

# BECOMING A REGENERATIVE PRACTITIONER A FIELD GUIDE

JOSETTE M. PLAUT, EMILY AMEDÉE



INSTITUTE FOR THE  
BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

clear center for living environments  
and regeneration

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## ABSTRACT

Regenerative development is about building the capacity and capability in people, communities, and other natural systems to renew, evolve, and thrive. A fundamental requirement of this work is that we constantly regenerate our own thinking, comprehension, and connection to the health of living systems as a whole. Strengthening our ability to sense what is emergent, what is essential, and where potential exists, enables us to evolve ourselves, our communities, and all living systems in the present moment and into the future. The practice of leading regenerative development, or becoming a regenerative practitioner, calls for a diverse and expansive set of capabilities around five core practice areas: Systems Actualizing, Framework Thinking, Self-Actualizing, Developmental Facilitating and Living Systems Understanding. Together, these competencies offer a variety of pathways for a regenerative practitioner to develop over time. The journey to becoming a regenerative practitioner necessitates both conscious and continuous commitment to all five practice areas. This paper offers the first stepping stones to a life-long devotion to regenerative practice.



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The mission of CLEAR (Center for Living Environments and Regeneration) is to cultivate and equip change makers to create a regenerative future.

## AUTHORS

**Josette M. Plaut, M.S.**  
[josie.plaut@colostate.edu](mailto:josie.plaut@colostate.edu)

Associate Director  
Institute for the Built Environment  
Colorado State University

Executive Director  
Center for Living Environments and  
Regeneration

**Emily Amedée, M.A.**  
[emily.amedee@colostate.edu](mailto:emily.amedee@colostate.edu)

Research Fellow  
Institute for the Built Environment

Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Communication Studies  
Colorado State University

## VISUAL ARTIST

Karina Mullen Branson  
[Conversketch](https://www.conversketch.com)

# PREFACE

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The genesis of this paper is rooted in my personal aspirations of becoming a regenerative practitioner. As I continue to make sense of the territory of regenerative practice, I find myself constantly reflecting on all it has to offer and what it means to me. In my own practice, a set of questions continue to emerge: What is it? What am I trying to do? What do I need to develop in myself to become more effective? How do I realize the potential that I feel inside for humans to play a beneficial, contributive role in the world? My hope is to engage others in this exploration. In my experience, the first steps are the most precarious. Regenerative practice is expansive, multifaceted, and leans heavily on complex language and concepts. The content can also be esoteric, especially if it is not grounded in concrete thoughts and action. On the flip side, learning about regenerative practice helps me to see the world, and my work in it, more clearly, enabling me to act with greater insight and efficacy.

The purpose of this paper is to help define the field of regenerative practice, similar to a map that illustrates the territory, and to bring the territory to life with the voices of five practitioners who have spent varying amounts of time in the field. The limitations, of course, are that the commitment to learning regenerative practice is deep, and this paper merely scratches the surface of the work. In the following pages we offer a glimpse into what it means to cultivate the skills and character of a regenerative practitioner, offering a set of five capabilities to develop over time: Systems Actualization, Framework Thinking, Self-Actualization, Developmental Facilitating, and Living Systems Understanding. In future work we hope to expand on this paper by providing workshops and continued education offerings in the core focus areas we highlight below.

In closing, I will say that in some ways I feel that I have always been on the journey of becoming a regenerative practitioner, though I wouldn't have called it that in my earlier years. I have always been inspired by the notion of healing broken systems and realizing potential for health, vitality, and ongoing evolution – in myself, my community, and the world. I have found the work of learning regenerative practice to be challenging, even frustrating and painful at times, but ultimately highly rewarding. Through my learning and development, I find that I am increasingly able to make sense of the world in ways that allow me to become a more effective facilitator, mother, partner, and global citizen. Regenerative development work offers a path forward in a world that seems increasingly precarious and uncertain. I welcome you, dear readers, as friends and partners along the way.



JOSIE PLAUT

Developmental Facilitator  
Lives in Fort Collins, Practices globally  
Years in regenerative practice: 6





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ideas and content for this paper were inspired by diverse people and groups working with a regenerative approach. Many of the specific concepts regarding regenerative practice laid out here were first introduced to me in 2013 when I participated in The Regenerative Practitioner™ series, offered by the Regenes Group and furthered by work with Carol Sanford through her Change Agents Development program. These concepts draw on a lineage of thinking and practice that has sourced the burgeoning field of regenerative development since the term was first defined by Regenes in the mid-1990s. Contributors to that lineage include Regenes and its nonprofit arm the Institute for Regenerative Practice, the Carol Sanford Institute, and, through the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Charlie Krone's Institute for Developmental Processes. That lineage is now being passed on to a new generation of individuals and groups, including those featured in this guide.

A special thanks to Pamela Mang and Ben Haggard of Regenes Group and the Institute for Regenerative Practice, Beatrice Ungard of Soma Integral, Craig DeForest of DeForest Associates, and Jim Newman of Linnaean Solutions for serving as concept and/or content reviewers, to Max Zanhiser who helped initiate the overall concept behind this paper, and to the practitioners who so graciously offered their perspectives to bring the concepts to life. We extend our gratitude to each of you for your thoughtful and generous contributions.

