

# THE POWER OF REGENERATIVE THINKING TO CREATE FLOURISHING DESTINATIONS

Anna Pollock

Founder, Conscious.Travel

**STiAS**

Sustainable Tourism in Austria  
Summit



1. **Why Regeneration?** - the context
2. **What?** Regeneration & Sustainability  
Concepts, Key principles & implications
3. **How and where to start?**



## World Is Facing Unprecedented Polycrisis, Warns WTO



*“present and future risks can also interact with each other to form a ‘**polycrisis**’ – a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such that the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part”.*



*“There’s no single cause,  
nor a single fix...”*

*A combination of improvisation,  
reform and crisis management  
might just get us through” - Adam Tooze, Economist*



## UN boss to Davos: You're the problem

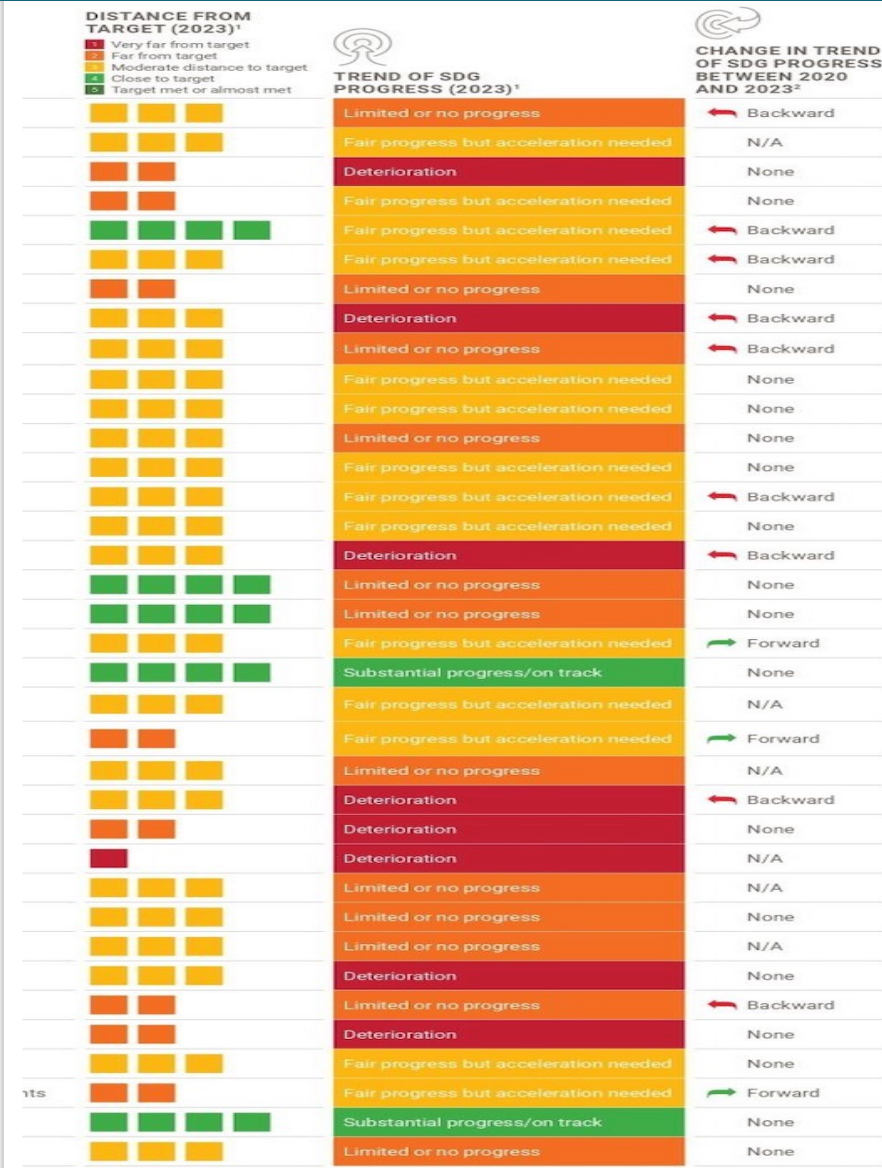
António Guterres warns that the race to increase fossil fuel production is 'inconsistent with human survival.'



*“We need to **change course** – now – and end our senseless and suicidal war against nature,” he said.*

*“We must place true value on the environment and **go beyond** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of human progress and well-being.*

*Instead, we must shift to a **circular and regenerative economy.**” <sup>[1]</sup>*



