

STEPPING INTO YOUR  
COURAGE






# STEPPING INTO YOUR COURAGE







And if the world has ceased to hear you,  
say to the silent earth: I flow.

To the rushing water, speak: I am.

— Rainer Maria Rilke

Sonnets to Orpheus II, 29

'Let This Darkness Be a Bell Tower'

translated by Joanna Macy



# FOREWORD

Where did this all start?

“Stepping Into Your Courage” is about sustainability.

Not just environmental but something more nuanced, something that has many perspectives. It is not just about the how but also about how we see it – our mindset and attitude.

As authors we all have a shared concern for the planet. The thing is, how did we meet, come together and decide to create this piece of work as a contribution to the sustainability debate? In the spring of 2020, we all completed an online course with The Do Lectures, each wanting to strengthen our voices in this crazy, noisy world – particularly in the context of a global pandemic and doing it online.

On completion of that course, Sabina Enéa Téari, one of our authors, took the initiative and put out a message to all participants on the course, asking if anyone might be interested in coming together to create something around sustainability. A few emails and online calls later, we got together and the concept emerged. And now it is complete as “Stepping Into Your Courage”. We hope it maybe provokes you to think a little more about sustainability, in all its manifestations. Enjoy!

Sustainability is usually thought of as an environmental issue. And it is. But not only. Sustainability is in fact a mindset. Sensing a need for new narratives, new stories, new songs, we would like to offer a more complex vision of sustainability, as seen from multiple perspectives, and to explore how sustainability may be viewed as a multi-layered cultural phenomenon best described as a combination of values of its agents, rather than just a selection of “How-To’s”.

It may take courage to look at sustainability less as what you do but more as who you are, as something that starts right here, with one’s own personal being in the world. Well-being. Physical. Mental. Emotional. Relational. Courage has a heart in its root. And as a “coeur” wishes to be listened to, the whole-hearted aspect of sustainability suggests the essential to embrace personal sustainability fully, in order to move towards its planetary fractal.

Paradigmatic shifts happen at the time when one can’t ignore one’s heart any longer. Bodies don’t lie. For the need to take on multiple perspectives, the embodied perspective is at the core of this report. When we can’t ignore our embodied and embedded condition, we become earthly again. Essentially such embodiment is about overcoming the split - of body and mind, poetic and practical, art and science, life and business.

This report is a weavework, where its authors from multiple cultural and professional backgrounds are bringing together their stories, as conversations, as a dance, a dialogue, a collaborative action, a song, or many songs...of and for the world we want to be part of.

These stories aren’t anymore about the deeds of heroes, but about togetherness, about trembling with the world and celebrating re-connection. These stories are about letting go and seeing what happens, working with emergence rather than forcing reality into a preconceived idea.

Cross-pollinating through different styles and formats, this report is a journey across the waters of mutual interest and desire for change, flowing towards the evolution of our human presence on earth.



# **The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with Nature**

\_ Joseph Campbell

We began with the idea of a song. A new song of sustainability. A group of people coming together. Not knowing the exact direction we would go in. But with a common cause. Not knowing that a theme of water would emerge organically through the writing. Not having the title in mind to start with, but allowing that to bubble up from our dialoguing.

Joanna Macy, a scholar, author and activist, has written about ‘co-arising’. We prefer this term to ‘co-creating’. Co-creating implies a certain intention. Co-arising is about being open to what wants to emerge and letting it emerge - both in collaboration with other people and those unseen forces in the world. And for that to happen we need to be in that mindset and bodyset and heartset of openness and emergence. We believe that from this place life lived in a sustainable way can arise, whether on an individual or collective level.

As Joseph Campbell said, “The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with Nature.” We hope that this report provides nourishment for both thought and action - and for ways of being in the world which are in alignment with our own hearts and that of the planet.

Sabina Enéa Téari and Olivia Sprinkel

I live my life in widening circles  
that reach out across the world.  
I may not complete this last one  
but I give myself to it.

I circle around God,  
around the primordial tower.  
I’ve been circling for thousands of years  
and I still don’t know: am I a falcon,  
a storm, or a great song?

— Rainer Maria Rilke  
Book of Hours, I 2

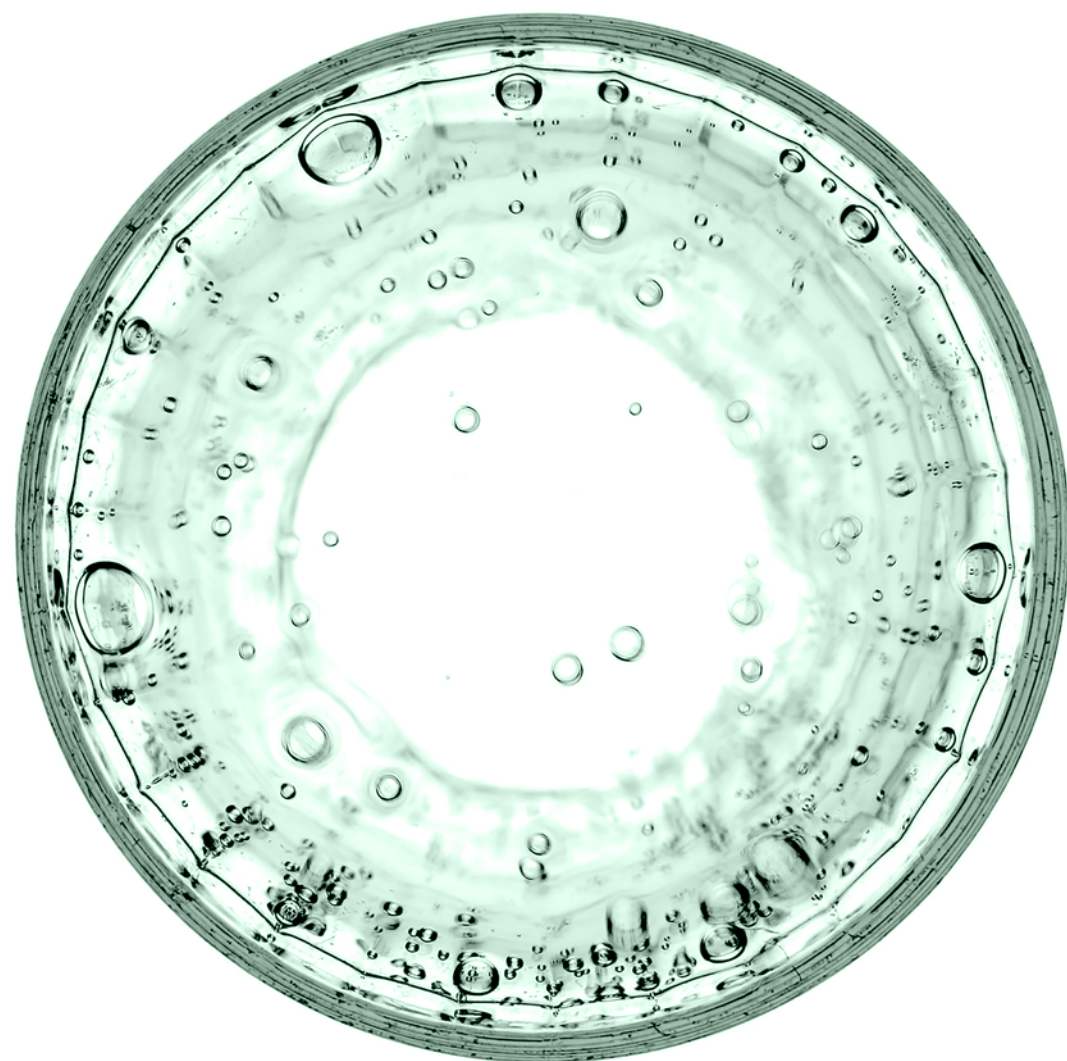


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# A Song of Care

Sabina Enéa Téari

To be performed in your mind,  
your dreams,  
your heart,  
in the shower,  
in moments of doubt.

## Verses for personal sustainability

Everything is connected  
Where attention goes energy flows  
Work the ground well  
Awakening the body  
Emotions are compass  
Find your voice  
Choose bravely

## Chorus

**Everything is connected,  
bigger circles start small**

**This is about a mindset,  
it's about an attitude**

**An attitude of attention,  
attention and care**

**It starts with you and me.**



# EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

Everything is connected. Over time it becomes even clearer  
Ecosystems are in us, ecosystems around us.  
The invisible things matter. Wind. Warmth. Affection.  
Balance matters too. Too much sun or rain makes us complain.

Nothing is waste. One thing nurtures another. It's a cycle.  
A bone left by the wolf is a long awaited meal for a fox.

How do I affect the world? How does the world affect me?  
How will the food I eat today affect my body, my inner rhythms, and immunity?  
How will my ability to rest influence my mood, clarity, and energy?  
How will the quality of my movement affect my vitality, strength and agility?  
What impact will my action have on those around me?

## WHERE ATTENTION GOES, ENERGY FLOWS

Attention is key, to be treated as a precious resource.  
I don't give it out easily.  
A choice for every moment: what does really deserve attention?  
Some people, places, situations  
May drain it, leaving me empty, exhausted.

Life is a mystery, who knows why things just happen.  
Things tend to happen in the space of awareness.  
Where attention goes, energy flows.  
Looking back I see  
How much I've shaped my life  
By what I chose to look at, and see.  
Attention is power.  
Life is talking all the time.  
Whispering at first.  
Sending invisible signs.  
When ignored they get louder.

The body is talking too.  
Light sensations at first.  
Emotional waves.  
Urges. Longings.  
What are they speaking about?

Chorus

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## WORK THE GROUND WELL

Water.  
Food.  
Rest.  
Fresh air.  
Movement.  
First things first.  
Taking care of the basics.

Are the surroundings healthy?  
People.  
Cultures.  
Cities.  
Work.  
If not - I move.  
Staying is toxic,  
it drains energy.



# AWAKENING THE BODY

Life lives in the body.  
Body is a home,  
I learn to keep it well, be well, feel well.  
I then can take care of the rest.  
Only then can I tend the larger home I live in.

In front of screens, machines  
Sensations get dimmer. Tensions hide.  
I need to be there to feel. To attend.  
Unattended, a numbing shell grows.  
Did it happen overnight?  
Did it happen over time?  
When was I there to hear the body's whisper?

Awakening the body is paying attention.  
Letting in air.  
Checking-in with inner waters.  
Creating space for everything that's already here.

Chorus

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# EMOTIONS ARE A COMPASS

What have you been feeling lately?  
Have you been feeling lately?  
Feelings ask for time to surface.  
For deeper impulses to appear.  
Even when sharp, or overwhelming,  
They ask for time  
to reduce in intensity and leave you with clarity.  
Listen.  
Let the impulse meet your ears, your skin, your reason.  
Merge into a free play like a jazz band in sync.

# FINDING MY VOICE

Voice does not always come as words.  
Sometimes it sounds,  
Sometimes feels,  
At times I sense it in my back.

Honouring my inner voice.  
My pluri-vocal multitudes.

I recognise it  
By its resonance within and without  
By the way I can tremble with the world  
When a door opens towards a more attentive being,  
Towards inhabiting this planet with integrity and care.



# CHOOSE BRAVELY

From a place of inner unity. Choose.  
From a place of uncertainty. Choose.  
From a place of trust. Choose.

Don't stay in a space of non-choice -  
an automatic pilot that just drags you  
into inertia,  
resistance to change,  
avoidance of a temporary uncertainty.  
It has its hidden costs.  
Energy, vitality, health, joy, fulfilment.  
Choose.

Choose and go.  
Try.  
Try again.  
And then look around.  
Are you where you wanted to be?

I hope we'll meet on the other side.  
Beyond the perceptual logic of the current paradigm.  
Where the forest grows.