Partial funding for this paper was provided by Colorado State University's Office of the Vice President for Research and by Valeo Partners.

# INTRODUCTION TO REGENERATIVE PRACTICE

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## BECOMING A “SYSTEMS ACTUALIZER” IS THE ULTIMATE AIM OF A REGENERATIVE PRACTITIONER.

In the face of increasing ecological, political, and social challenges, there is a pressing need to (re)consider the role of humans within the local and global context. Fundamental to that consideration is the question of who and what we wish to become - as individuals, as communities, and as a species? The paradigm of regenerative development offers that humans have the potential to play a positive, value adding role in the world. Realizing that potential, however, requires seeing ourselves in new ways, and asks us to develop new capacities and capabilities.

Becoming a Systems Actualizer is the ultimate aim of a regenerative practitioner and requires development in four key areas: Framework Thinking; Self-Actualizing, Developmental Facilitating, and Living Systems Understanding. The idea of systems actualization dates back more than fifty years to James V. Clark and Charles G. Krone who focused on developing human potential for the purpose of *system actualization*, which is the process of awakening the capability embodied in all living systems for creating increasing levels of vitality, viability, and capacity to evolve. The Regenesys Group first proposed the term *regenerative development* in 1995, describing it as “an approach that is about enhancing the ability of living beings (and systems) to co-evolve, so that our planet continues to express its potential for diversity, complexity and creativity.”<sup>1</sup>

Becoming a regenerative practitioner requires us to constantly regenerate our own thinking and ability to sense what is emergent, what is essential, and where the potential exists to evolve ourselves, our communities, and other living systems. Working in this way demands that practitioners develop self-awareness that includes the ability to see and elevate thinking, manage one’s inner state of being, and bring others along the way - all of which are informed and nourished by understanding the principles of life itself.

This paper defines five practice areas: Systems Actualizing, Framework Thinking, Self-Actualizing, Developmental Facilitating, and Living Systems Understanding. These competencies are not buckets of knowledge or disciplines to be studied. Instead, they are a set of capacities and capabilities that are developed over time and used dynamically, in real time application. Conscious and continual effort are necessary to develop individual ability and collective capacity for regenerative work. In this way, we invite you to be a part of a long lineage of practitioners and hope you will continue to nourish these competencies over the course of your lifetime.

<sup>1</sup> Pamela Mang and Ben Haggard., *Regenerative Development and Design: A framework for evolving Sustainability*. New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2016) p. XIV.

# USING THIS PAPER

This paper serves as a guide to initiate thinking about the self as a member of a greater system and as a practitioner who strives to work regeneratively. The forthcoming pages offer an overview of the field of regenerative practice, illustrating five core practice areas and how they come together as a means to establish the foundation of how you might think about developing your practice.

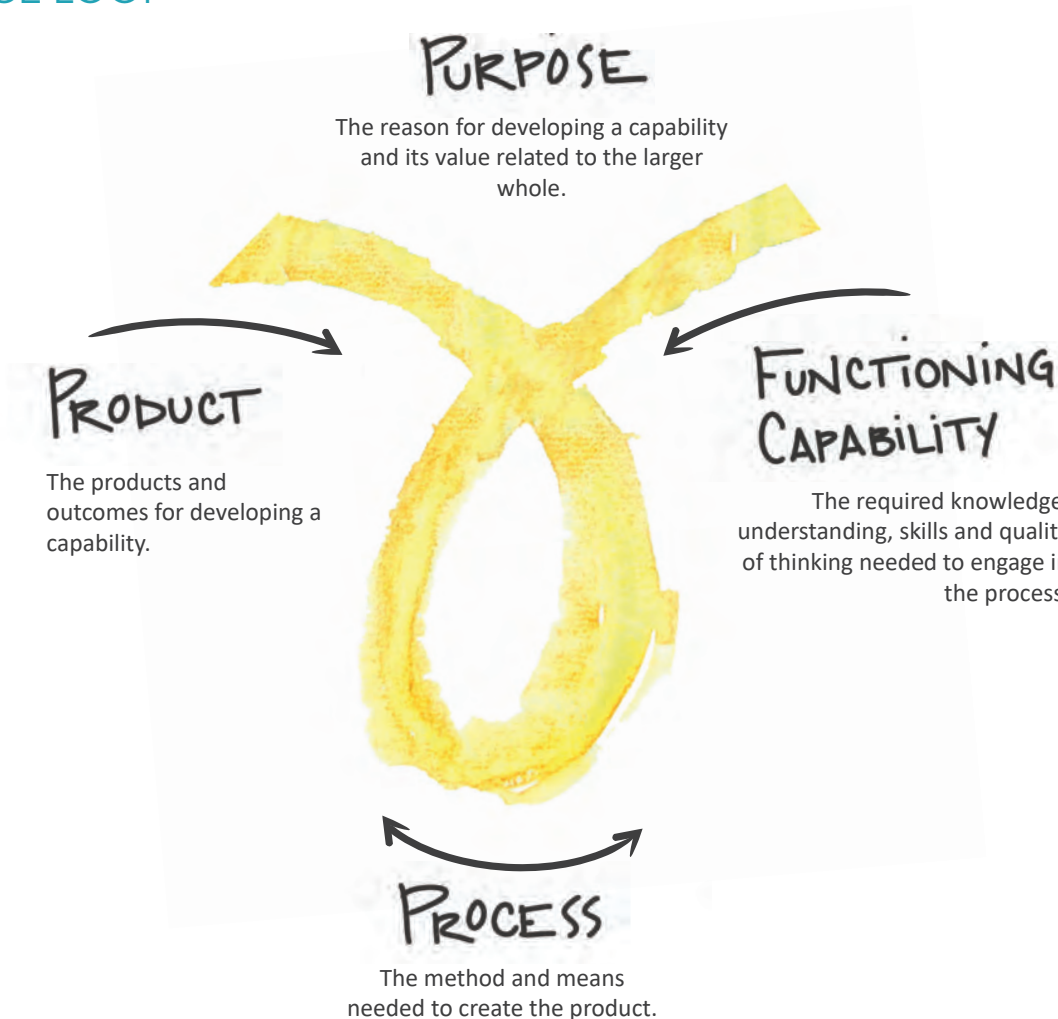
After introducing you to five practitioners, we illustrate a vignette for each of the five practice areas: Systems Actualizing, Framework Thinking, Self-Actualizing, Developmental Facilitating, and Living Systems Understanding. Each vignette follows the same format:

- The big idea and short summary,
- Voices from the five practitioners, and
- A graphic illustration that includes the purpose, product, process, and functioning capability.

The graphic illustration shows the purpose that guides your work in that area, the product or outcome of developing each area, the process by which you go about cultivating your development, and the functioning capabilities that enable you to excel in your practice. The Practice Loop used in this paper is based on the task cycle originally developed by Charlie Krone.

Finally, the paper concludes with a few remarks from practitioners about their internal journeys and processes, and why regenerative work is worth the effort. Toward the end of the paper we have provided additional readings and resources for further consideration, as well as a short glossary of terms.

## PRACTICE LOOP





# THE REGENERATIVE PRACTITIONER FRAMEWORK

Each of the five practice areas described in this paper contributes to a larger framework—together, the five practice areas introduce a robust landscape for exploration in your personal journey to becoming a regenerative practitioner.



# MEET THE PRACTITIONERS

BELOW ARE FIVE PRACTITIONERS THAT EXEMPLIFY THE JOURNEY OF BECOMING A REGENERATIVE PRACTITIONER. YOU WILL FIND THAT THEY ILLUSTRATE HOW REGENERATIVE PRACTICE EVOLVES OVER TIME AND HOW IT EMERGES IN VARIOUS FIELDS AND CORNERS OF THE WORLD.

## HOW DID YOU FIND THIS WORK?

## WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING?



CAROLINE ROBINSON

Artist, Integrative Facilitator, Healing Arts  
Lives and practices in New Zealand (Aotearoa)  
Years in regenerative practice: 4

*I met Bill Reed and the work of Regenes Group at the Living Future 2014 unConference in Portland, OR. A few months later, Bill came to New Zealand and we began collaborating. This opened the way for The Regenerative Practitioner Series to be hosted in New Zealand. Growing the community of practice here in New Zealand has developed the local context for my business to identify with, and actively use the terms, 'regenerative development' and 'regenerative practice' to describe the work I do.*

*Learning is whole. All encompassing. Reciprocal. Unceasing. Sourced from the land, seas, and skies of Aotearoa (New Zealand) and all the associated ancestral connections - human and more-than-human. I learn from my elders, peers and children in our community. Deep learning is cultivated in motherhood and family life. The process of learning itself is continuously evolving as I evolve.*



AKASADAKA ROBISON

Master Facilitator  
Lives and practices in New Zealand (Aotearoa)  
Years in regenerative practice: 2

*I really knew nothing about sustainability or climate change and decided I needed to take more responsibility. So in 2016 when Caroline Robinson (see above), a fellow facilitator and friend, invited me to take part in the first Regenerative Practitioner Series in New Zealand, I took the opportunity. I now over-identify with being a regenerative practitioner. It has effectively empowered my ability to act in this world in a way that will support the reversal of climate change and increase my capability to catalyze the necessary change for my local community to thrive.*

*There are two parts to my learning: the first is to facilitate the design and delivery of regenerative projects locally in collaboration with other regenerative practitioners; the second is the desire to develop the regenerative mindset, which is a way of seeing the world through the regenerative frameworks so that I can see and understand how living systems are 'at work.' My experience of this learning so far is that my mind is developing a new way of thinking and experiencing the world around me.*



## HOW DID YOU FIND THIS WORK?



BRUNO DUARTE DIAS

Architect and Researcher  
Lives and practices in Lisbon, Portugal  
Years in regenerative practice: 3

*When I started to question sustainability I came across the concept of regeneration. From the beginning it was obvious that it was a different way to look at architecture.*

## WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING?

*Learning is a never ending process. After some research on complex and systems thinking, it is easier for me to see how a project can become regenerative, but I have to step out of being an architect to start imaging the interconnection and aliveness of the whole system that a project is nested in. I continue to search for how regeneration is being applied to other fields like organizations, impact investing, etc. This forces me to go out of my comfort zone.*



ETHAN SOLOVIEV

Agriculture, Health & Beauty, and Business  
Lives in New York, USA practices globally  
Years in regenerative practice: 7

*I studied biochemistry in college, which lead to global research related to apples. Then I discovered permaculture design & consulting, which has evolved into entrepreneurship and research. I first connected to the concept of regeneration through permaculture, though at a functional level while doing permaculture design consulting.*

*The process of continuous learning is awesome - it's a mix of consistent growth and punctuated evolution.*



BILL REED

Planning and Integrative Process Management  
Lives in Massachusetts, USA and practices globally  
Years in regenerative practice: 20

*I was approached by the early iteration of Regenesys in 1995 after a keynote I gave on Integrative Systems Design. I gradually incorporated this way to thinking and being into my green practice, ultimately engaging in and promoting a whole and living systems way of practice full-time for the last 15 years.*

*Our practice is continually pushing our abilities. We are intentional in reflecting on what has worked and what has not. We are also particularly open to being 'friends in the work' for each other in order to grow our internal capability and the quality of our state of being.*



# SYSTEMS ACTUALIZING

THE AIM OF A REGENERATIVE PRACTITIONER IS TO BECOME A 'SYSTEMS ACTUALIZER' - TO HELP REALIZE THE UNIQUE, VALUE ADDING POTENTIAL OF A PLACE, AN ORGANIZATION, AND/OR AN ECOSYSTEM.

Systems Actualizing is the ultimate aim of a regenerative practitioner. It is the process of awakening the regenerative capability embodied in all living systems to create increasing levels of vitality, viability, and capacity to evolve within the systems they are a part of. Developing one's capabilities in the other four areas of the Regenerative Practitioner Framework is in service of this higher purpose or aim. In essence, tending to Systems Actualizing as a regenerative practitioner means constantly reckoning with the questions, "What am trying to bring into being as a result of my efforts," and "how will that work be in service of the greater whole?" A fundamental requirement of this work is that we constantly regenerate our own thinking, strengthening our ability to sense what is emergent, what is essential, and where potential exists, which in turn, enables us to evolve ourselves, our communities, and other living systems.

*Initially I thought this was about my projects. Now I am thinking this brings so much meaning to my life - it has gone beyond my own needs to the collective needs of the system. As I connect in with a living system as a living being, then the question is not just about collaborating with this being, but more about, "how do I come into relationship with it?" Indigenous people had to do this to survive and thrive.*



*System actualizing has always been the core of my focus - it is what attracted me to Regenesys; developing evolutionary relationships between people and 'nature' (a true ecology): uniting humans and all other life in a co-evolutionary dance ('a riot of reciprocity', as my co-worker Tim says). The hard part has been realizing and disciplining myself to hold onto the ride when the going gets tough. Humans going through a change process can be a rough ride as they struggle with the paradigm shift.*



*This work took me away of my assigned box (architect) and now I can't see just a project without seeing the organization, the place it is in, the systems that they influence and what they are influenced by.*



# PURPOSE

To cultivate the inherent potential in oneself to engage others in developmental improvement processes for the purpose of contributing to life's vitality, viability, and capacity to evolve in a particular place.

## PRODUCT

The capacity and capability of a practitioner to engage people in ongoing learning and development, leading to the continuing evolution and realization of potential over time.

## FUNCTIONING CAPABILITY

The ability to cultivate personal capacity and capability across the other four practice areas through self-reflection, learning with others, and cultivating discernment.

## PROCESS

Application of increasing ability to see and work with whole systems and skillfully apply frameworks, based on living systems understanding; working from a conducive state of being that supports developmental facilitation processes with others.

*Understanding my role in Systems Actualizing is the biggest change in last 5 years. I've learned the importance of focusing HARD on what system to change, what is the whole of that system, how to reveal essence and potential of it, and where to go from there.*

ETHAN



*I am in service to life. Over time, more is revealed about what this can mean in expression, as my unique contribution. Tihei Mauri Ora - behold there is life!*

CAROLINE







# FRAMEWORK THINKING

## ADEPT USE OF FRAMEWORKS HELPS TO BRING ORDERED THINKING, AND ABILITY TO ACT EFFECTIVELY WITHIN COMPLEX SYSTEMS.

Mastering Framework Thinking has the potential to elevate and amplify the practice of regenerative development. Why frameworks? We cannot think without them. Everyone uses them. In other words, the mind needs to associate things with frameworks in order to understand the world. Some frameworks help group and structure the world, so we can engage, think, and create order. Other frameworks are dynamic, helping us see how an entity or situation is working and how it is structured. One of the critical skills in Framework Thinking is being able to differentiate between frameworks. As we practice using frameworks, we become more attune with those that are needed and helpful at any given time, thereby enabling and amplifying the practice of regenerative development. To learn more about frameworks, consider The LENSES Framework from CLEAR, The Regenerative Practitioner Series by Regenesi, Theory U, design thinking, and books and blog posts from Carol Sanford, all of which can be found in the Additional Resources section of this paper.