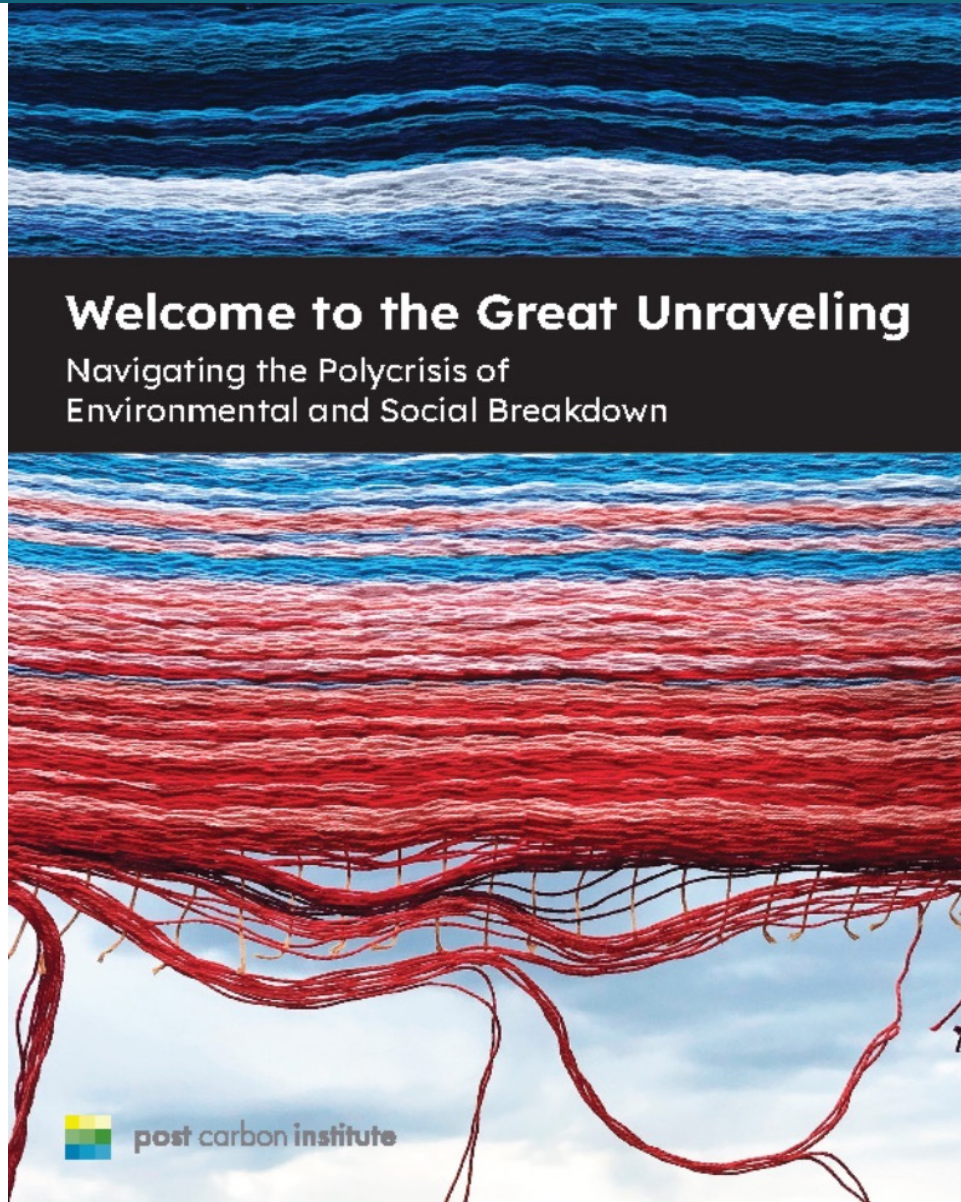
## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*"At the midpoint on the way to 2030, half of the 140 targets are moderately or severely off track and 30% have seen no movement at all....."*

*The Sustainable Development Goals are disappearing in the rear-view mirror.*

*A **fundamental shift** is needed – in commitment, solidarity, financing and action – to put the world on a better path. And it is needed **now**."*





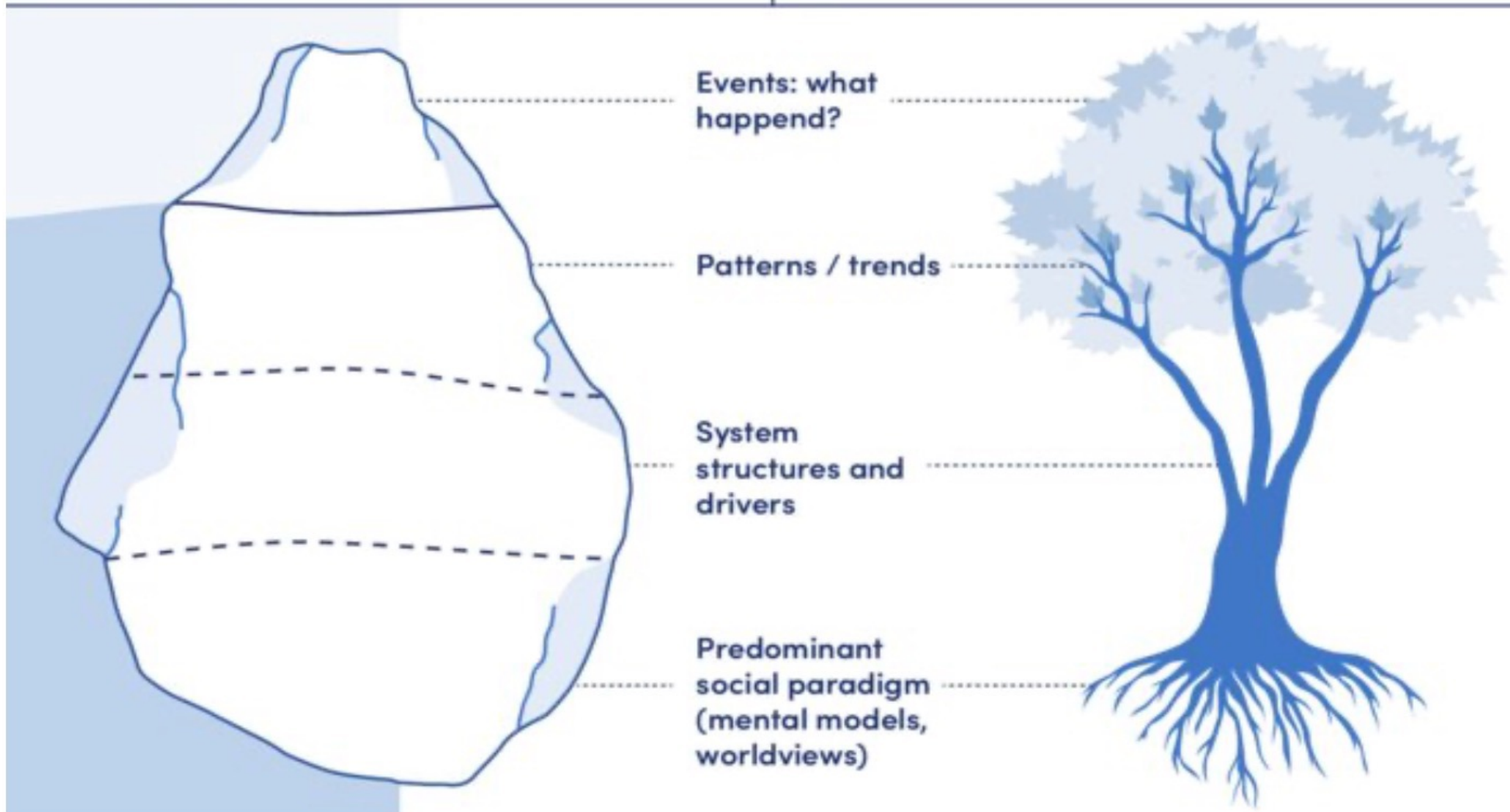
- Climate
- Biodiversity
- Toxic Chemicals
- Ocean Acidification
- Waste
- Soil loss and harm
- Resource Depletion
- Extreme Weapons
- Wealth Inequality
- Artificial Intelligence
- Political Polarisation