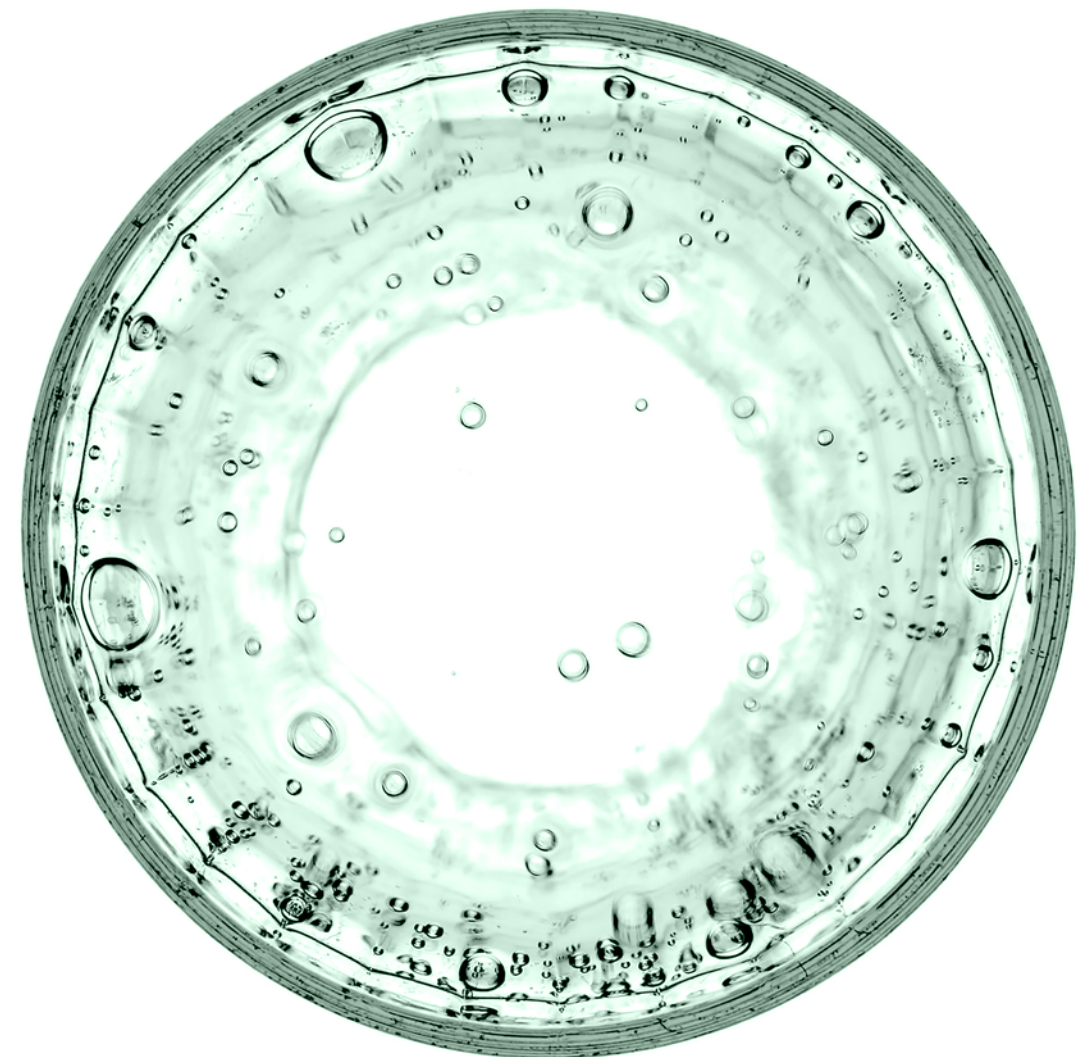
Chorus

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# If you're really going to be sustainable, you have to be regenerative.



Vincent, thanks so much for accepting the invite to chat! In this report we try to look at sustainability as a mindset and not only a set of methods. “How to’s” are great, but not really working all the way, and we need to dig deeper into the mindset that produces unsustainable behaviour. Therefore we look at sustainability in its multi-layered understanding, so that it’s not only environmental but also social, personal, relational (including between humans and other species). How does this resonate with you?

If we look at our environmental impact as a company, something like 86% of the impact is in our fabrics, and that mostly comes from the oil used in producing nylon and polyester. At the same time, if we look at how we want to work to address the environmental crisis, we also understand that it’s a social crisis. It’s actually one crisis, which has its social side and its environmental side. They are all linked. If we want to address behaviour, or if we want to change the way we’re acting, we have to address it holistically in terms of the systems. So when we undertake an action, we want to make sure that it’s addressing several problems at once. To put this in a more concrete way: the city of Philadelphia at some point decided to plant trees on the blocks in neighbourhoods near the downtown. And when you plant trees you do several things: you reduce summer temperatures by 3 degrees, you filter pollutants, you create shade and comfort. And also people love trees, so it actually creates a sense of wellbeing. I think when we are thinking of what kind of world we want to live in 10 or 15 years from now, we have to look at the kinds of actions that produce multiple benefits. Also when you look at the idea of multiple benefits, it tends to steer you away from false technological solutions, because technological solutions are usually pretty unitary, they’re addressing one problem or one thing you can do, rather than a host of them.

So yes, we do think everything is related. There are two big questions for us in terms of how we change our impact. And the first is - we need to get away from oil, using any kind of virgin oil in fabrics. The second is in agricul-



ture. A lot of our sportswear comes from cotton. We haven't used chemicals for 25 years, but there's more you can do. If you actually use regenerative practices in agriculture, which means companion planting or rotating the crops, using deeper rooted plants, using perennials - when you do all that



you can actually generate soil health. When you bring the soil back to health, you have a tremendous potential also to sequester carbon: draw carbon out of the air, building into the ground. We think that you need less water, when you actually create better soil. And we think that you can grow more nutritional food when you do that. So that is a major project for us. We've created a certification for regenerative organic agriculture with Rodale and Dr. Bronner's, but when we started to create

a certification to concentrate on soil health, we realised you really have to also consider animal welfare. And you have to consider the health of the communities that the workers live in. Because if you don't have those things you can't really guarantee the health of the soil.

**What is the thinking that moves you towards considering interconnectedness? Like, for example, how did you start looking at animal welfare and the soil and the communities together?**

I think first of all if you're looking at organic agriculture, animals play a role. So whether or not you're vegetarian, the waste from animals is critical to organic agriculture. But then you don't want to create factory farming and you don't want to mistreat the animals. When people mistreat the animals they create a whole culture of not tending the land, not tending to the people - a culture of a kind of carelessness. There's mutual benefits to treating animals, people, and the earth well. There was a point when we said 'okay we can bring the soil back to health, but who's working the soil?' That's the people who are actually doing the work and what are their conditions, how are they going to be motivated or how are they going to be able to have a good relationship to the land? If you treat the land industrially, if you treat the land as a factory and then you treat the workers as factory workers you get similar results.

**For creating such cultures of care, did you need to build good partnerships?**

Back in 1996, when we decided not to use conventional cotton, we made the switch to organic, and it created all kinds of problems for us. Because we were buying the organic cotton from farmers directly, and the farmers have no relationship to the spinners, and the spinners are the ones who turn the fibre into yarn. They didn't know each other, because the tradition in clothing is that you design the clothes, choose the colours, create the specs and you hand it over to a factory. And the factory is ordering the cotton, so you don't even know where the cotton comes from. It's a commodity. And then, the factory has a relationship with the weavers. So the whole process is completely separated



from what the brands do. As a matter of fact, until we switched to organic cotton we really didn't know how to make clothes. We just handed that process off. So, when we broke our connection to the global supply chain and we went directly to the spinners, they said that organic cotton gums up their machines, and they don't like it. We then found somebody in Bangkok who actually discovered a way to cool the factory floor so that the cotton wouldn't gum the machines. Afterwards we asked him, why did he do this for us, because we were a very small customer for him, and he said "I guess because I'm an environmentalist at heart." So that's what creates the partnership. When you get people who start to share the same goals that you have, to make changes. You then exit from purely transactional relationships and move towards a partnership you're building over time. You are also creating a set of knowledge that you share. Because when we work together, we come to understand something together. That's how a partnership deepens.

**I'm curious how was it for you personally to join the company, you were there from the beginning, right? Was the commitment to ecological regeneration already there, or did it develop gradually?**

Well it was very different in the beginning. Back then it was still a mountain climbing equipment manufacturer. I think that the values the company held then were for high quality, for utility, you know climbers risk their lives, so the quality of the gear needs to be right. We got into clothing mostly as a way to support the climbing equipment company. We thought



this is an easy business, not like dealing with iron and steel, here you keep your hands clean. But from the beginning of Patagonia there was an ethic of loving wild places, of loving nature. That's a strong personal ethic for a lot of the people who work there. And very early on we started giving 1% of sales



to environmental causes because the climbers or surfers realised before most people the kind of environmental degradation the planet was experiencing. You don't see it in the city, but you do when you go to a mountain and see the glaciers melting, or you go fishing and the trout are smaller and fewer than the last time you were there. So those were the original ethics, and then we realised - oh my gosh, we love wild places, we think nature is important in itself, and yet we're doing these things that are harming the

natural world. What can we do to change that? In some ways it was about taking personal values and applying them to the business.

So in a way your personal values grow together with the business. When this integrity is in place, then you adjust as you go because you're paying attention to what is happening, what impact you are producing, and how you can fully stand behind it.

Yes. And you also create a new experience for a group of people. After a while, you learn together, and so you've got this shared knowledge and shared experiences. You can do things that you can't do if you don't trust the person you're doing business with. But the same thing happens with employees within the company - when they address these difficult questions and they overcome them, people gain a kind of confidence. And they also create a language among themselves that enables them to do things that they couldn't have thought possible.

Bringing personal values into business, taking no compromises where it matters most, pioneering processes, going in a different direction than your industry, much of what Patagonia has been and is doing requires courage. Do you remember moments when calling upon your courage was especially important?

Yes, I do feel that courage comes into play, but also there's a difference.

If I don't know anything about diving, and then I go to the edge of a cliff and just jump, courageously, I die, because I don't know enough about what I'm doing. But if I've practiced, and I've done certain things that allow me to gain knowledge I might need, then it's a calculated risk, rather than just a leap of faith. So there are, for instance, a lot of people who look at Patagonia and say "Patagonia is so brave, they took these risks, we can't take that kind of risk". But there were very few things we did that were totally foolhardy. What we did was we learned how to do certain things before other people learned how to do them. And then part of our purpose in doing that was to show people that it's not that hard, they could do that too! For example, when wetsuits were made out of neoprene, which is very harmful environmentally, we developed an alternative that uses a kind of cactus plant that was once used for tires in World War 2, and we made that available to the whole industry rather than keeping it exclusive.



Back when we still made climbing equipment, a lot of our reputation was built on the quality of the pitons we made. The pitons are what climbers used to hammer into the rock to hold the rope, to provide protection. We discovered that traditional pitons when you hammered them in over time were actually degrading the rock, as they were widening cracks. And so we came up with a whole new vision, being a very small company (this was before the clothing). We looked at what climbers used around the world and British climbers used aluminium chocks that you could actually put at the end of a wire or a rope, and could slip it into a crack without hammering, so it didn't damage the crack. It was a huge investment to make these chocks in all the sizes that climbers needed. With this new product we put out a catalogue with a long essay on why climbers should switch, and how to use the chocks. In a year, our business moved from 70% being pitons to 70% chocks. That essay made a difference for people.

When we made the switch to organic cotton no customers had asked us for organic cotton. So that looked like a risk by ordinary standards. But again, I think that there are different kinds of courage. And when you have coura-



ge based on values you're seeing a connection and a possibility that other people aren't seeing yet, or they are afraid to see.

People often say sustainability is expensive, and this often becomes an excuse not to do it. How do you think about that?

Well, I think that first of all, there are a lot of things that people can do to lighten their environmental impact that won't cost them much, and actually will save money on energy and waste. We don't have a carbon tax yet but when we do it all can get very expensive. And so what's happening now is the Earth has to pay the price for it, or the poor neighbourhoods that get the brunt of environmental impact. Walmart for instance, has done a lot to reduce their environmental impact, and they will only do cost saving measures; if it costs them anything - they won't do it. But they are very serious about finding ways to reduce their environmental impact within those limits. Very few traditional companies do things that actually create more cost in the short-run, like paying workers a living wage. There's been some recent work by people at McKinsey who created a kind of methodology, which helps those company leaders to actually see that if you create good working conditions and you pay people fairly, and give them the authority at work to make decisions (and this all requires investment), you can gauge the return on this investment already in another year or so, as you look at how your employee retention rates and engagement rates compare to other companies. So you can look at that and say that was an investment. But business doesn't think that way for the most part, and if I look back at some of the things we did at Patagonia that looked like major risks to us, I am thinking now what if at the time we had thought this wasn't a risk, this was an investment. It's an investment with a risk associated with it. And the purpose of this investment is to actually increase or prove the business's health.

In a way you change the story that you tell and then you also change the mindset.

Exactly, and it's key because what's happening now is that a business may say, okay, I'm going to create a balance between profitability and doing the right thing. This is a compromise. Sometimes I'm going to do the right thing and sometimes I'm going to make a lot of money. And then you're not going to do the right thing very often. Because what you need to do is to create a mindset, in which you say okay, we're going to make money doing the right thing. That's going to be our business. We're not going to do what other companies are doing or what would just make us a big profit, because we think it's unsustainable.

What would you especially advise people who are just starting or who want to start their own thing from a more regenerative or sustainable place?

