

Learning to take care of ourselves,
each other and our planet

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION FOR A HEALTHIER WORLD

The Story of Triple WellBeing®

RACHEL MUSSON



Whilst we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about.

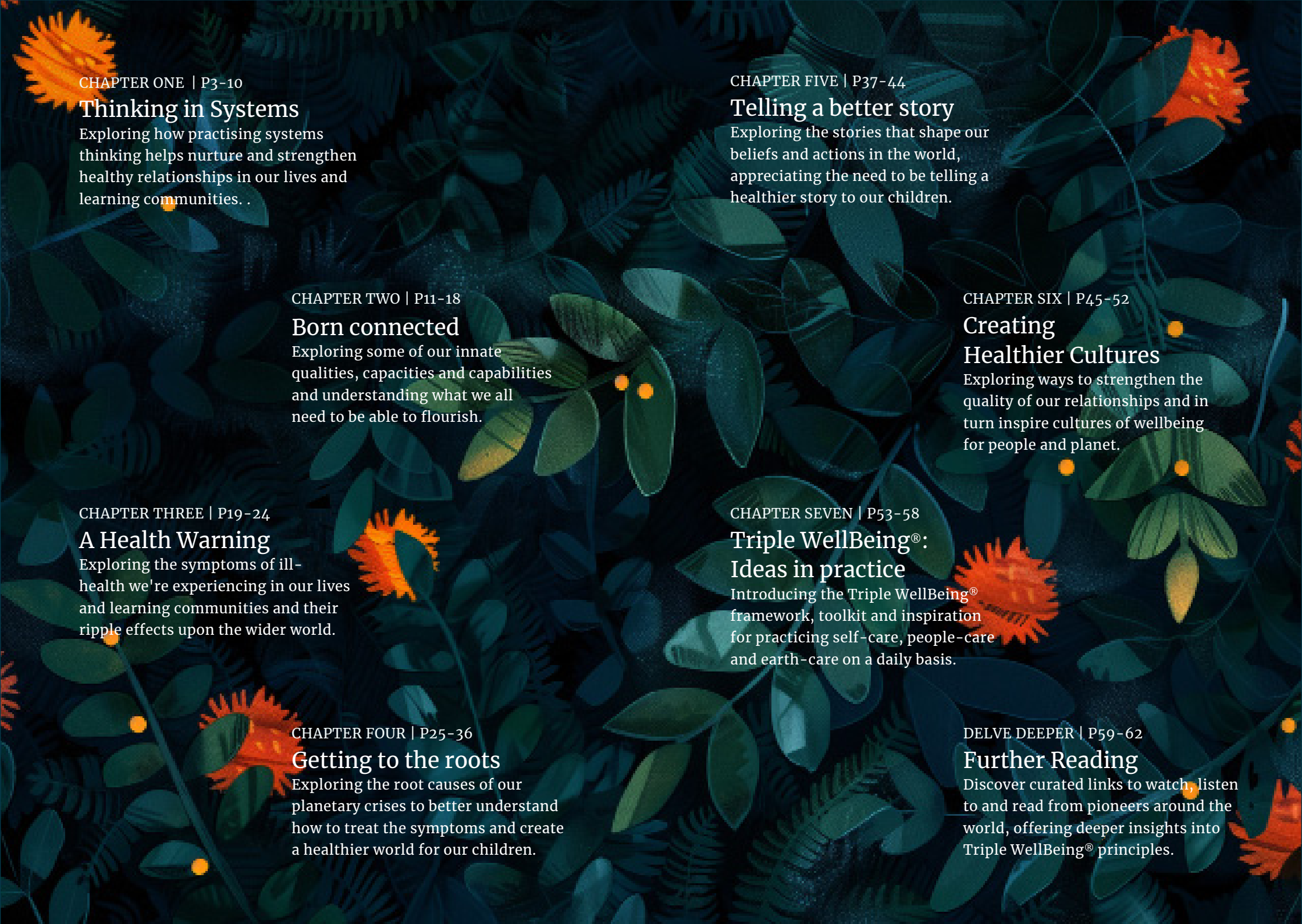
Looking around the world right now, you'd be forgiven for feeling a little lost at sea. We are living in overwhelming times. As we face escalating levels of mental ill-health, social unrest and environmental devastation, ever-more young people are finding themselves adrift. Anxiety about the world is showing up in children's behaviour, preoccupations, dreams and uncertainty about their futures, and schools are understandably having to respond.

No school is an island: they are simply microcosms of the wider world, and the issues we're facing in our learning communities are symptoms of all that's happening across the world. In order to respond to the growing challenges in education, we must also open ourselves up to look at the challenges and opportunities far beyond the school gates.

Drawing on over two decades of action-research into transformative learning, relational neuroscience and regenerative practice, this book is a journey right down to the root causes of our nested crises and then onwards towards a healthier horizon; exploring how to treat our symptoms of disconnection and put ourselves back together again in the process.

The time has come to create a healthier story for our children, one in which the wellbeing of people and planet sits at the heart of all of our intentions. This is a call to action and an invitation to journey together towards the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible. Are you coming?

**Rachel Musson, Director of Education
ThoughtBox Education CIC**



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Chapter One | Thinking in systems

**Humankind has not woven the web of life.
We are but one thread within it. Whatever we
do to the web, we do to ourselves.
All things are bound together.**

~ Chief Seattle ~

What's the connection between your right nostril, a leaf and the future of education? No, this isn't the beginning of a bad joke, rather an invitation into thinking in systems...

Life is made up of endless interwoven systems, all connecting, shifting and evolving together to form our ever-changing world. A system is made up of lots of different elements coming together to form a bigger whole. By joining together - a bit like a team - different parts of a system combine to create a completely different output from anything they could do alone. We humans are made up of countless systems, just like all other life - and we interconnect constantly with infinite other life-systems out there.

The right nostril, for example, is one part of our respiratory system -working in balance with the left nostril, mouth, trachea, lungs, diaphragm etc. to allow us to breathe. Each of these body parts are unique systems in themselves, yet by coming together in this formation they form a bigger system: the respiratory system.

Each 'team-member' plays its part to enable itself, others and the whole team to flourish. When working well, the whole system or team just flows continuously. We don't even notice it working for the most part. Things only begin to fall apart when a part of the system falls down - for example when we get a blocked nose and catch a cold...

When one or both nostrils are blocked, our breathing soon becomes laboured, which in turn impacts other parts of our respiratory system. This is because the other parts are suddenly forced to work much harder to make up for the ill-health of that poorly team-member. In this instance, the mouth will initially be taking on a lot of extra work to make up for the nostril being blocked.

This soon impacts our lungs, which suddenly aren't receiving as much oxygen as normal, and are suffering the loss of the 'hairy filter' that nostrils usually provide to clean the airflow supply. The knock-on effect is that pretty soon our circulatory system starts to struggle, as fewer healthy red blood cells are feeding our vital organs, due to a decrease in oxygen levels. As a result, our bodies start to feel tired, weak and increasingly achy.

This negative cycle continues rippling across the body until the elements are returned to good health, balance is restored and each part of the system is well and flourishing, enabling a healthy system to flow once more.

So how is the nostril connected to the leaf?

The oxygen we breathe through our nose and mouth is generated through photosynthesis, for example through plants and trees. If we wish to continue breathing an oxygen-rich flow of air, we need the leaves on the trees to continue photosynthesising healthily. In order to do so, each tree needs all of its elements (such as the roots, trunk, leaves and branches) to be well and supporting each other to enable the whole system - 'team tree' - to flourish.

This web of interdependence continues to spread out, as trees need the support of an underground network of fungi in the soil - called the mycelium - to help pass nutrients and messages between trees in return for

essential sugars (check out Suzanne Simard's [work here](#) or this [2-minute video](#) giving a quick introduction to the 'Wood Wide Web'). This extraordinary network of relationships and reciprocity is a beautiful example of systems-dynamics at work, each part of a system helping to support the health and wellbeing of itself, others and the wider network.

Thinking in systems helps us appreciate how the health and wellbeing of one part of any system influences the health and wellbeing of the whole. When just one nostril is blocked, it causes other 'team members' to have to work much harder, creating stresses and shockwaves right across the entire network.