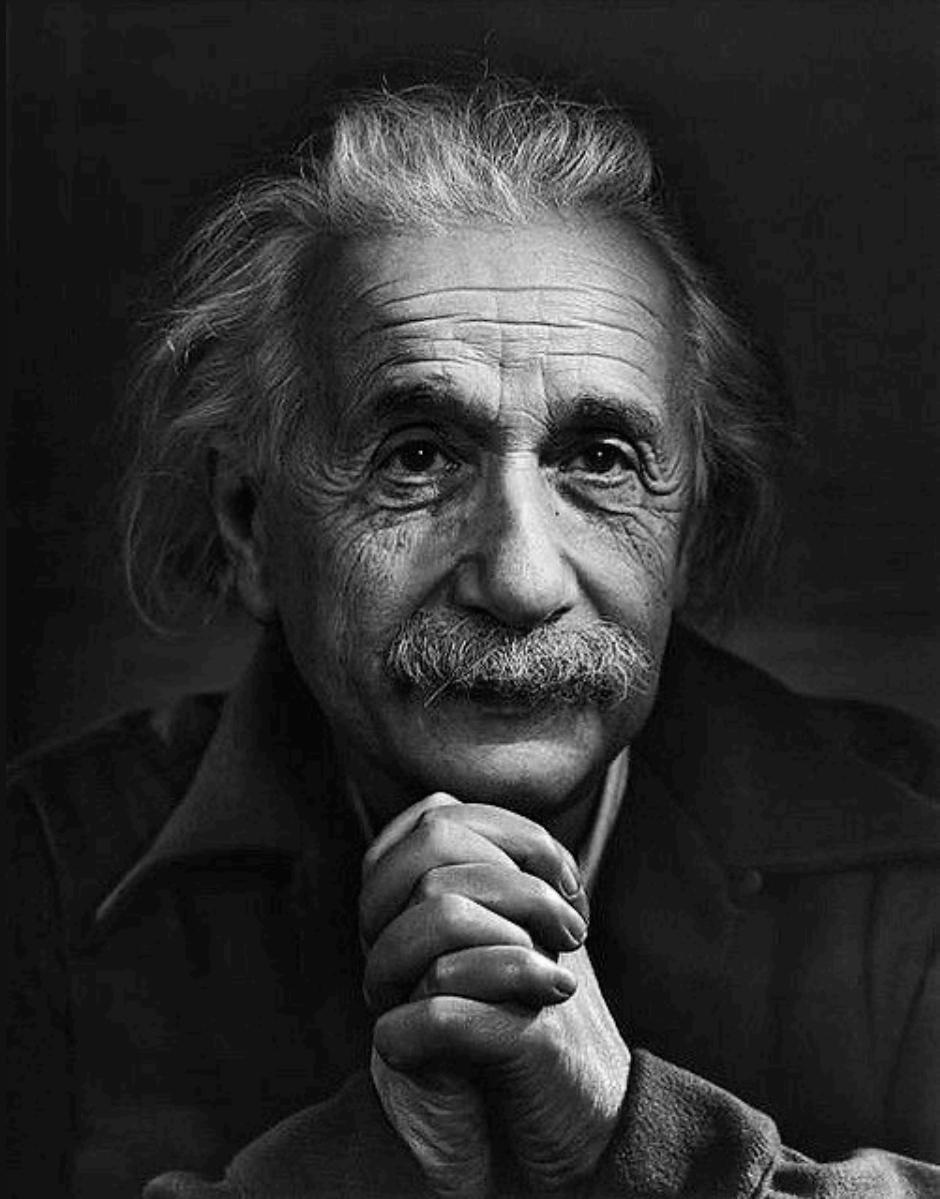




A) Iceberg Model

B) Tree Model





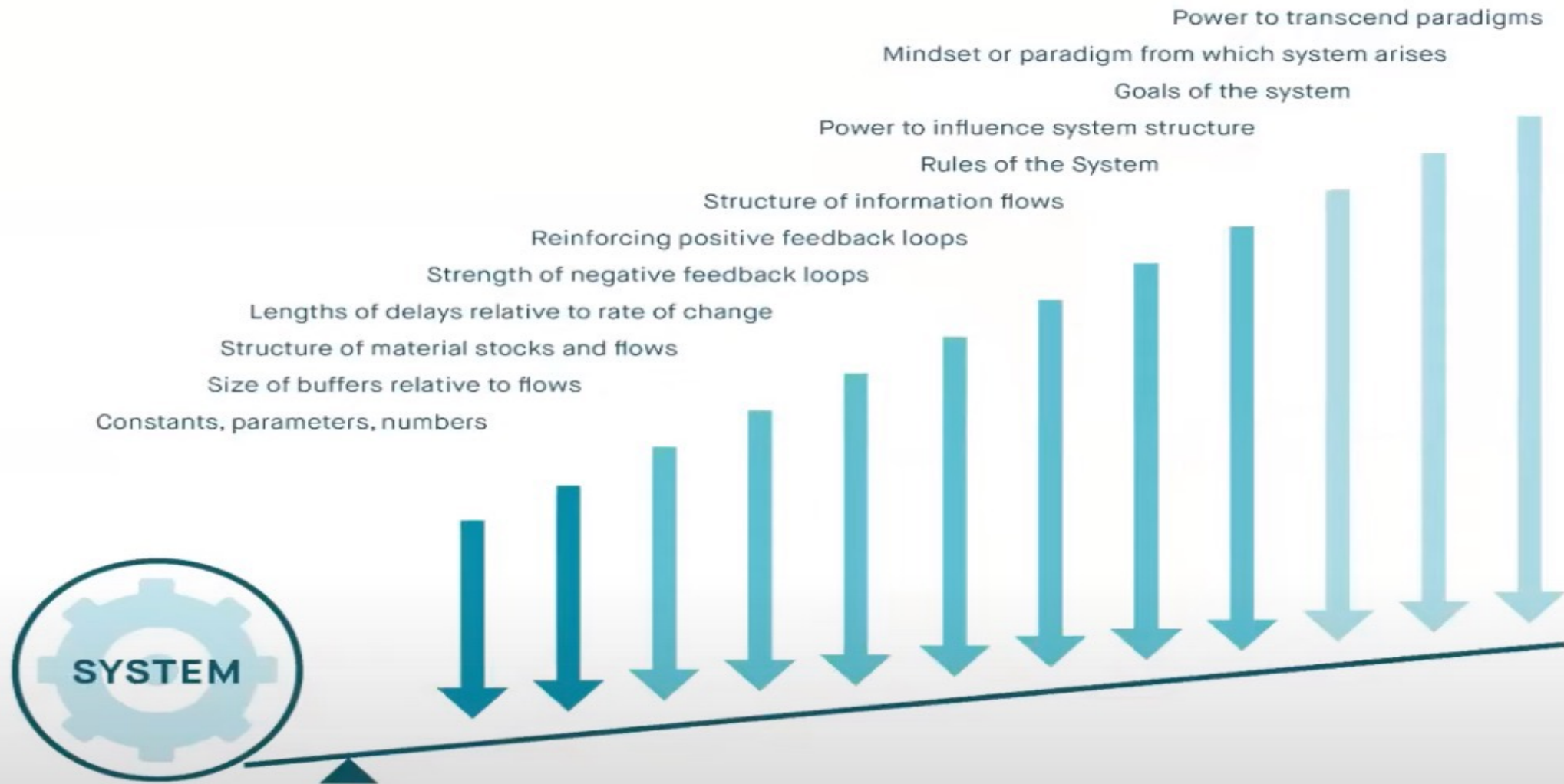
*“The world we have created is a product of our thinking; it cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”*

