Preparedness
- Plant propagation
- Bioremediation
- Renewable energy
- Ecological food production
- Food Forest Design
- Soil Building and rehabilitation
- Approaches to community living and cooperatives ...and so much more.

**Instructors:** Oliver Kelhammer, Hannah Roessler, Adam Huggins, and resident instructors

**Contact:** Tamara@Linnaeafarm.org

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See listing of back issues at our website.

## Permaculture Service Day California

**Dates:** First Sunday of every month

**Location:** Sivananda Yoga Farm, Grass Valley, CA

**Description:** Learn through hands-on volunteer work on the land and participate in a free workshop, open house, and tour of the Sivananda Yoga Farm in the beautiful foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Enjoy free yoga class, meditation, chanting, and two organic vegetarian meals.

**Instructors:** Colin Eldridge

**Cost:** FREE!

**Contact:** 530-272-9322

yogafarm.org

yogafarmregistration@sivananda.org

## Permaculture Design Course Missouri

**Dates:** September 10-20

**Location:** Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage, Missouri

**Description:** Permaculture is all about creating sustainable human habitat. What better place to learn about sustainable human habitat than an ecovillage?

Using our twenty-year-old ecovillage as a living laboratory, our Permaculture Design Course interweaves the wisdom and knowledge of the permaculture movement with the firsthand learning experiences of an intentional community.

Central to this course are interactive learning experiences around the ecovillage, project-based learning, and opportunities for creative expression, human connection, and celebration. Prepare to be surprised and inspired!

Our 2020 PDC focuses on:

- a focus on climate change solutions
- learning from community members experienced in gardening, farming, natural building, alternative energy, self-governance, communication skills, cooperation, and conflict resolution;
- exploration of social and financial permaculture, as well as personal "inner sustainability"

**Instructors:** Sharon Bagatell, Olivia Miller Peterson, Erik Peterson

**Cost:** \$1,395

**Contact:** dancingrabbit.org/  
permaculture/

## Permaculture Design Course Illinois

**Dates:** July 18-25

**Location:** Stelle, Illinois

**Description:** The Permaculture Design Certificate course is a seventy-two hour (minimum) training experience. Students who complete the full curriculum earn the internationally recognized Permaculture Design Course (PDC) Certificate. The training experience provides a deep introduction to the world of permaculture as originally set forth by the movement's co-founder Bill Mollison.

**Instructors:** Bill and Becky Wilson

**Contact:** becky@midwestpermaculture.com

## Advanced Course Permaculture Teacher Training Illinois

**Dates:** July 12-17

**Location:** Stelle, Illinois

**Description:** This training is for graduates of the 72-Hour Permaculture Design Certificate (PDC) Course who wish to become competent and inspiring teachers of this brilliant design/living approach called permaculture.

What will be covered:

- How do people really learn;
- Teaching techniques for different learning styles;
- How to prepare to deliver 1-hour, 1-day, 1-weekend, or the full PDC courses;
- How to improve one's teaching skills;
- How to start one's own teaching/educational business.

The primary focus will be on how one becomes an effective permaculture teacher. People who are passionate and committed to living and teaching an authentic way of living on the planet will likely find this training invaluable.

During the week, and under the experienced guidance of Becky and Bill, students will be compassionately supported in exploring those parts of themselves that make us all more effective teachers and communicators, and not just of permaculture. We will identify some of the key pieces and aspects of our PDC Courses that really make an impression on most students and why.

**Instructors:** Bill and Becky Wilson

**Cost:** \$1,095

**Contact:** becky@midwestpermaculture.com

## Teacher Training for Children Michigan/Online

**Dates:** July 30-31; August 6-7

**Location:** Online

**Description:** Sharing permaculture with children is one of the most rewarding and fun ways to spread the ideas and skills of permaculture design. Children are natural designers, and permaculture is completely within their grasp. Join Penny and Rhonda, both permaculture teachers with years of experience in working with both adult and child learners for a fun and fulfilling course!

This training is for permaculture practitioners of all skill levels, those who get to be with children regularly and want to bring permaculture design into their work, forest school instructors, and parents who love permaculture.

