

A REGENERATIVE APPROACH TO TOURISM

Life Is the Project . . .

Bill Reed · Regenesi Group

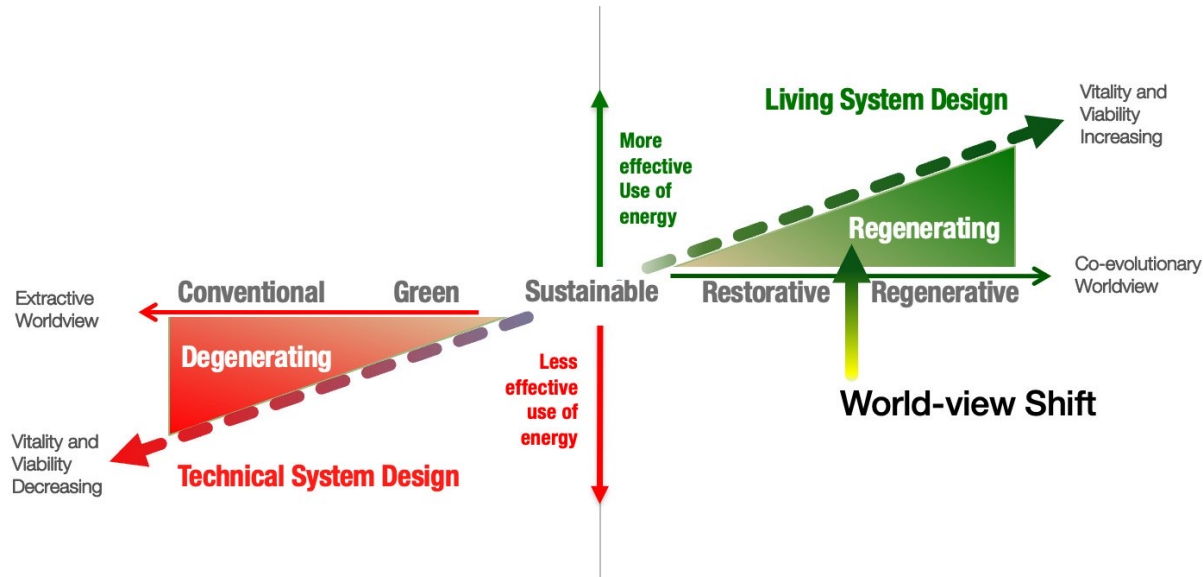
REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Doing less harm,
Ecologically aware,
Sensitive to local culture.

Positive impact,
“Leaving a place better.”

Staying in the game
of evolution.

Actively increasing the
capacity of living systems to
evolve and become more
fully themselves.



WHAT REGENERATION IS

Regeneration is a process of
engaging human activity
in a way that contributes to the
ongoing evolution and vitality of living systems.

WHAT REGENERATION IS

It is not generic . . .

What scale?

It is local and place-sourced — every place is unique (essence)

How?

Relational, purposeful, and emergent — the interactive quality of relationship

Outcome?

Capability for Co-evolution — within people, community, and the living system

Regenerative tourism works with the **Whole System**

the guest

the practitioner

the community

the ecosystem

In other words, all the dynamics of each place

all capable of being changed by the encounter.

WHY IT MAY FEEL INACCESSIBLE

Parts and Fragments vs. Wholes?

Does its deep simplicity trip us up?

Reductionism seemingly makes things simple? . . . fragments we manage and control.

HOW DO WE WORK WITH A WHOLE LIVING SYSTEM?

Fragments v. Whole Systems



WORKING WITH NATURE ON ITS OWN TERMS

Nature self-organizes as a whole system. Partnering requires us to let go of ‘control’

Reductionist View

Isolated fragments / **Parts we manage/control**

Metrics as proxy for health

Human as operator / controller



Whole-System View

Nested relationships

Capacity to self-organize / Evolving potential

Human as observer / participant



PARADIGMS OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIP WITH LIVING SYSTEMS

*Inherent potential is grounded in the **unique essence** of every living entity — a person, a place.*





PLAYA VIVA

Juluchuca, Guerrero, Mexico

Honoring essence (intrinsic nature) is the foundation for healthy relationships.

Relationships that keep learning and deepening over time.



LAS SALINAS

Viña del Mar, Chile

A community rebuilding relationships by discovering what it cared about . . .

by being asked to look at what their place was trying to re-birth.





FOGO ISLAND

Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada

Love for a place – fierce
enough to build an
institution in its service.

Powerfully place-sourced.



