

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & CLIMATE PROTECTION

—  CONFERENCE  —
JUNE 15, 2023

The Great Turning
Coalition Building Workshop
Beth Remmes

Three Stories of Our Time

Business as Usual

Mainstream narrative that assumes that there is little need to change the way that we live. It's the story that tells us that we can have infinite growth, with finite resources, and that profits matter more than people and planet. The main goal is to get ahead – no matter the long-term consequences.

The Great Unraveling

Progressive decline and collapse of the countless interlocking elements in the social, environmental, economic, and political systems. While an unraveling is not new to this moment in history, there is a convergence and acceleration of crisis that is unique to this time. It draws attention to the failures caused by Business As Usual and the goal of maximizing growth and profits which is counter to nature which tends to optimize rather than maximize with a series of checks in balances. When cells grow out of control and take over – we call it cancer.

The Great Turning

This story does not give the Great Unraveling the last word. If you choose this story, you see the breakdown as part of the break through. This story involves new and creative responses to **shift from an Industrial Growth Society to Life Sustaining Society.**

Humanity has been through other major revolutions:

The Agricultural Revolution (domesticate animals and plants took thousands of years) 10,000 BC-1700s

Industrial Growth Society (took generations) late 1700s-present

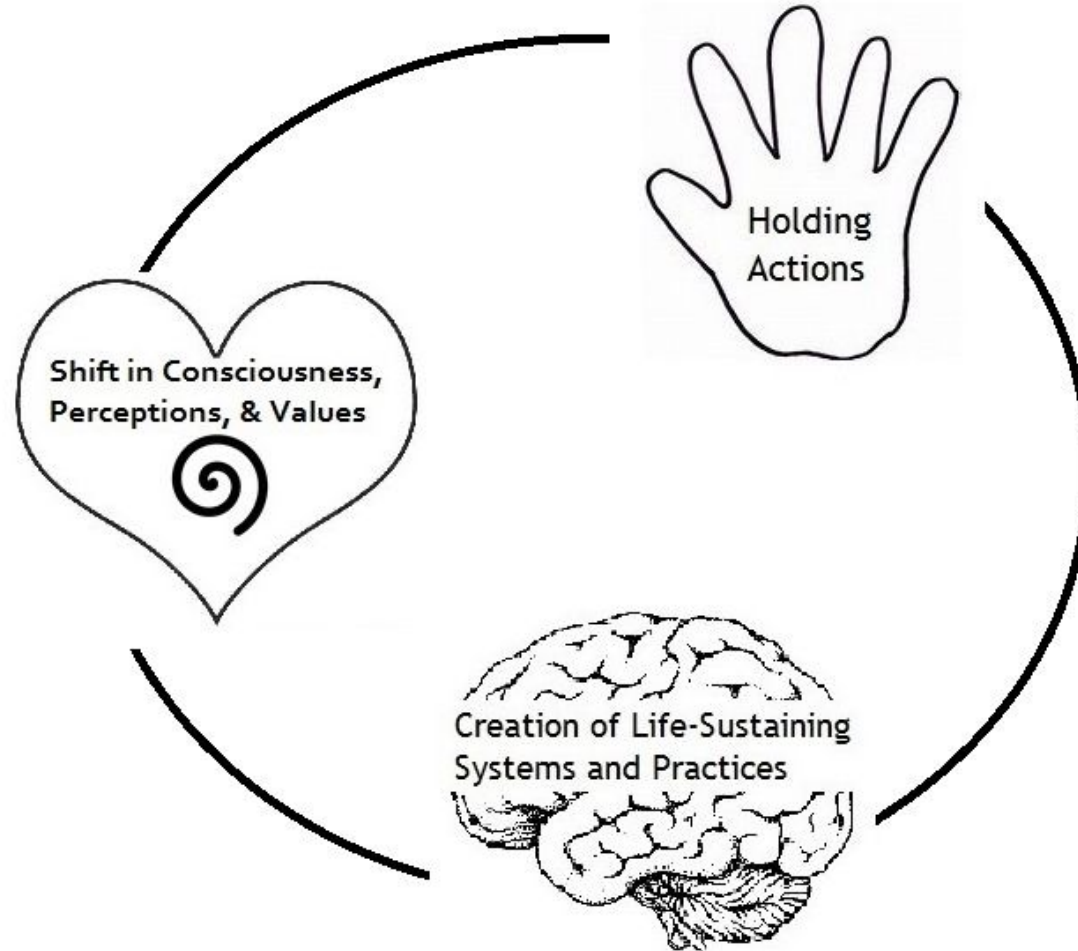
The First Industrial Revolution, which began with textiles in the 18th century, merged into the Second Industrial Revolution around 1850, when technological and economic progress gained momentum with the development of steam-powered ships, railways, and later in the 19th century with the internal combustion engine and electrical power generation and then the assembly line and mass production. We are now in what many call the Third Industrial Revolution or **The Digital Revolution/Information Age**. But they all have one thing in common: **growth at all costs. Profits over People & Planet.**

So how do we make this shift from an Industrial Growth Society to Life-Sustaining Society?