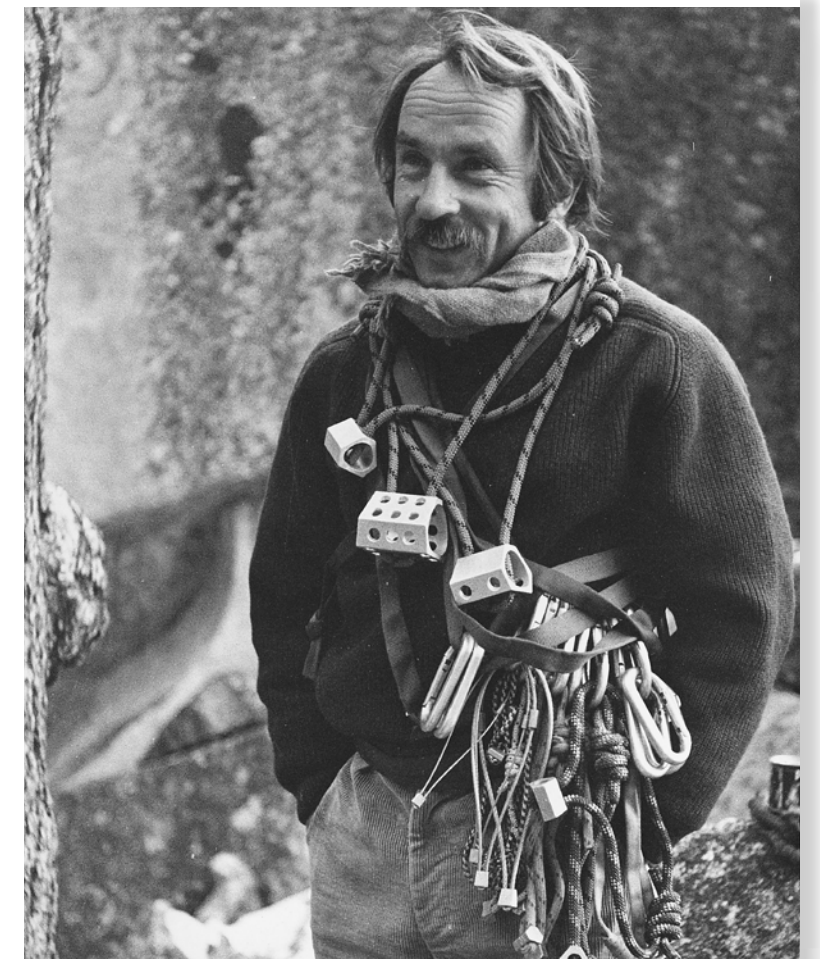
Well, if I were starting an enterprise now, a business, or an NGO, or anything where people are working together to achieve something, I think at

this point, you really have to recognise the difficulty of the world right now. I think that we're now past the point where we're going to have a kind of return to normal. We're living in a disruptive world, and we're going to feel that in our daily lives. And that in order to figure out a new way to live, that's better than the way we're living now, will require the work of everybody in every enterprise. So if you're going to make products, make sure that they're useful, and that they're made in the right way. If you're going to engage in social enterprise your relations to the people that you're helping need to be good. This becomes really important. I don't think that 5 or 10 years from now you can just be Coca-Cola and not care about the water or not care about the sugar. The other thing I think people, in businesses particularly, can pay attention to is the SDGs. They're really useful, and everyone around the world did a lot of work to come up with that agreement. And I think that should be taken seriously.

And then B Corps I think are really useful, because the impact assessment that B-lab produces enables a company to look at its practices holistically: how do we affect our place, how do we affect the environment, how do we affect the communities we live in? So yes, my advice would be to create something, which is actually really useful and addresses the difficult times we live in.

The question we ask ourselves is how can we be giving back to the planet more than we're taking? Not being extractive, but productive in that way. I think for many companies the idea of sustainability is not to damage or to reduce the damage they do. But it doesn't include the idea of bringing things back to life. So what we come to is that if you are really going to be sustainable, you have to be regenerative.

Vincent, thank you so much for your time, for sharing your wisdom and experience.







## How to cold water swim upstream, and still not become numb An exploration

Famela Ravasio

“I like the approach the science-based targets take, and I can easily see how these could be operationalised into our business. But ... what is the business case for science-based targets to start with? How much growth will they create for us? And what is their ROI? Let’s have another discussion when you have figured that out.”

It’s a Wednesday just before lunch time. And the scene I just experienced is a déjà-vu, somewhat reminiscent of those famous repetitive scenes in the film ‘Groundhog Day’.

For a good six months I have been trying to convince our CEO that science-based targets could be our ladder to integrate the Paris Agreement climate goals into our company’s strategy, as well as in the operational KPIs. I’ve tried to ‘make the case’ in numerous different ways. In the first meeting I started off explaining the likely climate reality in 10 to 15 years, and the resulting shifts in expected consumer behaviour, manufacturing locations, resource availability. From meeting to meeting I added other hinge points: migration, talent, biodiversity, food security. Every time I linked it to our company’s mid and long-term viability. Every time I showed how the science-based targets would cover our backs for as well as possible, and make us more future fit than we were now. And yet. Every meeting ended with more or less the same statement: What is the commercial growth we’d be experiencing? How much more of our goods would we be able to sell as a consequence? And how fast would the money invested for the efforts into science-based targets be back in our cash coffers?

Just as I leave the CEO’s office, he motions me to come back in for a moment and close the door behind me. “Listen, we have played this game for a long time now. You seem incapable of delivering anything relevant for the company. Ever since our first meeting I asked you for the growth forecast and ROI of the measures you propose. And yet — you have flouted my request. Please be advised that this is your last notice. I will give you one more opportunity. You either nail it, or we will be looking for someone more capable than you.”

I quietly leave the office, and politely and neatly close the door behind me. The silence those last words triggered in my head was ear deafening. And at the same time it was as if the light finally had reached my eyes.





Those last couple of sentences had just lifted the veil of confusion – finally. Once more a CEO had outed himself. ‘Committed to corporate responsibility and the Climate Agenda’ I was told when I came aboard. And for a while it indeed seemed to be that way. Some things started to move into the right direction. And then this great freeze in the last 6 months. And only now, with those last words I understood what was happening: Yet again the requirements of reality had caught up with a corporate leader. And he had chosen to look away and prioritise the short-term agenda. Chosen to trust old models and systems, and overlook the risks and dangers that were approaching softly, quietly, and hence did not screamingly demand attention.

Once more, I will soon be without a job. Once more, I will be out in that emotional limbo of trying to survive. Once more ... At that moment I suddenly felt numb, and all went dark. A tear in my memory record. Next thing I consciously remember is sitting at home, on the following Sunday afternoon. Looking out into the distance from my balcony, and seeing the nearby mountain dipped into the golden colours of the late afternoon sun.

A feeling going through my body as if I had just emerged from a swim in ice water. My skin is hurting. My limbs battling the tingling sensation of numbness. Physically exhausted. And yet only too excited to see those golden evening colours. What happened? I have no idea.

As I observe the evening light fading, I keep staring into the advancing darkness. Something deep down in my brain was trying to work its way up into my consciousness, but it was taking its time. It was not until the birds started their morning concert that I noticed that I had been sitting outside all night. Without a question: I was not fit to go into work. With quite some effort I sent an email to call in sick, then plunged back into my balcony chair.

With the morning sun creeping over the horizon and shining into my eyes, finally a recognition starts to take shape in the depth of my brain: I was scared. I felt intensely helpless. And profoundly lost. I felt as if the weight of mankind’s future was on my shoulders alone – but that I just had come from my last, and lost, battle. I felt alive, yet as if I had just received a death sentence. Never had I felt this way before. Not ever had I experienced such intense and yet paradoxical feelings. For the future that suddenly felt truly lost.





The days passed in a haze. I watched the birds feeding their chicks. Defending their nest against birds of prey, the many neighbourhood cats and even the occasional rat. As I watched their efforts, their fights and their strategies it dawned on me: they never gave up. They may lose one chick, or even all, to any one of their enemies. And yet: first they fought. And if they lost, they went off, built a new nest, in what they thought was a safer place. Then they lay a new set of eggs to see if they could manage to bring a few of this new set into adulthood. The fish lay eggs, most of which are eaten by predators. But season after season the same fish lay more eggs, to continue this repeating circle of life. This is how their species survived the millennia. The change of environment. The infringement of the human species into their living space. They always stood up again, and kept on flying, building nests and rearing chicks. As best as they could.

Fall down seven times, get up eight (Originally Japanese: 七転八起, Nana korobi, ya oki). Even if in reality one falls down a thousand times. Still get up a thousand and one times.

I don't quite know how long the haze really lasted. Slowly though it dawned on me: I had a choice: I could choose to give up. Or I could choose not to. I had a choice of accepting those CEO words as they were and letting them stand. Or I could choose to politely turn the table and rather than dissolve into corporate speak and arguments, choose to paint a landscape and draft a path of action as clear as glass. I could choose to just give – or choose to ask or demand. I could choose to be manipulated – or choose to proactively charter the terrain. I had a choice of having a price – or having value. I had the choice of making it easy on myself, but never being able to look into my own eyes in the mirror again. Or choose to stand up, be myself, recover, try again, and learn from what had not worked.

I can choose to be who I am. Or be what others want me to be.

My choice? Being who I am is not negotiable.  
It never should have been.  
And it won't be anymore.

I don't have a price – I have value.  
Being who I am is non-negotiable.



# But in the end, change does not come from the sky, but it comes from within.



Choba Choba is much more than just a 'unique' chocolate brand. They prototype an impact driven ecosystem that delivers chocolate with real taste from their farms directly to the consumers. Together, farmers and consumers create a global community of chocolate lovers and change makers. The Choba Choba ecosystem consists of a hybrid structure:

1. Choba Choba AG (headquartered in Bern, Switzerland): A private company co-owned and co-managed by cacao farmers from the Peruvian Amazon. This is the business arm of their venture, in charge of marketing and distributing ultra-premium chocolate products in Switzerland.

2. The Choba Choba Foundation, a non-profit organization, based in Switzerland.

The mission of the Choba Choba Foundation is to co-create hands-on solutions for small scale cocoa farmers in the Peruvian Amazon to thrive as professional entrepreneurs and preserve their natural ecosystems.

3. CoopACCC – Cooperativa Agraria Cacaotera Choba Choba. The farmers' cooperative based in Juanjui, Peru. This cooperative holds the shares in the name of the farmers (30% as at writing) of Choba Choba AG. CoopACCC is the structure in charge of the cacao production and concrete implementation of the projects in Peru.

Eric, many thanks for making time for me. You and Christoph Inauen, the European co-founders of Choba Choba, have a background in fair trade chocolate. How did that come about?

When I graduated from university, I wanted to contribute to changing the world a little bit. So I started reading, went to events ... and this is how I then met by chance Tristan Lecomte, the founder of AlterEco, even today the largest French fairtrade products company. At the time he was looking for someone to take the corporate communication lead, and help Alter Eco document the impact their work had on the communities of producers. This gave me the opportunity to travel a lot, to learn a lot. And at some point I ended up as Head of Producers Support and CSR Strategy for AlterEco. I probably had the best job in the world: I was travelling a lot, and learning a lot about the development of sustainable value chains for agriculture and food products. We were partnering with about 30 farmer organisations, in 20 different countries, across all the different commodities foods categories. It was my job to ensure that the relationship and the projects the farmers had with AlterEco were meaningful and impactful.

It was in that way that I met Christoph, sometime back in 2008, who worked at the time as Head of Sustainability for Chocolat Halba in Switzerland. Halba was the producer of the AlterEco private label chocolate. We went on to develop a strong personal relationship over the years, as we were often in Peru at the same time in the communities that produced the cocoa for the chocolate. And overtime, I fell in love with cocoa, chocolate and the communities in the Alto Huayabamba Valley.

Christoph and I shared a common vision about impact, about development, about certification and fairtrade. And we got to think that some things could be done differently. Something that would not forget the good things of the Fairtrade system, but go above and beyond.



How did you come up with the governance structure that you have? How did you get to that structure?

The structure evolved as we kept talking to the farmers. Trying to understand what did not work, and why. And how it could be done and become better. And as we kept talking to the farmers it emerged that: traditionally, this was only a relationship where they were mere raw material suppliers, hoping that a Fairtrade client would come and be willing to pay a little premium. And yet, that premium would not change anything fundamentally. This is how we got to understand that we needed to entirely change the role of the cocoa farmer.



I mean, it is obvious that the cocoa farmers are a key stakeholder in the chocolate value chain. And we thought the best way to show that was for them to just become partners in the company. In this way, the idea emerged to create a vertically integrated value chain where the farmers would not just be the raw material suppliers, but be also the co-owners of the chocolate company, together with us. Because that would allow them to play a central role in the chocolate industry. It stops

being the traditional buyer-supplier relationship, and it is a start to co-creating something together.

This whole aspect of collaboration and co-creation is really central in Choba Choba. It is evident in the governance structure because the farmers are shareholders in the company. But it goes much beyond, and is all about collaborative problem solving and solution design. In fact, that is at the true core of Choba Choba: include the farmers in a common understanding of the problems to tackle; and then design and test together concrete solutions.

So that's what we did. We learned from the success and failures we had gone through in the previous 10 years – and took a white sheet and designed something better together. This is how we understood that designing a vertically integrated value chain would certainly help to have a greater impact. Our farmer-partners would have a stake in the company, they would

have a seat at the shareholder assembly, they would have a representative that would take decisions with us. And beyond that: it would be the farmer-partners who would decide what price they'd sell their cocoa for. Every year, for every harvest, they set the price.

In other words: it is a bottom-up pricing mechanism that is totally disconnected from the cocoa market price. There is no conversation about premiums relative to the commodity market price. But rather: they state what they think is a fair price they deserve for their cocoa, for all the hard work to deliver a premium quality cocoa. And in that set-up of an integrated value chain, everyone is interdependent. The farmers are very involved in growing quality cocoa, and they know that it will be for their own brand, and that it will be for their own customers. In a normal commodity supply chain – why would the growers commit to quality? Or anything else for that matter. So the shared governance is not only about the ecosystem where the farmers are the shareholders of a private company, but it is also about this collaborative problem solving.

Another important point when it comes to the cocoa value chain, but actually in any food value chain, is: If we're honest, there is no such thing as a 'monolithic block' of cocoa farmers. Their realities and challenges differ enormously from one value chain to the other, from one valley to the other, even from one community to the other. This invariably means though that in order to ensure impact on the ground, there is no way around a deep-dive to understand the local realities - and to co-create the solutions. And in order to co-create solutions you need to have a shared understanding of the problems and challenges at hand.

Choba Choba was only founded in 2015, but it is the logical sequence of what we had been doing before, and all the learnings, experiences made over all the years prior to that – also with Fairtrade. Our way of doing business is a farmer centric approach. And if it is a farmer centric approach it cannot be something that is top down, but something that invariably is bottom up, that is grassroots. And then yes, you have to define mechanisms to make sure that what you do makes sense for the reality of the farming communities. Another part that is fundamental to Choba Choba is our will to bridge that gap between the production world and the consumption world. That is really important to us.

