RESTORATIVE LEADERSHIP

An Emerging Framework for Cultivating Resilient Communities in the 21st Century

Seana Lowe Steffen

Restorative Leadership Institute

Seana Lowe Steffen, Ph.D., directs the Restorative Leadership Institute and served as a faculty member at the University of Colorado. Seana brings over 20 years of experience in leadership and organizational development working in the private, not-for-profit, and public sectors serving conscious leaders and social enterprises. She has trained, consulted, and coached throughout the United States and the world in settings such as Senegal, Mexico, and Rwanda. Her awards include ETown National Public Radio's "E-chievement Award" for making a lasting difference in the community and beyond, and Mortar Board's "Outstanding Professor" award. She also was a nominee for the Ford Foundation "Leadership for a Changing World Award." She is a participatory action researcher.

In seeking restoration for my continent, I am quite literally restoring myself—because who we are is bound up in the rivers and streams, the trees and the valleys

Maathai 2009, 288.

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Let's start with a word association: When you read "environmental leadership," what are the first words that come to mind?

In a room full of community leaders in Colorado their words were:

Environmental leadership: tree hugger—landscape—conservation ethic.

Among a group of bankers in Ohio,

Environmental leadership: going green—recycling—taking care of the

environment.

In a classroom of students at a faith-based college in Massachusetts,

Environmental leadership: green—recycle—Al Gore.

What is noteworthy is that the associations reflect the distinct trends of environmentalism seen in the waves of conservation and protection. The words are evocative of the ideas and changes of the 20th century, from Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism to the first Earth Day to the Wise Use Movement, and from the *Sand County Almanac* (Leopold, 1949) to *The Population Bomb* (Ehrlich, 1968) to *An Inconvenient Truth* (Gore, 2006), America was the "first civilization in history to turn its environmental imagination into a political movement[1]" (Dowie, 1997, p. 9), a movement that struggled to reclaim what Western civilization forgot of indigenous wisdom and to fulfill what early philosophers like Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and others were imagining.

Beyond Environmental Leadership to Restorative Leadership[2]

From a global perspective, the earliest environmental leaders were the over 350 Bishnois who lost their lives in 1730 while defending their sacred trees against destruction in India's Himalayan foothills. Amrita Devi and her three daughters were the first to take a stand, hugging the trees and dying with them as they were felled, starting the Chipko movement with their acts of devotion[3]. For most in the United States, however, the idea of environmental leadership coincides with the advent of environmentalism, a concept introduced by Rachel Carson's seminal work *Silent Spring* (1962). Carson humbled the west by reducing the fate of our existence to dependence on topsoil, and catalyzed an awakening to the costs of industrialization by sounding the alarm: "For the first time in the history of the world, every human being is now subjected to contact with dangerous chemicals, from the moment of conception until death. In the less than two decades of their use, the synthetic pesticides have been so thoroughly distributed throughout the animate and inanimate world that they occur virtually everywhere" (Carson, 1962, p.15). Then with great clarity, she illuminated the gravity of the biological risks and connected the dots between agricultural and industrial practices and the widespread harmful impacts that communities were experiencing.

Great policy strides were made as a result, building on earlier national park and wilderness conservation progress that had already safeguarded millions of acres of land. Within a single "environmental decade" as U.S. President Richard Nixon called it, environmental leadership successfully legislated far-reaching policies including the Clean Air Act (1970), National Environmental Policy Act (1970), Marine Protection Act (1972), Endangered Species Act (1973), Toxic Substances Control Act (1976), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (1976), Clean Water Act (1977), and Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act known as the "Superfund" (1980).

Concurrent with the wave of environmental engagement in the late 1900s, a broader inquiry into the state of the world resulted in a prescient warning of the limits to growth on Earth. The international gathering of scientists at the Club of Rome gave their analysis and predictions, educating the world about interdependence and assuring us with scientific objectivity that, " . . . infinite growth in a finite system is impossible" (Meadows in Dobson, 1991, pp.13-17). *The Limits to Growth* (1972) fired a hopeful shot over the bow of the course that industrialized society had charted.