Three Dimensions of The Great Turning

These structural alternatives cannot take root and survive without deeply ingrained values to sustain them. They require a profound shift in our perception of reality--and that shift is happening now, **both as a cognitive revolution and spiritual awakening.**

When we perceive our deeper identity as an ecological self that includes all life on Earth, then acting for the sake of our world doesn't seem like a sacrifice. It is a natural and fulfilling thing to do.



Actions to slow the damage to Earth and its beings. Perhaps the most visible dimension of the Great Turning, these activities include all the political, legislative, and legal work required to reduce the destruction, as well as direct actions--blockades, boycotts, civil disobedience, and other forms of refusal.

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

R. Buckminster Fuller



HOLDING ACTIONS/ RESISTANCE



Holding actions save lives, ecosystems, species and cultures. It is heroic work! It can be tiring and filled with defeats – don't feel guilty if you need to take a break – there are other ways to participate in the Great Turning.

SHOW UP

Protests
Marches
Boycotts
Strikes
Sit-ins
Town halls
Community meetings

SPEAK UP

Phone calls
Letters to the editor
Petitions
Resistbot
Whistle blowing
Journalism
Speaking our truth

ORGANIZE

Lawsuits
Elections/campaigning
Divestments - Defunding
198 Methods of Nonviolent Action

NEW/REMEMBERED SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES



- Biocultural restoration
- Legal and Cultural Rights for LGBTQIA+ people
- Rights of Nature Movement
- Timebanks
- Herbalism
- Green burials
- Restorative justice
- Repair Cafes
- CSAs
- Slow food movement
- Organic farming
- Permaculture
- Urban gardening
- Edible landscapes
- Renewable energy/Conservation
- Local Living Economies/ Climate Resilience Hubs
- Sharing programs (cars, tools)
- Raise Minimum Wage
- Remembrance and Reconciliation projects
- Donut Economics
- Zero Waste
- Living Buildings
- Factory as Forest

SHIFT IN CONSCIOUSNESS, PERCEPTIONS, AND VALUES.

Cognitive revolution and spiritual awakening



Honorable Harvest

Kincentric

Storytelling

Gaia Theory

Biomimicry (Nature as Mentor rather than resource)