Today these two worlds are totally disconnected. And yet – they are in reality heavily interdependent. It is so obvious that we forget this interdependency most of the time. If there is no cocoa farmer there is no chocolate. And if there is no one craving chocolate ... there is no need to grow cocoa. It is so easy and obvious - but we forget about it in the supermarket bliss of easy convenience.

Therefore, another one of our goals is to ensure that the connection between the farmers and consumers ‘makes sense’ and is meaningful. We use that even in our marketing: buy chocolate from a farmer-owned organisation not just an anonymous brand.

**How long did it take from the ‘Aha’ Moment that there is a world beyond Fairtrade, to actually going into the market? Because, I imagine that’s where a lot of the effort of co-designing actually happens, correct?**

It was a logical evolution over time, and in the personal relationships we have with the farmers. The project we have is not something that you can create with people that you do not know. You need to build trust with the partners where you then can finally share the real thing, in full transparency: what to create, what is viable.

While I have become quite critical of the Fairtrade system, it is probably fair to say that without our farmers having been previously in the Fairtrade system, Choba Choba would not exist today. The Fairtrade system helped them to build internal structures, to comply with a number of standards, to have an internal control system. In short: a range of mechanisms that are really helpful for farming communities in order to be more professional. Choba Choba was not created until 2015, but it was the whole process before that led us to create the company it is now. This said, if we were to look at the time frame between us starting to have the discussions, and actually creating the company and launching the brand: that might have been maybe 15 months. It was fairly quick – because of the track record, the trust between us and our farmer-partners.

And it is precisely the trust relationship that is the hardest thing to replicate in our model, because it is based on human relationships. The tools yes, they could be scaled. The trust – that is a tough thing to do.

**Can you recall a moment of setting up Choba Choba where you felt courageous or had to call upon your courage?**

In the very beginning, Christoph, the farmers, myself – we all took a risky decision. The farmers had already decided to step away from their farmer Fairtrade organisation. Christoph and I decided to leave our jobs. I personally took all the money I had in the bank account, and I had to borrow some more. And invested it all into Choba Choba.

Even, the requirement to invest into the company, was a shared one. We had that discussion with the farmers about how much they could or wanted to invest. They started off with buying 7% of the shares.

But talking of courage: One of the farmers, Edwin Caballero, came to the founding meeting and said: ‘I do not have that kind of money, but I am in. And that is my contribution’, pointing to a pig he brought along as the physical equivalent of the monetary value. Now that is ‘skin in the game’. He had nothing in cash, but contributed with the in-kind equivalent. To me that is courage: Having nothing and yet going all-in.

To me, courage is what the farmers had by committing to the project. In Europe, if it all goes wrong, you’ll always find a solution to survive. It is not the same in Peru as a cocoa farmer. So for me, they were truly showing courage. And that to me is the Choba Choba style. Going all in, all the time. In fact, I cannot count the times we were on the edge, and we took once more the decision: OK, let’s go all-in once more.

**What’s one piece of advice you have for citizens or future food entrepreneurs working with communities ‘all around the world’?**

My advice would be specifically for so-called ‘social entrepreneurs’: Challenge the concept of ‘beneficiaries’. Instead: shift towards partnership and a co-creation approach with the community you want to support. I think it is very important to get out of this ‘buyer-supplier’ relationship. And truly understand and cherish the interdependence of the different stakeholders in the value chain. Really use it as a strength. In fact, that’s even what Choba Choba means. Choba Choba in Quechua means “I help you, you help me”. And this is what it is all about: We’re in this together. It is not: we come, and we support you guys. No, the farmers are not beneficiaries of Choba Choba. They are the founders of Choba Choba. And they are drivers of their own change. It is all about helping each other in this transformation journey. Because if we’re not personally engaged in a transformation journey, what is it that we actually can transform? We’re not going to change the world if we’re not willing to change ourselves. And that’s probably the hardest thing to do. Yes, we can develop methodologies, tools, great business models and ideas and so on. But in the end, change does not come from the sky, but it comes from within.

So, if you really want to support communities, shift away from ‘I help them’ and ‘they are beneficiaries’ to: How can we co-create change that is meaningful for both? How can we in this way genuinely create deep impact, much beyond any superficial indicators created without a deep understanding of partners and communities, no matter where we work?





# 1 lab rat to small giant

Sean Finn

Fear not – there is a happy ending but for now.... go dear reader with this idea for developing a sustainable way of doing business wrapped up in part personal story.

So, there I was – exhausted on a Friday night. Fifteen years into a career at a large financial services company. Facing into working the weekend to meet the big corporate deadline of Monday. That meant missing the chance to join the kids for a movie treat. It meant missing an impromptu dinner party with friends I had not seen in quite a while. The mood? Pissed off. Stressed? Certainly. Happy? No chance.

What was I feeling? In one way nothing – just numbness. What was all this for? Where was my sense of contribution? Why did it seem like I was nothing but a minute cog in a huge corporate machine? What was I really trading my valuable time for? Okay – the salary was good, but the life was not. Why, why, why?

Fast forward to Monday afternoon. The deadline was met – at the further expense of minimal sleep. Then the chest tingling starts. Not a good sign. Straight to the doctor. She signs me off sick despite protestations. Later that week I have an angiogram. Spread-eagled, arms out wide & seeing a large screen displaying images of my heart beating away. Both fascinating and scary at the same time. At the end of the test, the nurse says nothing terribly drastic there. True, but I do technically get a diagnosis of coronary artery disease with an estimated 30% narrowing. I was 44.

Sobering.  
And enough.

My mind jumped forward. Yes, this is a bit cliched but on my deathbed would I be thinking “Wow! Did not spend enough time on those damn corporate objectives” or would it be “Well I lived to my heart and it was my life.”

Things had to change. It was slow on some but first we took care of health. Without that as a foundation, nothing else would matter.

So began a journey of learning, exploring & going back to some roots. My early years were heavily influenced in a positive way by my parents spending their career with the United Nations Development Programme. I had a degree in Economics. One assignment for that involved a project on Uganda & how appropriate

technology might play a key part in that country's development. As part of my degree studies, I had read "Small Is Beautiful" by E F Schumacher. That book was perhaps to ultimately have the most profound influence long term than any other. Just think of its title & then think sustainability. Two other books I read earlier in my life also influenced my thinking greatly: *Business as Unusual* by Anita Roddick and *The Empty Raincoat* by Charles Handy. As Roddick said:

**Economic opportunity means much more... than money. It promotes fundamental self-esteem, facilitates education, healthcare, cultural continuity and the chance to protect the past while shaping the future.**

\_ Anita Roddick

From Charles Handy came the idea of being a *caring capitalist*, meaning a capitalism that was:

- Inclusive, People not exploited,
- People members of their organisations – not just employees,
- A more balanced workstyle,
- Fun to work & not just hard work for money,
- Making dreams come true rather than simply producing more widgets every day,
- Relatively small units where people know & trust each other rather than mammoth organisations.

I had veered away big time from these ideas. It was time to return.

Having gotten the health thing sorted out, I also sorted out my "incarceration" in the corporate world by negotiating an exit that gave me some financial breathing space. It took some time but was well worth the effort. Simultaneously, I had gone on a deep dive into the world of work, business in general, how people develop their talents and skills and how business might play a more noble part in creating a more sustainable world & way of life. This involved a lot of thinking, discussions and reading. The key books in that process were varied & some are still being read. They are listed for reference at the end of this essay. Indeed, the title of this essay combines two of them.

What emerged from it all?

- Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest Airlines in the US said, "The business of business is people."
- For business to play its full part in creating a more sustainable world then it needs to focus less on process or production but more on building people up - giving them the skills, capacity and confidence.
- And business needs to pivot away from running over the cliff of growth and size.
- Business in the future will likely be smaller, more community based and thus sustainable.

In a kind of way, it was going backwards to move forward. Back to a time when a business was truly part of its community. Where it was local. When it didn't suffocate everything around it. Business needs to be better, not bigger.

Of course, this does not exclude the larger business – there will always be some – perhaps even a need. But they should not be the dominating force. And as for dynamism, flexibility, community, a sense of service & belonging, then small is definitely better.

Anecdotally, the local shops in the area of Dublin (Ireland) that I live 'get it'. In the fruit & veg shop, they will pack your shopping if you need to hop next door to the small hardware store. It seems to have everything. They will also put the stuff in the boot of your car – even if the car is parked a distance away. Forgotten your credit card? No problem drop in the next time you are passing and sort it out. Simple but highly effective.

When larger businesses dominate then individuality goes out the window. So does a sense of curiosity. The focus ends up on process, products, compliance, shareholder value – anything but looking to a sustainable future. Faceless.Characterless.



How does that change? Bo Burlingham argues in his book *Small Giants* that bigger is not necessarily better. He takes the reader through several (and very varied) businesses that have all rejected the idea of endless growth. Instead they have chosen to be Small Giants - putting the focus on more meaningful goals such as being the best at what they do, creating stimulating work environments, providing excellent customer service & making significant contributions to their local communities. It is a very appealing argument – one to wholeheartedly endorse.

Each of the Small Giants enabled individuals to both develop and enjoy their work. We can further enhance this idea by focussing on 5 key areas:

1. Helping each person manage their own potential
  2. Helping people infuse themselves, their work & their business with real meaning on a human scale
  3. Helping people have the courage to say “Let’s try it differently”
  4. Helping people develop their intellectual capital so that they learn, adapt, think independently, creatively & have a high EQ
  5. Helping people be self-lead, self-managed & self- developed.
- Quite apart from the value of business making changes by themselves, us the customers should be demanding it as part of our personal contribution to a more sustainable economy.

**Meaning. Purpose.**

**Deep life experience.**

**Use whatever word or phrase you like,**

**but know that consumer desire for these qualities is on the rise.**

**Remember your**

**Abraham Maslow and**

**your Viktor Frankl!**

**Bet your business on it.**

\_ Rich Karlgaard

If we manage to turn the ship of business around to implement all the above, then business will be a force for good, not greed. It will play a key role in creating a more sustainable future for us all. And ‘small’ truly will be beautiful.

**If you think you are too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito.**

\_Anita Roddick

Here is to that brighter, sustainable future for business, each person and the world itself.

**Books of my journey**

*Small is Beautiful*  
E F Schumacher

*Business as Unusual*  
Anita Roddick

*The Empty Raincoat*  
Charles Handy

*Heroic Leadership*  
Chris Lowney

*Insanely Simple*  
Ken Seagall

*Small Giants*  
Bo Burlingham

*Company of One*  
Paul Jarvis

*Spiritual Capital*  
Danah Zohar & Ian Marshall

*Essentialism*  
Chris McKeown

*Building Social Business*  
Muhammad Yunnus

*Enough*  
John C Bogle

*Lab Rats*  
Dan Lyons

*The Passion Economy*  
Adam Davidson

# Be like water

Sophie Kirby

You know it. You sense it. You feel it.  
We are no different from each other, all of us humans.  
Clothed in our various skins, cultures, and backgrounds.  
All of us need to breathe.

## In and out. In and out. In and out.

Some of us choke,  
under centuries of oppression,  
or from toxic air.  
Yet the tragedy of it is --  
that which makes us seem separate is but an outer layer.  
We all come from the Earth and we all return to it.  
Regardless of what happens in between.

You sense it. You feel it. You know it.  
We are no different from any other being on this planet.  
Not just humans -  
but animals, trees, mountains and streams, too.  
They live and breathe as we do.  
In and out. In and out. In and out.  
That which makes us seem separate is but an outer layer.  
We all rely on the sun and the rain to nourish us.  
We all come from the Earth and return to it.  
Regardless of what we are in between.

We are all interconnected.  
Interdependent.  
Intertwined.

The lives we currently live are but an elaborate illusion.  
That outer layer, just superficial separation.  
As if we don't all come from the Earth and return to it.  
As if we don't all breathe in and out.



## In and out. In and out.

In this life, it is 'us' versus 'them'. 'Me' against the universe.  
'I' strive to make myself seen.  
To be heard.  
To find meaning.  
'I' hunt for wholeness.  
Significance.  
Connection.  
Through status, work, clothes.  
Sometimes by putting others down.  
Claiming 'my' rightness over theirs.  
'I' distract myself from my emptiness.  
Through sport, drugs, food, social media. Self-optimisation.  
Consumption and growth.  
Dominion and dominance.  
Taking from myself, from others and from nature.  
On a planet of finite resources and fragile beauty.

It is an endless and fruitless quest.  
Hence 'the pursuit' of happiness.  
-- The point is it's always somehow just out of reach.

The thing is,  
it doesn't take much to find that sense of wholeness  
we are all so busy searching for.  
Go within.  
Deeper than that outer layer of superficial separation.  
You will find pain, intensity, suffering.  
And you will also find a beating heart  
that longs just to love, and be loved.  
That is intensely capable of love.  
In that, each of us is the same.

Deeper still, you will feel the energy of your cells.  
There are trillions of them. You knew that.  
Hold up your palm to your eyes, observe its intricate lines.  
You see, you are no different from a leaf on a tree.  
Blowing in the wind.

Just as that leaf blossoms and wilts in the course of its life,  
so do you.  
Returning to the Earth together,  
you see you were whole all the time.

So where does this leave us?