The result of a blocked nose is that all members of the respiratory system struggle until health is restored. These same dynamics of interdependence play out in any system in the world, whether it's a family or a forest; a school, organisation or body. For a system to be fully flourishing, it welcomes each part to be healthy and well; with strong, supportive relationships between each of the parts to enable the collective to thrive.

Practising systems thinking helps to widen our understanding of how the wellbeing of ourselves is deeply connected to the wellbeing of others and the planet. When trees are chopped down, for example - whether in the Amazon Rainforest or in our backyard - we are directly and indirectly impacting our own capacity to flourish.

When seeking guidance on systems-theory, the rest of nature has a lot to teach us. With over 3.8 billion years of life experience in healthy system-dynamics, we can look to learn how all natural systems flourish through diversity and optimisation. This allows for resilience and enables each part of a system to be well in order to support the flourishing of itself and the whole.

Unfortunately, the majority of human-designed systems are functioning through principles of monoculture and *maximisation*: championing conformity and pushing each part to work as hard, long and fast as possible. As a result, we are experiencing symptoms of stress, burnout, exhaustion, overwhelm and system-collapse in ourselves and our wider communities and ecosystems across the world. So many systems across the globe have fallen seriously out of balance – some now on the verge of collapse – creating ripple effects of ill-health in our own lives, our communities and across the planet.

For any system to be healthy – whether it's us, our schools, families, forests or anything in between – we need to optimise each diverse part, supporting it to be as healthy as possible, in order for other parts to be supported and for the whole system to flourish.

If we take a birds-eye view and look down on the current state of our world, we can see just how many of our personal, social and ecological systems are struggling.

Education is one such system in crisis.

Just like all systems, the education system follows the same principles of systems-dynamics, with the vitality of each of the parts (ideally) enabling the wellness of each other and the flourishing of the whole. Healthy learning environments recognise the value of each part of the community: from individual teachers, students, administration staff and cleaners, to parents, governors, the local community and landscape and wider natural environment. However, too many systems at present are squeezing the vitality out of its members, to the detriment of the individual and the whole community.

Whether by removing elements that aren't working in a system, adding in new parts or strengthening those that are struggling, the amazing thing about transforming systems is that we all have the potential to influence healthier dynamics simply by changing how we relate to ourselves and the world. By nurturing the wellbeing of individual 'parts' within ourselves and our relationships, we help to transform and revitalise the flourishing of the whole. Thinking in systems helps us to appreciate just how much agency we have to both 'be the change' and 'do change' to enable healthier systems to flourish.

***Delving deeper:** Enabling and allowing ecosystems to flourish is the core principle of regeneration. The transformative qualities of regeneration are highlighted in this short four-minute video showing an eco-system transformation in action in Yellowstone National Park.: [How Wolves Change Rivers.](#)*

How to be thinking in systems

Be Curious

Try to ask big, reflective, critical and sometimes inconvenient questions to better understand ideas, thoughts and feelings more clearly and fully.

Zoom out

Actively seek to see and better understand the bigger picture. Look at the wider context as well as focusing on the detail, with an awareness that everything is shaped by the context(s) it sits within.

Pay attention

Pay close attention to what is being presented on the surface as well as to what is not obviously there, making sure to listen to what is not being explicitly said or revealed at any given moment.

Think outside the box

Explore ideas from different angles, mindsets and perspectives in order to think more deeply and find threads of connection.

Connect the dots

Try to find and tend to meaningful relationships within and between things. Notice how everything is connected to a much wider number of things in any given moment: life is allinfininitely, intricately connected.





Chapter Two | Born Connected

We often forget that we are nature. Nature is not something separate from us. So when we say that we have lost our connection to nature, we've lost our connection to ourselves.

~ Andy Goldsworthy ~

Great news: humans are natural born systems-thinkers! A deep awareness of our interdependence with the wider world exists intuitively within all of us. These qualities of interconnectivity may be active or can be awoken if they have become dormant. Studies in evolutionary biology and psychology 'prove' how a natural desire to be forging connections is actually embedded within the very structures of our DNA. This is sometimes called our *ecological self*; ecology being a branch of science dealing with the relationships of living things to their environments. To ecologise is to see the interconnections and relationships which are not normally recognised. In other words, to ecologise is to be thinking in relationships, thinking in systems.

Living ecologically is the natural default for all life on Earth, as it means we are simply living, thinking and recognising our interdependence with the wider world. Studies in biology, ecology, biomimicry and permaculture - to name just a few - all help to deepen our awareness and appreciation of the endless intricate webs of relationships and interdependence that we are all part of.

The roots of the prefix 'eco' come from the Greek 'oikos' meaning 'home' - and so nurturing our ecological-self simply means strengthening strong, healthy relationships with the 'homes' in which we live whether that be our bodies, our communities or the natural landscapes around us.

Did you know: We are nature. Humans share 96% of our DNA with a chimpanzee, 80% with a cow, 70% with a mouse and even 60% with a banana!

Humans are physically entwined with the natural cycles, systems and processes of other living beings – even sharing similar cells to many other species – and feel most in-balance within ourselves when our lives are also connected to and in healthy balance with the wider natural world.

We are tapping into or awakening our ecological selves when we feel awe watching a sunset or a murmuration of starlings; when we feel the energy of the waves at the ocean, or a deep sense of calm when sitting on a riverbank or walking in the forest. In such moments as these, we are sensing into the invisible webs of connection that bind us with the rest of nature, with the rest of life.

Anyone who has spent time with small children will instinctively know their favourite word. It's perhaps the most commonly heard word in early childhood in every language across the world. It's the word "Why?" This word sits at the very heart of learning, for it is the fundamental quality we hold within us which enables us to grow. As children deepen their connection to life, this powerful little word 'why?' helps them learn to find meaning through their curiosity; forging relationships with the world and learning constantly with the body, mind, heart and soul.

All of us are born with this innate and deeply intuitive sense of curiosity and relationality with life, born needing this sense of connection in order to thrive. When a culture supports our innate need to connect, children are enabled to flourish. Relational neuroscience (and lived ex-

perience) helps highlight the core capabilities we are born with, which are the foundations of our ecological selves: capacities of intuition and compassion, curiosity, creativity and a deep sense of relationship with life. Before being shaped by our contexts, most of us are intuitively conscious and fully present in the world with innate qualities of creative, embodied intelligence:

Before we write, we draw.
Before we walk, we dance.
Before we talk, we sing.

On the whole, children intuitively know what they need to feel well. Most children have strong levels of self-awareness, understanding and expressing their needs even before speech: "I'm hungry, tired, bored, frustrated, joyful" etc. When their context allows, children are naturally compassionate to others, with an in-built conditioning towards care. When conditions support flourishing, children don't naturally 'other' and have innate tendencies towards helping when given the chance. Children are born innately connected to the rest of the natural world – something understood when watching children playing outdoors: the joy of exploration when in nature is endless, infectious and innate.

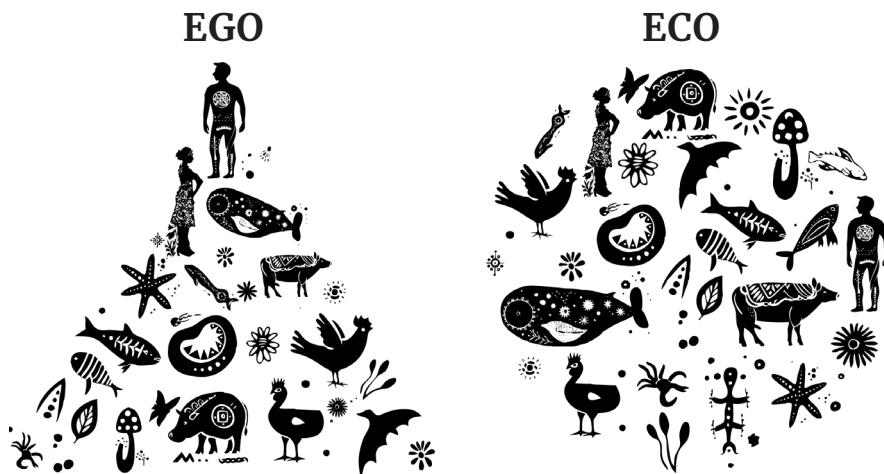
Of course, this state of joy experienced when feeling connected to life doesn't just apply to children. Each of us holds the capacity to feel good when we're connecting with ourselves, others and nature:

- We feel good when we take care of ourselves, when we tune into our thoughts and feelings and tend to our own personal needs.
- We feel good when we are connected to other people. We are social beings by design: it's why we form families and enjoy being part of

groups and communities. It's also why, when a crisis hits, the first instinct for most people is to help others.