*No problem can be solved with the same consciousness that created it.”*

**- Albert Einstein**

*“The root cause is a crisis in perception =  
the way we see and understand our world.” -*

**Fritjof Capra**

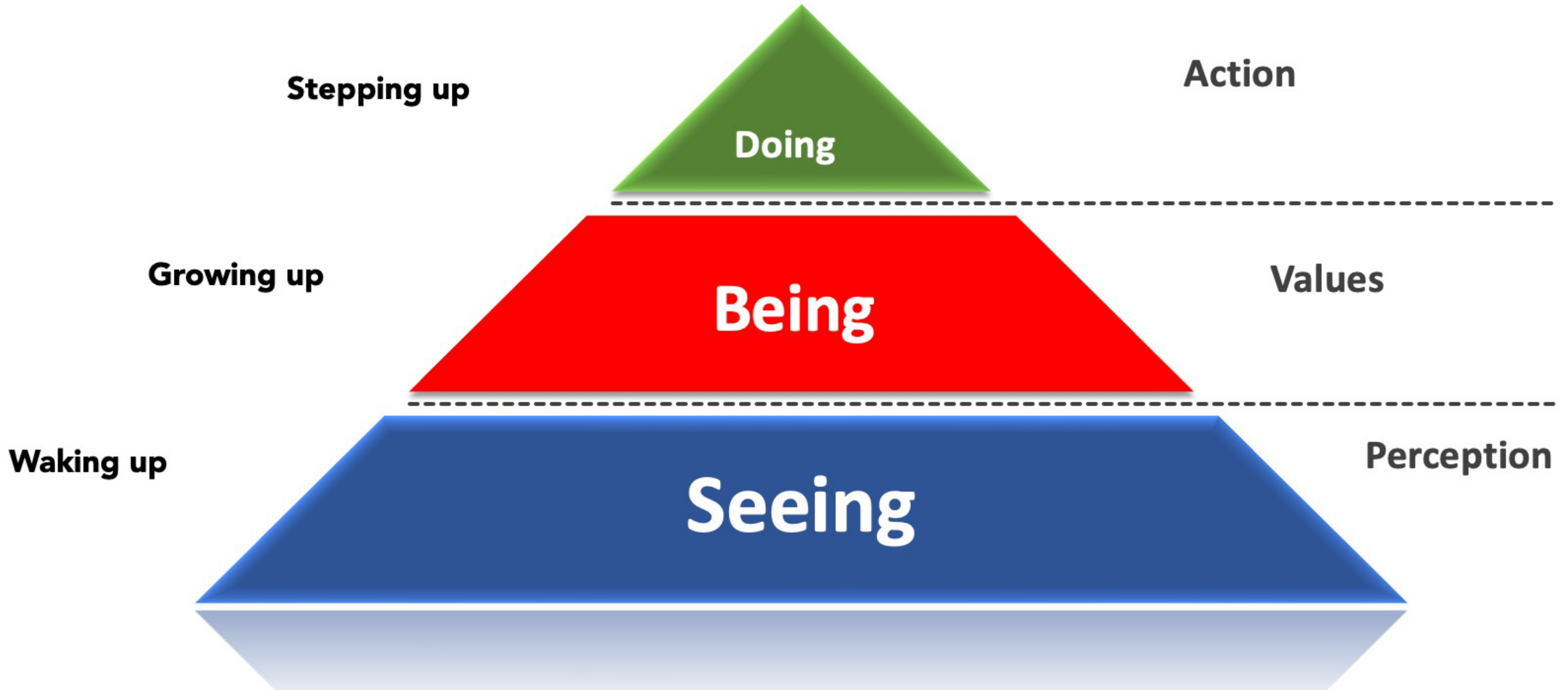




The major problems in the world are  
the result of the difference between  
how nature works and the way  
people think.