Our conclusions are:

1. If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. The most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity.

2. It is possible to alter these growth trends and to establish a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into the future. The state of global equilibrium could be designed so that the basic material needs of each person on earth are satisfied and each person has an equal opportunity to realize his individual human potential" (Meadows in Dobson, 1991, p.13).

Their efforts were followed a decade later by the work of Her Excellency Gro Brundtland and the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) that launched the concept of sustainable development to the center of the global stage[4].

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned progress of the scientific revolution and the enlightenment saddled us with dualities such as environmental versus social, urban versus rural, and traditional versus modern that fueled unsustainable growth trends through the turn of the century. In spite of the warnings and opportunities, an outdated mindset of mechanistic and reductionist thinking continues to govern. The blind spots of the industrial age have endured through the information age and globalization, driving production and consumption practices that, combined with population growth, have caused what was at one time avoidable. The Anthropocene Epoch has been ushered into existence by human- induced changes, and global indicators tell us that the Earth is now in overshoot and collapse. Therein lies the problem for 21st century leadership: "We cannot," as Albert Einstein said, "solve the problems we have created with the same thinking that created them" (Dowie, 1997, p. 206). If the state of the world is a reflection of the state of our leadership, twentieth century leadership failed to transform the risks to sustainability. While environmental leadership made great strides, the nomenclature of "environmental leadership" itself continues to perpetuate the dualities and what Orr calls "the fragmentation of the industrial age" (Orr 2002, p. 4).

The distinction in the 21st century is that we now know that we have exceeded the limits to growth. From a humanistic perspective, sustainability has become an ethical imperative for all leadership. Twenty-first century leadership must go beyond environmental leadership, carrying forward the conservation and protection ethic, while bridging the illusion of dualities and engaging in ways that reflect the significance of this time in evolutionary history. By necessity it must be holistic and restorative, humble and courageous, and infinitely creative, drawing on the best of 3.8 billion years of evolution at this "great transition" (Meadows in Dobson, 1991, p.13)

while bringing out the best of diverse humanity for the assurance of a sustainable world. The question becomes, what does that take?

Ground Zero for Sustainability Issues

This chapter begins to answer that question by introducing the emergent phenomenon of restorative leadership, which is a holistic and integrated, multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary framework discerned from a purposive sample of twenty-five high-impact leaders in community, industry, and policy. The selected case studies are working to transform distinctly anthropogenic problems threatening the biosphere and humanity through high-leverage areas for sustainable impact such as production and consumption patterns, pollution reduction and capture, ecological design, women's empowerment, and consciousness raising. Data collection spanned three years of interviews, primary source survey research, and participant observation where possible.

For the purposes of this collection, the case studies of Tostan International and the Green Belt Movement (GBM) are highlighted with a focus on Molly Melching and Wangari Maathai demonstrating restorative leadership principles and practices at each site, respectively. Both leaders and social enterprises are based in Africa, which can be seen as ground zero for sustainability issues such as climate change, food security, and population growth. Africa also can be thought of as a harbinger because, as Maathai states, " . . . the condition of Africa is bound to that of the world. We all share one planet and are one humanity. There is no escaping this reality" (Maathai, 2009, p. 4).

The social-ecological reality in Africa is that, "Almost half the population of sub-Saharan Africa lives on less than one dollar a day, the highest level of poverty in the world" (Maathai, 2009, p. 129), and in 2010, 28 of the 30 lowest ranked countries of the UN Human Development

Report 2010 were African. At 169th of 169, Zimbabwe is a recent example of system collapse. With 89.7 sextillion percent inflation, it went from being "the breadbasket of Africa—a modernized nation funded by tourism, diamonds, and agriculture—to a nation in which well over half the population is facing severe food shortages, more than 80 percent are unemployed, 3,500 people die each week of HIV/AIDS . . ." in under a decade (Frieze and Wheatley, 2011, p. 109). Rich in resources, Africa hosts approximately 17% of the world's forests, yet contributes to 50% of global deforestation. The continent's rate of deforestation ranks it the highest in the world at thrice the global average for most of the last decade. Deforestation combined with overgrazing has resulted in increasing rates of desertification, with the Sahara now "spreading 30 miles a year" (Maathai, 2009, p. 253). With climate change, Africa is expecting temperature increases of 0.2°C (0.4°F) per decade to 0.5°C (0.9°F) per decade, and "there is wide consensus that climate change, through increased extremes, will worsen food security [in Africa]" (Maathai, 2010, p. 23). In 2011, for example, the drought and famine in the horn of Africa affected more than 10.8 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.