- We feel good when we are in nature. Being out in nature is where we belong and we naturally feel better when connected to the more than human world. Indigenous cultures have always known the healing powers of being in nature, and modern thinking is now catching up, with Western health-systems now prescribing nature connection to patients to help treat a growing number of our current symptoms of ill-health (check out [Green Social prescribing](#) to learn more).

Quite simply, we feel well when we are connected with ourselves, with each other and with the rest of nature, as this is our innate way of life. One of the biggest reason we're feeling so unwell in ourselves, our communities and our ecosystems is because we've forgotten how to live relationally and nurture these connections.



In recent human history, many of us have been discouraged from living with an ecological mindset because a story of separation, disconnection, individualism and 'ego' has filtered into our cultures. This way of seeing and being in the world goes against the very fabric of life, and is resulting in the ever-increasing symptoms we're seeing of social, emotional and ecological ill-health across the world.

Stories of 'ego' and separation infiltrate modern cultures and societies through our news channels, through social media, television, film, music, literature - all influencing how we think, feel and act in the world.

- We are being encouraged to doubt our own sense of worth
- We are being encouraged to fear or alienate other people
- We are being encouraged to exploit the natural world

These stories of separation tend to offer an individualistic, rational, abstracted and disconnected way of seeing and being in the world. Over recent history, we have been pushed to follow a story of maximisation rather than optimisation, of competition rather than collaboration; of control rather than trust or co-creation. As such, it can sometimes feel we have lost our way - and in many ways we have, as we've moved further and further away from looking after our many 'homes'; away from nurturing our ecological selves.

NB: In Chapter 4, we explore these cultural stories more deeply to better understand when, where and how they evolved.

We know that the way we educate our children shapes our collective future, which is why transforming our behaviours to support a healthier world welcomes us to take a look at how we are educating our children and shaping their lives. One of the core reasons we find ourselves facing

so many challenges in our schools, communities and the wider world at this moment in time is that the opportunities to learn how to live in ways that nurture healthy relationships with ourselves, each other and the rest of nature have been disrupted.

Recent reports into future-fit education from [UNESCO](#), [OECD](#) and the [Times Commission](#) all recognise the need to strengthen our relationships with the whole of life; deepening competencies of resilience, curiosity, creativity, compassion and connection. Nature-connection is heralded as a daily essential for us all. Unsurprisingly these are the qualities which are innate in all children (in all of us) as they are the core qualities of our 'ecological' selves.

Studies and lived-examples of healthy learning environments across the world help us to appreciate the importance of enabling and modelling healthy relationships in our schools and learning communities. Strengthening healthy relationships helps not only address the symptoms of our current crises, but nurtures healthier mindsets, behaviours and future livelihoods in the process.





Chapter Three | A health warning

The unhealthiness of our world today is in direct proportion to our inability to see it as a whole.

~ Peter Senge ~

Right now, we're living in what could be called the most connected time in human history. People can fly to distant lands, video-call across the globe at any time of day or night; buy anything from anywhere without leaving the house, and orchestrate almost anything from a small device held in the palm of a hand.

Whilst in some ways we have evolved to extraordinary levels of connectivity, ironically we find ourselves suffering from all of the symptoms of chronic disconnection. Global news channels bombard us with the symptoms of our collective ill-health on a daily basis:

On a personal level, we're suffering escalating levels of stress, anxiety, overwhelm, burnout, depression, addiction (to social media and consumerism as much as to narcotics, pornography or anything else), self-harm, obesity, diabetes, heart-disease, eating disorders, increasing cases of cancer...

On a societal level, we're facing increasing levels of inequality and inequity; growing levels of intolerance, 'othering' and segregation; a cost-of-living crisis, civil unrest, protest, conflict, war, genocide...

On an environmental level, we're experiencing devastating heatwaves, droughts, floods, extreme weather events; rising sea-levels, crop failure, extreme biodiversity loss, species extinction, ecosystems in collapse...

It is increasingly difficult to read the mainstream news, as we're continuously being presented with a never-ending list of symptoms of our personal, social and environmental ill-health.

Cutting-edge research from neuroscientist Dr Stephen Porges into our body's vagus nerve helps make sense of how our internal nerve-systems are struggling to respond to this high-stressed world, as our resilience is tested on a daily basis. Our evolution and survival as a species have depended on our in-built nervous systems to be responding to threats in order to keep us safe. However, our nervous systems are not designed to cope with the incessant and endless state of stress that we currently find ourselves in. Our in-built fight, flight or freeze responses are being constantly activated and aggravated. As a result, we are witnessing and experiencing nervous-systems going into overdrive, meltdown or collapse, causing increased physical, mental, emotional dis-ease.

Dive deeper: You can explore more about the vagus nerve, poly-vagal theory, the nervous system and responses to trauma in this [short article and podcast](#).

Symptoms of a world in crisis are being felt across the globe and are now significantly impacting the health and wellbeing of children and young people everywhere:

- Every child on earth is now exposed to at least one climate and environmental hazard, such as heat waves, cyclones, droughts or floods ([UNICEF Children's Rights Report 2021](#))
- 60% of young people feel climate change and inequality are affecting their generation's mental health ([Save the Children 2022](#))

whilst 18.0% of children aged 7 to 16 years and 22.0% of young people aged 17 to 24 years have a probable mental disorder ([NHS 2022](#))

- 70% of young people are worried about the world they will inherit. ([Bath University](#)) whilst 60% of 16-25-year-olds are scared about their generation's future ([Prince's Trust 2022](#))
- 84% of young people are worried about the climate crisis, with over 50% feeling the following emotions on a daily basis: sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, guilty ([Bath University](#))
- The UK has one of the most nature-depleted education systems in Europe, with 75% of UK children spending less time outside each day than maximum security prisoners ([Gov. UK report](#))

As schools struggle to respond to the growing symptoms of a world in crisis, teachers are being inundated with endless government-enforced policies to support these complex issues being pushed onto schools. Whilst the intentions are valid, adding these expectations on top of a broken system is simply exacerbating symptoms of stress, anxiety and overwhelm, as schools are forced to spend more time on policy mapping and firefighting symptoms than on addressing the root causes of ill-health in their communities. Ironically, increasing pressures on the education system to be supporting young people is now significantly taking its toll on the wellbeing of teachers:

- 81% of school staff in the UK are experiencing poor mental health due to work pressures with teacher-wellbeing levels decreasing year on year for the past 5 years. 59% of teachers have considered leaving. ([Teacher Wellbeing Index 2023](#))

- Mental health and wellbeing are in the top five priorities for all governing boards across UK schools ([NGA report](#))
- Studies reveal the same bleak statistics in schools across the globe, as we navigate the challenges of educating young people in a VUCA world (*Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous).

In his book [Theory U](#), Otto Scharmer sums up our stories of disconnection and ill-health with three simple numbers: 800,000, 8 and 1.5.

The spiritual divide can be summed up by the number 800,000. More than 800k people per year take their own lives – a number that is greater than the sum of people who are killed by war, murder and natural disasters combined. Every forty seconds there is one suicide.

The social divide can be summed up by another number: 8. Eight billionaires own as much as half of humankind combined. Yes, it is true. A small group of people that you can fit into a minivan owns more than the ‘bottom half’ of the world’s population of 3.8 billion people.

The ecological divide can be summed up by a single number: 1.5. Currently our economy consumes the resources of 1.5 planets. We use 1.5 times the regeneration capacity of Planet Earth. And that is just the average. In the US for example the current consumption rate has surpassed five planets.

~ Otto Scharmer, Theory U ~

It’s hard to read such bleak statistics, yet it’s essential we face up to the perilous state we’re in, in order to change course and pave the way towards a healthier future for people and planet.





Chapter Four | Getting to the roots

When the stories a society shares are out of tune with its circumstances, they can become self-limiting, even a threat to survival. That is our current situation.