*Every level of my personal life, business, and creative practice utilizes Framework Thinking to continuously awaken my way of seeing and being within wholeness. This includes daily activities (family life, business planning, meeting structure, workshop design etc.), project process design and delivery, approach to communicating with clients, peers, and project communities.*



CAROLINE

*I use frameworks constantly. For each meeting, process, project, or endeavor I use frameworks appropriate to the immediate situation. Frameworks generate questions, insight, disruption, and external coherence in a group and/or new thinking in myself.*



ETHAN

*Dynamic frameworks bring me to a particular state of thinking and being. It's like I enter in a regenerative mode, I stay more alert to my own thoughts and I'm searching for the whole of a situation.*



BRUNO

# PURPOSE

To increase individual and collective capacity to make sense of complexity in a way that helps reveal the potential within a living system (person, group, ecosystem), for the purpose of catalyzing improvements toward potential.

## PRODUCT

Clear thinking that results in deliberate, effective action, and heightened intelligence for working with whole systems.

## FUNCTIONING CAPABILITY

Learning how to utilize frameworks; developing mental discipline and the will to stay open and focused; managing one's own state of being.

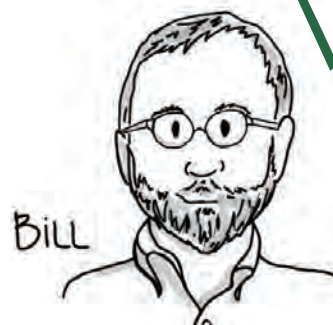
## PROCESS

Utilize frameworks (often visual) to develop awareness and understanding through slowing down and disrupting thinking, and to articulate beliefs, philosophies, and principles.

*I am currently working with the scope of consciousness framework and literally bringing it into all aspects of my life. I even have it printed out and place it front of me during meetings. It felt like gaining a super power.*



*Frameworks are a way to slow down automatic thinking and allow new thinking to emerge. I use the basic frameworks in every activity. I am not a slave to them but use them as a way to shift thinking when I feel stuck. Frameworks are a powerful way to allow us to work quickly to discover new and grounded ways to engage our clients.*





# SELF-ACTUALIZING

THE ONGOING ABILITY TO DEVELOP CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY WITHIN YOURSELF IS ESSENTIAL FOR PARTICIPATING IN REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT WORK.

In order to draw out the collective potential in others, it is vital to begin awakening the inherent potential of oneself. The work of Self-Actualizing involves taking full responsibility for oneself and one's role (having an internal locus of control), recognizing the needs and motivations of others within the system (external considering), and protecting the space needed to realize potential (source of agency). Developing these capabilities allows for a strong sense of personal agency informed by a deep understanding and care for the system you are working in. One key outcome from Self-Actualizing is the ability to hold the oftentimes uncomfortable space that is needed for evolving, growing, and realizing full potential. In other words, system actualization becomes the source of agency for a practitioner, which is typically not the same as assuring that everyone is comfortable. In a more general way, Self-Actualizing is about realizing the potential of one's true self to create and manifest benefit through one's work in the world. Self-Actualizing is often the limiting factor in a practitioner's ability to participate as a systems actualizer, and requires constant attention.

*I understand Self-Actualization as a way to stretch and develop the potential that I see in myself in relation to the work I want to do in the world. So I must continue to develop my capacities and abilities to be able to evolve the systems that I'm part of.*



BRUNO

*You cannot become a regenerative practitioner without your attention to Self-Actualizing. Otherwise it is all talk and no walk.*



AKASADAKA

*Self-Actualizing is essential. We are called to become more and more alive and whole - physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually – so that this 'aliveness' and 'wholeness' is the source of activation in our creative endeavours.*



CAROLINE



# PURPOSE

To develop personal competencies for working in human social contexts in a way that builds capacity, agency, and capability in oneself and others, enabling teams to work regeneratively towards system actualization.

## PRODUCT

Personal agency and effectiveness for serving as an agent for developing potential in individuals, teams, and other living systems.

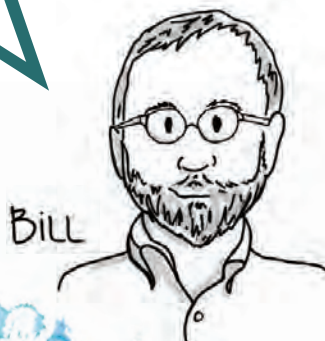
## FUNCTIONING CAPABILITY

Ability to self-observe and self-manage as needed in the moment (internal locus of control); ability to understand context/others (external considering); ability to hold space to realize/actualize potential (source of agency).

## PROCESS

Engage in a process of self-reflection and growth by disrupting repetitive thoughts and behaviors, and simultaneously developing empathy and personal agency, while holding a sense of greater potential.

*THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS WORK. It is the foundation. But it is never divorced from the purpose of system actualization. If it is it can become self-indulgent.*



*Self-Actualization is essential. As I take on larger systems-change efforts, I grow myself towards what is required. External regeneration cannot occur without internal regeneration.*



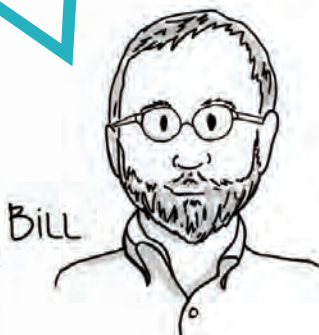


# DEVELOPMENTAL FACILITATING

DEVELOPMENTAL FACILITATING IS A DYNAMIC AND ADAPTIVE PROCESS FOR HELPING GROUPS EVOLVE THEIR SENSE OF PURPOSE AND THEIR ABILITY TO REALIZE POTENTIAL TOGETHER.

Developmental Facilitating is a dynamic and adaptive process that creates opportunities for groups to transform their thinking and understanding and to grow their capacity to realize potential together. The medium is often through events and meetings, but the point is to catalyze an ongoing developmental process that has the ability and generates the will to endure and evolve over time. Developmental facilitators identify what to focus on, how to evolve individual and collective thinking, create and hold space for group transformation, lead divergent and convergent thinking, and help establish systems for action planning and ongoing management. Effective Developmental Facilitating results in deep caring and shared commitment toward realizing potential. The will and ability to realize potential is generated through co-creating new thoughts, experiences, and connections. This process often centers on reflection and connection to identity and purpose. Developmental Facilitating brings together Framework Thinking and Living Systems Understanding, while drawing on the work of Self-Actualizing. The ultimate aim is to design and deliver group activities and processes that build capacity towards System Actualizing.

*Our fundamental 'deliverable' in a project or engagement is building the capacity and capability of participants to carry this way of being and thinking forward. If not, it is not a regenerative process. My role is to help birth that. My role is also to deliver a successful project process. This can be a very delicate and awkward dance until the participants catch the importance of self, group, and system actualization. Developmental facilitation is difficult if it is not grounded in real work. If it is seen as an end in itself, it can get very abstract and wonky.*



BILL

*Facilitation for me is the art of presence. My role is to help create the conditions for uniqueness and unity to become tangible for people, supporting others to remember and express our kinship within all of life.*



CAROLINE

*My role is to be a guide that can help people make a step back, to remember why they started the project, reflect on how the project is manifesting now, and what it could be if they can see it in a larger context.*



BRUNO

# PURPOSE

To design and facilitate transformative processes that connect to the unique essence of a living system in a way that inspires ongoing learning, caring, and conscious action toward system actualization.

## PRODUCT

New thoughts, deeper will, and informed actions that are co-created by the group; increasing levels of capability within a team or community to realize regenerative potential over time.

## FUNCTIONING CAPABILITY

The ability to design and deliver developmental processes and activities that are based on contextual understanding and external considering.

## PROCESS

Increasing the collective ability to think and work regeneratively; identifying key intervention points; developing potential based on contextual understanding.

*I work to be a resource for other peoples' evolution - I work to discern and then disrupt current paradigms with space and context for new understandings to emerge from individuals and groups. One key learning from the last year: To move a group, focus attention on someone who is clearly challenged and struggling with the material - this can generate clarity if they can move.*



*I often work with the invisible forces, in the silence and stillness of deep listening, looking and feeling for acupuncture points that will shift or de-veil present states of consciousness to illuminate essence and potential.*







# LIVING SYSTEMS UNDERSTANDING

LIVING SYSTEMS UNDERSTANDING ENABLES US TO SEE WHERE AND HOW TO ENGAGE, BASED ON LIFE'S PRINCIPLES.

Working from an understanding of living systems aligns our efforts with the principles and reality of how life actually works. Such understanding aligns work efforts with the basic patterns and tenants of all life and enables a greater capacity to see where to intervene and how to transform the human relationship with living systems. The integrity and wisdom of living systems is at the heart of the evolutionary processes, which, in turn, is the heart of regenerative practice. At its core, regenerative practice is about coming into attunement with the life world through understanding and being able to work within the larger context in which we exist. In this way, Living Systems Understanding informs and nourishes regenerative practice. A significant aspect of Living Systems Understanding is a heightened understanding of how life is constantly patterned and engaged in nested systems. Living systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static “snapshots.” Systems thinking is a sensibility -- for the subtle interconnectedness that gives living systems their unique character. When we see life and patterns in systems, we can co-create new patterns and enhance life.

<sup>1</sup> Carol Sanford developed the Seven First Principles of Regeneration. See the resources page for further reading.

*I admit to previously having only a utilitarian view of nature. What can I use it for, often it was about pleasure like going on snowboarding adventures in the mountains or swimming wild in rivers. Understanding the principles of living systems has given meaning to my life.*



*In order to move whole entities (self, business, lifeshed), I must discern the principles of how the living system works and design strategies in harmony with multi-million-year patterns.*



*When we are in a regenerative field we are participating in evolution. The processes of whole living beings and systems are nested.*



# PURPOSE

To understand the principle of how life works in a way that informs thinking and action so that humans realize their potential to be contributive, value-adding members of local, global, and living systems.