— *Gregory Bateson* —



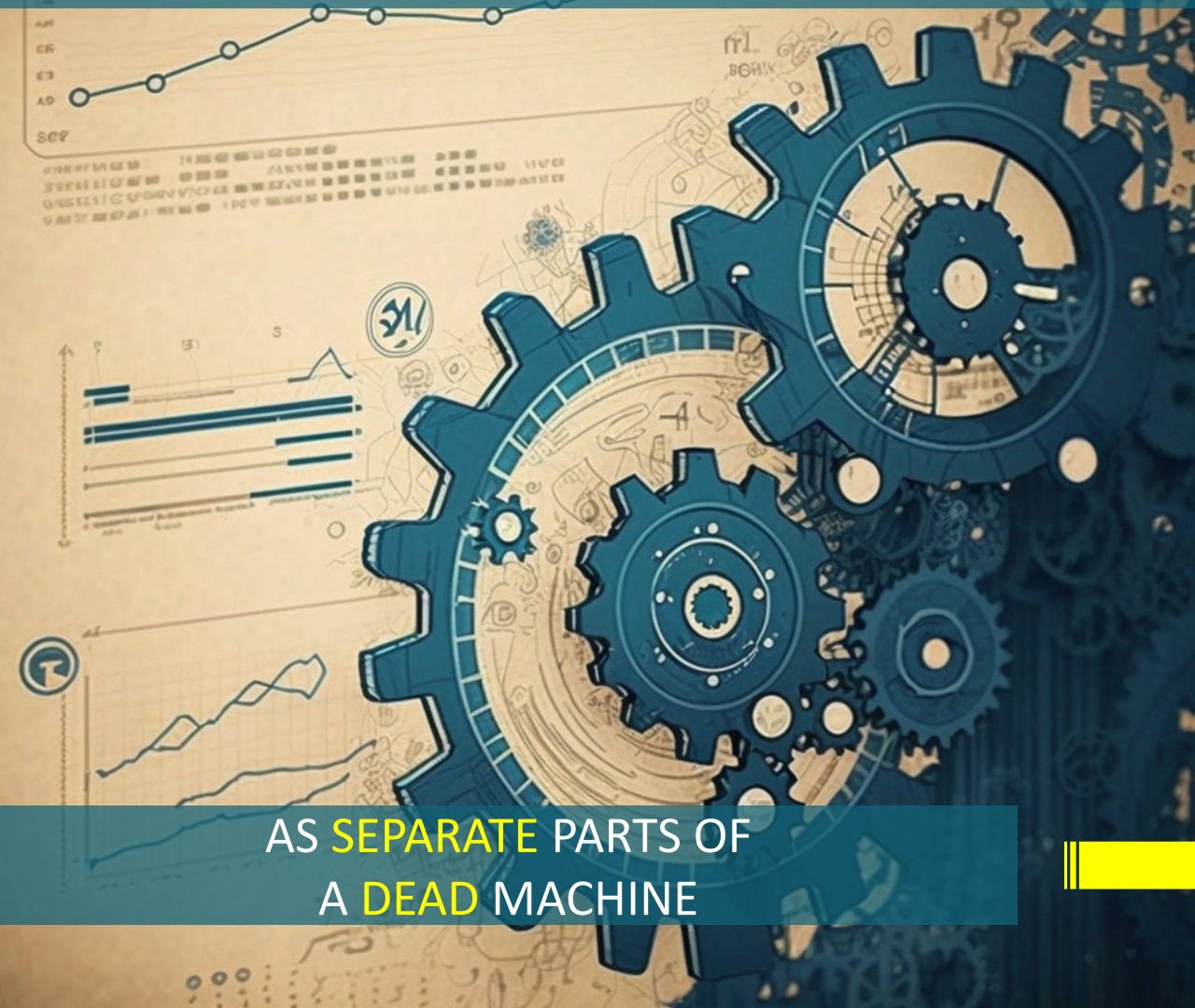




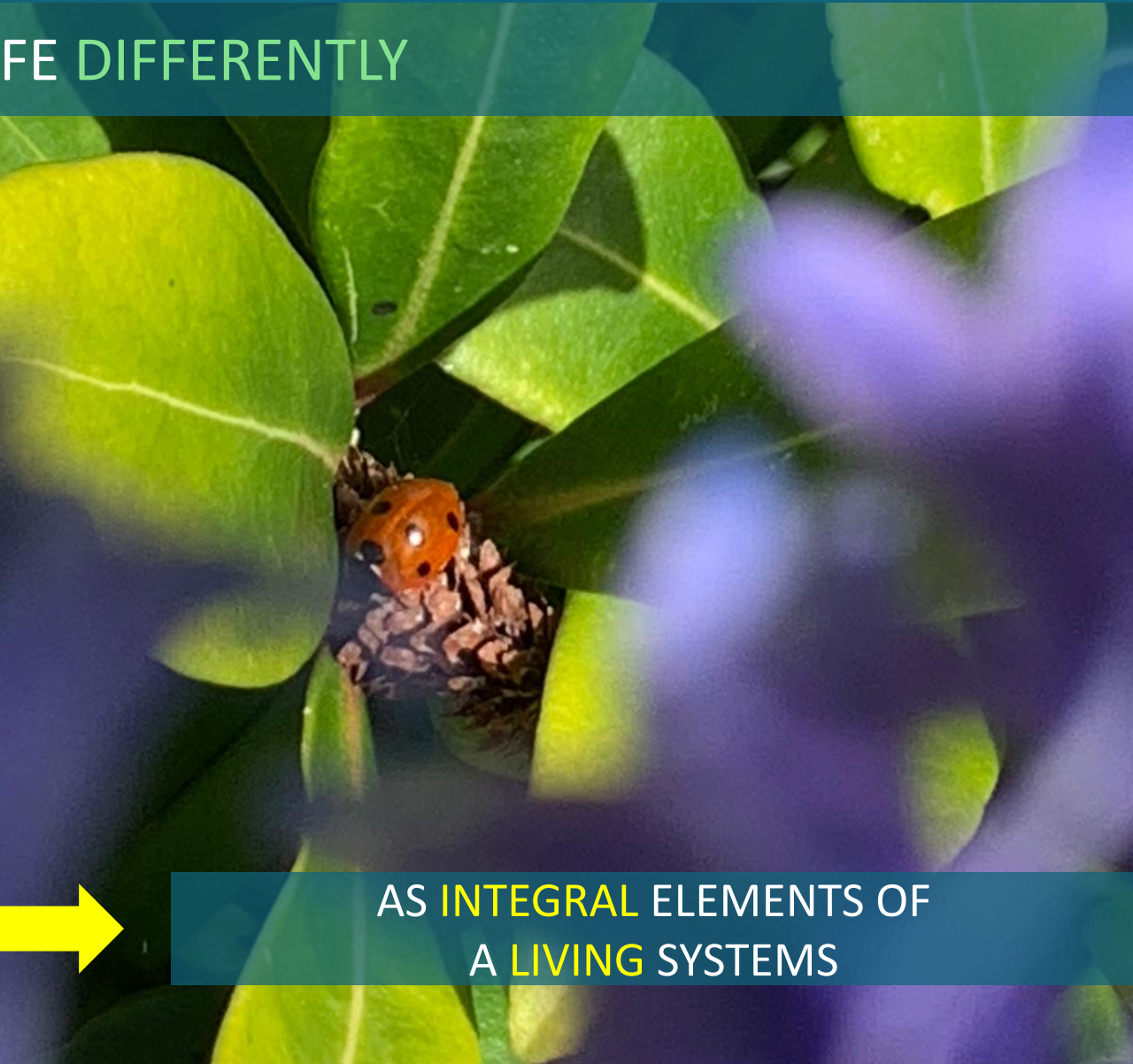
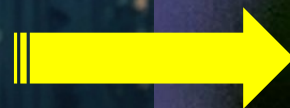
1. Change the **Paradigm**, the Story – that's a process!
2. Radically re-think **Purpose**
3. Break out of the Silos – the boxes that confine
4. Localise – the **Power of Place**
5. Focus on **Potential** and **Essence**