~ David Korten ~

Whilst there seems to be endless crises – sometimes called the polycrises – erupting on a personal, social and ecological level, understanding how they are interconnected helps appreciate how we can respond and regenerate. Framing our ill-health as a ‘metacrisis’ recognises that something is underlying these problems: a state of disconnection from ourselves, each other and nature.

It’s in our nature to connect – which is why there’s something niggling within so many of us that this can’t go on, this disconnected way of existing surely isn’t how we want to be living. This gut-feeling or sense of discontent is our ‘ecological self’ urging us to wake up...

These times welcome us to be brave and go against the ‘business as usual’ stories and head in a healthier direction, to enable a future for our children. It may feel hard to go against the tide and dominant direction of travel, and yet – just like that little salmon swimming upstream – we know it’s where we must travel if we are to avoid slipping off the edge of a cliff. Just like the salmon who swims upstream by following wisdom deep within its DNA, we also need to listen to our inner knowing – to learn to listen to our gut-feeling and our embodied brains – to lead us in a healthier direction.

Pause for thought: The gut contains the same number of neurons as a cat's brain - meaning there's strong intelligence there! It can be easy to dismiss gut instinct in a culture that encourages us to trust in rationality above all else - yet the gut is one of our wisest teachers. Gut instinct is our innate sense of knowing and understanding that transcends all rational and objective thought and taps into our deeper levels of intelligence. Take a dive into the work of [Dr Ian McGilchrist](#) or [Dr Malcolm Parlett](#) to explore these ideas further.

To better understand the root causes of our global ill-health and to appreciate why our current trajectory is so perilous, we are going to travel for a moment into Deep Time - back to the time of the early formation of Planet Earth over 4.6 billion years ago...

Imagine the Earth's history compressed into 24 hours, with the Earth forming at 00:00 hours. Can you believe that everything we've ever known in human history, from Neanderthals to the Romans to the Vikings and everything in between - the far-reaching limits of everything we know about human evolution and the enormity of our history - all happened in the last three seconds of the 24 hours since Earth began?!

Life on Earth has existed for the majority of its time without us being here: 23 hours, 59 minutes and 57 seconds of life on Earth when using this metaphor. What did all of those vast years of life without us have in common? Life was simply evolving relationally and ecologically, with natural systems working within a healthy balance of optimisation and flourishing.

For the majority of early human civilisation, we were living in healthy balance with all other life. It is perhaps through the last 500 generations that a sense of disconnection started to emerge, and only in the last 2-3 generations that things rapidly unravelled into the desperate state we now find ourselves in. So if for almost 95% of human history (that's 2.85 of our total 3 seconds on Earth) human were living ecologically, what happened in that last nano-second of time to get us to this point?

Time travel advice: There is a certain limit that the human mind is able to reach when thinking about these timescales. Even going back 100, 500 or 1000 years moves well beyond most people's sense of comprehension, which is why metaphors are so useful when exploring Deep Time. This [90-second video](#) using the 24 hour clock is a great starter, as is going for a [Deep Time Walk](#) to experience the physical sensation of travelling through Deep Time.

Studies in ecopsychology, developmental and evolutionary biology, behavioural psychology, cutting-edge neuroscience, deep ecology, transformative pedagogies, ancient wisdom traditions and a wide and diverse school of thought all help to pinpoint milestones in our human evolution that have led to a shift in beliefs and perspectives - shifting us from living relationally to living in separation and accelerating the shift from eco to ego. Here are some key moments:

- **The Agricultural Revolution.** The early structural reorganisation of communities around farming practices around 12,000 years ago was a time when some civilisations started seeing the land - and then people - as something to control, own and manage; something separate from ourselves. This resulted in the accumulation of surplus food and

sedentary lifestyles, alongside drastic changes to gender roles, community dynamics and population patterns. Humans started claiming and exerting power over landscapes and other lifeforms, creating stories that divided humans from the land and from each other.

- **Colonialism.** The three pillars of God, Gold and Glory that accompanied many global invasions contributed to a story of superiority, racism, hierarchy and dominance of one human culture over another. These stories of superiority and dominance have been spread into diverse cultures and communities right across the world through rapid colonial expansions, slavery and – in modern times – globalisation. This monopolising also often enforced abstracted religious doctrine upon more spiritual, nature-based practices held by indigenous communities.
- **Witch trials.** From the early modern period, women across the world were frequently persecuted as witches, with prosecutions and executions for witchcraft reaching a high point in the 14th - 17th centuries. In many ways, these women were early environmentalists, living in harmony with nature and utilising their wisdom to help sustain life. Beyond botanical and medical expertise, they often cultivated a profound spiritual and philosophical connection with the environment - a practice that was deeply misunderstood within the confines of rationality.
- **The Age of Enlightenment.** During the 17th and 18th centuries, theories of Francis Bacon, Galileo, Descartes and other influential figures in science and philosophy presented life as a purely rational process, with the mind as separate from the body and humans separate from the rest of nature. With a forefront of rationality and logic, these left-hemisphere theories helped embed powerful, deep-rooted sto-

ries about the superiority of humans, severing our relationships with our whole beings, with our communities and with the rest of nature.

- **The Industrial Revolution.** This period in the 17th and 18th centuries saw a rapid expansion of human domination over the natural environment, presenting the natural world as resource to extract and exploit for the benefit of human growth. Workforces created different value-levels for different human capacities whilst the introduction of GDP in the early 1900s started measuring a country's 'success' in terms of productivity, maximisation and accumulation of resources. Stories of power, fear, dominance and separation grew exponentially during this time.
- **The Educational Revolution.** The introduction of a monoculture of schooling for the masses allowed these stories of separation to be taught and spread right across a rapidly globalising world, removing indigenous cultures from their land and communities and enforcing a global narrative of separation and competition. One of the most inconvenient truths – perhaps the hardest to face – is that we continue to learn many of these disconnected ways of seeing and being in the world through our education system.

Have you ever been to a school in another town or village? Or a school in another country? Did it ever strike you as odd that they all look, feel, and function in pretty much the same way? It feels deeply disturbing that schools in the Himalayan mountains are still purposed in the same way as those in inner-city London, or that classrooms in the suburbs of Delhi or Dakar are designed around the same principles as those in the suburbs of Doncaster. In such a culturally diverse world, how have we ended up with such a homogenised education system and what is this doing to our sense of relationship with ourselves

and the place we each call home?

The dominant global education system emerged during the 1800s to meet the needs of the Industrial Revolution, with young people trained in whatever skills the job-market required. During this time of mass production, consumption, extraction and unlimited growth, the purpose of schooling as it was being designed for the masses was to educate for the job-market and produce workers ready for the factory-line.

One of the painful realisations in this moment in time is that we're still using this same model of education as the foundation for our schools – a factory-model format in which the core value of the education system is teaching children to regurgitate information at the end of a process in order to pass exams and move onto the next level. Trust has been eroded from our schools at the same time as creativity, inquiry, exploration and joy; with the framework of learning biased instead towards a focus on logic, rationality and reason, rather than a felt, intuitive or embodied understanding.

This monocultured, factory-inspired model of education has also been spread across the world through colonialism, missionaries and more recently globalisation; with a one-size-fits-all model imposed on communities and children across the world. Often removed from families and put into state boarding schools, and frequently disconnected from local culture and context, children across the world have been educated through a Westernised education system that served neither needs, talents, contexts nor prosperous futures, but instead severs connection from culture, land, community and identity and enforces a global narrative of separation and competition. The wider ripple effects of a one-size-fits-all education system continues to reap devastating effects on communities across the world.

The volume of education continues to increase, yet so does pollution, exhaustion of resources, and the dangers of ecological catastrophe. If still more education is to save us, it would have to be education of a different kind: an education that takes us right into the depth of things.

~ EF Schumacher ~

Education is so often seen as the answer, yet the painful truth is that our dominant mainstream system is actually part of the problem. Ever-increasing demands of a globalised education system have forced schools to focus more time and attention onto content and information; structured around exams and competition, rather than on creating healthy, connected learning environments which enable each child to flourish. This is not the fault of teachers, educators or those within the system – it is the design-flaw of the system itself; a system which was created to have winners and losers and which was never, ever designed to enable children to flourish. As painful as it is to recognise, the design of the education system was to break us down and it has been so successful that it has broken us right across the world.

