

SUMMARY - MODULE # 4 PEOPLE

John Naisbitt, the popular futurist of the 1990's observed –
“The most exciting breakthroughs of the twenty-first century will not occur because of technology, but because of an expanding concept of what it means to be human.”

While it's a cliché to say that tourism is all about people and place; the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors are highly labour-intensive sectors; and the wealth it creates depends entirely on the **quality of an inter-personal relationship between a Host and a Guest**; it is sobering to see just how little attention is given to the role of **people**.

Most jobs in mainstream, mass tourism are perceived as unattractive (poorly paid, temporary, and seasonal) – hence, frequent talk of labour shortages pre- and post-pandemic. Aspects of its economic structure (namely low barriers to entry and the perishability of the “product”) have resulted in fierce price competition within tourism & hospitality. Since many of the occupations require low skill levels, “labour” could be bought cheaply and price competition between suppliers has further depressed the rates paid to hospitality workers.

“By adopting an operating model suited to the manufacture of “things,” tourism became dragged down by the twin forces of increasing competition and commodification that could only be contained through cost cutting, automation, job losses and price discounting. The ‘industrial part of tourism’ now has a reputation for poor wages – the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has actually applied the adjective “outrageous” due to long working hours, unattractive working conditions, high levels of labour turnover, antisocial working hours, over and high use made of part-timers, casual, seasonal labour, and difficulties with recruitment and retention.” - Anna Pollock

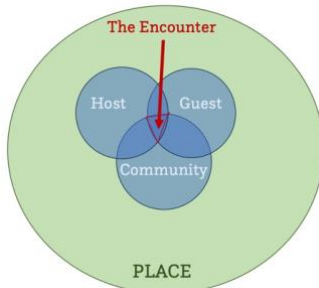
While delivery of high-volume products could be serviced by a ready supply of inexpensive labour, willing to be told what to do and say, changes in the labour market and workplace, plus over 70 years research into human capacity and potential from within psychology, sociology, and neuroscience, are throwing the idea that people are nothing but anonymous, substitutable economic “inputs,” out the window.

REGENERATIVE PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO PEOPLE

The **regenerative approach views people** very differently - not as resources, inputs or even assets but as **Hosts and key participants and partners in the delivery of attractive, commercially viable, meaningful experiences for visitors**.

The activities associated with tourism and hospitality are seen as contributing to the vitality, health, and well-being of the places (destinations) which the visitors come to.

A so-called **'tourism destination'** (the place and its social, cultural, ecological, commercial features) **is recognised as a living system in its own right, subject to the laws of living systems.**



As shown in the Figure on the left, **the destination (Place) is the container in which Hosts and Guests meet and interact.** That meeting, which is **supported by the Community** is a value-generating ***the Encounter*** between two parties with social, cultural, physical, and financial expression and outcomes. The encounter is the core source of value within the tourism system.

The term **Host** is not restricted to **the owner-, the manager of a tourism-hospitality facility or the service but also encompasses employees, residents in the community, supporting businesses, and services, and even life forms in nature that co-create attractive scenery, pleasant climates, nutritious food, etc.**

While the quality of the Encounter depends on the health and vitality of both parties - Guest and Host - it is often the role of the host to revitalise weary guests as part of their hospitality offering.

When applying the old Machine paradigm, tourism-hospitality positioned hosts as "producers" whose purpose is to generate revenue as efficiently as possible, and guests are seen as "consumers", whose combined spending contributes to the economy. As a consequence, the encounter is reduced to a financial transaction with both guest and host endeavouring to get the best "deal" at the lowest price.

When applying a **Living System's paradigm and a Regenerative Approach, Hosts and Guests are seen as self-organising citizens and the Encounter is seen as an opportunity for each partner to generate value for the other.**

Note: the concept of value in regenerative terms is not confined to material value - ideally it takes the form of capability development (i.e. enhancing the ability of both parties to fulfil their potential and thrive).

As a Living System, a destination and its peoples will thrive if they follow Nature's Principles:

1. The **diversity** of participants (sometimes called stakeholders), whether they are acting as hosts, customers, employees, managers, regulators, investors, or residents; a diversity of guests and diversity of experiences.

2. The success of the whole will depend on the extent to which the **capability of each participant to self-organise** (sustain themselves, respond to change, make wise choices, grow towards more complexity, etc.) is developed. This implies the free flow of information, materials, finance, transport, and other services.