Let us absorb and embody that wholeness.  
And trust it. Place it at the forefront of our minds.  
Act from a place of completeness and safety.  
That is how love can ease out fear,  
and our beautiful planet can heal from within.

Let us be like water floating downstream.  
Rippling over rocks. Trickling through crevasses.

## In and out, in and out, in and out.

Allowing itself to be carried in the direction it's going,  
there is no heaviness, no forcing.  
It is the opposite of dominance and dominion.  
Lightly, lightly,  
water bends to its environment,  
and in turn nourishes it.  
A cycle of giving.  
And the fish and the algae and the frogs?  
They are one with the stream.

You know it.  
You sense it.  
You feel it.  
It's really quite simple, isn't it?

# But collaborating, and taking the values of nature to heart, makes a difference.

Adriana, many thanks for taking the time for this interview. How did Animaná and HechoXNostotros come into being? What was the path whose result we see today in these two organisations?

For me the two are one thing – complementary, but one thing. All started with the work I did already as an academic researcher, looking at the local challenges and lack of opportunities within disadvantaged communities, and how the realities of inequality impacted their lives and well-being. I come from Patagonia – and that’s also where my appreciation of natural fibres, artisans and communities that work them, originates. For me artisans have always been the biggest luxury we have in this world. I feel really inspired by their wisdom, their dignity and the mastery with which they work the natural fibres into the type of products they create.

Wherever I went – from Patagonia where I grew up, to the North of Argentina where I lived for many years, and the many areas I travelled to in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador – it always struck me that the artisans, this luxury we have, experience such challenges to make a living and to just lead a decent life. Even though they are at the origins of an industry that today makes billions of dollars. It is tough to see how much difficulties these communities and artisans face to create designs and links to the market that would allow them to lead a life in dignity, and to progress.





When our family went to live in Spain, I continued to collaborate with the ten or so craftsmanship cooperatives that I had worked with before. It developed into something like a curation of their craft and products, beyond just textiles, and slowly over time started to incorporate design into that



process. Over the years another 15 or so textile-focused cooperatives and micro-enterprises have been added to that portfolio.

Back then, Spain was a very good place to me. Everything seemed to flourish. My partner took care of the entrepreneurial side of things, and I managed all the rest: from supporting the communities in the design aspects, to helping them understand the Spanish (and European) market.

I eventually decided to re-

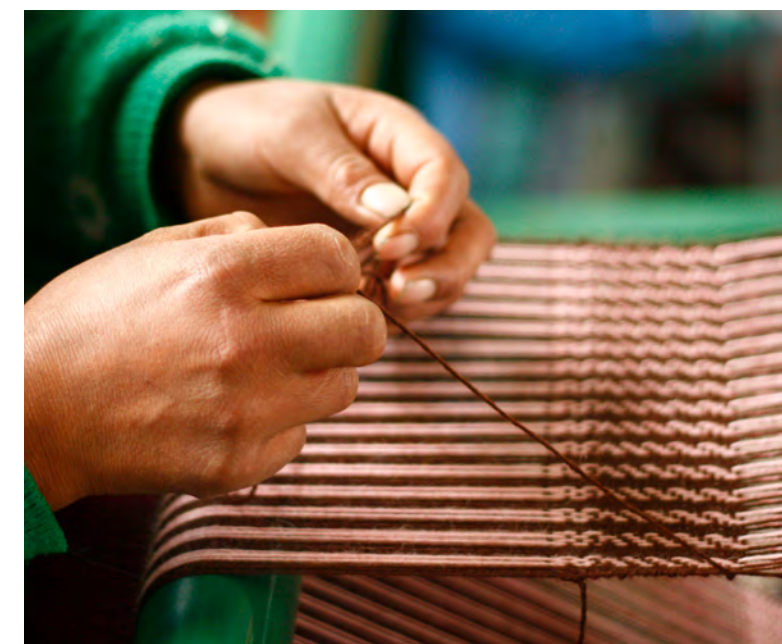
turn to Argentina – via a detour to India. And that's where I got to know the fast fashion phenomenon. In Spain, that was the moment when the Zara/Inditex phenomenon really took off. It is there that I consciously realised the quantity of clothes that had to be moved around the world to make that happen, the processes behind the industry. This was the moment where I finally connected it with the knowledge I had about the effort and labour required to bring those clothes into being. And I was flabbergasted.

With that in mind, I wanted to create a space that would be centred around the artisan. Where their micro enterprises would be empowered, and also improve on whatever sustainable processes they already had in place. A platform also that would create links between different artisan communities on the one hand, and with connections to the bigger world of fashion on the other. In my view, then as much as today, this is the only way to create truly novel opportunities on both sides and change the system: by bringing together the expertise and wisdom of the artisans with the players in the fashion industry.

To me it was clear then that I needed a commercial company as a vehicle to achieve this goal. After all, there is no company without adequate capacity building; and there is no better way to build capacity than by bringing your business model to market with the intention to make it a success. This is how you learn by going through all the difficulties that arise along the way.

In parallel, I started to unite all my economist friends in the NGO called today Hecho x Nosotros (Engl: Made by Us). The NGO developed into a network of international academics and other experts: contacts are forged, knowledge exchanged. And these exchanges are really fruitful and rich.

It was also at the origin of the creation of the Ethical Fashion Forum Latin America. It goes without saying that when I started out, something over 12 years ago, I thought it would be much easier and much faster. I put a lot of my own money into Animaná. We started to work with a number of communities across the Andes that had the skill we needed but lacked the access to the market. We started to forge connections with different fashion compa-



nies: medium sized ones, large ones, in a variety of geographies. And we learned how such a business model might work: the target customers; the brand collaborations; the product pricing; the story telling. At the same time, by being in touch with these fashion companies we brought the topic of sustainability to them – in many cases for the first time. That was well over a decade ago, not a time where this topic was either much known or recognised. Everyone thought 'Adriana, you're a little bit mad!'.

Of course there is another angle to this: the industry professionals. That's where our work with design schools kicks in. In Buenos Aires we're a very design-centred society. Talking to the designers as they are shaped in schools is the best way to inoculate them with these ideas and concepts. For many of them it was and keeps being a culture shock. The reality of these artisan communities is so different from what is being taught in school – and yet, at least for Argentina: it is our own cultural heritage we're bringing to the table!

Now, there are probably around 1500 students we have managed to touch and familiarise with the beauty and potential of Andean craftsmanship. All of these have gone out into the world – and have taken what they've learned with them. In a similar way, just in reverse, this applies of course also to the artisan communities. Those that were kids back then when we started, have grown into adults. From a very small age they absorbed the work techniques and ethics of their parents, and have learned from any oppor-



tunity they were given. Today, they lead their communities, and understand how to create and find space in the market for their products. They use and integrate the tools that make their family business more professional, more resilient, more adapted.

An ecosystem shift then starts happening, co-created by everyone affecting and affected by it. Which of course also starts to positively impact other areas of the indigenous societies such as women's empowerment, or the public-facing accountability of local politicians, to just name a two. Creating such an ecosystem is really hard. And yet – it has to happen. There must be a way to work more in sync with nature, and with communities. To create a virtuous cycle in this way.

**Your background is in economics. What is it that you learned from this that drove you to create Animaná and Hecho X Nosotros?**

I think it all goes back to Patagonia, where I originally come from. That's where you have it all, notably that all powerful nature. I spent days on end there, isolated with my family, and with my grandmother in particular. I spent four months each year in the summer with her: going to the mountains, being with the animals and talking to them, spending time with the Tehuelche who saw me growing up from a very tiny age, who kept Guana-cos and collected their fleece in an absolute natural and peaceful way. My love for nature, the natural environment, and the communities stems from that time.

That time, those experiences, were my university if you want to call it that way. Since then, I've been an academic, a campaigner, an entrepreneur. But

wherever I went, I always saw the lack of constructive dialogue. Instead of creating spaces for co-creation, evolution and collaboration, we sort of seem to do the opposite. The world we live in now is a world that is invented by our minds, and really has no connection any more with nature. This is the reason why I wanted a space where collaboration is the rule, not the exception. Spaces that would allow us to co-create that win-win, indeed would make it the path with the least



possible headwind. For now, I feel glad I have been so tenacious and not given in. Because make no mistake: it has not been easy. I mean, honestly, this world of fashion really does not want us. They really do not feel that we have a raison d'être, that we should exist.

So yes, it all started in Patagonia, in that land where the headwinds can blow 150km/h. That's probably why I am how I am, and why I am swimming against the current. Pretty much all the time.

**You are working with indigenous communities. That certainly is not easy work, for a million and one reasons: the context, the infrastructure, the difference in world view. The fact that many of these communities up until now did not need to, or did not see the point to, professionalise their trade. How do you work with them? What is it that you did differently back when you started from all the other people and organisations? And in particular, different from those that go 'to help', hence the traditional 'developing country approaches'?**

Oh, there you have me nearly cry. And here is why: At the root of it all is my admiration for those artisans, those communities. I was, and still am, learning from them to start with. The dignity of how they live their lives. The dignity of how they find ways to make a living, to educate their children, their love for life and nature. It is not me helping them. To the contrary, it is them helping me. They saw the best in me, and the best of them is in that force I have to work with them, and to make space for them. For me it was always about making space so they could find out what they want their lives to really be. And to create those tools and opportunities to make this happen.

It's not about what I want to do. It is about what they want to do with their lives, with their communities, with their possibilities, with their future, with their culture. And neither it is about me telling them what design looks like, or to learn from them what their designs and techniques are. It is about collaborating to understand how their designs and their craftsmanship could resonate in the urban societies of today. Animaná is the translation, the bridge,





to make that happen. It is most certainly neither pity nor aid. It is appreciation, love, affection, and the vocation that they be the actors in forging their own path into the future. Because for them it's like it is for everyone: if someone sees you, recognises you – that gives you strength.

The communities do have the wisdom. Establishing the dialogue and projects has just co-constructed new shapes, new opportunities. And those opportunities again, have given birth to new ideas, new collaboration, and new types of communities. Family companies and micro enterprises are at the root of that change – for the simple reason that they make up for well over 90% of the global workforce. But unless the majority of the value add remains in local communities they will remain in a really difficult position. Right now, in this crazy world of today, the local value add is as good as non-existent. Just take my own history: in Patagonia there were no opportunities for me, I had to leave. And that's the issue.

**Can you recall a moment in the setting up of the Animaná ecosystem, where you felt courageous or had to call upon your courage?**

There were many. To get Animaná off the ground and ahead was hard, and cost so much work and effort. Despite all the support and help I received, which was not a small amount either. So finding that strength and courage to continue was an ongoing process.

The second moment might have been maybe 18 months ago, when we decided that I would leave the commercial part of Animaná to my son. It was difficult to admit that my skill and expertise was not sufficiently geared towards the commercial aspect of what the company needed to prosper. I had to learn to let go and let him do his own thing. Don't forget that I had put all my work, and all my time and even all my savings into Animaná over all those years.

And last but not least: this very moment. Not because of Covid. But because it struck me that the very people that create the global problems we have would actually also be the protagonists to solve them. That's why every so often I feel disgusted just hearing the word 'sustainability'. The lack of commitment, the greenwashing in social media. It's hard. And yet – we have to keep going and keep pushing for change.

**What's one piece of advice you have for citizens or future social entrepreneurs?**

First, collaborate and learn from other entrepreneurs, from other projects and undertakings. Look for inclusive spaces and environments. One thing is for sure: we won't find solutions using the same mechanisms and tools we used as we created this disastrous situation we're in. But new tools, ideas, solutions are only created collaborating with others. Most of us entrepreneurs, also social entrepreneurs, fail. But then again – some of what we do remains. But collaborating, and taking the values of

nature to heart, makes a difference. And will allow you to make a difference – even if your business, your organisation, your NGO, fails.

Lastly: One needs to remain faithful to one's own commitment and beliefs. I always wanted to create tools for collaboration, and spaces for collaboration with the Andean indigenous communities. That's what I really wanted. And that's what I am and will keep doing.



#### ANIMANÁ AND HECHO X NOSOTROS

Adriana Marina was born in Puerto Santa Cruz in Patagonia, a sparsely populated area located at the southern tip of South America, where the pristine landscape contrasts between grasslands, desert and rugged peaks of the Andes. An economist by training, and with a PhD in Inequality, Growth and Convergence, Adriana always worked with marginalised indigenous communities. She has also always been fascinated by the Andean culture: its people, their connection to the earth, and their art. She witnessed how poverty eroded these beautiful ancient cultures, and in this way many of their secrets and treasures gradually dying out.

In the extinct Kakane language, the term 'Animaná' means 'a place in heaven'. The term has given name to a social enterprise whose purpose it is to elevate the craftsmanship traditions of the Andes, from Patagonia to

Bolivia, by rescuing in particular the art of spinning and of the creation of natural fibres, and turn them into commercially desirable premium clothing items.

Hecho x Nosotros is a non-profit NGO with consultative status within the United Nations. Complementary to Animaná, it works to promote sustainability in the fashion world, with a strict focus on research and educational projects to better understand the industry and its problems; and find comprehensive solutions to create a sustainable paradigm within the fashion industry. Their three areas of work are:

- local development especially in rural Andean communities;
- value chain and market development of camelid fibres (i.e. hair from the Camelidae family, including llamas, alpacas, vicuñas, and guanacos); and
- progress in a sustainable textile industry.



# Courageous conversations

Barbara Putman Cramer

It's often only after speaking that I realise the conversation was not in flow, it was more of a reactive, upload-download dynamic. Through these upload-download conversations we miss out on what is most needed when facing global problems: weaving new stories through our shared imagination and appreciation for one another, together.