Delve a little deeper: You can engage in some of these stories and deepen understanding of the negative impact of a global education system in the [1 hour documentary *Schooling the World*](#) and in the short book [School Days](#) by Patrick Chamoiseau. In addition, this [short animation](#) from renowned educator Sir Ken Robinson helps to explain the impact of a global factory-model of schooling on our current education system.

Currently, we have a dominant education system that takes curious young hearts and minds and actively encourages them to sit down and be quiet. At a time when the embodied, emotional self is rapidly developing, we squeeze it into shiny shoes and stiff shirts, force it to sit still behind a desk and hold itself and its emotions tightly within. The shocking stats that British school children spend less time outside than maximum security prisoners should make us all sit up and take notice that something here is deeply flawed.

As school develops, children's ability to follow their own natural inquiry diminishes as they are given a pre-planned and generic pathway to follow. Possibilities to enhance creativity are soon reduced, as painting, singing and free play are slowly replaced with writing, talking quietly and following a standardised curriculum. The predominant focus is on educating just one part of the child – the mind. Whilst learning within Primary education can and does still retain a relationship to context, as education progresses into secondary level, much of the learning is rapidly decontextualised and fragmented. Learning is siloed into subjects rather than interconnected topics, with very little relevance to what is happening out there in 'the real world' and very little space for curiosity, creativity or personal growth.

Traditional models of education in the 21st century actively encourage focus on the outcome rather than the process of learning. Things are taken apart in order to be understood, rather than seen within their wider contexts, whilst learning is modelled on the three 'c's of conformity, compliance and competition, built around a system of punishment and reward. The current paradigm of education teaches us to strive for success by competing with our peers to win the coveted grades and unlock potential. However, the bitter-irony is that this competition is flawed from the start. Not only is the model designed to only work for those

whose learning style meets this one-sized structure, there are never 100% of top-grades to give out in the first place. At least 30% of students fail before the learning journey even begins, as this model has to have winners and losers in order to function.

Did you know: There are two different Latin roots of the English word education: *educare* - meaning 'to train or to mould' and *educere* - meaning 'to draw out'. Whilst quite different, they are both represented in the word education, yet we've fallen out of balance in favour of one above the other.

By being taught to see the world through an 'ego' rather than 'eco' perspective in school, we've been taught from an early-age to take things apart to make sense of them, rather than seeing things in context or in relationship to the wider world. So many of the stories we've been told over very recent human history – especially in the last 500 years, and specifically within Western civilisations – are abstracted from context, excluding the ripple effects of our actions. We have been taught to see and be in the world in a way which literally goes against the fabric of the life-systems that we are a part of; causing so many of the symptoms of ill-health we are now facing in our lives, communities and ecosystems.

Psychiatrist, neuroscientist, philosopher and literary scholar Dr Ian McGilchrist has studied these ideas of mental separation and stories of a left-centric world in his life's research into brain development and human evolution. Unpicking Einstein's quote, *The rational mind is faithful servant but the intuitive mind is a precious gift*, Ian's work explores how we currently live in a world which honours the servant but which has forgotten the gift.

Delve a little deeper: His two epic tomes: ‘The Master and His Emissary’ and ‘The Matter with Things’ offer an in-depth exploration of how we’ve been taught to see and be in the world in this way. This short [RSA animation](#) and slightly longer [documentary on the divided brain](#) both offer a good introduction to the deeper studies.

In many ways, we’re witnessing a reverse-evolution in our schools – what could be called the ‘Butterfly to Caterpillar effect’. Children are flitting in at one end filled with wide-eyed wonder and a thirst for exploring the infinite and diverse fascination of life, and emerging the other end – many years later – feeling slow, sluggish and cocooned into conformity through a predominantly linear, straight-lined thinking approach to learning and to life. The reverse metamorphosis may not be sudden, but it is pervasive and in many cases it feels absolute.

This is not the fault of teachers, educators or those within the system – it is the design-flaw of the system itself; a system which was created to have winners and losers and which was never, ever designed to enable children to flourish. What is at fault is that we’re still following an education system designed for a world that no longer exists. Right now we need to be asking ourselves:

- What is the point of school?
- How is learning connected to life?
- What sort of learning do we need for the world we wish to live in?

Awareness of the ‘education problem’ is nothing new, and there has been extensive work happening across the world for several decades focused on creating healthier systems of learning. The invitation to do something different is now being championed by educators, parents, policy makers and young people right across the world; all recognising the need to transform education systems in order to co-create a healthier world for people and planet.

Here are just some of the leading recent reports into the future of education, each offering pathways to a healthier culture of learning.

[Futures of Education](#) (UNESCO)

[Times Education Commission](#) (UK)

[Human Flourishing Report](#) (PISA)

[Rebooting Education Report 2023](#) (UK)

[The Future of Education & Skills](#) (OEDC)

[School Report – Pearson](#) (UK)

This time of crisis – both in education and in the wider world – welcomes us to put on the brakes, take a step back and look at the bigger picture to understand how we have gotten so lost. It is a call for systems-change moving forward, welcoming us to remember our innate ways of feeling well, being well, living well and learning well together.

This moment in time is an invitation to really appreciate the interdependence of our world and to be enabling our children – and ourselves – to learn to take good care of ourselves, of each other and of this one planet we all call home.



Chapter Five | Telling a better story

**The stories we tell literally make the world.
If you want to change the world,
you need to change your story.**

~ Michael Margolis ~

Every one of us is born into a story. It forms our perspective on the world; shaped by the land we're born into, the cultures we're a part of; the family we grow with, the education we receive and the values and mindsets that we are taught. These stories help us to make sense of the world around us and our place within it.

Many of us don't even notice that these are stories rather than truths – and that we're all living out slightly different stories – as our own versions become so familiar and comfortable.

When we experience the world through a different story – perhaps exploring other countries and cultures, speaking a different language; engaging with diverse traditions, or even just reading stories from different perspectives – our awareness widens to let other narratives in. By looking at the world through alternative viewpoints, we allow ourselves to see things differently, reframe our perspective and explore familiar ideas from new, alternative or deeper levels.

The stories we believe shape the world in which we live. As it is, the dominant story we're currently telling ourselves is leading us towards a path of no return.

Over recent human history, a story of separation has been spread across the world – through reasons explored in previous chapters – yet this is a story without a happy ending. In this story there has to be suffering

and destruction, winners and losers; as the story is based primarily on competition, consumption and compliance.

The more this dominant story has been forced upon other cultures across the globe, the more our planetary crises have grown.

The dominant story of western civilisation is one which encourages us to focus primarily on ego and personal gain; inflicting huge violence onto the world for our own short-term satisfaction. It is a story of self-doubt and endless growth; wherein the way we're told to find true happiness is by obtaining ever-more 'stuff' to fulfil our endless search for happiness. It is a story that includes the conscious killing of innocent people; sustained ill-treatment of animals; the destruction of oxygen-producing forests and the poisoning of rivers, oceans and the very air that we breathe. All in all, it is a hugely dysfunctional story which can only ever lead to our collective demise.

Continuing to live within the limits of this story may still feel the easiest thing to do as it is so familiar, yet the symptoms will only keep increasing whilst we do. When we recognise that this is just a story - just one way for humans to be living - we can appreciate just how much agency we have to create healthier stories to live by.