## PRODUCT

Actions that align with and support living systems in a reciprocal and mutually beneficial way.

## FUNCTIONING CAPABILITY

Explore, observe, and internalize the principles of how life works, to see patterns and visualize systems at work.

## PROCESS

Developing the ability to experience, understand, and work in ways that align with and benefit life itself.

*By engaging with First Principles<sup>1</sup> of living systems I have learned to better see and understand underlying patterns. With pattern understanding, I can trust that whatever is presenting on the 'surface' is guided by something deeper. These deeper currents are of life's principles, and therefore in alignment with life. In this way of thinking, my role as a regenerative practitioner is not to judge 'right' or 'wrong', or attempt to make corrections, but rather to trust in and align to the creative forces that are life's regenerative surges.*



*I have learned to better see and understand the underlying patterns of life. With these pattern understandings, I can trust that whatever is presenting on the 'surface' in the form of behavior or structure is guided by something deeper.*



# INTEGRATING REGENERATIVE PRACTICE

PRACTITIONERS SHARE A FEW INSIGHTS ON THEIR INTERNAL JOURNEYS, PROCESSES AND WHY REGENERATIVE WORK IS WORTH THE EFFORT.

## MY INTERNAL JOURNEY

## WHY IT IS WORTH THE EFFORT



BRUNO DUARTE DIAS

*Since I became a father eight years ago something changed. At the time I was finishing a master's in sustainable architecture and the environmental picture wasn't looking good. I started looking deeper into what was happening in the world, what sustainability and other concepts were aiming at, what were the outcomes of everyone's good intentions. The regenerative school of thought lifted the veil to other possibilities of how to make meaningful changes through projects, initiatives, and community development.*

*This way of thinking and being in the world is taking time to develop in me. At some stage I was a bit frustrated because I could see the aim of a regenerative project, but could not grasp how to do it. When I realized that this is not something that I could master overnight, and when I could see that for many practitioners this is a life work of self-development and service to others, then I got more relaxed. I understood that if I really want to follow this path I need to start to be more patient and gentle with myself and others.*



AKASADAKA ROBISON

*For me, the final frontier has always been to explore the nature of consciousness. Life has thrown me enough curve balls that I have had to question the narratives handed out to me by my friends, family, and society. I have sat in meditation and unpacked who I am. I have played in dreams, faced demons, and woken feeling like I was having 10,000 birthdays all at once. Sometimes I have let go of knowing what to do and begin to listen. All this has given birth to my regenerative "punk"-- I bring "mental mosh pits" to meetings. Some people don't like it, but I cannot stop chuckling to myself, as I feel I am finally becoming free.*

*Mental confusion has increasingly dulled my experience of life and my ability to contribute effectively. There are weighty opinions flying about everywhere. Some people have very convincing arguments, others repeat nonsense continually, until that is all I can hear. How do I decide who to listen to? Regenerative practice asks me to develop my ability to think clearly. It asks me, "who do I need to be in order to contribute effectively?" It empowers me to decide and take responsibility. It has given me back true control of my life, and with it hope that I can contribute something worthwhile to the future of our planet.*



## MY INTERNAL JOURNEY



CAROLINE ROBINSON

*I have always carried a sense of being in service to life. The simplicity and potency of love and presence has been core to my work as an artist and facilitator. Over time, more and more has been revealed to me about what this can really mean in expression, as my unique contribution to the world.*

## WHY IT IS WORTH THE EFFORT

*Committing to the disciplines of regenerative practice has been a means for me to more clearly recognise my strengths, while deepening my pragmatism. These practices are building my confidence for working within the 'whole' of life. My sense of scale (both inner and outer) is expanding. This is a very, very invigorating journey...*

*To future practitioners who are getting started on your journey: be your whole self. Tihei Mauri Ora - behold there is life!*



ETHAN SOLOVIEV

*There is no line where you become a regenerative practitioner. I continue to ask myself, "What is the impact I'm having on the systems I seek to regenerate? How could I deepen and evolve my approach?" Internally, I mix confidence in the paths I have designed with critical thinking and questioning on their evolution.*

*An indicator of growth for me is when I can go back to a framework and have a new and different experience of myself and its work.*

*What would I say to future practitioners? If you ever notice yourself saying something you've said before, stop. You are not re-generating fresh thinking appropriate to the current situation. Take a breath and begin again.*



BILL REED

*My most important realization is that this work is an evolutionary process of working with the development of self: a practice. Just like life, regeneration is a continual process of birthing, living, dying, and rebirthing. Our internal development allows us to 'become' on this co-evolutionary journey. There is so much farther to go . . . Exciting!*

*One cannot unlearn this paradigm of wholeness and evolutionary potential. It is an awe-inspiring gift to participate in and learn from the energies that are borne within the reciprocal relationships of all life. While this sounds pretty highfalutin, this understanding is the source of framing the powerful effect we as humans can have in the world if we align ourselves with living system ways of being and becoming.*

# DEEPER STUFF

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THE RESOURCES BELOW ARE BY NO MEANS EXHAUSTIVE. YOU WILL FIND A FEW TRUSTED PLACES AND PEOPLE TO GET YOU STARTED.