Deep-down I know there is a different level of conversation available to us. One where we listen deeply and are willing to be changed by the conversation forever, instead of verbally fighting to protect our current worldview. That, to me, seems a pretty restrictive bandwidth for something so potentially powerful as the exchange of our inner worlds with other humans.

If you recognise this mode of conversation in your life, how do you see it playing out? At home, at work or out in public? Can you identify any benefits to it? If you, like me, cannot find many merits to unconsciously scripted and reactive conversations, let's imagine what a good, flowing conversation might look like.

## “It takes two to speak the truth: one to speak, and another to hear.”

— Henry David Thoreau

### The origin of upload-download

The way I engage in conversation, when I decide to speak, and the words I choose are often misaligned with what I really want to say and when I really want to speak. This misalignment is no wonder, given that I also am trained by my Western culture to instantly react to what others say, bring forward solutions and have opinions on whatever comes to the table.

Let us go back to the root of where silence turns into conversation: What makes me actually speak? How do I even start talking? Many of the feelings we experience, lead to an action to alleviate them when negative, or extend them when positive. That holds for conversations, too.

When I am deeply immersed in a conversation, my mind seems to be in charge, showing off its logic, processing power and speed of response. My back is straight, I'm leaning slightly forward and listening to the other party, waiting for my turn to make a contribution that will allow him or her to validate my worth.

In the conversation I might feel insecure, hence seek approval. Or I experience validation, and will keep interrupting someone to gain even more. That is how hungry our feelings can be. Many of my conversations show such patterns, sequences of unconscious verbal expressions triggered by feelings.

### Why do good conversations matter?

As a humanity, we are a collective. We rely on the commons, such as fresh air, clean water and healthy soil, for our survival. Yet, we do not feel the negative impacts of our activities on this planet equally. The impacts are either very abstract, future predictions, or very real, negatively affecting our actual lives and livelihoods.

For a new story to manifest itself, we need everyone aboard. We need everyone's heart aboard. Hearts aren't touched by logic alone. Hearts do not open when they are not listened to. Hearts do not speak when there is no safe space to do so.

Not being allowed to bring our hearts into conversations is like building a dam around the sea. In our hearts reside our emotions and deepest longings, long before we cognitively have turned them into feelings or even verbal expressions. From those heartfelt longings only a better world can follow, because hearing the whispers of your own heart makes you automatically capable of hearing those of others. You cannot unheard what is in someone's heart, and you will naturally be inclined to act in accordance with that person's needs, too.



### What does a good conversation look like?

It is easy to become drowned out by conversations about changing the world for the better, in particular when the conversation is dominated by trying to convince the other, instead of seeking common ground.

A flowing conversation, focused on the collective, is essential as we face challenges that we have caused, as well as suffer from ourselves. The right conversations can help us to shift our singular, individual, restrictive reactions to expansive, collective and loving responses.

I have listed three types of flowing conversations you can have with yourself, others and your wider community that look beyond individual interests - and carry within them the possibility to generate something better, for everyone.

The three practices listed all focus on listening - to yourself, others and something bigger than yourself. They teach you to keep a beginner's mind in conversations, to let yourself be surprised, to deviate from your own script and actually learn something new, to remain strong in your beliefs, yet fluid, to welcome the unknown with curiosity, candour and courage.

Renew your attitude to conversations, and witness how the flow will change course and create new beddings, rivers and realities.

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

— Viktor E. Frankl

## 01 Conversation with self

Meditation, or the act of training your attention to focus on a primary anchor, such as your breath, can lead to being in flow with the elements around

and below you. Realising that you, as a human, are not separate from your surroundings, can lead to wholly different decisions in life and work.

## 02 Conversations with others

When we listen, we often do not hear. By structuring a conversation into ‘talking time’ and ‘listening time’, you create a so-called container to let conversation flow. You and your conversation part-

ner(s) are invited to move from react to respond, from forced to flow. When you remain quiet as someone else is speaking, and hearing what is (not) said, mutual understanding emerges.

## 03 Conversations with the wider community

In Buddhism there's a meditation practice called ‘metta’ meditation, or loving kindness meditation. The meditation invites you to not only wish well for yourself, but also for those around you - friends or foes - and eventually for all sentient beings you happen to share this planet with. When you sit in meditation, you focus on your heart center, you

can even put your hand on your heart and say: May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease. Next, you can shift your attention from just yourself to friends, family, neighbours or your wider community and say: May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe. May you be peaceful and at ease.



# You know when the time is right, and it's not just about a good idea.



Let's start from the beginning, I'm curious about the origins of the Moy Hill farm and your initial intentions. Why did you transition from being a professional surfer to creating a farm?

I grew up on a farm, and always actually planned to go back at some point. I just didn't know in what form. I liked the idea of being a farmer and growing food but I wanted to reinvent certain things, and do it with people rather than on my own. Moy Hill started as a community garden. I wanted to make it really clear that the intention was for people to get the community theme, as well as being in a nice environment. It evolved from there and we bought another piece of land where we started to grow more. Yet it was always about trying to be more inclusive, more community orientated. And about education, but not in the formal sense, more education by inviting people to come to the farm, for tours and talks, buying the veggies and being aware of their seasonality. So to grow food, feed people and feed the community was my basic intention, I suppose. Direct selling was important too: that we're not just producing commodities and supplying markets, as many people do anyway, but that we're trying to supply the local community with local food, and also look after the environment in the same way.

So moving to the land was both a personal wish and also a wish for some systemic changes connected to farming. What issues did you want to tackle?

It definitely is a personal thing of wanting to live how I grew up, being on the land and seeing my kids grow up here. That's what brings me happiness every day. And definitely I'm interested in the bigger changes, looking at the challenges that the world is facing with food, supply security and stuff. We are trying to slightly infiltrate the community with these ideas. Generally, there are so many studies and articles, and so many people telling about the problems. But it's not making people stop creating the problems. I decided I'm not going to be a part of that. Instead of highlighting problems all the time I want to create a solution, and just gently involve more and more people by providing food, having farm tours, where people can join and ask questions themselves. We also host a music event every year,





which offers nice little ways that people can be involved, where conversations can start - and it almost happens organically without having to force anything, which is a long-term kind of way to do it. The beauty of events is that there are many more people interested in good music than those in food security and eating well. So, having a music event with stories and good food on our farm is a very powerful way in the space of only a few hours or a day or two to affect people's lives and create a lot of memories and conversations. Some people may say it's too slow. But you know it's only been five years and we've involved a lot of people and then you can say it's actually really quick. These things take time, but it makes it a lot more real, it's not just a passing idea.

It's often hard to speak about impact because it's hard to measure, but still what kind of intended or even unintended impact do you see in the community or the people around?

It never ceases to amaze me to see the impact the farm actually made that I have never really intended. I just knew whatever happened at the farm it would make a difference for people and the community. And there would be ripples of it, and I never knew what exactly they would look like. So for example this area where we are is now one of the most sought after places to move to, and I get emails and phone calls every week with people asking about possibilities to rent or buy property to move here. And I'm not saying this comes directly from the farm, but actually often it does as people say they've been following our farm and want to live near the farm, being part of a happier community. We also supply different places in the region, and there are some really nice ripples of having good products and good food. Some people even email me after having been here for a day or a week and say that they've quit their job.

Could you talk about the regenerative strategies you practice at the farm, and what this choice means to you?

In our parents' generation everything was done very much on a profit and loss basis. Most decisions being made were based on whether it helps you make money, and if you can help the environment along the way, great,

but at the end of the day, things have to make money, especially if this work is your only wage. But I was not going into farming for a wage, because there are easier ways to make money. I'm doing it to regenerate the land, teach people about that, and to try and create some change.

So I suppose we were very lucky when we started, we still were professional surfers and we had this kind of time and a bit more security. But now the farm has to pay for itself. Yet it's a carriage and a horse problem, too. We are in a phase now where the EU and the national governments are all pushing for the carbon question, biodiversity, habitats, etc. Yet while it's all on the way, we can already create a regenerative farm, and then it's more likely that the system will start implementing those changes. But it's very hard for them to implement changes when they don't even have any examples to learn from.

So it's kind of my mission or life work to create a regenerative farm and show that it's possible, and that ecosystems can thrive. I know we don't get a paycheck overnight, but we will eventually. And the land pays us back in a million ways by being healthier. When we have droughts or floods we have more buffers because we have a healthier ecosystem - it's the long term game. And at some point the governments will be paying farmers for biodiversity creation or their carbon sequestration. So eventually we're going to get rewarded for our agenda and practices, but for me it's just far more important that we do it, we get the ball rolling on what regenerative farming should look like.

What should it look like from your perspective?

If we want to regenerate the land, the best way is doing it with animals. Animals have a bad reputation for their carbon stories, but it's actually upside-down. The problem is with the current model or the current management practices of industrial farming where we're not actually managing land, we became part of a financial system where the middleman gets paid when something's in a bag. So they'll get paid for fertilisers, but they won't get paid for well managed grasslands. Nobody gets paid for that, only the





farmer, and the animals. The problem with CO2 is that we don't feed our animals a proper diet. They generally eat only one type of grass, which is why they fart so much and send all the CO2 into the air. If they ate a mix sort of grass they'd be healthier. There would also be way more biodiversity because there could be 50 types of grass, not just one. And then you have all the flowers and insects as well, and you get more resilience.

And actually animals never really lived inside the sheds until we came along. Animals don't like belong indoors. If we want to build soil and we want to store carbon quickly, we need to invite animals to build the soil. Many people look at animals as the problem, but they really are the solution to many of our problems, if we can only look closer at our management of land, at animal welfare, at the ecosystem and see how the ecosystem responds to animals. There's not enough animals on the land, and that's why the ecosystem isn't thriving.

So it's very interesting stuff because realistically just growing vegetables isn't regenerative at all: you grow your plants, you take the plants out, you input compost - it's like balancing the books every year - in and out, in and out. Whereas an animal eats the grass that grows by the sun, and leaves manure, which feeds the soil and grows more grass - it's a circular system, and a byproduct can be food. This for me is a much more regenerative model. And yeah, trees are great, but trees are slow. Grass stores carbon 21 times faster than trees do. Grass stores carbon into the soil, into the organic matter, which can be stored in the soil indefinitely, for millennia. Whereas trees store carbon and then they die and then they release the carbon. Now it's not negative, it still feeds the soil and grows more trees.



And we're really interested in trees. We've planted 26,000 trees here. We've planted the hedgerow and the windbreak thicker. In the areas of the farm that are really wet or where the soil isn't very good, we've planted trees so we still have all the fields for the animals to graze, and then we put trees in and around the fields. That creates windbreaks, shelter and food for the animals. There are all these models, like agroforestry, to integrate trees with the farm. But

farmers are often traumatised by trees, because they think trees are going to take all their land. Whereas, I'm trying to show them that we've got nearly 30,000 trees and we still have all our fields, we haven't lost the farm. We are trying to show farmers that there are benefits to having trees, from animals having shelter and food to having your own timber, or your own firewood. So we are trying to integrate trees, creating lots of small areas like clades where you end up having microclimates, sheltered areas, little gardens, and also you've got richer biodiversity. Usually it's the edge of the forest where the most species live, between the edge of the forest and the field. If you create kind of an edge of the forest, lines of trees, all around your farm, you're creating a huge amount of biodiversity.

It sounds like you are looking at things and processes in a more holistic, interconnected way. You mentioned that you are also interested in direct sales models, i.e. REKO, is it something you are innovating in your area (REKO-ring is a local group of consumers and food producers who shop in a simple model. REKO stands for Real Consumption, in Norwegian «Rettferdig Konsum»)?

A big problem for farmers is that they gave away their power in the 60s to the supermarkets. Most farmers don't do direct sales. They're pretty powerless in their decisions because they can't see how they're going to make any money through the middleman who sets the price. So my longer term idea is to collaborate with local farmers, if they also do regenerative farming and plan their grazing properly and don't spray chemicals and all is managed correctly, then they create really good products and if I have more demand we can work together. This would definitely change things. Lots of farmers have been sold an industrial dream as a way that was going to make them more money. But actually now they end up with dry, worn out soil, and also in debt. They actually need to be shown different ways. And they can still do a lot of what they were originally doing but just tweaking it a little. I find this way better than imposing legislation. This would make farmers feel more involved rather than just being told that they're wrong. And if they come to our farm and see things working, that the land is getting better, that the trees aren't a problem, and that we're making money - that's when they will listen. When we succeed with





this model, they might start integrating the ideas but it's a slow transition.

I imagine farming and making everything work takes most of your time. Do you still keep the connection to the ocean, to surfing?

Definitely! It doesn't have to be surfing but it's just being there at the sea. It refreshes, clears my head, and I come back with a lot more positivity. The ocean is very important to me. That's what keeps me sane. A big problem I think for farmers is that there's never ever a time where there isn't anything to do on the farm. When you think you did all the work for the day there's always another job to do. I think farmers need other activities to keep them occupied outside of the farm, it can be swimming or cycling or anything really. Then I think there'd be a lot more life balance. At the moment people get into farming, not making much money with it, and the work is constantly staring them in the face. You can always do more work! Farmers often end up being workaholics and end up not enjoying the work because they're just stuck, working all the time. I'd love to see 10,000 new young farmers in Ireland alone. And how am I going to convince 10,000 young people to become farmers? They have to see that there's life as well as farming. If you have something else as well, something that can keep you centred, I think it's really healthy and that's what I try to show to young people.

