

Power of Nature

A vision of the future where we live as one with the earth

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IN 2112 WE LIVE in a world transformed by the power of nature. You will be surprised at how much human life has changed. Consensus councils politics, sharing for business, and meaningful living in “co-naturality.” And you will understand that all this is the result of deep changes in the way we perceive ourselves and Mother Earth. But you will recognize the impulse within yourself.

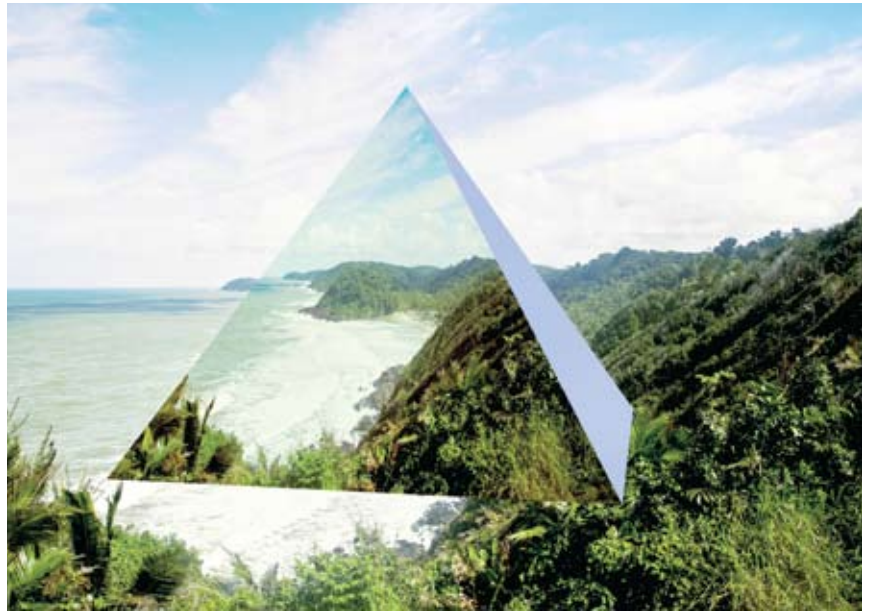
We as living beings are nature and therefore the power of nature is also the power of us. The power to change. The power to redefine ourselves and conceive nature and humans as one. This is the story of how we changed the world by changing the understanding of ourselves and by remembering what it is like to be one with nature.

THE MINDSET THAT drives “Power of Nature” has in a sense always been present insofar as humans have always been part of nature and been able to recognize this. But the powerful activation and unfolding of it in the 21st century had its roots in currents, movements, and thought that first began to arise around 1970. These came both as a culmination of an era of unprecedented material progress and at the same time as a reaction against it

E.F. Schumacher’s book *Small is Beautiful* was emblematic of the new agenda as were the movements his ideas helped create. It was a rejection of a way of life that was based on a mindless materialism oblivious to nature and its boundaries, and founded on the creation of large-scale systems, bureaucracies, governments, corporations and mass society. A model of economic development that seemed to satisfy material needs, but in fact perpetuates itself by constantly creating new artificial needs. The eternal race for growth in material prosperity increasingly came at the cost of alienating us from nature, from each other and from our basic, deeper, spiritual, and more authentic needs and potential. Throw-away consumerism and economic growth were not making people happy. The fact that this was not sustainable was a big problem, but the roots of the problem ultimately lay with ourselves.

It triggered a broad search for new ways of connecting with inner as well as outer sources of meaning. It was not a question of just making it, possibly surviving by scaling back our standard of living, and/or by way of technological development. We wanted to experience the richness of being.

There was a newfound interest in philosophy, wisdom, spirituality, and practices from all kinds of ideologies and traditions, from indigenous peoples and ancient sources. New artistic and cultural expressions developed. There was a spontaneous flowering of experimenting with ways of living, working, producing, and consuming.



For many decades all this was part of culture, some of it quite mainstream and influential, but most of it more subcultural and fleeting, constantly morphing, and constantly expanding in a process that absorbed and was affected by the cross-cultural inclusion of people from all over the world. What really made all this come to a head resulting in a true mind shift—a paradigm shift—on a global scale were two things. First of all, the failure of leaders and systems to offer new valuable and transformative agendas that would advance human fulfillment and happiness rather than merely aiming to deliver more of the old. Second,

a sustained run of adverse developments that triggered global crises on many levels: climate, hurricanes, flooding, draughts, food scarcity, and economic crises which overwhelmed the established leaders and systems. This created an acute sense of disillusion with authorities and a loss of legitimacy for the economic and political system based on experts and representatives. All this came on top of the deep, underlying discontentment with the system of old-style consumerism.

The old mindset and paradigm of the modern ages that historically underpinned the spreading of democracy and capitalism on a global scale was based on the idea of universal human rights. It became clear that this human-centered paradigm was too narrow, too anthropocentric. We were living in the Anthropocene, but we had forgotten the nature of man. The new mindset had to be capable of including the inherent value of other forms of life and of life itself. Life was created out of the apparent mess and mistakes of nature, and in that sense it was

This perception of nature is a deep and authentic human intuition which arguably precedes all types of religious formulations, and which forms the basis for spiritual feelings and cosmic authenticity.

Myths and tradition and their attendant tales and rituals can be seen as rooted in this deeper-running intuition about nature that is part of the human makeup. And so is our sense of aesthetics, our capacity for artistic expression, our ability to communicate, and our need for meaning in our existence. This leads us to pursue all kinds of meaningful “co-naturality” activities to get in contact with ourselves and thereby nature—from rituals and art to the academic pursuit of knowledge and insights. Even technology and commercial innovation are ultimately expressions of the urge to create what is innate in humans.