Given the magnitude of Africa's challenges, the scale of positive transformation demonstrated by Tostan International, based in Senegal (144th on the UNHDR), and the Green Belt Movement, based in Kenya (128th on the UNHDR), is particularly remarkable. At the heart of their successful efforts, both Melching and Maathai have been bringing communities together to forward a vision of planetary wellbeing and human dignity, with health and trees as entry points.

Molly Melching and Tostan International

Tostan is a US 501(c)(3) non-governmental organization (NGO) whose mission is to empower African communities to bring about sustainable development and positive social transformation based on respect for human rights. Located in Senegal, Tostan works primarily in rural regions providing holistic, participatory education to adults and adolescents who have not had access to formal schooling. Tostan focuses on community engagement in projects related to health and hygiene, child welfare, human rights and democracy, the environment, and economic development. With a community-led development model, progress is grounded in an asset-based approach that begins with pre-existing strengths and community priorities.

Molly Melching, who first traveled to Senegal in 1974 as an exchange student, founded Tostan in 1991. The vision for Tostan grew out of her time as a Peace Corps volunteer in Dakar where she created the first radio program for children in national languages. The work led her to rural villages, where she found that many development efforts were not addressing true community needs. Drawing on her later experiences with Senegalese cultural specialists, she evolved a new type of development program that engaged communities in the process by working in their own language and using traditional methods of learning such as expressive arts.

With Molly's vision and commitment, Tostan has grown to serve eight African countries. Tostan's staff includes more than 1,000 local community facilitators who have trained over 250,000 community members. As a result of Tostan's community empowerment program (CEP) and organized diffusion practices (community-led educational outreach), over 4,800 communities with approximately four million people have publicly declared their abandonment of female genital cutting (FGC). An estimated 660,000 girls have been spared the practice of FGC as a

result. In addition, over 4,000 communities have publicly abandoned child and/or forced marriage.

Tostan, which means "breakthrough" in Wolof, has been recognized by many awards including the 2010 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, the 2007 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize, the 2007 UNESCO King Sejong Prize for Literacy, and Sweden's 2005 Anna Lindh Prize for Human Rights.

Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement

Green Belt Movement (GBM) Kenya is a not-for-profit grassroots non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Nairobi with a mission *to mobilize community consciousness, using tree planting as an entry point, for self-determination, equity, improved livelihoods and security, and environmental conservation*. Wangari Maathai started it in 1977 as a project of the National Council of Women of Kenya. Maathai saw connections between cash-crop farming and desertification, and connected the dots between the loss of firewood and the decline of traditional cooking resulting in Kenyans' eating highly refined foods and developing malnutrition. To address the problem, she suggested that community women plant trees. When she discovered that they didn't know how to plant trees and thought that they needed a diploma to do so, she emphatically replied that, "I don't think you need a diploma to plant a tree" (*Taking Root*, motion picture, 2008) and launched the movement. Together they started small, transforming a country and much of a continent.

Since Maathai started the movement in 1977, nearly 47 million trees have been planted for afforestation and restoration, and over 30,000 women have been trained in forestry, bee-keeping, and other trades that help them earn income while preserving their lands and resources.

The GBM has helped establish hundreds of nurseries and thousands of public green belts, and has facilitated the creation of over 4,000 community groups.