Through hands-on work at your home, facilitated discussion, and practice participants will find their own approach to working with children and a path forward for their projects. Along the way we will explore a range of opportunities working with children brings us for healthy communities, reclaiming creativity, and implementing permaculture.

Reach out to see if this training is a good fit for you.

**Instructors:** Penny Krebiehl, Rhonda Baird

**Cost:** Sliding scale, \$250-\$400

**Contact:** penny.ok.art@gmail.com,  
rhonda@shelteringhills.net

## Permaculture Design Course Online/Indiana

**Dates:** September 21-December 11

**Location:** Online with field days

**Description:** Take the permaculture design course in a way that works for you! Through more than 15 years of teaching the permaculture design course and facilitating online learning. The course will cover the standard material of the PDC (acknowledged by PINA), as well as include additional material on sociocracy, project development, connection to the landscape, and community-building practices and projects. Students found in the past that the focus on personal implementation over the length of the course and the emphasis on practice supported their understanding and development as practitioners.

In person, mentored experiences are also a part of this course and support your learning, as well as one-on-one support throughout the course. Set up a call to see if this is a good fit for you.

**Instructors:** Rhonda Baird, lead; guest instructors throughout; former student "reunion" and community

**Cost:** Sliding scale: \$750-\$1,150. Payment plans available.

**Contact:** rhonda@shelteringhills.net; shelteringhills.net

## West Michigan Lakeshore Region

### Permaculture Design Course

July 5-18, 2020

**\$1395**

(discounts for early registration)

- Improve Home Comfort
  - Learn Edible Landscaping
  - Make Wise Energy Choices
  - Understand Climate Impacts
  - Explore the Natural World
  - Practice Earth Repair
  - Gain Allies and Nurture Community
- See how good design can make a place for people to thrive.

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Meals, camping, and instruction included.

PINA-recognized curriculum. Regional and guest instructors. Satisfied graduates.

**www.permacultureactivist.net**  
**pcactivist@mindspring.com**

**812-335-0383**

## Touch the Earth Workshop Indiana

**Dates:** October 10-12

**Location:** southern Indiana

**Description:** This workshop facilitates a deeper connection with the Earth, attunes us to the moment we are in, and supports a deeper dive into whole self/whole system living. Through story-telling, creative work, and hands-on permaculture projects, we will co-create a rich experience. Expect to leave with an action plan, resources, a renewed sense of self, and a community of support!

Rhonda and Corbin draw on more than two decades of work in culture studies, deep ecology, community work, permaculture design and systems thinking, home-steading, gender studies, leadership, and survival skills.

**Instructors:** Rhonda Baird, Corbin Baird, and guests

**Contact:** rhonda@touch-the-earth.life  
touch-the-earth.life

## Permaculture Design Course Vermont

**Dates:** July 17-26

**Location:** Vermont

**Description:** Utilizing the design studio and site resources of Whole Systems Design, LLC and the Whole Systems Design Research Farm, this course is a skills-based permaculture design training in Vermont. The course offers immersion in a decade-old permaculture site with a highly diverse and integrated built and biological infrastructure in place. The course offers a skill-focused, hands-on alternative to the highly academic permaculture design curriculum typically offered. The course is also particularly appropriate to design student and professionals as it's based at the home office grounds of the WSD landscape architecture studio.

**Instructors:** Ben Falk

**Contact:** 802-343-9490

design@wholesystemdesign.com  
wholesystemdesign.com

### We've got you!

Join the Calendar & Events  
Reminders List.

Send notice to:  
events@permaculturedesign-  
magazine.com  
(by June 1 for August issue)

## Permaculture Design Course North Carolina

**Dates:** September 16-27

**Location:** Asheville, North Carolina area

**Description:** This hands-on permaculture design course (PDC) engages the mind, body, and heart. Students get to see permaculture in action in a wide variety of settings, from urban gardens to forest farms. Throughout the program we get our hands dirty and engage all of your senses; it's about learning by doing. Every one of the instructors incorporates permaculture into their landscapes, businesses, and day-to-day lives. You'll learn from their successes and failures, as they share candidly about diverse experiences applying permaculture principles to real-life situations.