SEE ALL HUMAN ACTIVITY, ALL LIFE DIFFERENTLY



AS **SEPARATE** PARTS OF  
A **DEAD** MACHINE



AS **INTEGRAL** ELEMENTS OF  
A **LIVING** SYSTEMS

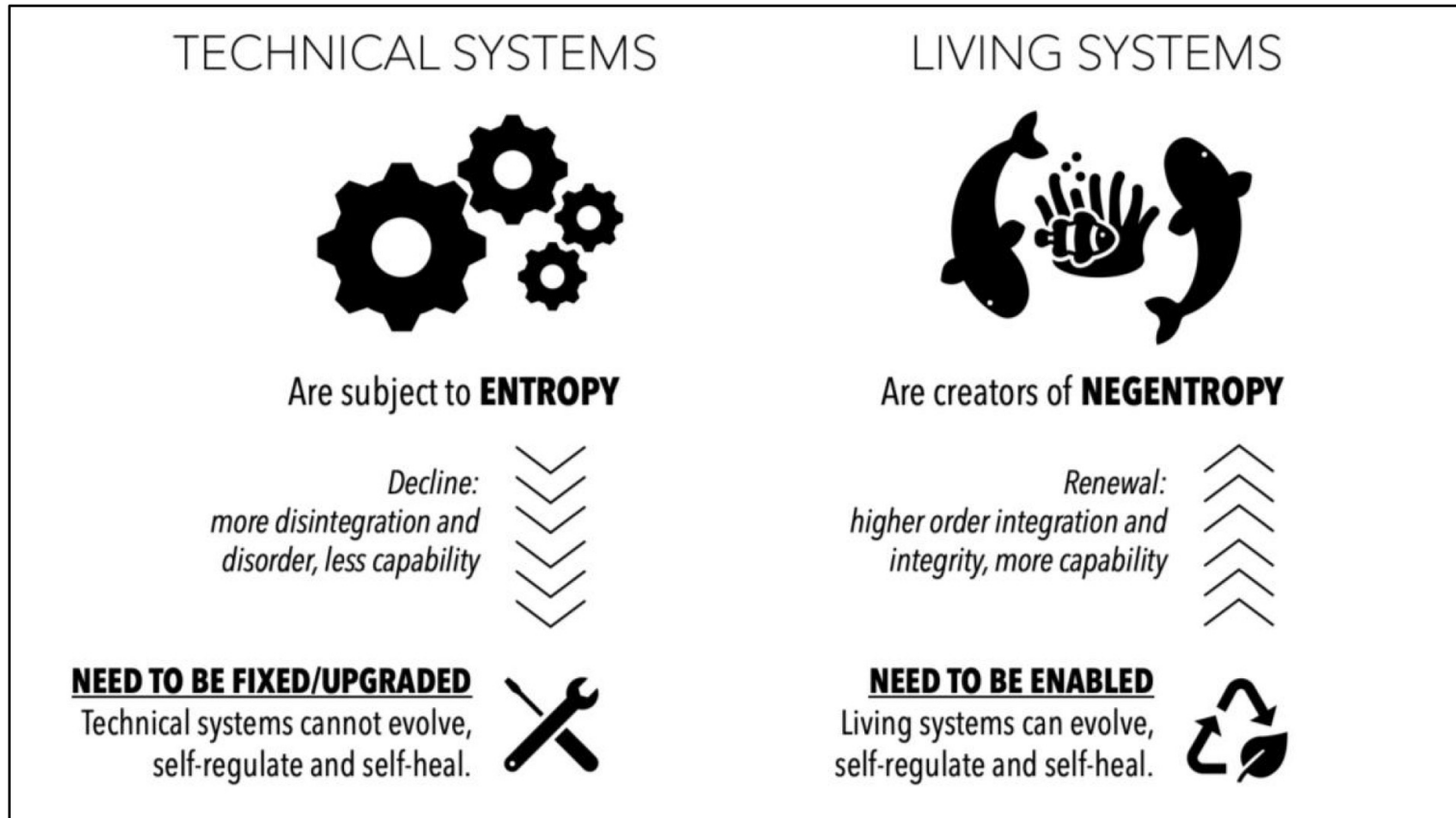




A 'must' watch video: Retelling the story of humans and nature | Damon Gameau | TEDxSydney / YouTube



- Our Relationship with nature
- Our Relationship with each other
- Our Relationship with ourselves



*FIG—1: THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING SYSTEMS SCIENCE. Enabling negentropy—the inherent capability of living systems to grow into new levels of order, integrity, capability and thriving: every living system, if it is to thrive and endure, must continually increase its vitality, viability, and competence for enabling further evolution.*



## A MACHINE STORY



Separation, fragmentation, siloed thinking  
Global , not rooted  
Extractive  
Standardised, homogenous, efficiency  
Success = Things, more  
Scarcity -Competitive  
Top Down  
Vulnerable

## A LIVING SYSTEMS STORY



Connected, inter-dependent, holistic  
Rooted in soil, community  
Generative  
Unique parts, diversity, resilience  
Success = Value, well-being  
Abundance - Collaborative  
Bottom Up  
Resilient, adaptable, evolving



**Regeneration** is a PROCESS, a way of thinking that applies to **living systems**. It's what life does....

*"Life creates the conditions for life to thrive and evolve."*

- Lynne Margulis

**Regeneration** revitalises bringing back to life that which was dying or degenerating.

By making it whole again = healing the fragmentation. It is also a process of "re-membering."