During the final decade of her life Maathai was elected to parliament (2002), was appointed Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources (2003), and received the Nobel Peace Prize in (2004). In 2007, she launched the Billion Tree Campaign with the United Nations Environment Programme, resulting in over 7 billion trees being planted in three years' time. As the first African woman Nobel Laureate, she was praised for her "holistic approach to sustainable development that embraces democracy, human rights and women's rights in particular" (Maathai, 1985/2004, p.), which was the first time the prize recognized the connections among environmental resource control, scarcity, and conflict. For Maathai, the tree was "a symbol of what we all can see in the environment, but it is also an entry point into understanding the link between the environment and all these other issues" (Mazur and Miles, 2009, p. 214).

The results achieved by the leadership of Maathai and Melching are momentous, and inform a leadership framework for addressing the scope of anthropogenic issues threatening humanity.

Restorative Leadership Philosophy and Practices for the 21st Century

The commonalities among case studies in this research project reveal a distinct philosophy with aligned principles and practices that translate to significant demonstrable impacts in high-yield sustainability areas such as afforestation and women's empowerment. The term *restorative leadership* is being introduced and used to capture the distinctions of this guiding framework that has the potential to foster positive impacts on a large scale.

Valuing and Empowering Community

Restorative leadership demonstrates a fundamental belief in human potential and the power and wisdom of community. There is a resolute faith in basic goodness and the wisdom of collective intelligence. In essence, as Meg Wheatley says, "Whatever the problem, community is the answer" (personal communication, May 17 2011). Embracing an ethic of community, restorative leadership is guided by core values to do no harm, to serve collective wellbeing, and to bring the highest benefit to all. It is leadership that utilizes a community-centered approach, engaging social networks to forward and sustain hopeful possibilities.

The work begins with a foundation of trusting that people "do the right thing when they have the information and when they are not attacked" (personal communication, Melching, April 19, 2011). Indeed for Melching, "If there could be a movement towards really trusting people, respecting people, giving them the information they need, then I see this as a way to really bring about change not only in certain areas, but in many areas: the environment, governance, gender issues, health, even education . . ." (personal communication, Melching, April 19, 2011). Trust extends to believing that people come with good intentions as an opening for communities to return to their core values. In that space of social interaction, there is freedom for communities to adjust or change when they discover that existing practices are incongruent or in conflict with core values. For example Melching explains,

> "Traditions like female genital cutting are not the end values, they are a means to the end, and as people start realizing this more and more, they are then more open to being analytic and critical, of 'Wow, we could do this, and not do this' . . . and that comes when we look at, 'What is our vision for our community? What are things that are important to us? What do we want our community to be in five to ten years?' This is what's critical, to

get people discussing values and principles and human dignity issues in those terms. . . . Where has the gap been? It's been with the social norms. It's been with those social constructs that were thought about and put in place 2,000 years ago that no longer stand up. . . . it's more of a holistic approach" (personal communication, Melching, April 19, 2011).

Given the belief in the power of community, it follows that, "One *can* improve one's life and circumstances—and the earth itself. That they don't need to wait for someone else, whether of this world or another, to do it for them" (Maathai 2010, p. 155). Within the GBM, Maathai who considered herself an ordinary woman stated that, "One of the most wonderful things we did in the GBM process was to make ordinary people become seedling producers, what we call 'foresters without diploma'" (Maathai,1985/2004, p. 129). The success of this approach to community empowerment began with a failure in forestry training:

"Unfortunately, the [official] foresters insisted on using technical terms to describe the gradient of the land, the entry point of the sun's rays, the depth of the seedbed, the content of the gravel, the type of soil and the specialized tools and inputs needed to run a successful nursery. It quickly became apparent that the (semi-literate) women would be unable to implement what they had learned. Then came the revolution. The women decided to do away with the professional approach to forestry and instead use their common sense! After all, they had for a long time successfully cultivated various crops on their farms. What was so difficult about applying this knowledge to tree planting?" (Maathai,1985/2004, p. 129).

In essence an asset-based approach, the leadership of both Maathai and Melching has empowered participants to see and apply their knowledge and skills, and to recognize their collective assets as relevant and transferable to a diversity of community priorities and problems.