Right, like the half-farmer half-X idea! Lots of what you've been telling seems to involve going against the mainstream, in one way or another, and this requires courage. What are the most memorable moments where you had to call upon your courage?

Yes, that's the constant! Originally such a moment was when I took the decision to leave surfing. You know, I was getting paid to go surfing, so to stop that and to take on, essentially, a life of work and no money really, it was a big leap into the unknown. I had to have that courage just to do what I knew that needs to be done and it's amazing, because I don't have the paycheck I had from surfing, but actually everyday is far more rewarding and far more healthier for my kids and family than what I was doing before. So that definitely was a good one!

On a day-to-day basis on the farm it's really important to have your wits about you. Especially when you are not a standard farmer with a private farm, but when you are more open. We have a lot of events and tours and different things that people get involved in. You get a lot of people trying to get involved. And they might not always be the right people. And for the farm to really work I have to dig deep a lot and sometimes just tell people "No, it's not going to work". I had to learn this. I used to say yes to everyone. And you end up having a situation where it's actually not helping the farm. It's also part of personal wellbeing, to take care, not to get burnt out, or the farm is not going to work very well. So I actually have to be saying no a lot more than I say yes, which is taking a lot of courage and it's not easy

to do, especially when people are really interested, when they really want to get involved in this lifestyle but sometimes you just know it's not going to work, and you have to be very clear. It is really about sustainability, because you are only one person, you can only do so much. It's about learning to prioritise, keeping yourself full of energy, and able to do what you've already begun. You know when the time is right, and it's not just about a good idea. There are lots of good ideas but you don't have to do them all.

Thanks so much for your time, Fergal. Good luck with your beautiful endeavour!









## Choose bravely making good decisions about sustainable products

Terms such as “sustainable”, “environmentally-friendly” and “green” are in widespread use in a vast range of product marketing materials. Making decisions, and good choices, when buying is difficult. Universal certificates for sustainable products don’t exist so products may define what they mean by sustainable in different ways, and some claims may not be true or verifiable. Here are some pointers to help you make better choices.

Zoe Belshaw



## Do you really need this new “thing”?

If you’re tempted to buy something, the first sustainability question to ask yourself is “Do I really, really need it”? If the answer is no, then that might be the point at which you stop. But if you still really want it, that’s ok - just consider your options. For example, if you’re looking to buy an engagement ring: does it need to be a new diamond and platinum one or could it be a second hand or upcycled one? Second hand products may not be labelled as sustainable, but buying something second hand means minimal new resources will be required. Independent of the product, this is typically your best sustainability bet. Second hand, and upcycled, versions of many things are available if you look hard enough.

## How much do you know about the “making of”? Who made your “thing”?

Making a product requires a lot of steps, and many of those are invisible to the consumer. Each of the constituents of a product will need to be farmed, manufactured or mined. Each of these processes may themselves have a non-negligible impact on the environment and communities. Production may require factories with all their inputs and outputs, staff with offices and transport and international shipping of parts or ingredients. Sales will require packaging, and more transportation. Locally made things may be better in terms of fossil fuel transport miles, but manufacturing in bulk can sometimes be more sustainable in terms of input per item. And that is even before considering whether using the finished product will directly lead to any environmental damage, or whether the product might possibly be recyclable one day. It’s almost impossible to get this level of information. This said, when you look at a product, check where it was made and consider what might have gone into its manufacture.

For example, it is estimated that the production of 1kg of cotton requires between 10,000 and 20,000 litres of water - that’s to make a single pair of jeans and a t-shirt. The “Better cotton” initiative ([bettercotton.org](http://bettercotton.org)) is working with producers and major manufacturers to reduce this. Or perhaps you’re thinking of moving away from drinking cow’s milk to a plant based substitute. There are several options - oat, cashew, rice, soya, almond to name a few. It’s worth thinking about the relative environmental costs of these. To make a single glass of almond milk requires 74 litres of water, whilst the same volume of oat milk needs under 20 litres. But, oat milk requires slightly more land per glass, and leads to slightly higher emissions compared to almond milk.



There will always be trade offs to consider. It's easy to get lost in a sea of decisions. Don't beat yourself up over it – it is hard to know or get hold of all the facts behind every product. Sometimes it's best to pick a single issue that you care most about and start there. You can always change your choices when new information comes along.

## Are there reliable websites that have done sustainability checks for you?

Many websites claim to help consumers make sustainable or ethical choices. Ideally you want advice from an independent expert, free of ties to specific companies or products. Exercising your inner sceptic can help you make decisions that are based on facts rather than instinct and good marketing! When trying to decide which websites to trust about product sustainability, try using the free online Trust or Trash tool ([trustortrash.org](http://trustortrash.org)). It encourages you to follow three steps to fact check the information:

First: Who is making the claim? Can you see who has written the piece, and do they have credentials that make you think they would know what they are talking about? That might be a relevant degree or some level of market expertise. Where do the facts they are quoting come from? Is there a source to back them up? Or a visible framework that they have used? If they are making comparisons with other products, is it an apple-to-apple comparison, or rather not? Who is paying for it? Is this a website paid for by a company trying to sell a product, or an independent review site?

Secondly: When was the information written? Is there a date on the article or webpage and a date when the information is due to be reviewed? If not, it's harder to tell whether it's trustworthy or if the information is still true.

Finally: Does this information seem likely to be true based on other things that you've read, or is this a wild new claim that doesn't quite ring true. Are there alternative resources that mirror the conclusions reached on the website?

## Don't lose too much sleep over it

At the moment, it's exceptionally hard to live sustainably in all aspects of your life. Systematic change requires government legislation, adaptations to infrastructure and shifts in societal norms that may not change fast. If you follow some of these steps sometimes, you will be starting to make a difference. Turn them into habits and tell others, and that impact will grow. But don't worry if you sometimes slip up. It happens. Learn from what went wrong if you can, share that with others so they don't make the same mistakes, and keep going.





## Fashion AND Water

Use of water per kg materials to produce

1 kg cotton	10 - 20k litres of water (100 bath tubs)
1 kg polyester	78 litres of water (1 bath tub)
1 kg of viscose	3829 litres of water (39 bath tubs)
1 cotton T-shirt	2,700 litres

### Facts about fashion and water

1 | <https://bit.ly/3969gOc>

2 | <https://bit.ly/2Kxtlmr>

3 | <https://bit.ly/3lTIWvD>





## Food AND Water

Environmental impacts of different milks.  
<https://bbc.in/2IXMlcX>

soy milk

requires 7 litres of water per glass

oat milk

requires 12 litres of water per glass

almond milk

requires 74 litres of water per glass

rice milk

requires 54 litres of water per glass

Facts about food and water

Vegetarian diets use half as much water

<https://bit.ly/394SLSB>

Water needed to produce kg of common foodstuffs

<https://bit.ly/3fnbp9h>





## Household AND Water

average water usage of household appliances

<https://bit.ly/2IYbRiF>

bath	80 litres per use
washing machine	56 litres per use
shower	46 litres per use
dishwasher	25 litres per use
water flush	7,5 litres per use



**It's the people who  
know why the world needs  
change and drive that shift  
with their heart,  
head and hands  
connected  
who make the best  
things happen.**



Andy, what was your intention back when you started TYF? And how did you see it develop over the years?

With TYF we went through a number of phases that were not planned, but were an evolution, as my own thinking and the nature and thinking of the people in the business changed. I was 24 when I started and at that time just doing cool adventures close to nature was enough for me - we were not trying to be agents of change in anything more than reclaiming the meaning of adventure in a world that already seemed to be forgetting what it meant.

Pretty soon we started working with businesses and teams and it didn't take long to realise the scale of disconnection between work and meaning and the dire implications of working in an economy where four out five people are not actively engaged in the work they do. So the early work we did in consulting was reconnecting people to purpose at work - we got good at asking simple, powerful questions about what mattered. I saw that connection between people, work and personal impact was unexplored in most leadership programmes, so spent time learning and teaching at Cambridge University's Institute for Sustainable Leadership and Schumacher College to calibrate my thinking against the then-leading thinkers in this space - and realised that almost nobody in the environmental sector had the skill set to make change in business.

It was clear which hat I needed to put on - because few others were wearing it - so I started working on questions on how to reconnect people and purpose at work and the environment in ways that make sense in business. Gradually as our ideas got bolder and braver I realised that they have a potential to change a good chunk of the world.

We started working more deeply in education with young people and what felt important on that journey was helping people move away from the trap of thinking "we are not good enough, someone else can do this better" as a way to never fully commit to making change happen. I'm sure that a belief



that you can make change actually makes you more responsive to the signals you get from people around, and you notice very quickly whether your ideas are genuinely inspirational and whether they hit the ground where it most matters. Gradually we got better at pitching and practicing and stitching different areas together (forestry, biodiversity, education, health etc) - into a single tapestry that people can understand. Today, most of my work is about connecting people who can recognise and share their parts of that jigsaw, together building a picture of a shared future. On our website we say that our mission is to help people fall in love with nature and we do that by offering people better stories. By using our business to build community, we help people grow and then act on their desire to build, and be the teller of better stories. And here I think it's important to stop being scared about the difficulty of joining things together.

#### Can you give an example?

We're increasingly aware that buying more things isn't the answer to sustainability and at the same time, most of us don't live in either a society or a climate where it's okay to have no clothes. At the simplest level, let's make sure that if buying clothes, we're buying ones that are not stitched together with child labour, that are fair trade, organic, etc because each of those garments are also part of a story. We end up wearing other people's stories as well as using clothes to tell a story about ourselves. TYF's retail business' purpose is to make people more conscious shoppers, regardless of whether or not they buy anything from us. The relationship with the customers is much more about seeing our customers as partners on the journey, rather than people who've just come into a shop to maybe buy something. When you take two products, how would you ever know that one is made of slave labour and one isn't? The only way of knowing is by learning to read the labels, ask questions and have conversations that deepen our knowledge. We are working on better ways to help customers compare the buzz of buying a cheap T-shirt made by a 12-year-old with the warm glow of buying an alternative made with organic cotton and certified Fair Trade stitching.

#### And then there are the costs of damaged nature that aren't included in the description of a product...

Nearly all the damage done to nature so far is legal. Brazil is being deforested now with its forest being cut by companies acting lawfully and encouraged by Bolsonaro. The biomass power stations in south Wales are processing shiploads of wood from Canadian forests and are doing it legally but it doesn't seem to make 'Future Generations Sense' to ship firewood 3000 miles to burn for steam.

Compliance with legal standards is the floor level compliance goal for most governments and businesses but the problem is that if every business in the world just complied with legal standards we will disappear as a spe-

cies because complying with legal standards was never intended to create conditions for any species to thrive. Nearly all of the emissions of carbon, or damage to our land, soil, or biodiversity have been done within the law, according to legal standards. We need to respond to kind of a shared reality and a shared awareness of what's happening in the world. People in academia, for instance, might have really good insights, but they're not geared up to make change happen. Public sector is hampered by short term thinking, misunderstanding risk and tick-box culture. Charities are often funded in really limited ways that don't allow them to do imaginative things. Businesses are usually successful at money-making but hitting the wrong goals everywhere else. So we are looking at a new kind of agent, that catalyses radical collaboration, that is leading towards regeneration of natural systems and 'good ancestor' action.

#### I know you've been working on educational projects using planetary health approach and connection to nature. Could you share more about that?

TYF are working with health boards (the public organisations that run hospitals and healthcare in Wales) to find ways of scaling up the use of nature and outdoor time as a preventative, effective approach for those who need support with mental health or general well-being. We are doing a global search for the best stories of what's working, how nature contributes to people's health, and we bring them back to Wales, put them on a big table, and then ask - "if this works really well and we did it at scale, what difference would it make to well-being outcomes?"

As part of this work we are designing a new Future Generations Practitioners programme for 12- to 18-year-olds, who know that they want to work in healthcare, medicine or wellbeing. The programme will teach them everything about elements of wellbeing that medical schools don't generally cover in sufficient depth - diet, nutrition, forest bathing, mindfulness, yoga, the relationship between purpose and wellbeing. Our goal is that by the time they enter the world of work, they'll have deep understanding and experience of the key determinants around planetary health.





What impact from your work, intended or unintended, stayed in your memory most vividly?

In my 20s I worked as a beach lifeguard and, while the majority of our time was spent stopping people getting into difficulty, we also trained hard to deal with emergencies. The most serious of those were 'after hours' when I happened to be at the beach windsurfing or surfing and being in the right place at the right time meant that I was able to save two people from drowning. A lovely touch was that a couple of years back, someone came to the TYF shop and asked for me. It happened to be the wife of the guy I saved, saying that he was only here today because I was on the beach then. They'd come back in the area and wanted to come and say thank you. With TYF we're certain that what we do changes people's lives and often get emails from people saying that what we did changed their career or mindset trajectory, or it offered a glimpse of the future they could have. On one lovely occasion, we received a letter of complaint - something that's pretty rare, saying that we'd let him down, we should have known how powerful our adventures are and should never let him book for just one day. Coasteering changed his life, he said, and the most important thing was that he learned how to play and let go.

Experiences in the ocean feel particularly powerful and help people realise they don't need to be in control all the time, and can't be. There is something elemental about the power of the moving sea and its physical energy, that makes you feel very small and insignificant in a non-threatening way. Coasteering shows through play that while we cannot overcome the waves, we can learn to think and react differently to challenges that swirl around

us and to gain a different perspective that helps us turn potentially dangerous energy or events into opportunity.