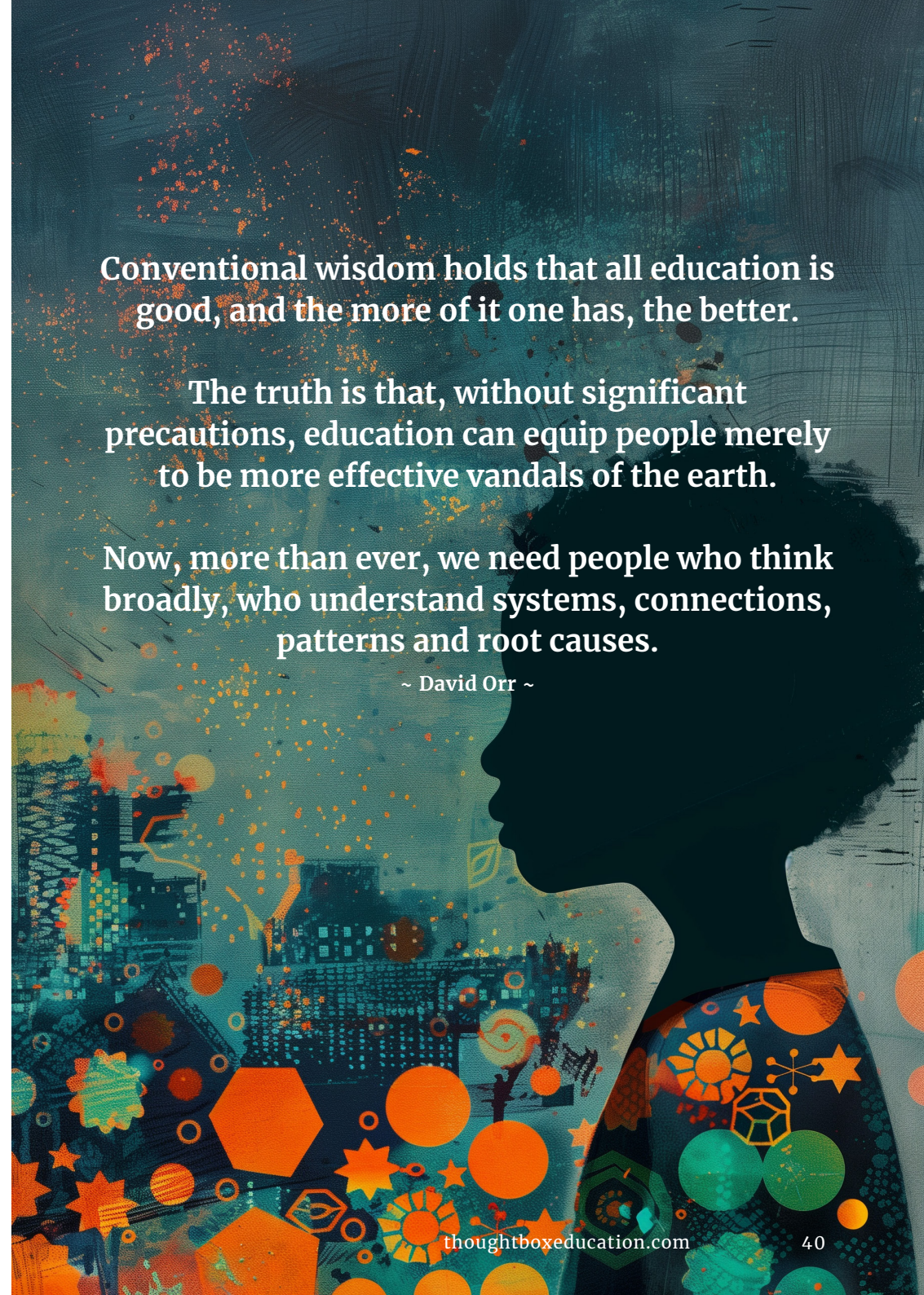
How the next generation thinks and feels will determine what the world becomes. We desperately need a better story to be telling ourselves and to be teaching our children in school. At present, the story shared through the dominant education system is a story of compliance, conformity and competition, with the narrative made up of winners and losers.

Conventional wisdom holds that all education is good, and the more of it one has, the better.

The truth is that, without significant precautions, education can equip people merely to be more effective vandals of the earth.

Now, more than ever, we need people who think broadly, who understand systems, connections, patterns and root causes.

~ David Orr ~



Ever-increasing demands of a globalised education system have forced schools to focus more time and attention onto learning content and information; structured around exams and competition, rather than on creating healthy learning environments which enable children to really flourish. Across the world teachers, students, parents, leaders, policy makers and citizens are calling out for systems-change in education – calling out for a better story; one in which the wellbeing of people and planet sits at the heart of all our intentions.

Whilst thinking about systems-change may seem overwhelmingly complex, the truth about so many of our human systems – including the education system – is that they simply consist of a group of people following particular beliefs, behaviours or ways of seeing things. They are quite simply a group of people all believing, enacting and retelling the same story.

What this means is that each and every person within that system has the power to change the system simply by shifting how they think and act; changing how they show up or how they relate to other people. We can transform education simply by transforming ourselves and the stories we are living out in this world.

It requires great courage to relinquish the familiar in a world of uncertainty. For many of us, as the challenges grow around us, the instinct is to cling on even tighter to what we know and what we're used to – especially when it comes to education. Yet this moment in history welcomes us to let go of all things getting in the way of life's flourishing and start living out healthier, more vitalising stories.

Luckily we're not starting from scratch. Our world is filled with an extraordinary number of courageous people telling a different story of how

to live well together on a finite planet; people who are putting care for all life at the heart of their actions. What these stories all have in common is that they are built on a foundation of 'Triple WellBeing' by living in a way that allows for the flourishing of individuals, communities and the one planet we all call home.

For a dose of inspiration, here are just a few of the many different stories of education already being lived out across the world:

Green Schools: Wall-less schools nurturing holistic, purpose driven inquiry-based learning to create and sustain a thriving world.

Forest Schools: A global movement of child-centred learning programmes supporting holistic growth, all taking place outdoors. It is learner-led and inspires learning through play, exploration and supported risk taking.

Steiner Waldorf Education: A learning pedagogy and movement of schools enabling children to become their true selves, to be good citizens and to be a strong force for good in the world.

Montessori Schools: Creativity and exploration are at the heart of the Montessori ethos, putting children firmly at the centre of their learning. Based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning and collaborative play, it has been widely respected for decades.

Black Mountains College: An alternative learning institute in Wales (UK) offering nature-based degrees for future careers which focus on the challenge of our times: how to build a fair and just society within safe planetary boundaries.

United World Colleges: Education as a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

Schumacher College: A global learning community focused on a holistic Head, Hands, Heart model of learning.

Project DEFY: A movement of educators enabling communities around the world to create their own self-learning spaces.

Planetari: Earth-led learning aligned to the planetary boundaries, Planetari creates schools, curriculum and learning environments that transform education, equipping children to be the innovators and entrepreneurs of a brighter world.

As we co-create a healthier future for our children, it's helpful to keep in mind that the future is not a place we go to but a place we create, shaped through our words and actions, mindsets and habits.

We each hold the power to change our own stories and allow a shift in our cultural narrative as a result. We may tell ourselves that we're creatures of habit and can't easily shift our ways of doing things. Yet adapting to change is an innate capacity we all hold, for the only constant in life is change.

It's worth recalling Viktor Frankl's profound insight here: *Between stimulus and response lies a space. In that space, we have the power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.*
~ Viktor E. Frankl ~

The first step to change is to recognise and appreciate that the dominant, predominantly 'westernised' way of life is simply a story, not a truth - meaning we can choose to no longer believe it and follow a different, healthier narrative instead.

The second step to change is changing ourselves. It begins with recognising our 'response-ability' - the choice we have to do things differently, to change our habits and transform the world we are helping to co-create. Changing our mindset and shifting our habits can literally change the world.

Did you know: When it comes to changing our habits or mindsets, cutting-edge research into neuroplasticity and brain-development shows we can literally re-wire our brains to embed new ideas, perspectives, mindsets or practices so that they become part of how we think, feel and act. We can do this at any point, at any age in life and with any mindset! This [two-minute animation](#) gives a quick introduction to neuroplasticity in action.



Chapter Six | Creating Healthier Cultures

Successful schools don't focus on output; they focus on culture. If you get the culture right, everything else takes care of itself. ~ Ken Robinson ~

All of you keen gardeners out there will know that the key to a healthy garden lies in the quality of the soil. If you get the soil conditions healthy, everything you plant in it has a strong chance of thriving, as you've created the foundational conditions for healthy growth.

A school's culture is much like the soil and plays a pivotal role in supporting the health and wellbeing of all who are growing within it. You can recognise a school's culture within mere moments of being in the school grounds, simply by how it feels. The culture of a school comes from its foundational values, mindsets, behaviours and beliefs. Whilst it's tempting to think that culture is something that can be added in, culture is something foundational to be practised by everyone within a system. It is the story of the school that everyone is believing, sharing, supporting and enacting constantly and consistently.

Cultivating the conditions for healthy growth in our schools begins with creating a healthy culture – tending to the 'soil' to support all those growing within it. Healthy learning environments recognise the value of each part of the school's ecosystem – from individual teachers, students, administration staff and cleaners, to parents, governors; the local community as well as the wider natural environment – and work to support the health and wellbeing of each part that makes up the whole system, helping create a culture of care.