Consistent with the belief that one can improve one's life and circumstances, Tostan has a "brain gain" approach that builds community capacity from the inside out. For example, Melching states that, "Our national coordinator was a shepherd originally, . . . he doesn't have a high school diploma and he doesn't have a college education, yet he's the national coordinator for Senegal. This is a model for people to see that you can do other things and there are other possibilities. It doesn't just depend upon a diploma from the outside" (personal communication, Melching, April 19, 2011). The restorative leadership approach uses "formal leadership to champion values and practices that respect people, that rely on people's inherent motivation, creativity and caring to get quality work done" (Frieze &Wheatley, 2011, p. 11).

Both Tostan and the GBM bring people together by engaging and cultivating grassroots networks as social learning communities that forward community development priorities. At Tostan, for example, the community empowerment program (CEP) brings adults and adolescents together in separate classes of 25–30 over 30 months. To sustain the progress of the CEP, community management committees (CMCs), which are part of Tostan's emphasis on working through social networks for exponential change, are established and include gender and age diversity, varied socioeconomic backgrounds, traditional, religious, and elected officials, and the marginalized. Melching calls it "an approach that unifies rather than divides" (personal communication, Melching, April 19, 2011). As it transforms both perceived and actual deficits through internal sourcing, participants break through internalized limitations adopted from the dominant hegemony or cultural habitus that suggest that a diploma is needed to plant a tree or that

only a man can be a leader. The positive changes are then shared or transmitted through localized interactions in the network.

Holism and Making Connections

Restorative leadership embraces a holistic, systems-oriented understanding of the world. There is a grasp of the interdependence and interconnectedness of life that, whether grounded in an intuitive sense or based in scientific knowledge, can be articulated with great clarity. Maathai's statement in the Green Belt Movement 2010 Annual Report is a cogent example: "If you destroy the forest then the river will stop flowing, the rains will become irregular, the crops will fail and you will die of hunger and starvation."

Holism, or recognizing "that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, [and] that reductionist analysis never tells the whole story" (Daly, H. in Dobson, 1991, p. 145) is a core value that informs practices of seeking understanding and root cause analysis in the nuance of interconnections. Melching clarifies that seeking to understand harmful practices does not mean excusing them. Rather it empowers critically thoughtful dialogue, self-authorizing, and self-organizing in a nonjudgmental space consistent with core human values. Root cause analysis is a key variable enabling systemic change and system-wide impacts at the levels demonstrated by Tostan and the GBM. Both Melching and Maathai give illuminating examples.

Molly Melching:

> "You start with why people are doing what they are doing, and see that the social constructs were decided upon and then became an integral part of the society over two hundred, three hundred, in the case of female genital cutting, two thousand years ago. It became an integral part of that system in order for a respected woman to have that status,

in order to prove that you were worthy of marriage, . . . Then we look at the end result and ask, 'Why do we do this? Why is this necessary?' Let's look at this now in terms of, 'What are our real values?'" (personal communication, Melching, April 19, 2011.)

Wangari Maathai (1985/2004):

"For many years our main thing was to try to make people understand the linkage between good governance and conservation—how an environment that is well managed helps to sustain a good quality of life. It was easy to say, 'What are your problems?' 'Well, our problems are many. . . . ' 'Where do you think these problems come from?. . . . You also play a part. You do not demand a better government. You do not stand up for what you strongly believe and tell your government to provide that. Also, you have your land but you're not protecting that. You're allowing soil erosion to take place and you could do something about it. You are hungry but you are not growing food. You have opted for exotic food crops that don't grow very well in your soil and may not even be very nutritious. So you need to do something. You may not be able to do much about the government, but you can do something about what is in your power.' That is what produced the tree planting campaign. And a collective responsibility gradually developed towards the management of the environment" (p. 129.)

These examples illustrate the importance of understanding interconnections, recognizing the role that one plays in them, and seeing the risk of harming others. The experience of seeing and placing oneself and one's community or group in the web of interconnectedness fosters personal and collective responsibility. As a result of being informed and seeing the relationships

among choices and consequences, community members are empowered to act from an expanded awareness.