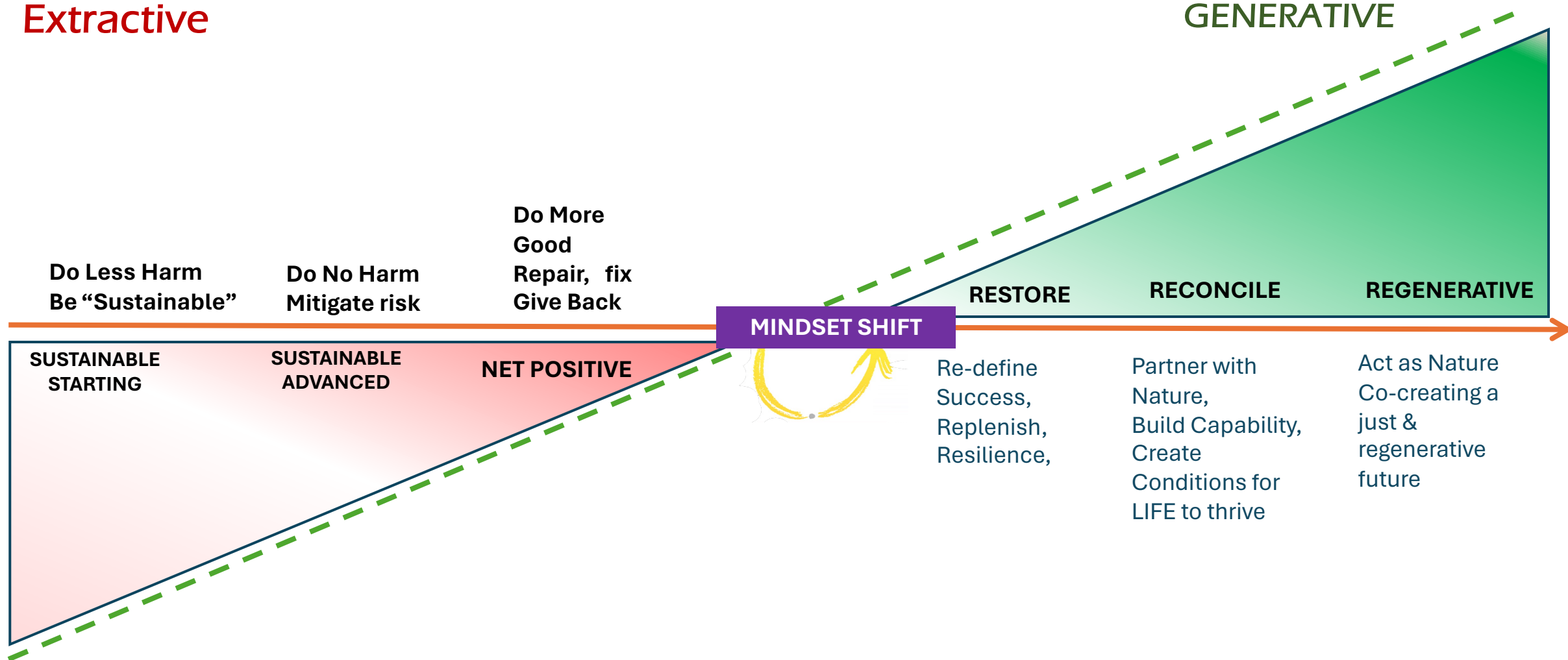
If sustainability is doing less harm, then **regeneration** is about developing the **innate capability of a system to self-organise, thrive and evolve**.

By applying the the same principles that Nature has used to generate and evolve **LIFE!**



**Extractive**

**GENERATIVE**





## A MACHINE STORY



Global, generic  
Extractive – soil depleted inputs needed  
Standardised, homogenous systems  
Focus on efficiency, quantity, yield  
Price competitive  
Ownership – private, concentrated  
Top-down decision making  
Vulnerable

## A LIVING SYSTEMS STORY



Localised  
Generative – soil enriched  
Place-shaped solutions - diversity  
Focus on quality, nutrition  
Value-driven  
Ownership – mixed, diverse  
Bottom-up  
Resilience, adaptable



## A MACHINE STORY



Global, generic  
Extractive – energy, water, emissions,  
Standardized, homogenous systems  
Focus on efficiency, quantity, yield  
Price competitive  
Ownership – private, concentrated  
Top-down decision making  
Vulnerable

## A LIVING SYSTEMS STORY



Localised  
Generative – community  
Place-shaped solutions  
Focus on quality, experience, care  
Value  
Ownership – mixed, diverse, spread  
Bottom-up  
Resilient, adaptable



- **Life** creates the conditions for life to **thrive/flourish = health, vitality**
- Survival of the “**fittest**” not the strongest
- Nothing in nature grows forever







- If the destination and the nested **living** systems connected to it are living systems, then it's relevant to ask...
- *What does flourishing (health) look like here – my life, business, community?*
- Health is not associated with size but “**fitness**” within its context (environment)
- Health = health of each sub-system (i.e. a **flourishing** community, prosperous enterprises, thriving individuals)
- **If health = “aliveness”** *what contributes to aliveness?*
- *How can we in tourism nurture the aliveness of the people we affect and engage?*



 **Thesaurus.com**

**flourishing**  

adjective *as in prospering, going well*

[Compare Synonyms](#)

Synonyms

Antonyms

**Strongest matches**

blooming burgeoning expanding growing prosperous thriving

**Strong matches**

mushrooming rank roaring

**Weak matches**

doing well exuberant going strong in full swing in the pink

in top form lush luxuriant profuse rampant rich robust

successful vigorous





- It's **alive** – vitality; robustness;
- It's self-**organizing**
- Creates conditions for other life to exist; **contributes** to the web-of-life
- **Adaptable**, constantly changing reciprocal benefit
- **Resilient**
- **Diversity**
- **Efficient** - Zero waste; fractal patterns
- It's **evolving** – greater order, complexity, beauty - dynamic equilibrium
- Uniqueness of parts
- Develops potential



Healthy nutritious plants need healthy, fertile soil to thrive  
PLUS the quality of relationships present within the whole.