Throughout the 12 intensive days you'll build connections amongst your fellow students while working on real-world design projects for local community members. Interspersed within the course are hands-on activities like gardening, natural building, basket weaving, and pressing fresh apple cider.

**Instructors:** Laura Ruby, Natalie Bogwalker, and guests.

**Cost:** April 24 – July 23, 2020: \$1,129 – \$1,525 with \$300 meal plan option

July 24 – September 15, 2020: \$1,229 – \$1,625 with \$300 meal plan option

**Contact:** Hannah, admin@wildabundance.net

wildabundance.net/classes/permaculture-design-certification-course/

# Calendar

August 19-23. Loveland, Colorado. North American Leadership Summit. pina.in.

## June

June 20-July 4. Cortes Island, BRITISH COLUMBIA. Permaculture Design Course. Tamara@Linnaeafarm.org.

## July

July 5-18. Whitehall, Michigan. Permaculture Design Course. pactivist@mindspring.com.

July 12-17. Stelle, Illinois. Permaculture Teacher Training. midwestpermaculture.com.

July 17-26. Vermont. Permaculture Design Course. wholesystemdesign.com.

July 18-25. Stelle, Illinois. Permaculture Design Course. midwestpermaculture.com

July 30-31; August 6-7. ONLINE. Teacher Training for Children's Permaculture. rhonda@shelteringhills.net.

## August

August 1-16. FRANCE. Permaculture Design Course. contact@permacultive.org.

Aug. 1-2, 29-30; Sept. 19-20; Oct. 3-4, 17-18, Nov. 14-15; Dec. 5-6.. ONLINE. Permaculture Design Course. glpdc.info.

## September

September 10-20. Dancing Rabbit Eco-village, Missouri. Permaculture Design Course. dancingrabbit.org/permaculture/.

September 16-27. Asheville, North Carolina. Permaculture Design Course. wildabundance.net.

September 21-December 11. ONLINE. Permaculture Design Course. shelteringhills.net.

## October

October 10-12, southern Indiana. Touch the Earth Workshop. rhonda@touch-the-earth.life.

## Ongoing

Online. Permaculture Design Course. info@PermacultureEducation.com, PermacultureEducation.com.

Online. Permaculture Design Course. pace.oregonstate.edu/permaculture

Online. Food Forest Course. workspace.oregonstate.edu/course/Permaculture-Food-Forests

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As part of being sustainable and regenerative we also offer solar services and products as an integral part of our design work.

info@growpermaculture.com  
727-495-6145

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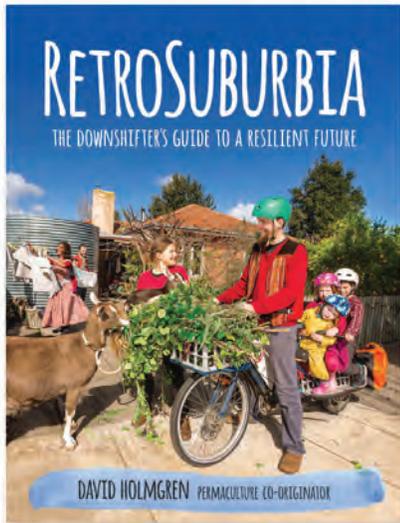
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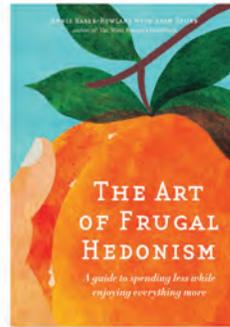
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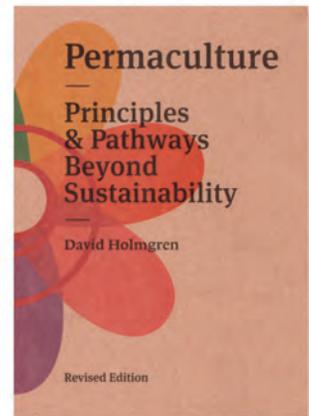