Rights, Responsibilities and Practicing Participatory Engagement

Restorative leadership holds a global worldview, translating broad awareness to local understanding. There is an embrace of universal values such as human dignity and collective responsibility. For both Tostan and the GBM, human dignity is an organizing principle, and human rights and responsibilities are core content in their educational programs. With health and tree planting as entry points, the organizations place community in the context of broader social-ecological understanding. As Maathai clarified, " . . . it is what is *not* human that ensures that we continue to exist. Without human beings, the creatures and plants and trees would flourish; but without those species, human beings have no hope of survival. This is why in thinking about *human rights*, we need to reach another level of consciousness to appreciate that these other species, too, have a right to their existence and their piece of the Earth" (Maathai, 2009, p. 288).

Tostan and the GBM engage and expand social networks that gather and ultimately mobilize around community development priorities. Tostan has a 30-month community empowerment program (CEP) that hosts dialogues three times a week to explore and analyze community health, hygiene, environment, and education aligned with a shared vision for improved conditions. The CEP utilizes active facilitation techniques and expressive arts, and begins with a foundation in human rights and responsibilities. It is a holistic, participatory education program that engages the broader community such as other villages where participants intermarry. The GBM also utilizes a participatory 10-step tree planting process, during which participants learn to "make linkages between the challenges they face and environmental

degradation. This leads to community-led action and a commitment to safeguard natural resources" (Green Belt Movement Annual Report, 2010).

Connecting daily life issues and broader environmental and social concerns through participatory leadership practices is key to the scale of success demonstrated by Melching and Maathai. Maathai (1985/2004) explains:

> "Messages such as the protection of genetic resources, concerns over climate change and the ozone layer are very important to conservationists. But how does one explain their importance to community members, the majority of whom are illiterate or semi- literate? It is necessary to deliver the conservation message in a manner that the audience will understand and appreciate. For instance, one can ask community members to list the various ways that their families use/d the local biodiversity (e.g: as medicine, for construction, in traditional value- and spiritual-based ceremonies, as food and fodder). Such participatory discussions bring indigenous trees back into the communities' daily lives and helps them to perceive the environment as a real and living part of their communal life" (p. 82.)

With participatory engagement, the process itself is transformative. Distinct from traditional command-and-control leadership or banking models of education where the formal leader is considered the knower and participants are passive recipients, there is mutuality and reciprocity. Capacity and knowledge are co-created or co-produced, thereby illuminating community assets and validating collective wisdom. The participatory approach liberates participants from internalized blocks or oppression and acculturated patterns of silence or submission that perpetuate disengagement, disenfranchisement, and denial of personal and

collective responsibility. As Paolo Freire (1985), the father of participatory education explained, the process cultivates "the creative capacity to act to transform the world."

In large part, participatory engagement is so effective because the process is the change and the means are the end. Melching explains that, "If you don't go through the process, you lose so much of the meaning that comes with change" (personal communication, Melching, April 19, 2011). For example, the personal and collective actions involved in dialoguing about female genital cutting represent change because the taboo of discussing FGC is being altered in the process of talking about it in public space. In addition, making inclusive decisions and choosing collective action in a deliberative way, particularly in cases that include men and women, organically evolves social norms of equity. For Sengalese women, the incremental increase in confidence can be seen as their voices grow from being fearful and barely audible to being projected while standing in front of their community. Ultimately, however, it is the many public abandonment ceremonies of the two thousand year-old tradition of FGC that demonstrate the profound power of participatory engagement to transform.

As a fundamental practice of restorative leadership, the participatory approach is astoundingly simple: ask and listen, align and co-create. This begins with starting where the community is. For example at the GBM, "to effectively raise people's consciousness about the environment, it was necessary to assist them to practice ways through which they could still meet their felt needs while simultaneously conserving the environment." (Maathai 1985/2004, p. 34). With Tostan's community-led development, Melching explains, "You have to start by getting people coming together around what is really important to them . . . Once they define that, it becomes much easier for them then to look at what they are doing and decide together" (personal communication, Melching, April 19, 2011).

