

What you can do now...

HERE'S HOW

A MANUAL FOR ACTION IN 2010

A TRIIIBES.COM PRODUCTION

INSPIRED BY "WHAT MATTERS NOW" THE EBOOK PRODUCED BY SETH GODIN

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Observe (An Introduction)

In observing–listening, looking and paying attention without judgement, you see the answers you’re meant to see.

Authors are observers of life. They amuse with their observations of us. Us re-worked into drama, comedy, theatre, documentary, books, film, dance, art and music. We love people watching over and over again. We find each other endlessly entertaining, for this is how we learn.

The Internet permits us to observe and learn like never before. Evolving technology enables faster learning and the Internet has become the perfect teaching tool.

Could it be in observing that we’re all becoming anthropologists? The Internet has provided us with the perfect social hub - a tribe. I am involved in a tribe–Seth Godin’s triiibe. Seth is an observer of life. He blogs regularly and inspires daily. One of Seth’s recent blogs contained a free ebook titled “What Matters Now.”

You can read it here <http://sethgodin.typepad.com/files/what-matters-now-2.pdf>

“What Matters Now” inspired triibes.com to release “What You Can Do Now ... Here’s How.”

Philosophical anthropology is the study of the nature and essence of humankind.

When we meet people, we spend considerable time learning about each other. As social beings we seek exchange-scenarios: endless cafe conversation, daily work-chat moments, gigs, museums and concerts to attend together, along with sporting events, religious festivals, news events and pub-chat. These social scenes permit chances, moments to glance inside of another’s soul and reach new levels, continuing our exploration of one another and gaining new depths of knowledge. The internet speeds up this process and seemingly cuts through time and space, as it connects us to the immediate essence of each other–our true nature, our authentic naked selves–the heart, your heart.

Triibes.com is a big drum, a collective heart beating louder and louder.

A tribe allows us to jump into life’s essence and while here, we observe and honour each other, as we lead and make a difference.

Discover or create your tribe in 2010.

***Bronwyn McConville** is an entrepreneur who gives. Bronwyn is a triibester @ www.triibes.com, StorySearcher on twitter, founder, leader and creative director working to deliver change by inspiring entrepreneurship in communities. Email Bronwyn at info@brightsparks.me with your thoughts and stories about the change you would like to see happen in your community and help make change real.*

You should be crusading; here's why:

For The Focus

You can't start a crusade if you don't know, with absolute clarity, what you're crusading for. By making the decision to start a crusade, you force yourself to clarify, polarise, and focus your objective into a single, potent, and consistent message. Decisions become easy: does this further our cause?

For The Story

A crusade will always create a story (sometimes even a legend). Throughout your crusade, your story will build depth and complexity all by itself, simply because your actions are so focused on whatever it is you're crusading for. You build a complex story whilst retaining a simple message.

To Raise Your Standards

A crusade will force you to up your game. If you're crusading, pushing really hard for something, your standards regarding the objective of your crusade will be raised. The quality of whatever it is you output will naturally increase.

For The Attention

We love a good crusade. As long as there are people who care about the objective of your crusade, people will support you, help you, and spread the word. Even the media can love a crusade.

Here's What You Can Do Now...

Polarise. You can't crusade for the middle ground—decide what you're going to improve, and who you're going to improve it for, and ignore everyone else.

Have a single, unshakable objective—potency is key. If you need to use “and,” in the objective of your crusade, you haven't distilled enough.

Don't be selfish. Crusade to make something better, for a certain group of people, and support will snowball.

Believe, unequivocally in your crusade. Without belief, you won't achieve any of the things listed above. The leader of a crusade must find ways to nurture the belief of the co-crusaders.

Inspired by John Moore (Sacrifice), Todd Sattersten (Focus) and Mark Rovner (Timeless) in “What Matters Now”

Andy Gott is the managing director of [Liquidearth](#), a very, very, very small company that works on various projects that they like the idea of.

Pay Attention

There is a coming crisis. Not an oil crisis, but this crisis will cause many cars to stay off the road. Not a terrorist crisis, but this crisis will change the way you think about the world you live in. Not a food crisis, but if you don't plan for it, you might well starve.

The crisis is an attention crisis. Already we see the beginnings: Inbox Zero. 4-Hour Work Week. Time Management.

All of these are just methods to help manage your already overstretched attention. Attention being pulled to and fro by your family, work, job, hobbies and much more.

So for the next minute, examine your day as moments of attention.

We can't remember every detail of our day in a minute; instead we end up with a set of edited highlights. Those highlighted moments are some of what draws our attention. What moments most draw your attention? What moments are starved of your attention? Which moments give you the most pleasure? Which drain you? Which energize you?

And what moments would you want to attend to tomorrow?

Michael Vander Donk is an explorer in individual and corporate transformations, searching for the leverage points that quickly and easily make sustainable change. Discover more at www.toach.net

Everyone cares about something.

And where an organization of people exists, it usually means those people have at least one subject in common that they care about.