When you think back to moments where you had to call upon your courage doing the work you do - what comes to mind?

One of the things that you've got to be pretty good at if you want to do adventure at any serious level and stay safe, is to be good at noticing the patterns of change around you in the ocean,



the winds, the waves, the people you're with, and permanently be adjusting to the meaning of those, noticing the interplay between those factors. And then, based on your interpretation, understand what they might mean in terms of different choices that you need to make going forwards.

When we are kayaking in a rough sea next to the rocks, the timing of our passage between two islands will be completely determined by the capacity of the people who are in the kayaks and how big the waves are. If you get the timing right, you can go through an incredibly exciting journey between a gap in the rocks, and if you get it wrong you might get hurt. Judging risk and making choices is something that people that are good at adventure learn how to do. Understanding this helped me a lot when faced with tough challenges or big questions in business, to be able to stand back from those and look at them from a perspective of risk and say what's the risk of me doing this versus not doing it.

One example of this was working with TYF's very first corporate client, British Aerospace, a company who make aeroplanes and aeroplane parts. And they also make weapons. They don't sell weapons, but they make them, and they say 'but we're in the game of making peace' - and while there may be peaceful outcomes sometimes as a result of weapons existing, for much of the time that's clearly not the case. We ended up being increasingly uncomfortable with this paradox; even though the people we were working with were good people and they were our biggest client at the time, we ended up saying sorry, we really love you as humans and we wish you well but we can't work with you anymore and we're sacking you as a client. Making that decision was a really important stage of our development. We knew that it was a business risk but there's no point in saying your values are important then not acting on what you say. Making that decision gave me and colleagues courage to start following our path with more confidence and a stronger voice. What was the real risk? If we hadn't made that decision, we would have lost some of the rights to talk about change and following your heart. Losing that was too big a risk to take.





It reminds me also about how you once said, that everything you do becomes part of your DNA. Something that you pass on to future generations. Things are not only on the idea level but are really in this kind of action and commitment.

I've just been reading a great book called How to Be a Good Ancestor, by Roman Krznaric. And it's one of the points that he makes is that as a species, we are just too young to be able to think longterm - in generations rather than just years or decades.

In a way, it's no wonder. If many of us have been in parent-child relational dynamics, not only in our families, but also in learning institutions, at work, in all kinds of constellations, we haven't really had a chance to mature, to learn to take responsibility, think of consequences, learn to face things...

Completely. Working with investors it's vital that we help them look at the timelines of their decisions in relation to their consequences they have on their children and grandchildren. All too often, people seem to disconnect themselves from those thoughts and emotions by just not thinking far enough ahead. It's good to remember the importance of connecting our hearts and soul to the important decisions we make and remember the consequences or regret of not doing that.

You have been engaging with sustainability subjects in many different ways, and if you were to talk to people who are just starting, where would you encourage them to focus their efforts?

Part of the problem that we've got to overcome is that most of our education is focused on achieving other people's dreams about what we're capable of. Whether it's your parents who want you to be a good girl so they can look like they are good parents, or schools who want you to achieve good grades so that they get more good students, we are conditioned to chase other people's dreams, not our own.

It's very easy in this broken model to step back from the ambition of making real change happen. My take is that the most valuable thing for anyone interested in sustainability is to take time to ask yourself this question - "If I took stock of what's happening around me and had the most powerful network, skills and knowledge imaginable to help me deliver, what would I set out to make happen, knowing that I couldn't fail?" Get really clear, on your answer to that question - write it down in full colour, and embody it. Imagine yourself inside it, living it, regardless of how much money or qualification you have now. Whatever point you are starting from, never let the fire of that ambition go out. Hold that spark of an idea like a burning amber, wrapped in a protective cloth and carry it with you wherever you go. You might need to work today in communications, PR or finances or something you are not really interested in, but never lose the feeling and the sight of that goal that you set out to do. Remember to stay confident in the glare of other people's pretend greatness, remembering that the people who are really great will

always help you, and never make you feel small - so never let your dreams be watered down by people who are scared that you might succeed. That compass needs to be set by what your heart and head together tell you is the right thing to do. And the more you share this dream with others, the more you'll believe in it. When you are bold, clear and practiced, people start understanding and being interested in your dreams and they'll come and ask how they can help you. That's when you'll start to climb your chosen ladder, faster and together.

What helped you keep this fire burning?

Paying attention to it. Meaning this - even if I can't work with total alignment with it all of the time, and need to do another job to live, I never lose sight of my goal. And if it's a true goal I will still find a way and share it in a non-ego way with other people, and will have the bravery to ask questions, or ask for help, to keep it alive. Letting go of the fear of failure is crucial in this process. It's the people who know why the world needs change and drive that shift with their heart, head and hands connected who make the best things happen.

Thanks so much, Andy, really appreciated talking to you!

**tyf**





# this world

i did not come into this world  
to not release my heart into this river  
and let it be shaped by whirligigging currents

i did not come into this world  
to not let my whirligigged-shaped heart  
swoop with a swift low over the water  
catching insects with precision timing  
on wings that have returned them to eaves  
at the end of the street  
tapping the side  
of the nests with their wings  
to see if there is room  
for them to make a home

i did not come into this world  
to not stay in one place and learn the place  
and walk the same paths over and over  
and come to know the grasses and flowers  
and trees and insects and birds  
and all of their songs

i did not come into this world  
to not sing of this world

i did not come into this world  
to not be water

i did not come into this world  
to not release names to the wind  
beetle sycamore heron  
and then not to see a heron  
grey as the water grey as the sky  
white breast feathers ruffling

and not learn from the heron  
to stand still and watch  
for movement in the water  
to not feel the weight  
of slow-beating wings against  
the moisture-laden air  
to another sandbank of the river

I did not come into this world  
to not sink to my knees next to a red poppy  
and wonder at the delicate fabric of its petals  
and by what grace this was spun  
and by what grace I can feel it between my fingers

i did not come into this world  
to not witness these yellow fields  
being sprayed with insecticide to kill the insects  
which the swifts swoop for

i did not come into this world  
to not listen to the rustle of the leaves of the trees  
as they tell of storms to come

i did not come into this world  
to not share the rustling of the leaves of the trees  
as they tell of storms to come  
as the wind skiffles across the surface of the river  
as the river flows to the sea  
slowly now  
lingering  
knowing it will soon become salt and white-capped wave  
before transforming again  
rising upwards from oceans  
past the swifts flying high as they return to warmer lands  
and drink a drop of rain as it falls earthwards

i did not come into this water  
to not re:place myself in this world

Olivia Sprinkel



# Follow this calling and prove yourself right, even though it is not going to be easy

There are people who are content to take the easy path through life, happy to just go with the flow and accept the way things are. They may be moved by injustice or acknowledge that the planet is in crisis, but they don't necessarily feel the responsibility to do something about it. The problem is not theirs; it's too big.

And there are those who purposefully seek a different route, even though they know it will be the harder option. They feel compelled to discover that there is a better way to do business or to live their life and they certainly won't allow the work they do or the life they lead to contribute to the problem. At Hiut Denim and The Do Lectures, we call this doing things 'the long, hard, stupid way.'\* It's the path you take when you have a purpose, when you have a conviction that what you are doing is right, and when you have the courage to follow this calling and prove yourself right, even though you know it is not going to be an easy journey.

When we started our first clothing company, Howies, back in 1995, there were very few clothing companies doing things this way. Yvon Chouinard at Patagonia was out there clearing the path for us smaller companies to

follow. He was brave enough to follow his convictions and run his company with sustainability at the core. I remember when we switched our t-shirts from regular cotton to organic cotton, the premium price meant we lost all our wholesale accounts over night. It took courage to ignore the loss in income and do what we believed in. In fact, doing the right thing for the planet, also turned out to be right thing for our business and our loss of wholesale customers kickstarted our catalogue business which was the thing that put us on the map. It's the long, hard, stupid way that now finds us on a quest to bring jeans manufacturing back to our small town with Hiut Denim. Definitely not the easy option.

It's now 25 years since we started our first business and there are so many beautiful companies and projects out there that have sustainability at their heart. They too have chosen the harder path but hopefully they will have been inspired by and learnt from the ones that came before them. I'm thinking that perhaps this journey should no longer be called the 'long, hard stupid way', but instead renamed the 'slow, courageous, beautiful' way.

*\* Inspired by Frank Chimero's 2011 Do Lectures Talk*



## SABINA ENÉA TÉARI

An independent researcher, experience designer, curator and creator. I'm a founding member of Foresta Collective — a fluid transdisciplinary collective based in Berlin, designing experiential formats around regenerative ways of learning, working and being.

Foresta Collective is dedicated to the emergence of a multi-layered sustainability mindset with a focus on personal and relational sustainability.

Transcending disciplinary boundaries we are working in the in-between space of cultural, educational and artistic practices, implementing strategies of awareness, participation and interaction.

Conceptually and experientially we are rooted in ecosystemic thinking, poly-creative collective practices and embodied culture, translated through both online and offline learning formats.

Our clients range from value-driven companies and forward-thinking educational initiatives to ecology-oriented cultural institutions across Europe.

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## PAMELA RAVASIO

Pamela specialised in corporate governance and responsibility (CR), with a strong link to innovation processes, digitalisation. She has worked as consultant with very small and very (very) big companies, and taken on corporate roles as Global Stakeholder Manager, and as Head of CSR & Sustainability. Under her leadership, the European outdoor industry developed into a leader in future-proofing an industry dominated by SMEs, private capital and family companies. She champions transparency and an inclusive approach to all partners along the value chain, leveraging opportunities arising from public facing accountability.

A published author with professional qualifications in corporate governance, CSR and sustainability, she is a member of the advisory board of Fluidsolids (CH) and Polygiene (SE), and has previously held steering committee roles in the multi-stakeholder (MSI) and start-up space. A graduate in Computer Science with a PhD in Human-Computer Interaction, she has worked and lived globally for 15+ years.

## SEAN FINN

After a career in finance set up Smart-21 - a boutique business consultancy that works with solopreneurs & small to medium enterprises as a resource and partner in helping them both grow and develop their businesses.

It means several things – working creatively, solving everyday business problems. Also devising profitable outcomes to name a third. It also represents a sense of excitement about the possibilities in business. The key thing though is helping business professionals and SME owners have all they need by way of information, systems and resources so that they develop.

Above all, to give you the time and space to do so.

[www.smart-21.ie](http://www.smart-21.ie)

## BARBARA PUTMAN CRAMER

I'm naturally drawn to work with individuals and businesses willing to raise questions that have no ready-made answer. With an aptitude for Strategy, Storytelling and Sustainability, I have worked for and with pioneering and impact-driven start-ups and scale-ups. To better understand how to get to the right questions, I picked up complementary studies in Yin Yoga, Meditation, and Energywork. Currently, I work as Impact & Innovation Director at BYBORRE, an impact-driven textile innovation studio, where I guide the teams towards making the impact that is truest to themselves.

# THANK



## SOPHIE KIRBY

I do a lot of things, like drawing, singing, and organizing collaborative cooking events for a wonderful Berlin-based charity that supports refugees. But for the past nine years, I've earned my living as a television journalist, covering news and current affairs. Conflict, racism, systemic inequality, environmental destruction: it's humanity's worst deeds that tend to make the headlines. Being surrounded by such stories led me to reflect on the causes of our various problems and ask how I might contribute to building a more beautiful world.

That's how my passion work, 'Sophie and Friends', was born. It's a video series that helps pre-schoolers appreciate who they are, understand what's important to them, and learn how to deal with big, unpleasant emotions. If I were going to get technical, I'd mention skills like self-regulation, mindfulness, and self-compassion. Or connecting the heart, body, spirit, and mind. But the essence of the show is helping kids feel loved. Because everything goes back to love. And everything grows from it. My hope is that if a generation of children grows up having internalized that love and the skills that stem from it, our planet can take a large step towards social and environmental healing.

## ZOE BELSHAW

I am a UK-based veterinary surgeon with a specialism in canine and feline medicine. I completed a PhD at the Centre for Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine, University of Nottingham where I received extensive training in critical appraisal, or how to interpret the quality of published information. These skills are applicable to any field, and I hope this advice will be useful to you.

## OLIVIA SPRINKEL

I am a sustainability consultant, writer and photographer.

For the last 10 years, working in both London and New York, I have advised some of the world's leading companies on sustainability strategy and how to communicate sustainability to audiences ranging from employees to consumers to investors.

As a photographer and writer, I love to combine both mediums. The focus of my work is the natural world and our relationship to it. In 2019, I travelled to visit trees on four continents to research my book 'A History of the Future of the World in 10 Trees'. In February 2020, my artwork was included in an exhibition in the George Lawson Gallery, Mill Valley, California.

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## AKKIE BOSJE

I am dutch based creative director, designer. Dedicated and driven to get your story out there with tailor made communication design. People-oriented, meaningful solutions for emerging optimistic brands, initiatives and ideas.

I like real stories, a good challenge, sports, poetry and personal contact. Taking good care of each other and the world. A society that values attention, care and education has my heart. Being raised between clean water and a lot of fresh air and wind is a deeply rooted gift. Its fairness and airness waves throughout my thoughtful design and thinking. Combining 30 years of insight, creativity and technology to get your story out there, clarified and visualized. Driven by values. Inspired by your story. Designed with purpose.

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## STEPPING INTO YOUR COURAGE

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