OTTERCREEK WOODWORKS

Tillsonburg, Ontario, Canada

Craft, land, and family as a living whole:

Discovering and sharing
a story of tradition,
appreciation, and
regeneration of place.

A deepening of caring . . .

EXERCISE — ESSENCE & POTENTIAL IN A PERSON

Bring to mind a person you know well, who you deeply appreciate.

Do not focus on their achievements or their role, **but**
the quality (essence) underneath all of that.

What excites them? In what situations did they have purpose, passion, and joy?

What nature of thinking, being, or way of engaging fully energize them?

Was that quality present when they were very young, that now appears in moments of clarity or even persists to the present? . . . i.e., the nature of being and functioning that makes them unmistakably themselves.

Image this for 90 seconds . . .

EXERCISE — ESSENCE & POTENTIAL IN A PERSON

How did you recognize that quality?

Were you told?

Did you closely observe?

What period of time did it take you to understand?

EXERCISE — ESSENCE & POTENTIAL IN A PERSON

Now think of conditions that suppressed that quality.

What was present in those situations that asked them to be something other than themselves?

What was the nature of that environment – not what happened, but how it felt to watch them react within it?

What was different? What de-energized them? What was absent?

Feel into that for 30 seconds . . .

Did the contrast help you to refine your understanding of this person?

We experience life through perceiving wholeness, not parts.

Living entities (systems) have this quality of wholeness – an essential nature.

A place. A watershed. A community. A culture.

Our work: sensing that quality or essence

Understanding conditions would let their inherent potential be realized.

EXERCISE — THE PLACE AS A LIVING SYSTEM

Think of a place you work with — not your vision for it, but the place as it actually is.

Bring to mind the way you brought that person to mind:

How it feels to be in it.

How does it 'work' you?

What makes it unmistakably itself?

90 seconds of quiet . . .

EXERCISE — THE PLACE AS A LIVING SYSTEM

What makes this place unique compared to other places in the region?

What is the quality that persists underneath whatever has been built, altered, or lost — present before you arrived, still there or reappearing if you left?

Sit with this for 2 minutes . . .

EXERCISE — THE PLACE AS A LIVING SYSTEM

*If you listen to it rather than plan for it — what does it want to become?
(not what YOU want)*

Converse with the person next to you.

Not a problem-solving conversation.

Simply, “here is what I sensed.”

Ninety seconds each.

EXERCISE — THE PLACE AS A LIVING SYSTEM

*What shifted in you as you moved through those questions?
Not what you learned about the place, what changed in how you were
relating to it?*

SYNTHESIS

A place seen as a whole – rather than managed as a set of resources – moves in the direction it was always trying to move i.e., healthy evolution

Not primarily a technical intervention.

It's a quality of relationship.

We don't 'do' regeneration –

We establish the conditions for regeneration to develop.

TRANSFORMATION

Generation . . . then . . . Re-generation

Q&A

How the heck do you practice this?

Working with Wholes

Reductionism isolates fragments to manage and control them. With unintended consequences.

Living systems practice works with the self-organizing intelligence of the whole (human and other than human life).