To do so requires a combination of humility and confidence, and the courage to swim with others in unknown space. There must be immense trust in the wisdom of community, in the integrity of shared vision, and in one's abilities to facilitate positive momentum. For some in leadership it requires what Wheatley calls a "conversion moment . . . when you realize that it's not all up to you, and that other people are as competent and capable and creative as you are." (personal communication, Wheatley, May 27, 2011). It is leadership that facilitates and guides rather than commands and directs, empowering communities to come together in shared vision on common ground. Melching and Maathai have provided a model for what's possible through restorative leadership, standing up in the current to create eddies of empowered space for others to reclaim their wisdom and to reconnect with each other and the Earth out of a commitment to global equilibrium and collective wellbeing.

An Emerging Framework for Cultivating Resilient Communities

Global indicators suggest that fulfilling a vision of global equilibrium and collective wellbeing will require embracing the 21st century as the age of sustainability and community, leaving the blind spots of previous ages behind. Fortunately, both are accessible by balancing modernity's progress with a return to earlier ways of knowing and being that are naturally human. Restorative leadership is an approach that helps us remember what we have forgotten, drawing on the best of 3.8 billion years of evolution and bringing out the best of diverse humanity to answer the great question of this age: how can we meet the needs of 10 billion in a sustainable, equitable, and harmonious way? We know from Charles Darwin's guidance that species survival is most dependent on responsiveness to change.

Fortunately, we can learn a tremendous amount about being responsive and leading for positive change by studying cases like those of Melching with Tostan International and Maathai with the Green Belt Movement. Their examples remind us that there are emerging distinctions in what is needed for leadership at this time in our evolutionary history. For example, it is distinct to lead in a way that inspires community members to trust themselves and each other enough to examine and consciously abandon millennia-old social norms that have become incongruent with core community values. It also is distinct to lead such that community members are inspired to engage in forty-seven million small acts that collectively transform livelihoods and bio-regions. An analysis of the case studies in this research project reveals that distinctions in the guiding framework of restorative leadership include the following:

♦ a belief in the potential and power of community;

♦ a substantive understanding of interconnections that can be shared with and taught to others clearly and concisely;

♦ an ability to engage individuals and communities in bridging that understanding of interconnection to a recognition of personal and collective rights and responsibilities in the web of relatedness; and

♦ participatory skills that empower self-organizing capacities and confidence while forwarding current priorities for collective wellbeing.

Resilience

Remarkably, an additional distinction of restorative leadership is that it produces not only positive impacts like the scale of those highlighted by Melching and Maathai, but also cultivates what social-ecologists call adaptive capacity. Having adaptive capacity be a byproduct of restorative leadership is particularly relevant at this time when disasters are occurring with

increasing frequency and severity. Adaptive capacity can be thought of as the collection of preconditions for resilience. In this context, resilience is "(t)he capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks" (Cutter et al., 2008, p.34). "Community resilience thus refers generally to the continued ability of a community to function during and after stress" (National Research Council, 2011, p. 14). It is an emergent quality that arises when triggered by a disturbance, resulting in sustainability through adaptive cycles that balance co-creative response with persistence.

Over the past decade, studies have identified qualities and characteristics that heighten a system's adaptive capacity (Tompkins & Adger, 2004). Upon examining restorative leadership as demonstrated by Melching and Maathai, it is evident that the approach yields some of the following preconditions for resilience: a sense of efficacy, engaged social networks, the ability to self organize, and the ability to learn and apply learning.

Efficacy and Self-Organizing Through the Learning Process

As mentioned earlier, participatory engagement is a core practice of restorative leadership. The experience of co-constructing knowledge and impact is predicated on a practice for learning known as praxis. Because praxis is a cycle of observation, reflection, and action, the process habituates a culture of learning, which is a precondition for resilience. In the process, individuals and communities grow their awareness of assets to draw upon when taking action, as well as their confidence for doing so. Self and collective efficacy are inherent outcomes, heightened by increased awareness of the capacity to act and by the sense of empowerment from seeing one's place in the web of causality while developing personal and collective responsibility.