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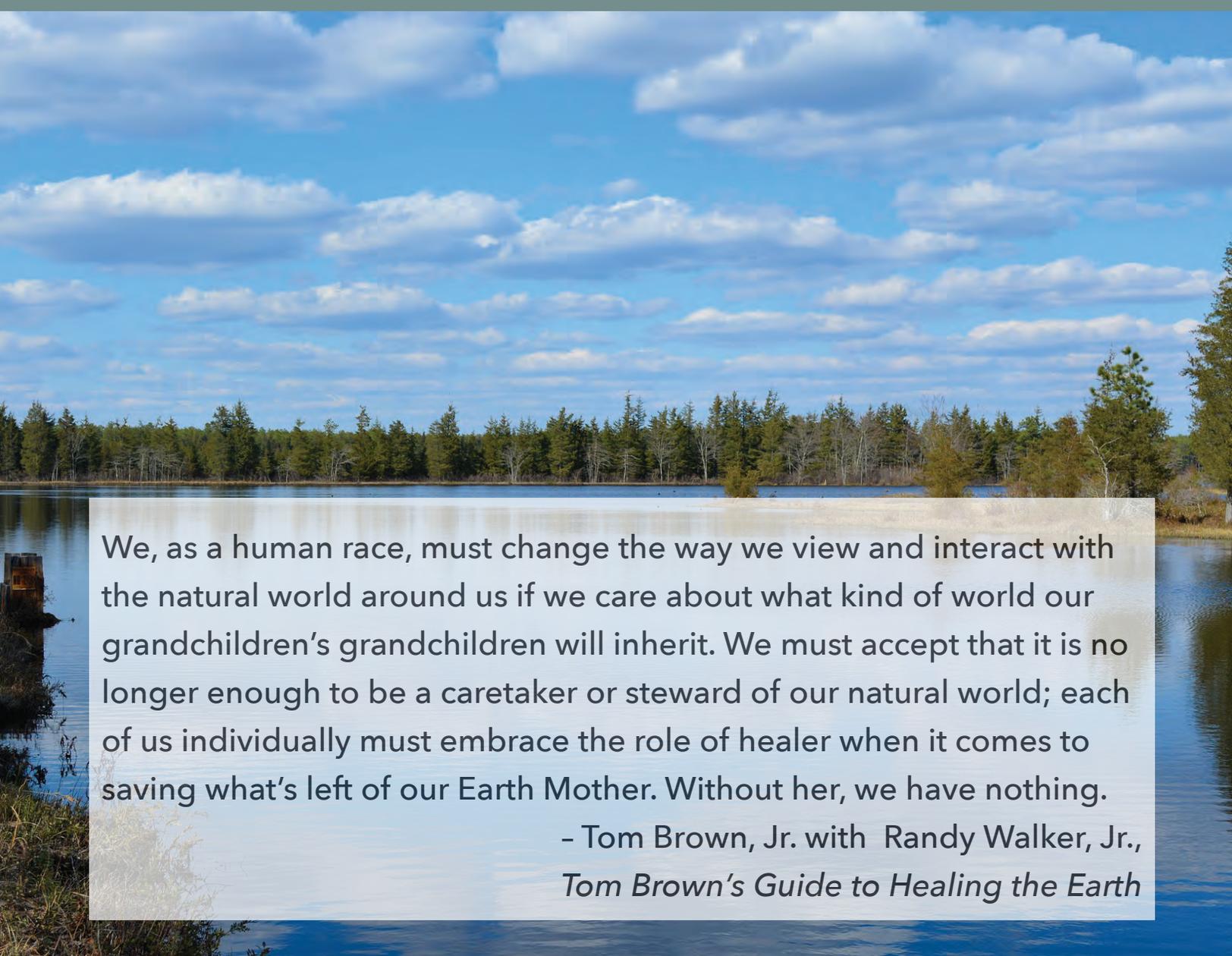
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We, as a human race, must change the way we view and interact with the natural world around us if we care about what kind of world our grandchildren's grandchildren will inherit. We must accept that it is no longer enough to be a caretaker or steward of our natural world; each of us individually must embrace the role of healer when it comes to saving what's left of our Earth Mother. Without her, we have nothing.

- Tom Brown, Jr. with Randy Walker, Jr.,  
*Tom Brown's Guide to Healing the Earth*