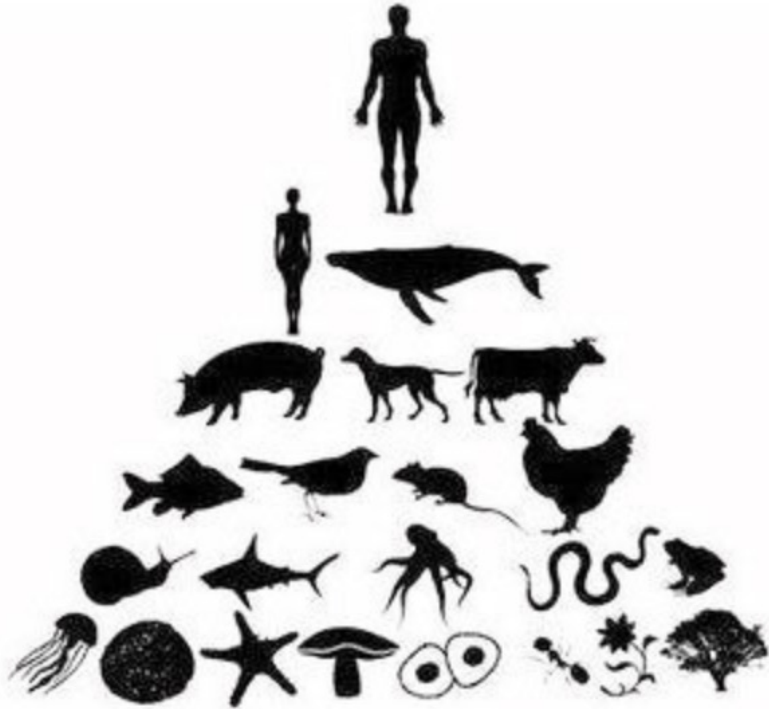
A Healthy Visitor Economy needs a healthy,  
engaged hosting community to thrive.

**Community is to tourism in the same way**  
**that soil is to agriculture**

“Regeneration is a living system’s capacity to create the conditions necessary to release its unique potential and act as a co-evolutionary partner in life’s unfolding”



# EGO



# ECO



# SEVA





## How can Tourism & Hospitality help this place, project, and people flourish forever?

Conceive wealth as 'Wellth'

Return on Multiple Capitals

Ensure the benefits "stick" / Localise

### Wealth building defined

Wealth building in a region means taking action to increase all three of these:



1. The quality and quantity of **wealth**—embodied in eight different types of capital.

2. The local **ownership and control** of that wealth by a region's people, places or firms.



3. The **livelihoods** of people, places and firms in the region, including moving those on the economic margins toward the mainstream.





*“We can’t save the planet. It’s too big; it’s an aspiration, but how do we work on it? ...but when we work in place we can see the impact and respond. **Place is the one unit of measurement that allows us to change our behaviour. If we save the places of the world, we save the planet.**”*

**Bill Reed, Regenes Group**



*“**Place is a doorway into caring.** Rootedness in a place is the most important and least recognised need of the human soul. Love of place unleashes the personal and political will needed to make profound change.*







*It can also unite people across ideological spectra because place what we all share: it is the commons that allows people to call themselves a community”*

**Simone Weil**










**We're already in the re-vitalisation business !!!  
We're rooted in a place..**

-  To hospice means to care and pamper
-  To heal is to "make whole"
-  To revitalize to bring back to life
-  To "recreate" – ideally bathed in nature
-  To experience wonder & awe
-  To contribute to individual, community & planetary health



-  We connect strangers: hosts & guests; guests & guests; guests & locals
-  We convene meetings & celebrations
-  We're rooted in a place
-  We're inhabitants, pay taxes
-  Close to the host community





Each participant has a unique essence



Each participant has an innate desire to become, evolve



Focus on Potential not problems

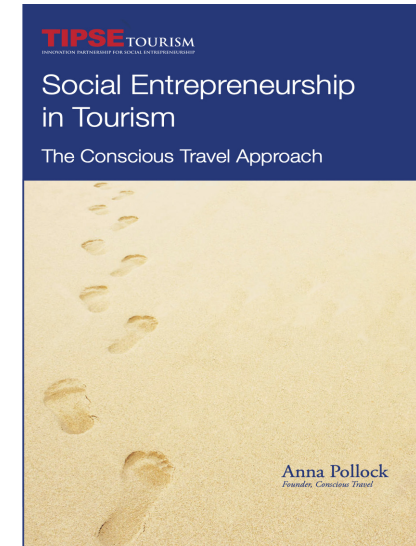


1. **Change the Paradigm**, the Story – that's a process!
2. Radically re-think **the Purpose**
3. **Break out** of the silos – the boxes that confine
4. **Localise** – the power of Place
5. Focus on **Potential** and **Essence**



- 1. Continue, intensify “sustainable” practice**
- 2. Develop curiosity & learn together in community**
- 3. Inner work – question assumptions, ways of thinking**
- 4. Develop new skills and capabilities**
- 5. Support one another**

## THE POWER OF REGENERATIVE THINKING TO CREATE FLOURISHING DESTINATIONS



### ANNA POLLOCK Founder, Conscious.Travel & Back To Life

Based on an extensive career as a researcher, strategist and change catalyst serving the international tourism and hospitality sector, I'm passionate about its capacity to generate well-being, wealth and welfare for people and places, provided that it is managed properly, i.e. with respect for the interdependence and connectedness of all life and in harmony with the laws of nature. Often described as being irrepressibly curious and creative, "ahead of her time", and a "visionary", I see myself as a change agent whose mission is to help clients and colleagues prepare for a very different future. Specifically, I believe that the industrial system on which tourism is based has run its course and needs replacing. I now work to serve those who wish to expedite that transformation.



[anna@conscious.travel](mailto:anna@conscious.travel) | Mobile +44 7799 758 672  
[linkedin.com/in/annapollock](https://www.linkedin.com/in/annapollock)

The power of regenerative thinking to create flourishing destinations  
Anna Pollock, June 24, 2024