An increased understanding of interconnectedness also expands the ability of community groups to embrace system complexity, which eases decision making in times of uncertainty.

The participatory process of engaging as co-creators also develops self-organizing skills such as communication and dialogue, collaborative decision-making, project management, and facilitation. In the case of the GBM, these skills are applied and evolved during participation in community groups and when developing nurseries, while in the case of Tostan, during the CEP and organized diffusion with CMCs. Communities empower each other and apply those self-organizing skills to plant more trees or to meet other health needs, for example. As knowledge and skills are shared, possibilities for future community engagement and response expand.

Social Capital Through Engaging Networks

With restorative leadership, connecting relationally and seeing connections holistically builds adaptive capacity in additional ways. For resilience to emerge, trust and familiarity across social networks already engaged in collective action lay the foundation of social capital for easing cooperation in times of stress. Social capital can be either bonding and intragroup or bridging and linking across groups or segments. Because bridging social capital results from crossing boundaries, it translates to greater diversity, greater creativity, and an increased likelihood of traditional, indigenous, or place-based knowledge informing problem solving. As described earlier, both case studies actively engaged vertical and horizontal networks to forward community priorities for collective wellbeing. Tostan in particular puts great attention on bridging divides by facilitating relational connections across normalized boundaries of status hierarchies. Such engaged social networks and the social capital they represent enable communities to navigate the uncertain terrain of disturbance or disaster.

Resilience has gained heightened relevance in the face of climate change, breached criticality thresholds, and the reduced likelihood for communities to be able to rely on external aid as trends continue. Amidst such large-scale and complex challenges, it is hopeful to notice that resilience is a community-level phenomenon and that the preconditions to reduce vulnerability and increase responsiveness tend toward localization. It is also exceedingly positive to discover that the restorative leadership demonstrated by Melching and Maathai not only transforms current issues but also cultivates adaptive capacity.

Restorative Leadership

Uncertainty is a hallmark of the 21st century as we envision the possibility of global equilibrium and collective wellbeing while confronting the reality of having exceeded the limits to growth. Sustainability has become an ethical imperative for all leadership. With sustainability at the forefront, it is important to remember that the challenges to be transformed " . . . are mostly the result of a miscalibration between human intentions and ecological results, which is to say that they are a kind of design failure" (Orr, 2002, p. 14). When approached as a matter of design, it becomes evident that leadership plays the critical role in solving the current social-ecological design problem on Earth—a charge to meet by co-creating with collective intelligence. Fortunately, the emerging framework of restorative leadership provides guidance for what it takes to lead for resounding impact at this planet-critical time.

Restorative leadership recognizes the interconnectedness of all life and acts for the highest benefit to all. Engaging in restorative leadership involves embracing the responsibilities to do no harm and to heal the Earth, our communities, and our selves, moving toward what is naturally our best and most balanced expression of universal values and natural laws. Restorative

leadership is visionary, courageous, and infinitely creative in generating yet unfulfilled possibilities. Because it reflects a holistic perspective on leading and living, empowered action is simply accessible to anyone anywhere, starting wherever we are and with whatever is in front of us. It is an approach to leadership that compels a level of positive impact unimaginable at earlier times, made possible by scaling across networks of connectivity. At the very least, to do so takes systems thinking, participatory engagement, unwavering commitment, and generosity of spirit. It requires what Melching and Maathai have demonstrated: the hopeful resolve to empower basic goodness and human potential to sustain diverse and abundant life on Earth.

Author's Note: This chapter is dedicated to Professor Wangari Muta Maathai (1940–2011)

Notes

1. See Dowie, 1997 for a comprehensive analysis of the history of American Environmentalism.

2. The restorative leadership guiding framework has been informed by the full sample of study participants and is elaborated in a forthcoming book on the subject.

3. Breton's 1998 account of *Women pioneers for the environment* is an essential read.

4. Edwards, 2005 offers a complete analysis of the sustainability revolution.

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