Reductionist View

Isolated fragments

Parts to manage and control

Metrics as proxy for health

Fixed objectives

Human as operator



Whole-System View

Nested relationships

Capacity to self-organize

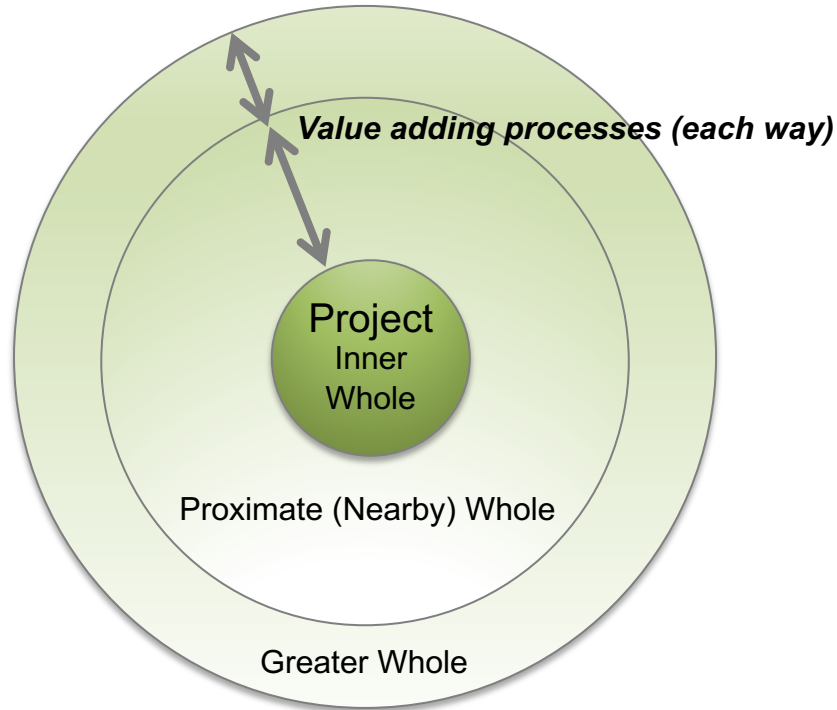
Patterns as signal

Evolving potential

Human as participant



Nested Wholes – Value-Adding Reciprocity



Inner Whole

The project site — its soils, hydrology, built fabric, and immediate community.

Proximate (Nearby) Whole

The surrounding landscape and community — the larger living context the project inhabits.

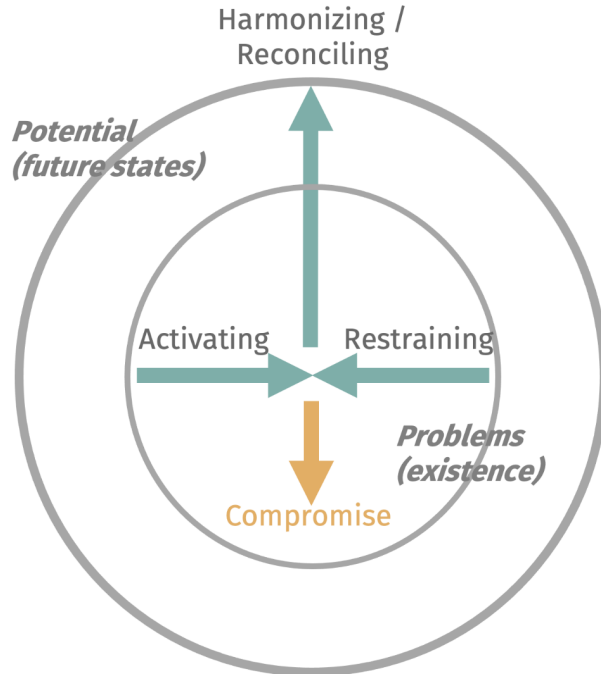
Greater Whole

The watershed, bioregion, and planetary system — the source of vitality for all nested levels.

Value-Adding Reciprocity — each nested level contributes to the vitality of the whole it lives within.

The Law of Three

Every generative act arises from the interaction of three distinct forces.



Activating or Affirming Force

The active force — initiating, seeding potential, bringing what wants to emerge.

Restraining, Denying or Receiving Force

The resistant force — not opposition but necessary structure that gives form.

Reconciling

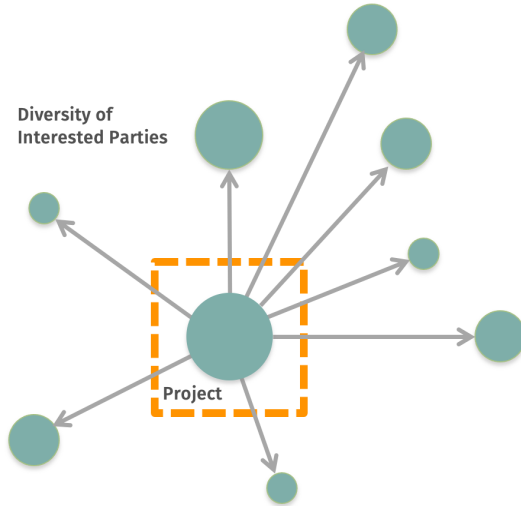
The mediating third — the creative intelligence through which a new whole arises.

When all three forces are genuinely present, something new becomes possible that could not have arisen from any one force alone.

