

## The 2022 Bioregional Regeneration Summit

<http://bit.ly/rcn2022info>

### the Natural Growth Path - a plan to change plans

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Slides: <https://synapse9.com/EnTrans/2022-1101-the%20NaturalGrowthPath.pdf>

Original Invitation: <https://synapse9.com/signals/the-natural-growth-path/>

Notes on the talk:

The discussion focused on the stages of change in natural creative processes, particularly the growth of emerging systems which is invariably a plan to change plans. The natural growth of either human or other natural creative system developments starts with a “germination” trigger event that initiates the development of a self-animating system that first has to capture resources used to expand its ability to capture more, a growth process. To do that, it must also animate and incorporate its sensing and response to opportunities for finding and adapting to new resources while creating new support structures. Thus building on a single pattern of animated growth, with supporting patterns, growth creates “whole systems” of animated design coupled to their environments. the substance of “growth.”

The need to change plans comes from that initial expanding and exploratory process being highly sensitive to approaching limits to its structures and emerging conflicts with its environment, which, in nature (skipping over some detail on exactly how), very often triggers a shift from multiplying the original pattern to converting its resources to helping what grew mature for exploring, and finding reliable niches and roles in the larger new world it emerges into, that triggered “turn forward” event being normally called “birth.”

A small group of appreciative newcomers to the regeneration movement attended, so we focused mostly on learning how growth systems steer their paths, responding to contextual signals of opportunity or distress that we all experience in the course of making life choices about when and how to commit and give birth to our emerging creative projects or new relationships.

The subject of true regenerative finance, the way our world system would steer its path ahead to become part of nature, never came up due to the absence of any representatives of the knowledgeable LinkedIn or Bioregional Regen communities intensely concerned with finding survival strategies in a world so clearly headed for a major collapse, or possibly a series of collapses. I think it’s entirely plausible that the managers of the financial system could have a more or less sudden change of heart if they realized that their ever-escalating abuse of humanity and nature was likely to collapse our whole civilization, as grand abuses authority did for the two civilizations that we descend from that disappeared that way, the Mycean Greek Mycenaean Greek civilization, and Roman.

It took a few hours after that for the very clear whole community rejection of my work to become deeply traumatizing, the apparent direct conflict between my whole system approach and the broad community’s focus on addressing just the

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symptoms. It's very natural to reject as highly unpleasant or stupid to address looking at the deep causes of humanity's self-destructive obsession with power and to deeply doubt those caught up in it could ever reform. They are also mostly good moms and dads, however, highly educated professionals who clearly know what to do with knowledge and have divided loyalties.

Yet, even my oldest and most connected associates in the advanced sustainability movement, after over ten years of attempted collaboration, still decline to look at other indicators than symptoms and decline to look for opportunities for changing the causes of what is now an existential crisis for civilization, and the chance of cultural collapse for all it supported, as before. The alternative would be facing the problem that the world economy seems organized to be blind to the effects of multiplying its solutions till they become mortal threats.

Personal note:

I must say I am deeply grateful for being introduced to the broader regeneration culture at LinkedIn and the Summit. I could hardly imagine a more appealing group of people. My experience of total rejection of looking into nature's common solutions for this kind of crisis, nature's everywhere admired paths for growth systems becoming part of nature - we ALL seem to say we need to do too - is too much for me to bear.

It has reduced my disabling bodily anxiety a little by writing this, and I don't mean to advocate any change in anyone else's thinking, but I thought I

should at least tell you about it. It also happened ten years ago while working at the UN, helping to write the SDGs. The community of wonderful NGOs that led the SDG drafting process rejected any inquiry into the causes of the crisis and insisted on focusing only on the symptoms. So... they picked maximizing growth (the cause) as the main solution, and they promoted capitalistic development to achieve measurable objectives to do it. The less competitive countries consistently failed at that, too, as being interfered with by superior competition had been their problem. The community development parts of the plan then also fell behind. In the SDG drafting process, only the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group (OWG), Ambassadors Korosi and Kamari, sympathized with me, but in their roles as coordinators, could only observe the process of negotiation between the NGOs and the national delegates.

I hope there's a day when we'll stop rejecting out of hand each other's insights into what's needed for us to become part of nature. It would be ridiculous for me to be hopeful, though. In the world systems science community, I'm facing the same bloody thing, the kneejerk rejection of growth being nature's process of building individual whole systems. They like some of my talks but refuse to study the subject or to peer-review my papers. Maybe this is too much personal stuff. Thank you so much for looking at this report on my talk.

All the best,

Jessie Henshaw