Culture is formed by how we show up and through the quality of relationships between different parts of the system – the way we treat and

relate to everything else within that ecosystem. To nurture a healthy culture, we need to focus on the relationships between the different stakeholders in a community to support healthy dynamics.

Ask yourself the following questions: Where are opportunities for students to build good relationships with other students? Where are opportunities for staff to connect together on a personal as well as professional level? What about the parents – how do we welcome them as valuable and essential members of the community?

The invitation, as we work to transform education towards healthier horizons, is to focus attention on nurturing and strengthening these foundational relationships to enable and allow all stakeholders to feel well, be well, live well and learn well together.

The way a school helps people to feel is often a foundational indicator of testing if the ‘soil’ is healthy. We can sometimes dismiss the importance of our felt experience as being secondary or even irrelevant, and yet our felt experience of any given situation shapes everything about our capacity to respond. People do well when they feel well. This is as true for adults as it is for children.

Cutting-edge neuroscience now helps show that the brain circuits that are important for social-emotional learning interact directly with brain circuits that are responsible for cognitive learning. The circuits are physically connected in the brain. What this means is that our emotional state will literally either work to facilitate or disrupt our capacities to learn – therefore creating an environment wherein children feel safe, heard, seen and supported – where they feel care – enables cognitive learning to flourish.

Did you know: How we feel helps or hinders how we learn. Take a listen to neuroscientist Dr Richard Davidson sharing how this learning can help support healthier learning environments in the podcast interview: [On Love and Learning](#).

Therefore, an important question to ask when thinking about creating healthier cultures is: “How do we want our classrooms, our schools, our learning communities to make people feel?” The wisdom of Maya Angelou is always good to keep in mind: *I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.*

Raising a healthy child means nurturing their whole being: educating their hearts, minds, bodies, spirits and souls. To enable healthy growth in a human welcomes a recognition that how we educate is as important as what we’re educating about. The process of learning is the learning itself – and how an educator is helping children to feel is in itself supporting the learning to embed.

Relational neuroscience – in particular interpersonal neurobiology – helps us to appreciate that learning from all that is unspoken is as powerful as any learning shared aloud. We naturally attune to people around us, and will consciously and unconsciously shape our own habits and behaviours to match the physical, emotional, physiological and neurological messages being received by people around us – for children this influence is especially dominant in their parents, primary caregivers and teachers.

What this means is that the wellbeing of teachers is as essential to a healthy classroom as that of students – children’s wellbeing cannot be fully supported if the teachers are not also flourishing. If we wish to create healthy learning environments for our children, we have to have healthy teachers. This is a non-negotiable.

***Delve deeper:** Renowned educator Sir Ken Robinson recognised the importance of how learning makes us feel, inviting us all in his final public speech to focus our attention on co-creating healthier cultures in our schools.*

Changing the underlying conditions changes everything within a context. When a plant is wilting, for example, we don’t diagnose it with wilting-plant-syndrome, prescribe some medication and tell it to “try harder at vitality”. We instead stand back and wonder why it is struggling to grow. We then recognise it needs more water or sunlight; healthier soil or otherwise. We recognise that its current conditions are not offering the plant what it needs to be well and so – if it is possible to do so – we change the conditions.

This same logic applies to us in this moment in education. Whilst it may feel easier to keep treating the symptoms, until we address the root causes and change the story, nothing is going to change. Educating for our VUCA world (*volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) welcomes us to strengthen the resilience and mindset to first meet, then move beyond, our current challenges towards a healthier horizon. We will all need to strengthen and nurture core practices to support wellbeing for ourselves, others and the planet to meet the world as it is and shift it into the world we wish it to be.

Change begins with one teacher in one classroom. Simply by changing how we show up, and how we relate to the world around us, we can transform the culture we are a part of. Systems begin to transform when parts of the system change relationship with each other; when new parts are added, old parts are removed and the ways in which parts connect together begin to change.

We all have the power to change the relationships in our classrooms and communities; change our habits, change how we think and feel about ourselves and the world. We all have the power to change how we show up. These challenging times are inviting us to be a little bit brave, a little bit bold and as fully human as we can possibly be, with the collective courage to put wellbeing for people and planet at the heart of our every intention. Especially in our schools.

Schools hold the power to transform our communities by transforming the culture within; helping pave the way towards a kinder, more caring world in which all life flourishes. So what if we enabled a culture of care at the very heart of learning?

- What if education helped strengthen **personal wellbeing** on a daily basis by creating opportunities for all members of the community to practice self-care?
- What if education helped strengthen **social wellbeing** on a daily basis by creating opportunities for different members of the learning community to connect with each other more deeply and nurture people-care?
- What if education strengthened **environmental wellbeing** daily by weaving nature connection throughout school culture, creating spaces, places, and opportunities to practice earth-care?

By focusing on competencies for Triple WellBeing® – by caring for ourselves, each other and the planet – schools can create a culture wherein people are learning to thrive. Young people are learning to live more in balance, deepen their relationships with themselves, others and the rest of nature, strengthen innate capacities to feel resilient and resourced, and become active in shaping our world.

There is nothing stopping any of us from welcoming the practices and principles of Triple WellBeing® into our own lives, our roles and our communities to help create change. They're free, we've all got them inside us and can action them whenever we choose.

Starting right now...



An artistic illustration of a family silhouette walking along a path next to a pond. The scene is set in the rain, with vertical lines representing rain falling. The background is a mix of teal and orange tones, with a bright orange sun or moon in the upper left. The family consists of a man, a woman, and three children. Their reflections are visible in the water of the pond. The overall style is painterly and expressive.

Chapter Seven | Ideas in practice

You're always practising something. So you're either practising upholding the world as it is, or you're practising shifting into the world as you want it to be. ~ adrienne maree brown ~

Triple WellBeing® is the understanding that personal, social and planetary health are not just related; they're inseparable. It is both a mindset and a holistic approach to help nurture our inner-world, build caring communities and revitalise our planet. We can enhance Triple WellBeing® in our lives through three practices:

Self-Care: Nurture your inner-world.

Wellbeing starts within and shines out, helping us all grow stronger together.

People-Care: Build caring communities.

Compassionate, connected communities enable a happier, fairer world for all

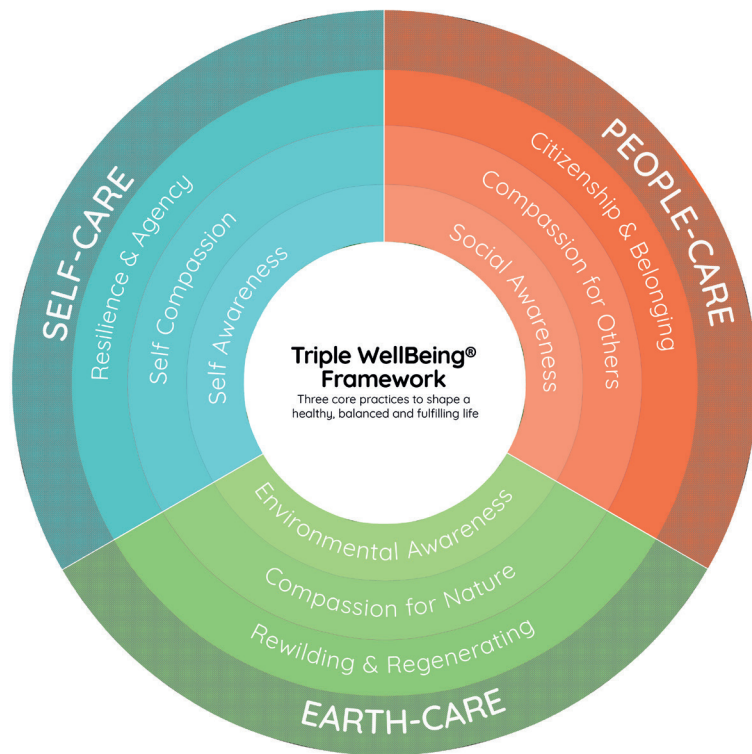
Earth-Care: Revitalise our planet.

Tending to nature keeps us all healthy and breathes life back into our futures.