We encourage you to explore the readings provided and to reach out for additional education and learning opportunities.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**The Regensis Group** has developed what we believe to be the most expansive set of resources to further your knowledge in the many practices and principles we explore in this paper. You can find further reading on their resources page at <https://regensisgroup.com/resources>.

**CLEAR (Center for Living Environments and Regeneration)** provides resources and education related to regenerative design and development including the LENSES Framework you can learn more about LENSES and CLEAR at [clearabundance.org](http://clearabundance.org).

**Institute for the Built Environment:** The Institute for the Built Environment offers regenerative development and facilitation services as well as industry research and publications. Learn more at [ibe.colostate.edu](http://ibe.colostate.edu)

**Carol Sanford Institute** provides educative services and resources with a focus on regenerative business practices, as well as several books and other publications, which you can find at [carolsanfordinstitute.com](http://carolsanfordinstitute.com).

**Capital Institute** is focused on cultivating a regenerative economy and financial system. Their thought piece on Regenerative Capitalism and can be found on their website at [www.capitalinstitute.org](http://www.capitalinstitute.org).

## MORE ABOUT FRAMEWORKS

**The LENSES Framework** is a developmental facilitation framework designed to structure the process of regenerative development. Learn more about LENSES at [www.clearabundance.org/lenses/](http://www.clearabundance.org/lenses/).

**The Regenerative Practitioner™** is a distance-learning seminar series offered by the Institute for Regenerative Practice for practitioners who are interested in creating regenerative effects in the places that they live and work. The series introduces the core concepts and frameworks that define the practice of regenerative development, a process and methodology for harmonizing human activities with the continuing evolution of life on our planet, even as we continue to develop our potential as humans. Additional information can be found at [regenerate.es](http://regenerate.es).

**Theory U** offered by the Presencing Institute builds on two decades of research at MIT and helps individuals, teams, and organizations build the leadership capacities needed to address the root causes of today's social, environmental, and spiritual challenges. Find out more on Theory U at <https://www.presencing.org/#/aboutus/theory-u>.

**Design Thinking** is a process framework based in the field of design, but is used across many fields. Design thinking is especially useful for encouraging external considering, though itself does not lead to regenerative outcomes or systems actualizing. IDEO offers courses on design thinking [www.ideo.com/pages/design-thinking](http://www.ideo.com/pages/design-thinking), as does Stanford d.school [dschool.stanford.edu/resources/](http://dschool.stanford.edu/resources/). IBM has helpful resources as well [www.ibm.com/design/thinking/page/framework](http://www.ibm.com/design/thinking/page/framework).

# GLOSSARY

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## THE REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT FIELD IS BRIMMING WITH A HOST OF UNIQUE TERMS AND CONCEPTS.

Below, we offer a set of terms to get you started and fully acknowledge the steep terrain to become fluent in the language of regenerative practice. Our definitions may not be unanimously embraced across the field, but we hope they provide a thoughtful starting place.

**Developmental Facilitating:** Guiding individuals and groups toward increased capacity and capability to engage in regenerative work (systems actualizing)

**External Considering:** Consciously and proactively seeking to understand what others are trying to create and contribute

**Framework Thinking:** Developing the understanding, discernment, and discipline for utilizing frameworks to enable and amplify the practice of regenerative development

**Internal Locus of Control:** A sense of personal responsibility and agency for the outcomes of one's actions

**Living Systems:** Whole, self-organizing life forms that interact with their environment. All living systems are distinguished by a unique essence, and all have an inherent potential which they are moving toward or away from, depending on their state of integrity and vitality or health<sup>1</sup>

**Living Systems Understanding:** Seeing and being able to apply the patterns and principles of living systems in service of systems actualizing

**Regeneration:** To bring new and more vigorous life; the process of creating increasing levels of health, vitality, and capacity to evolve in people, places, fields, and organizations

**Regenerative Development:** Building the capacity and capability in people, communities and other natural systems to renew, evolve, and thrive <sup>2</sup>

**Regenerative Design:** The art and process of planning and creating, based on a deep understanding of local socio-ecological systems, using technologies and strategies that result in enduring capability for co-evolution

**System Actualizing:** The ongoing work of realizing the unique, regenerative potential of a system, such as an organization, a project, or a community, to increase vitality, viability and capacity to evolve.

**Self-Actualizing:** Developing the internal capacity and capability as an individual to lead regenerative development

**Source of Agency:** The sources of potential, including external considering, that impact our sense of personal agency and direction toward systems actualization

**Systems Thinking:** Rooted in biology, engineering, and ecology, systems thinking offers the perspective that the world must be seen holistically, and as dynamically interdependent and interrelated

<sup>1</sup> Definition adopted from Pamela Mang and Bill Reed's paper "Designing from Place: A Regenerative Framework and Methodology" (2012)

<sup>2</sup> Definition courtesy of Center for Living Environments and Regeneration