THE TRANSFORMATION WAS accomplished by radical political changes in a broad sense, but the paradox was that most of

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sustainable. The inert wisdom of nature always knows when to let go and release new forms of life and social “contracts.”

The mindshift of “Power of Nature” rivaled previous social and cultural mindshifts, like the one that established the human rights paradigm itself. Other examples include the Copernican and Darwinian revolutions and—in the social sphere—the changes in relationships between races, between men and women, and between adults and children in which the stereotypical, hierarchical, and even bigoted views of earlier eras have largely been transcended.

Everything is nature, and so are we. Life is, as far as we know, unique to Mother Earth, and our sentient appreciation of life is unique to humans. Therefore we must respect nature, we must respect life, and we must respect ourselves and each other. We must strive to develop and expand our inner and outer capacity for living in ways that are consistent with all life, and the realization that everything is connected with everything else. And that we humans do not have an exclusive right to dominate the world on which we rely, or to deny the dynamics of Mother Earth.

this took place outside the established institutions. Much of it was a change in attitudes, and thinking on an individual and grassroots level.

There was a strong realization that we needed to turn our attention from the outer to the inner world. The problems in the outer world of political domination, of economic competition, and of unsustainable exploitation and pollution were identified as symptoms of failure to connect with our inner sources of meaning.

One consequence was the hasty erosion of legitimacy of outer authorities like governments, bureaucracies, scientific experts, and corporations. They had their competencies which continued to sustain them, but they were no longer able to guide development. It was not expressed as a collective revolt, rather as a gradual transition where more and more people lost interest in the old political system and kind of said, “So long, we will follow another path.”

Instead local and government connections and flow on a person-to-person level became increasingly important. These were the fora where new models of thinking, living, and behaving were developed; models that were based on oneness and a truly holistic perception of the natural world.

The emergence of the Consensus Council as a widespread social institution was one reflection of this. Consensus Councils

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were not formal assemblies of representation for various established social interests. They were the framework for an open process of dialogue in which participants represented different perspectives on the agenda at hand. They took different forms in different local contexts, but generally functioned as an important and ongoing exercise in deliberative wisdom.

In general, a new kind of political consciousness and a new culture of networked decision-making enabled spontaneous agenda-setting, coordination, and participatory problem solving.

ECONOMIC LIFE AND business practices were equally deeply transformed: From a reliance on exchange and markets to an emphasis on generosity and sharing; from competition to cooperation; from material to immaterial and spiritual fulfillment; and from knowledge to wisdom. An economy built on trust and reciprocity. True business is all about being in good company, and when people changed, business changed.

Old economic concepts had new and different meanings ascribed to them. Markets were understood as a form of social conversation. Value became a multi-dimensional concept transcending the mono-dimensional idea that was associated with money. Wealth was no longer a question of economic growth, but a concept denoting social sustainability, and economic actors were capable of “we-behavior.”

New economic models for production and consumption developed locally and were frequently upscaled by emulation and copying, sometimes only locally, in other cases globally due to the many vibrant channels of communication and the openness to inspiration.

In every field, craftsmanship was important, not only to customers but as a source of genuine satisfaction for the practitioner. Spontaneity and self-organization were guiding principles, and not by accident but by conscious emulation of nature in a biomimicry effort on the social level. The ubiquity of this, and the easy and global circumvention of traditional power centers in society were helped by breakthroughs in communication technology, including transition and new forms of deeper communication.

LIFE IN THE TRANSFORMED society was materially simpler, but higher quality and spiritually richer. Hunger and poverty on a massive scale was eliminated by generosity and sharing. The enormous and varied selection of products that the previous society had excelled in providing for, and the acquiring of which had compelled people to a never-ending pursuit of material wants, was eliminated and replaced with new goods and services.

Settlements, towns and cities were a highly integrated part of surrounding ecosystems with small-scale urban farms all around. Spending time on contemplation and various forms of meditation became an important part of life as a way of connecting with one’s inner nature. It was also found that the


development and ceremonies that celebrated life served the purpose of strengthening social bonds and mutual understanding between people whether in the family or in the wider community.

One of the forms of language that became an important driver in its own right was art. It was the indispensable means of developing and unfolding new captivating narratives of the meaning of life on Mother Earth and the role of human beings. Stories, images, sounds, dancing, and performances became integral to people’s lives, not as something to passively watch and admire, but as activities the people themselves would take part in.

Art served as a tool and a facilitation process for connecting with our inner intuition. It was a great synthesizer and bridge-builder among humans and among different kinds of insights. At the same time, art in a sense represented the only truly manmade phenomenon, one that was a clear expression of the specifically human nature and that only humans were able to appreciate. Art was how we expressed and connected with universal meaning. Therefore it increasingly became integral to everyday life.

MANY GREAT SCIENTISTS played an important part in the entire transformation process, like Benjamin Franklin, Niels Bohr, or Andrei Sakharov had done in earlier times, supplementing their scientific insights with holistic wisdom and communicating inspirational messages of guidance of our relationship with Mother Earth.

Science acquired a deeper quality as a pursuit of knowledge and insight about nature that was valuable in its own right. After all, science is a way of acknowledging and connecting with nature. New branches of science emerged as there were intense efforts of research into spirituality and consciousness as well as a revitalization of fields like philosophy and the humanities.

Technology turned small-scale and local-based, exploiting the huge potential for decentralization that was inherent in digital technology and many sources of renewable energy such as wind, solar, and waves. The distrust of large-scale systems, bureaucracies, and centralized power made it difficult for large scale technologies to develop. But that didn’t stop the dynamic development and diffusion of small-scale systems, drawing on sharing of knowledge, common consciousness, and holistic responsibility. 



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