3. Success in developing that capability will require that the **unique essence and potential of each individual** participant is acknowledged, and nurtured so they can **make their own unique contribution**. *Essence* is the aspect of a person or thing that is continuously present from birth to death despite all the layers of socialisation that get laid over it. Such attributes as “strengths” or psychological types can be shared. Essence cannot.

4. Success of the whole **host community** will depend on:

- the diversity of participants (across many dimensions – age, gender, primary form of intelligence, strengths, skill, etc). *Inclusivity* is not seen as an obligation but as a critical contributor to creativity, productivity, adaptability, and resilience.
- **A shared sense of collective identity, values, and purpose.**
- the provision of numerous opportunities for **relationships** to form between participants that enable information to be exchanged and learning to take place.

“Relationships are the pathways to the intelligence of the system. Through relationships, information is created and transformed, the organisation’s identity expands to include more stakeholders, and the enterprise becomes wiser.” - M.J. Wheatley

- The **extent** with which each individual is enabled and trusted to contribute to the shared purpose in their own unique way.
- Creating a **sense of belonging, inclusion, and sense of community**. No participant is isolated nor can bear to be isolated for long. Together they are all part of one body (one system) and each either supports or undermines the success of the others.

*“Any community – be it an enterprise has to balance two seemingly conflicting forces; the need for **freedom** and the need for **relationships** and to **belong**.*

*Life’s first imperative begins with this primal freedom to **create** the capacity for **self-determination**. An individual creates itself with a boundary that distinguishes itself from others and that gives rise to the diversity on the planet.*

*Life's second imperative propels individuals to **search for community**. Evolution progresses from these relationships not from the harsh and lonely dynamics of survival of the fittest. Species that decide to ignore relationships, that act in greedy and rapacious ways, simply die off.*

Success in life means learning to balance these two imperatives – life does not allow us to choose sides. Our communities must support our individual freedom as a means of community health and resiliency. And individuals must acknowledge their neighbours and make choices based on their desire to be in relationship with them as a means to their own health and resiliency.” - M.J. Wheatley

The core goal of a regenerative destination would be to create the conditions for "Encounters" that enable both parties (Hosts and Guests and the Arctic) to benefit, develop and thrive in some way.

As in Living Systems it is "*through the self-organisation of the components that life emerges and becomes self-replicating,*" reaching that goal is a primary responsibility of the Host whose responsible **behaviour and practices will influence and motivate the Guest**.

The first step for a **Host** is to accept that they **do matter**, their individual actions do affect the outcome of the whole and that **each has a unique contribution to make** that matches their personal interests/passions and gifts (strengths).

Hosts interested in applying regenerative approaches will need to focus on developing relationships in at least three areas: with self; with others; and with the natural world that surrounds them and on which they depend.

- **Relationships with Self** 

Regeneration starts with self-awareness and self-care. We cannot care for guests, colleagues, or the natural world unless we have learned to care for ourselves.

For a self-examination, here are some links.

Richard Barrett of the **Values Centre** has developed a range of tools that can be used to assess personal values as well as those within a company or even a nation.

For the personal values test see:

<https://www.valuescentre.com/pva>

Please note there is a small charge but do check out a sample report to see if it is of interest to you.

Here's an example of the kind of report generated.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/647a349435a7cf1bab8cf1b7/t/64f8e511ef13bb1e10a48a2d/1694033169407/Example-PVA-Report-2.pdf>

Virtues - The Science of Character

This film is now 12 years old but as relevant as ever.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0fK4837Bgg>

Worldviews

This company associated with the University of Utrecht has developed a worldview test (free)

<https://worldviewjourneys.com>

<https://wvtest.com/responses/5b9vx2/intro>

- **Relationship with Others** 

This is a huge topic that will be explored - albeit briefly- in the next two modules.

Note: the application of regenerative approaches has to be undertaken in community, and in tourism, that is currently assumed to be the destination. But once you see **destinations as living systems** then you will immediately appreciate that the concept of destination is a **social construct** - it only exists in the minds of hosts and guests and the structures that support them. Reality comprises place-shaped communities that include many non-tourism specific activities.

There are many techniques and approaches developed to facilitate people working in groups such as 'Appreciative Inquiry' and '[The Art of Hosting](https://artofhosting.org)' (<https://artofhosting.org>)

- **Relationship with Nature or Natural World** 

Given that the destination is a living system, Hosts need to develop a thorough understanding on how the Natural World works in their Destination, especially as helping their Guests appreciate Nature will grow in importance. This topic will be covered in more depth in next module, Place.

- End of Summary Module # 3 -