

SESSION TWO: Application of Regenerative Principles

Overview:

Using nodal interventions that help systems to realize their potential is often compared to acupuncture. Reading the patterns or pulses in the body, Chinese medicine practitioners look for where focused stimulation can unlock vitality and health. Small changes can have systemic effects if they are strategically placed to release pent-up energies.

Another common example of this approach is adding yeast to bread dough. Introducing a small but potent species to the mix transforms some of the nutrients into more digestible form. It inspires gases in a way that turns soggy flat bread into a crispy, fluffy delight. Introducing a specific biological agent to the mix at the right time "spoils" the dough into a more nutritious and palatable form. The problem of food spoilage is addressed by looking at the larger system we are serving (nourishing people) and selecting the form of spoilage that best serves this aim.

In this session, we introduced three new principles:

- Work with nested systems
- Find nodal interventions
- Work from the uniqueness of each place

And reviewed the principles from our first session:

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

Try this exercise:

The best way to learn is to look from a different perspective.

One way to do this is to ask new questions. Particularly ones you do not have ready answers for. Think of it as a game.

- a) Think of the neighborhood or community your home, business, or project lies within. If it were a person, who would it be? (e.g. active and vital or slow and reserved, creative or traditional, etc..)
- b) What/where are the healthiest expressions of this character? Where are there blockages or challenges? Why?

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- c) How does your neighborhood relate to adjoining neighborhoods? What role(s) does it play in the larger city/town/community? Is it all business? Education? Recreation?...
- d) How might taking these insights into your thinking in your work and play enable you to be more effective in growing your community? Think of both short-term and long-term ideas.
- e) How might your neighborhood celebrate who it is in ways that make it conscious and an obvious guide to orienting work in the place?
- f) How might you engage others in exploring these questions? Try it out and notice the responses, both in words and in people's energy.
- g) What does this teach us about regeneration and the role of people's spirit in the life of a place?