

## **SUMMARY - MODULE # 2 PURPOSE**

### **PURPOSE**

If the intent is to change a system, then the two most effective ways are first to change the paradigm (see Module 1) and second to change its purpose, i.e., have the majority of participants in a system change their understanding of purpose.

So, what does purpose mean? The word **purpose** has **two meanings**:

1. A **reason** to do something (a rationale, or higher purpose).
2. An **aim** or a **goal**.

The challenges that tourism now faces stem from forgetting its **higher purpose** –providing hospitality as a generous gift of caring that involves heart, mind, body, and soul and pursuing a **false goal**, making tourism merely a transaction-oriented, economic engine, i.e., merely one of many contributors to Global Domestic Product (GDP) and endeavouring to grow that measure every year.

The original reason behind tourism was to welcome strangers visiting from another place and take care of them. In this way the offer of hospitality contributed to the well-being of both guest and host. Strangers could feel safe travelling because there was an understanding that friendly "others" would take care of them and reciprocate in some way.

*"We've lost our way. We've forgotten that the act of hospitality is a gift of caring from host to guest. All indigenous societies understand the reciprocal nature of this exchange that requires respect to be practiced by both parties. By converting the gift into a transaction, and what was once a welcoming heart and hearth into a product, we've sucked out all the life-giving juice that could nourish and sustain all involved. Industrial tourism is a zero-sum game of winners and losers each trying to serve their own self-interest as witnessed in an obsession for cost cutting in order to meet the expectation that tourism itself has promoted i.e., that cheap travel is a right. Worse, we've missed the opportunity to live up to the higher purpose of travel & hospitality and play our role in helping life flourish on this planet."*

– Anna Pollock in *Purpose Plus Passion Equals Prosperity* for Mekong Tourism

Over the past hundred years or so as tourism gradually industrialised and became a key economic engine (provider of income and jobs), its purpose became to contribute to the growth of the economy. As the latter was measured by such calculations as GDP, the purpose of tourism defaulted to increasing its contribution – visitor numbers and gross spending were the measures used to track the success of means and absorbed most attention. Purpose and success indicators got confused.

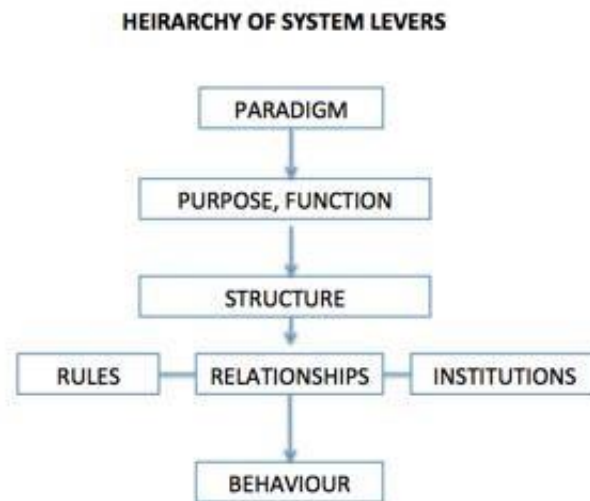
### **THE ROLE OF PURPOSE IN CHANGING A SYSTEM**

In her paper *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System*, Donella Meadows suggested **the two most effective ways to change a system** were **first to change the paradigm**

**(assumptions) on which the existing system is based and secondly, to change its purpose.** The current tendency is to tinker at the edges – cut carbon emissions, discount prices, add taxes, impose regulations, add incentives, etc. Nevertheless, because we don't fully understand the system and its relationship with other systems, such interventions rarely work even though they may help us feel more in control at the time we make them.

*“Diddling with details is like arranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Probably ninety-five percent of our attention goes on the numbers, but there’s not a lot of power in them. Not that parameters aren’t important, they can be, but they rarely change behaviour” – Donella Meadows*

The steps Meadows described in her paper have been simplified in the diagram below and placed in order of effectiveness.



Regenerative approaches are based on a different paradigm - all life is a living system of systems subject to nature's rules and life's purpose is to create the conditions for Life to Thrive.

**Thus, the application of regenerative thinking to tourism & hospitality changes its purpose from a focus on increasing visitor numbers and spending to delivering hospitality in such a way that supports the healthy thriving of all parties - visitors, guest, and hosts (the resident and nature).**

The use of the terms flourishing and thriving outside tourism occurs in a growing number of areas:

- **Positive psychology** (notably the work of Martin Seligman, Maureen Gaffney, Jean Russell),

- **Business** (thanks to the work of Michelle Holliday in her book *The Age of Thrivability* and Chris Laszlo and Judith Brown in their book *Flourishing Enterprise*),
- **Finance & capitalism** (thanks John Fullerton and the Capital Institute), and
- **Leadership** - the book published by The Thrivability Foundation, *A Leaders' Guide to Thrivability*.

In short, the words flourishing or thriving, when applied as adjectives, each describe the state and capacity of a self-organising living system to be fully alive and to renew, develop and evolve. They can be applied to individuals, businesses or enterprises, and destinations because these are living systems. On the other hand, those words cannot be applied to machines: we describe a machine as performing well but never as flourishing.