Living life through a Triple WellBeing® approach is about making conscious choices that benefit us today and pave the way for a healthier tomorrow. By caring for the needs of ourselves, each other and the rest of the natural world we are able to meet both the symptoms and respond to the root causes of our changing world. It's a triple win: A healthier you, a healthier us, a healthier planet.

Triple WellBeing® is all about practice, helping to shift mindsets and habits by learning to take good care of ourselves and our world. Developed through over two decades of active research into regenerative learning - and drawing on natural system-dynamics and relational neuroscience - the Triple WellBeing® framework is an entry-point to help strengthen personal, social and environmental wellbeing on a daily basis.

Three core practices (self, people and earth-care) combine with three core skills of thinking (head), feeling (heart) and relating (hands) to create nine core competencies. These competencies can be practiced and strengthened in any context and serve to nurture healthy relationships in our lives, homes, schools, communities and beyond.



To help bring the transformative qualities of Triple WellBeing® into our daily lives and learning spaces, we've designed a series of courses and resources to transform cultures into healthier places and spaces.

Triple WellBeing® Courses:

Our **Educator Programmes** help create classrooms that nurture a culture of care for self, people and earth, whilst our **Leadership Programmes** support global leaders to address the critical challenges in education, guiding clear pathways for much-needed transformation.

Triple WellBeing® Resources:

The Triple WellBeing® card deck contains daily practices to help you slow down, take care and connect more deeply with yourself and the world. Each of the 27 cards offers a simple yet impactful activity to integrate the principles of Self-Care, People-Care and Earth-Care into daily rhythms.

The Triple WellBeing® curriculum helps create meaningful lessons from the world's stories through a discussion-based, inquiry-led programme. Through a series of progressive learning resources for 5-18 years, lessons inspire a Head, Heart, Hands approach to learning, guiding students on a journey of self-discovery whilst deepening connections with others and nurturing care for the natural world.

Triple WellBeing® storybooks take young readers on exciting adventures that show them why caring matters. Through simple yet profound stories, they learn how to care for themselves, others, and the planet. Through animal-stories, young readers are immersed in a space of exploration to connect with our changing world and nurture a sense of care, connection and activation to make the world a kinder place.

One of the most invitational thoughts about Triple WellBeing® is that these principles and approaches can be embedded into our lives and learning contexts in an infinite number of ways. Taking the practices of self-care, people-care and earth-care is the starting point, with so many ways to support healthier lives at home, at work and across our learning communities.

There are active and engaged practitioners across the world embedding Triple WellBeing® practices in their lives in order to create healthier stories for our world. From classroom teachers changing how they design their lessons to Headteachers embedding a Triple WellBeing® culture at the heart of their schools. From Education Ministers building learning models around the Triple WellBeing® framework to global educators embedding self-care, people-care and earth-care across their curriculum, campus, culture and community.

Remembering that we're not alone is key. We are working alongside thousands of educators across the globe - all focused on transforming education for a healthier world.

Being part of the community of practice helps to forge valuable connections with other educators - connecting and learning from and with each other to develop skills to transcend conventional teaching and welcome in a new era of education.

The Triple WellBeing® community is free to join and takes just a minute to register. Join us and together let's make education not just about learning, but about thriving: www.thoughtboxhub.com





Further Reading | Delve a little deeper

This book reflects two decades of study, teaching and action-research in transformative learning. Here are some of the resources that shaped it:

Exploring systems thinking

Read: [Thinking in Systems](#) - Donella Meadows (book)

Explore: [Theory U](#) - Otto Scharmer (book and training)

Watch: [A Systems story](#) -The Blind Men and the Elephant tale (video)

Explore: [Linking Thinking](#) - WWF (PDF activities)

Read: [People & Permaculture](#) - Looby Macnamara (book)

Watch: [Teaching systems thinking in schools](#) - Peter Senge (video)

Exploring transformative education

Read: [We need regenerative cultures](#) - Daniel Christian Wahl (article)

Read: [Earth in Mind](#) - On Education, Nature & the Human Prospect - David Orr (PDF)

Read: [Sustainable Education](#) - Stephen Sterling (book)

Read: [Regenerative Learning](#) - Essays from Schumacher College (book)

Watch: [The Power of Children's Imaginations](#) - Penny Hay (TED talk)

Connect: [Rewilding Education](#) - (courses & resources)

Listen: [Coconut Thinking](#) (podcast series)

Listen: [Flourishing Education](#) (podcast series)

Exploring Relational Neuroscience

Read: [The Heart of Trauma](#) - Bonny Badenoch

Listen: [A Neuroscientist on Love & Learning](#) - Dr Richard Davidson (podcast)

Read: [Nature and the nervous system](#) (article)

Read: [The Master and His Emissary](#) - Dr Ian McGilchrist

Read: [The pocket guide to interpersonal neurobiology](#) - Dr Dan Siegel (book)

Explore: [Psychotherapy to navigate the depths](#) - Caroline Hickman (various)

Explore: [Life Kind](#) - Jo McAndrews (talks, training and resources)

Exploring pedagogy and transformative learning

- Read:** [Help your child to wonder](#) – Rachel Carson (article)
Read: [Permission to Feel](#) – Marc Brackett (book)
Watch: [Do schools kill creativity?](#) – Ken Robinson (Ted Talk)
Read: [Schools of Thought](#) – Mary Warnock (book)
Read: [Schools reinvented for the challenges we face](#) - Valerie Hannon (PDF)
Explore: [Freire Institute](#) - Education, Empowerment, Transformation (movement)
Listen: [The Art of Being](#) – Eric Fromm (audiobook)
Listen: [Imagination & fortitude](#) - Jason Reynolds (podcast)
Read: [Worldwise Learning](#) – Elizabeth Crawford & Carla Marshall (book)

Exploring the meta-crisis

- Read:** [Active Hope](#) – Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone (book)
Read: [The Climate Book](#) - Greta Thunberg & friends (book)
Read: [This one wild and precious life](#) – Sarah Wilson (book)
Watch: [Don't Look Up](#) (film)
Watch: [Inner dimensions of climate change](#)
Read: [Sapiens – A brief history of Humankind](#) – Yuval Noah Harari (book)
Read: [Beyond Civilisation](#) – Daniel Quinn (short book)
Read: [Ishmael Series](#)– Daniel Quinn (books)
Read: [His Dark Materials](#) - Phillip Pullman (book)
Listen: [Seeking language large enough](#)– David Whyte (podcast)

Exploring Global Perspectives


- Watch:** [The Danger of a single story](#) – Chimamanda Adiche (TedTalk)
Watch: [Schooling the world](#) (film)
Read: [This changes everything](#) – Naomi Klein (book)
Read: [Yes, Colonialism caused climate change](#) (article)
Explore: [Local Futures](#) (movement)

Exploring Ecopsychology & Nature Connection

- Read:** [Returning the self to nature](#) – Jeanette Carny (book)
Read: [Small is beautiful](#) – EF Schumacher (book)
Explore: [Active Pause](#) (podcasts and practices)
Read: [Sacred Nature](#) – Karen Armstrong (book)
Watch: [Reinventing the human-nature relationship in the digital age](#) (video)
Read: [What is the ecological self?](#) (article)
Read: [The benefits of nature](#) – Declutter the mind (article)
Connect: [The Ecologist](#) (online and print magazine)
Explore: [Roots and Shoots](#) (school programme)
Read: [Nature contact v nature connection](#) (article)
Read: [Silent Spring](#) – Rachel Carson (book)
Explore: [Connecting with Nature activities](#) – David Suzuki Foundation
Listen: [I got saved by the beauty of the world](#) – Mary Oliver (podcast)
Explore: [Nature Premium](#) (education movement)

Exploring a different story for humanity

- Explore:** [The Wellbeing Economy Alliance](#) (movement)
Explore: [Doughnut Economics](#) (movement)
Read: [Citizens](#) – John Alexander (book)
Read: [Regenerative Leadership](#) – Giles Hutchins & Laura Storm (book)
Read: [The Power of Now](#) - Eckhart Tolle (book)
Listen: [From what if to what next](#) - Rob Hopkins (podcast)
Watch: [A message from the future](#) (video)
Watch: [2040 – Regenerators](#) (film)
Watch: [A future for us all](#) – Ken Robinson (video)
Watch: [What is regeneration?](#) (video)



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

~ Margaret Mead ~

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