Transaction vs. Reciprocity

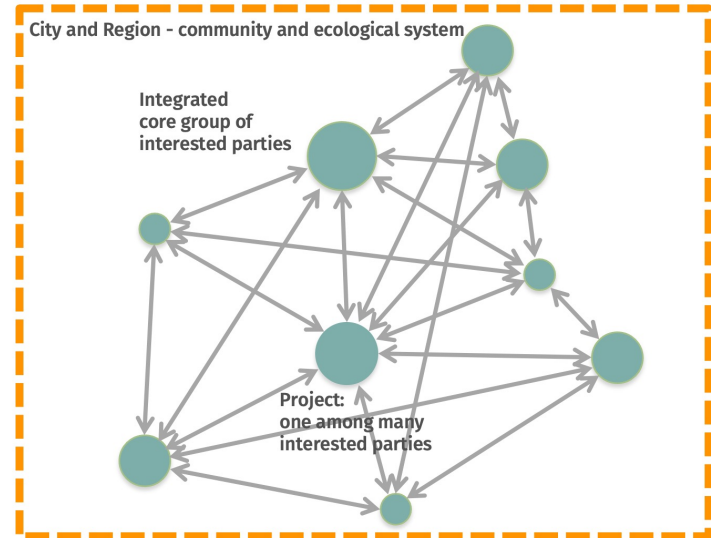
Building Fields of Cooperation and Co-evolution

Old Relationship



Transactional (Rewards / Cost-benefits)

New Relationship



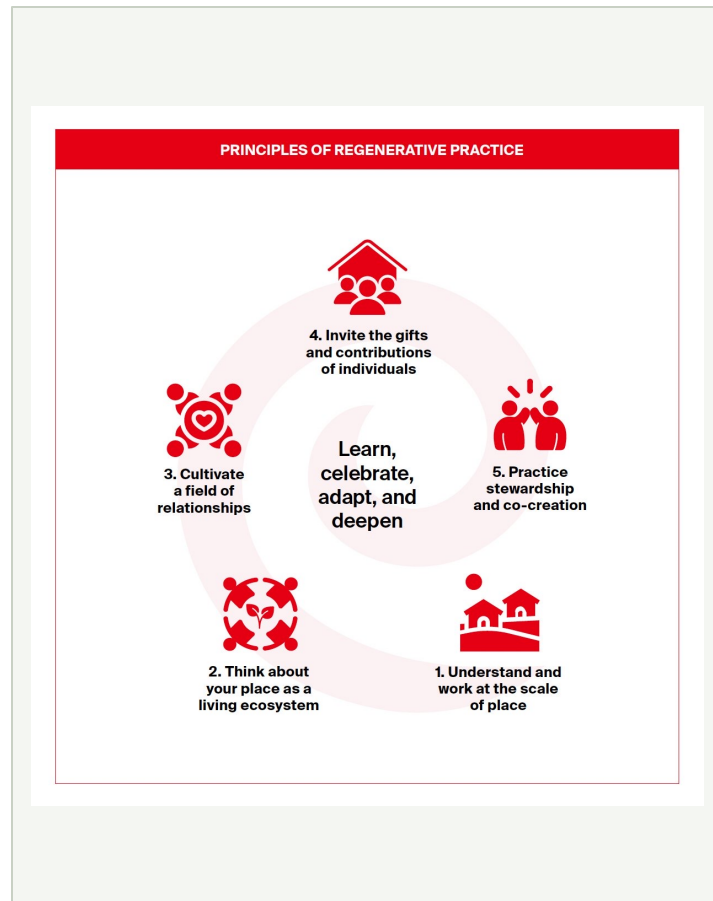
Reciprocal - (a dance of mutual benefit and greater potential)

PRACTICE — STEWARDSHIP & CO-CREATION

Regeneration is Practice,
not an event or metric

Regeneration is a synonym for continual evolution and development. The work is to get things done in service of your place's potential for thriving.

How do we develop new capabilities to co-evolve? What would bring people together over time? How do we avoid problem-solving and reductionism?





OTTERCREEK WOODWORKS

Artisan to Forest Storyteller

David Schonberger

OTTERCREEK WOODWORKS



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*Visitors come not to consume the
place but to be changed by meeting
it.*

WORKING WITH NATURE ON ITS OWN TERMS

Life runs up! Nature self-organizes as a whole system.

Partnering requires us to let go of 'control'





PLAYA VIVA

Juluchuca, Guerrero, Mexico

Regenerative resort embedded within an ejido community land trust.

Story of Place methodology grounded in coastal mangrove and sea-turtle ecology.

Community as co-creator — essential to discovering the place's potential.

Outcomes: turtle nesting restored, mangrove recovery, community economic sovereignty.



FOGO ISLAND

Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada

Embedded within Shorefast Foundation's model of community economic sovereignty.

Fog, isolation, deep fishing culture, silence — treated as the design brief, not a constraint to overcome.

Visitors come not to consume the place but to be changed by meeting it.



ÎLE GAGNON

Rivière des Mille Îles, Québec, Canada

An island shaped by a long human relationship with water, forest, and seasonal rhythm.

Development beginning with Story of Place: what is this island already trying to become?

Nested systems work: the island's health inseparable from the wider Laurentian watershed.