A flourishing life form expresses its vitality, energy, resilience, and adaptability in a diversity of ways unique to the individuals, companies and communities involved. **Thrivability is dynamic** – always in motion adapting to its circumstances and seeking to develop and evolve.

### STEPS TO TAKE IN MOVING TOWARDS A FLOURISHING SYSTEM

The first step is to **recognise the need for systemic change** - that one system is failing, and another is emerging. This means acknowledging that most of our interventions simply tinker at the edges and are designed to make the current system less harmful so we can carry on i.e., sustain business as usual.

Step two involves making visible and evaluating the **current** validity of the **assumptions** and values **underpinning** the **failing system** and the **emerging living system**.

In the tourism sector this assessment is complicated by the fact that two models operate side by side within an overarching dominant economic system (Module 2-1, Slides 12 & 13). Compare the characteristics of each. In Swedish Lapland, the vast majority of tourism-related businesses are small, family owned, single properties often run to sustain a lifestyle. They are not conforming to many of the rules and characteristics of industrialised business – they/you are not focused on growth; do enjoy close relationships with their other aspects of their communities; deploy sustainable practices and want to protect nature.

Yet many of the global and national agencies responsible for economic development of any kind do align with the principles of industrialised capitalism and assume those principles should dictate future business of all kinds in the region. Because Norrbotten is rich in mineral, timber, and other resources (including cold temperatures), clashes in values and priorities will increase and those difference have the potential to polarise opinion. Things can still turn around...

Step three will require a **willingness of participants** in both "sides" to **better understand the needs of the other** and find **harmonised ways of co-existing in win-win fashion**. This process of coming together is best undertaken in smaller areas within the region. This is

where the Swedish Lapland Visitors Board, by assuming the responsibility to ‘Care for the Arctic’, could facilitate. This process of **coming together involves acts of caring, a willingness to listen to other perspectives, and a commitment to co-develop a shared vision of and for a thriving/flourishing future.**

### Re-DEFINING SUCCESS

In the current economic model, based on the Machine Story, success is defined as the accumulation of wealth or capital in material terms that can be assigned a monetary value be it GDP for nation, net worth for an individual; profits, retained earnings, capital for a company.

When the Living System story is applied, all systems are seen as subsets of Life. Our understanding of all aspects of biology has led to an understanding that Purpose of Life is to create the conditions for Life to Thrive.

The first indicator of success of any system is that **it's alive!** This begs the question - how alive? Is the system full of vitality, able to adapt, bounce back from shocks, evolve, and thrive or is it struggling, lacking in stamina, energy, adaptability, resilience etc.? As discussed in the previous section, the two words that best describe the **healthy state of a living system are flourishing, thriving.** Neither term can be applied to an inanimate object or machine, but **they can be applied to persons, companies, and destinations.**

A **thriving person** feels fully alive, lives life to the full, has lots of energy, makes a contribution, physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically, i.e., they are seen as healthy. The core human needs that Abraham Maslow identified as needs for nourishment, security, love, and belonging are met and are able to develop their essential talents, grow in various qualitative ways and find meaning and purpose in their life. Maslow call this a process of self-actualisation. They enjoy autonomy (the capacity for self-organisation), mastery and a personal sense of purpose (contribution) that both shapes and is informed by their identity and actions.

A **thriving company** enjoys a sustainable profit, provides sustainable livelihoods to an engaged workforce, and is accepted and supported by the community in which it is located. A flourishing company is associated with peak performance, is recognised as an attractive place to work, generates high levels of productivity, creativity, adaptability, and resilience, exudes a sense of vitality and balances the human needs of its stakeholders.

A **flourishing destination** is one in which the visitors pay their way (covers internal and external costs), suppliers have a flourishing business, individuals (guests, employees, owners, investors, residents) enjoy a quality of life and feel respected, valued, and fulfilled; the natural environment is revered and protected as the Source of Life. Past degradation and damage are restored and healed.

**Flourishing is a composite state of being involving many contributors, many facets (emotional, physicals, social and financial/energetic) and both an inner and outer dimension. External parties to a system cannot create a state of flourishing but can create the conditions for thriving to emerge as an expression of the system's health.**

Practitioners of regenerative tourism focus their attention on sensing the whole state of an employee, co-worker, customer, the business, and the destination.

A **Flourishing Destination** will involve **healthy**:

**People:** A diverse population of stakeholders (people acting as customers, co-creators, personnel delivering services), facilitators/supporters, residents and who are aware of their own sense of connection and interdependence, identity, place, and purpose.

**Place:** A population who have a strong sense of rootedness in, knowledge of and a caring for their unique place and their role in ensuring its health and vitality.

**Community:** A coming together of people in place to align around a common purpose notably to act as caretakers and stewards ensuring the health of the system.

**Enterprises:** commerce is seen as the digestive system whereby energy is converted into products, experiences, services, and infrastructure that support the community. The greater the diversity of commercial enterprises and the greater ease with which materials, energy, nutrients, and information can flow between them, the more abundance will be generated.