Mindfulness

Meditation

Yoga

Art/signs

Antiracism work

Living room Conversations – civil discourse

Meditation

Forest Bathing/Nature Connection

GNH – Gross National Happiness - Bhutan

Charter for Compassion

Tiny House Movement

Center for New American Dream

HeartMath Institute/Global Coherence Institute

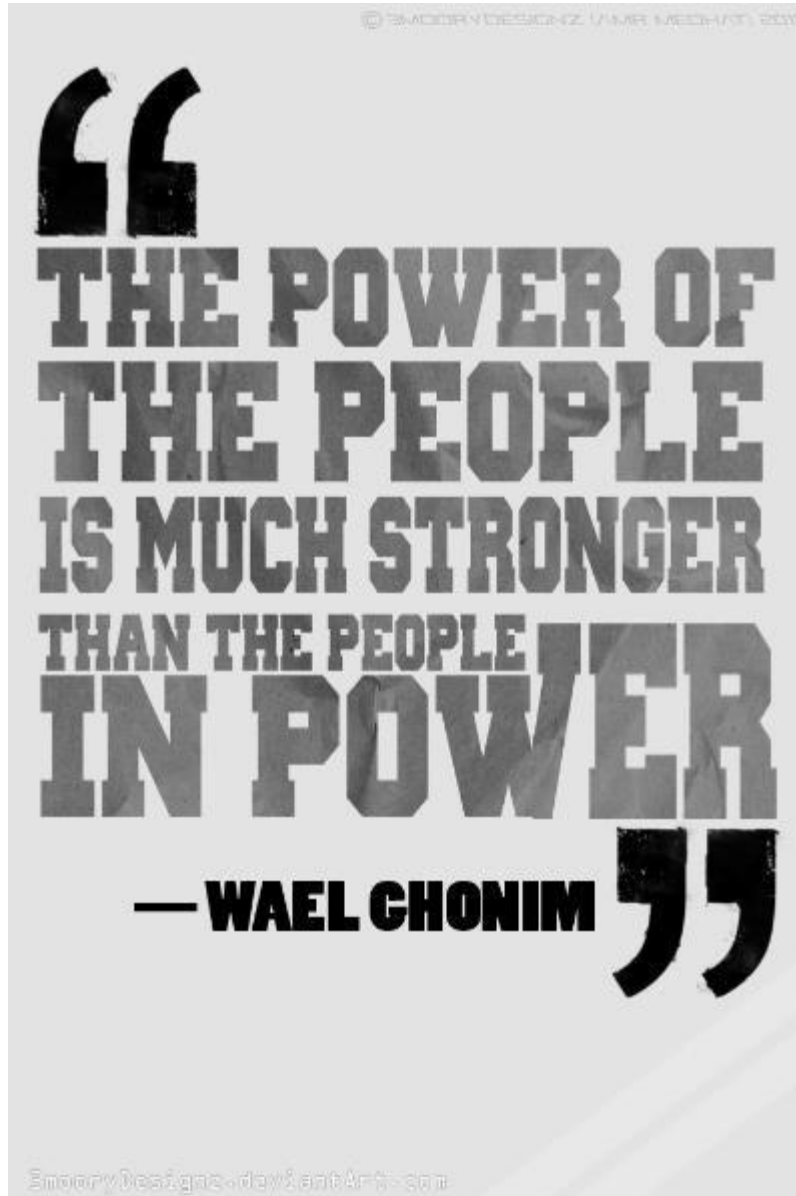
The resurgence of shamanic traditions/vision quests

Subtle/Sacred Activism -connecting spiritual awareness with collective concerns

Pachamama Alliance – Indigenous Wisdom/Modern Knowledge

Open Sentence

As I look at my life, the ways I see myself taking part in the Great Turning are by...



The power generated when working with others is based on synergy, which is when two or more parties working together create results that would not have occurred if they worked alone or in competition.

In systems, these interactions create emergent properties which are greater than the sum of its parts and more than imagined.

D.H. Lawrence wrote,

Water is H₂O,

Hydrogen two parts

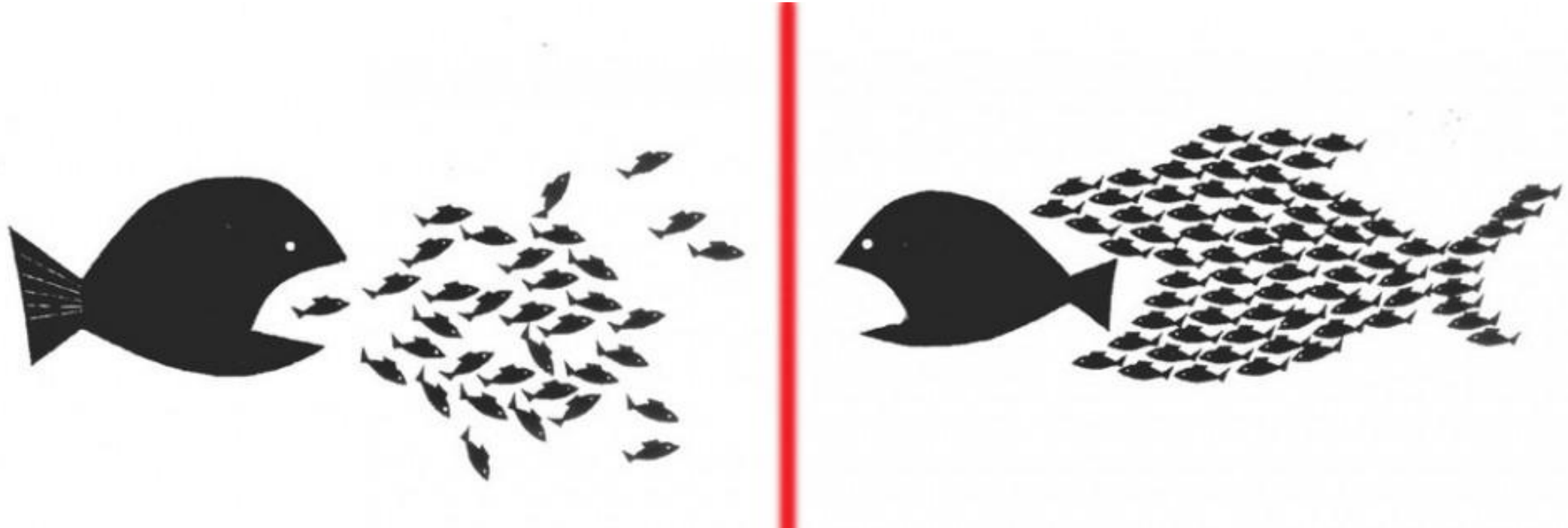
Oxygen one

But there is also a third thing that makes it water.

