

SESSION ONE:

Introduction to Regenerative Development & Design

Overview: Problem solving breaks whole systems into pieces. When we look for the bad part that is to blame for the problem and try to repair, replace, or remove it, we fragment systems and communities. Beginning with whole systems allows us to work on potential instead of problems. This is one of the benefits of working regeneratively. To see potential, we need to stop focusing on the problem and broaden our perspective to see how the problem points to potential for the larger system, as well as the parts.

Remember the principles:

- Work with wholes
- Work from potential, not problems
- Develop capability
- Build a collaborative field

Example: My oldest son used to bother his younger brother and sister every morning until they cried. No matter how much his mother and I scolded, he would not stop. Instead of problem-solving to attempt to correct his behavior, we re-framed the situation to work see the potential in cultivating family harmony. Through this lens, we saw that our son needed an outlet for his excess energy. Through redirecting his energy towards a morning bike ride, it became clear he was not a bad kid and he was able to develop both his balance and his body. Rather than solving a problem and suppressing our son's behavior, we encouraged a different behavior to help him develop himself. The potential for family harmony developed further when his grandfather, an avid cyclist, began taking our son on bike rides. Our family relationships only grew stronger and we were having a lot more fun biking than scolding. It was critical to consider the whole of the situation to see the potential of our ultimate goal, develop capabilities, and build a field of caring throughout our extended family.

Try this exercise:

You will be doing two things at once - a) thinking about the answers to these questions and b) reflecting on how you are thinking.

- 1) Think of a problem you have in your life, work, or at school.
 - a. Be specific: What is the problem? And why is it a problem?
 - b. What does it block or prevent from happening that is important to you?
- 2) Now consider the larger system this “problem” is in.

- a. What is this larger system?
 - b. What is the condition of that larger system you are hoping to create?
 - c. How is the problem getting in the way of that?
- 3) Think about when you shifted your focus from the problem to the potential of the system.
- a. How did your perspective change?
 - b. What are you able to see now, that was invisible before?
 - c. How does that change your view of the problem?

Optional:

- 4) Who else may need to be included to shift the problem, so it is no longer in the way of what you are aiming to create?
- 5) How would you need to engage them, so they too saw the potential of the system and committed to realizing the outcome?
- 6) Reflect on how you need to think differently for questions 4) and 5).