**Encounters:** the primary source of value in a tourism system originates in every encounter between a guest and a host. The “richer” that encounter is for both parties, the greater collective value is accrued. Richness is not defined in transactional value but in a full spectrum of emotional, social, physical, cultural, psychological, and aesthetic ways. A diverse and rich palette of encounters, offered by a diverse mix of suppliers honouring their inter-dependence and collaborating where appropriate will attract more visitors, extend their stay, and encourage higher net benefit.

To further stimulate discussion, many Elements of the state of being called Flourishing are listed in the table on next page.

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

To activate-animate, give life to ‘Care for the Arctic’, host suppliers must show they care about the places they operate from and to which they are inviting visitors.

Furthermore, hosts neither can nor should act alone - they need the support of the community. By focusing on the health and well-being of the community first, tourism hosts are more likely to enjoy community support/experience.

In Module 3 - People, we will discuss, among other things, the fertile conditions that enable people and communities to thrive.

In Module 4 - we'll look at how communities can develop their own unique sense of Place (identity) that can shape and unify approaches to development.

In Module 5 – Practice will be the subject.

See 'Table of **Elements** of the state of being called **Flourishing** 'on next page...

### **Elements of Flourishing**

	CHARACTERISTICS	THRIVING INDIVIDUAL	PROSPEROUS ENTERPRISE	FLOURISHING COMMUNITY
1	<b>Vitality (healthy, robust) Power, agency</b>	“Fully alive”, healthy, energetic, authentic, zest, enthusiasm, fashion, empathic, cooperative, supportive, confident, present Physically fit, mentally alert, emotionally balanced,	Healthy level of profitability; solid market prospects (pipeline, repeats, referrals); provides sustainable livelihoods to employees, delights customers; enjoys community support	Enjoys high net benefits from tourism (minimal costs); feels a sense of ownership and pride; able to expend genuine welcome to visitors; boom & busts cycles minimised
2	<b>Self awareness – distinct identity</b> (character, personality, identity, authenticity)	Good self knowledge: Emotions, strengths, values, beliefs, ethics, intelligence and aptitudes	Clarity about purpose and needs of all stakeholders; sense of how to differentiate (stand out); strengths; cultures (values and ethics) that are expressed by all members.	Clear sense of PLACE – what is unique and special
3	<b>Positive Emotions</b>	Able to express a full spectrum of emotions High EQ	Pleasant, happy place to work; supportive, nourishing, stretching, compassionate, creative	Great place to live, work and play High levels of community well being Tourism benefits evident & valued
4	<b>Engagement</b> (passion, “in the flow)	Capable of absorption in an activity, experience peak performance and joy in the task, passion, zest High EQ, SQ	High positive energy; focus on delighting customer in creative ways, employees and customers feel heard and cared for	Community enthusiasm, lots of spontaneous community activity, and a strong sense of pride
5	<b>Relationships</b> (interdependence, sense of interconnectedness)	Can sustain a range of relationships with work colleagues, friends, family and enjoys a support network High EQ	Enjoys good relations with all stakeholders, especially community; willing to work collaboratively with other members of the destination community	Community members willing to work together, collaborate, co-create.
6	<b>Meaning &amp; sense of purpose</b>	Enjoys a strong sense of personal purpose and direction	Members of the enterprise share a common sense of purpose higher than simply making a profit that engages and motivates	The community knows why they are encouraging tourism and what they wish to achieve as a result of its success.
7	<b>Achievement</b> (Sense of mastery, autonomy & contribution)	Has a range of interests, skills and enjoys a satisfying level of mastery; sense of autonomy (can direct events to serve self and others)	Leads trends rather than follows, clear sense of strategic direction & priorities	High levels of performance on indicators determined by the community as important to them. High levels of volunteering and SE
8	<b>Diversity</b>	Flexible, multi-skilled and capable of taking multiple perspectives	Diverse workforce (gender, ethnicity, age, intelligence, worldview) but aligned around a common purpose & values	Diverse enterprises but aligned around a common purpose & values and sense of place
9	<b>Balance</b> (within and between)	Balances various aspects of life (work-leisure); physical, mental, emotional and spiritual)	Operates in harmony with natural environment – close to zero waste; minimum resource input; respects local culture, expresses place. Procures locally	Healthy environment Thriving culture Self sufficiency
10	<b>Resilience</b>	Able to bounce back after major changes or shocks; learns from mistakes, adaptable	Plans and prepares for downtimes, low seasons, contingency & risk planning	Plans and prepares for downtimes, low seasons, contingency & risk planning
11	<b>Capacity to grow, develop, self-organize</b>	Committed to lifelong learning, personal growth and development	High levels of innovation and creativity.	High levels of innovation and creativity.

Table ‘Elements of Flourishing’ © Anna Pollock – *not to be reproduced without permission*. Shaded areas are based on *Positive Psychology* and *Dr. Martin Seligman’s* concepts of ‘Flourishing’.

- End of Summary Module # 2 -