And nobody knows what that is.

What new capacities and solutions can emerge when groups of people act together? Who should we work with?

COMPETITION OR COOPERATION?



“Survival of the fittest” does not mean only the strong will survive. That phrase wasn’t even introduced until Darwin’s 5th edition of *On the Origin of Species* after it was coined by Herbert Spencer and applied to his own economic theories after reading Darwin. By “fittest,” Darwin meant that those who are most “fit” – most well adapted to their conditions, able to optimize their energy use, and able to partner well with others – are most likely to survive.

Darwin actually noted that humankind’s real power comes in their ability to perform complex tasks together, to sympathize and cooperate. In the more than human world, mutualisms tend to increase in times of stress. In places that are harder to live in, there are more mutualisms. During difficult times, like during a drought, organisms become more cooperative.

“Life did not take over the globe by combat, but by networking.”

Evolutionary Biologist Dr. Lynn Margulis



[Georgia Today: State's beloved Okefenokee Swamp at the heart of plan for new titanium dioxide mine | Georgia Public Broadcasting \(gpb.org\)](#)

Long-legged wading birds, such as Egrets, Herons, Ibises, and Storks choose nesting sites above American Alligators. The Alligators help keep Raccoons and Possums away from the nest. In return, the Alligator has more opportunities for nutrients. Bird droppings likely attract small fish to the Alligators and birds often hatch more chicks than they can care for, so they reduce their brood by pushing chicks out of the nest to the hungry gators below. Often 1–2 chicks - either alive or dead - are pushed from each nest, which in breeding colonies, or “rookeries,” adds up to be a substantial food source.

Studies showed that Alligators measured larger when they lived near wading bird nesting colonies than the ones who lived in locations without colonies.

The successful protection of the nests from predation and the increased girth of the Alligators demonstrate that this relationship is a mutualism - which is one that is beneficial for both species.



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SYNAPSE

by Biomimicry 3.8

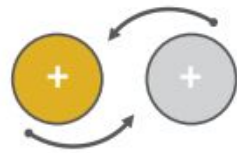
MUTUALISMS IN NATURE

Key Characteristics to Inspire Partnerships

Published July 2017

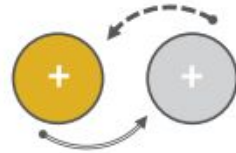
Mutualisms in nature take many forms, yet ultimately mean prospering in a reciprocal partnership where the success of one party supports the success of the other.

4
Key Criteria
for Enduring Partnerships
 By Dr. Doyra Baumeister



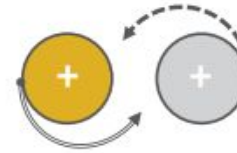
1

Must be a *net* benefit for each party which fosters a *reinforcing feedback loop*



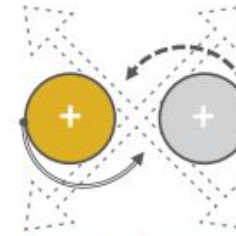
2

The value exchange is of *different* resources or services



3

The benefit (of resources or services) is something each partner can *readily* provide to the other



4

Partners respond and adapt to each other and to changing contexts



Clownfish + sea anemone



Zooxanthellae + coral polyps



Lichen (algae + fungus + fungus)



Cleaner wrasse + ocean fish



Boxer crabs + sea anemone



Leaf cutter ant + mycelium

How might nature's insights further optimize your healthy partnership?

How might nature's insights help your struggling partnership thrive?

Any other insights?

Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world. Even when we don't "win," there is fun and fulfillment in the fact that we have been involved, with other good people, in something worthwhile.

Howard Zinn

Symbioses ----- 9

No organism exists in a vacuum. Since all of life is interconnected and interdependent, indirect and direct interactions between organisms result in a variety of outcomes for each party in the interaction. Depending on the exchange of resources or services, these interactions may be beneficial, harmful, or have no effect on one of both of the organisms. The range of possibilities for a pair of organisms is captured in the graphic below. Not shown, is the entire suite of interactions that any given organism might have with others in its habitat.