But leaders of corporations seem to put a lot of effort into getting employees to care about what they care about. All kinds of tactics are employed by management to get “buy in” or “motivate” employees, but in reality, employees are already motivated to do things for the good of the company, that’s why they decided to join that organization in the first place.

What leaders need to do is care about the individual first. Find out what that person would like to do, or discover their ideas for furthering the cause of the organization. Then, a leader can support them in accomplishing their goals, not some personal irrelevant goals, but the kind of goals that support the overall mission of the company.

When individuals are appreciated, encouraged, and supported in accomplishing their own goals, efforts or projects, the ones they came up with, how can they not be anything but completely loyal to that organization? Once you have deep loyalty, it’s really not that hard to ask them to do something for the organization. There’s no hard selling to get “buy-in,” there’s no need for fancy incentives or über-high pressure that the “ship is sinking” or “our platform is burning” to get employees to perform. There’s only a natural give and take. You help me and I’ll help you. When you’ve demonstrated that you sincerely care about me, I’ll most likely reciprocate. Trust begets trust.

If you want someone to care about what you care about, try caring about them first.

Inspired by [Dick Axelrod's eBook](#).

***Rex Williams** is an Intrapreneur within a large aerospace company, building communities and efforts that improve employee engagement and productivity. You can read his external blog at <http://therexblog.com>*

Delight

The poet Horace said—probably after a round of tennis in which he'd thrashed a testy opponent—"All instruction comes through delight." Horace was definitely from the old school, but there's nothing fusty about his advice. I think what he was getting at is that actual learning, the state where the highway crews in your brain are laying down new roads in double-time, is always companion to those little pop-pop-pops of pleasure that stoke the crew's engine. Those pleasure pops are delight.

The first time I became aware of the sway of language, I was seven or eight, sitting in a library aisle surrounded by dinosaur books. Tales of titanic beasts thrilled me, but I noticed something else: the words themselves—Jurassic, Diplodocus, Tyrannosaurus Rex—were servings of information that had texture and flavor. Some words were weighty, some crunched, some stopped a sentence in its tracks. I'd roll the possible pronunciations around on my tongue, watch where the letters coupled hands or crossed fingers, mull variants. From that point on, I was held in thrall—willingly—by words.

Other lucky kids might have found that turning a piece of wood on a shop lathe gave them symphonic shivers, or that scribbling the outlines of a cityscape on a lunch bag brought an instant frisson of design proportion and balance. The child's brain is a greedy little sponge, but too often that honest hunger later gives way to the empty calories of compromise and concession.

Let delight be your guide. Seek things that surprise, that make you rock on your heels and pull you forward again.

Thomas Merton said, "If you have love, you will do all things well." Lift your boots from the soul-sucking muck of settling, and let your better angels take wing. The work done through delight is your real work.

And the next time you play tennis with Horace, you'll trounce him.

Tom Bentley lives in the hinterlands of Watsonville, California, surrounded by strawberry fields and the occasional Airstream. He has run a [writing and editing business](#) out of his house for more than 10 years, giving him ample time to vacuum.

It's human nature to live a life of delay. We recognize that children who can delay gratification are more likely to succeed. We understand that accomplishment takes effort over time. We see that quick-and-dirty rarely leads to long-lasting.

And so, we wait.

Learning is important. Getting a grounding in the discipline we're pursuing is vital.

Practice is critical. Whether we're reaching out for the fabled 10,000 hours to become an expert or simply honing our craft, we cannot be good at what we don't do.

Acknowledgment is powerful. Knowing that we are respected or followed or loved fills very special places in our mental self-image.

And so, we wait.

We wait until we're properly trained. We wait until we have enough experience. We wait until someone tells us we're ready.

We wait for an epitaph that says "She was finally ready."

You are what you are. If you're pursuing a career as a writer, inside, you're already a writer. If you're getting a law degree, face it, you're already a lawyer; you're just chasing the bits of paper and time that announce it to others.

Training, documentation, practicing the art—those are not what make you what you are. You are what you are.

Get out of the “someday” box. Stop waiting for what you'll become someday. You already are.

Be.

*Born too late to be a pirate or a cowboy, **Joel D Canfield** writes books and speaks in front of groups large and small to help new entrepreneurs avoid the broken thinking so common in business. He and his Best Beloved operate Chief Virtual Officer (<http://ChiefVirtualOfficer.com/>) to help virtual workers and potential clients find each other and fall in love.*

Have Grace and Gratitude

A great teacher once said that we should always seek grace in everything we do: God's grace and people's grace.

Why? Because when grace visits the landscape of our hearts, we experience a sense of gratitude and we are reminded that each soul adds something to the collective we call humanity. While we might not always be conscious of the things that bring grace into our lives, it behooves us to acknowledge our good fortune gracefully and share our gratitude by comforting and helping others. Grace and Gratitude are like conjoined twins—intertwined. We need both; for when we inhale one, the other exhales.

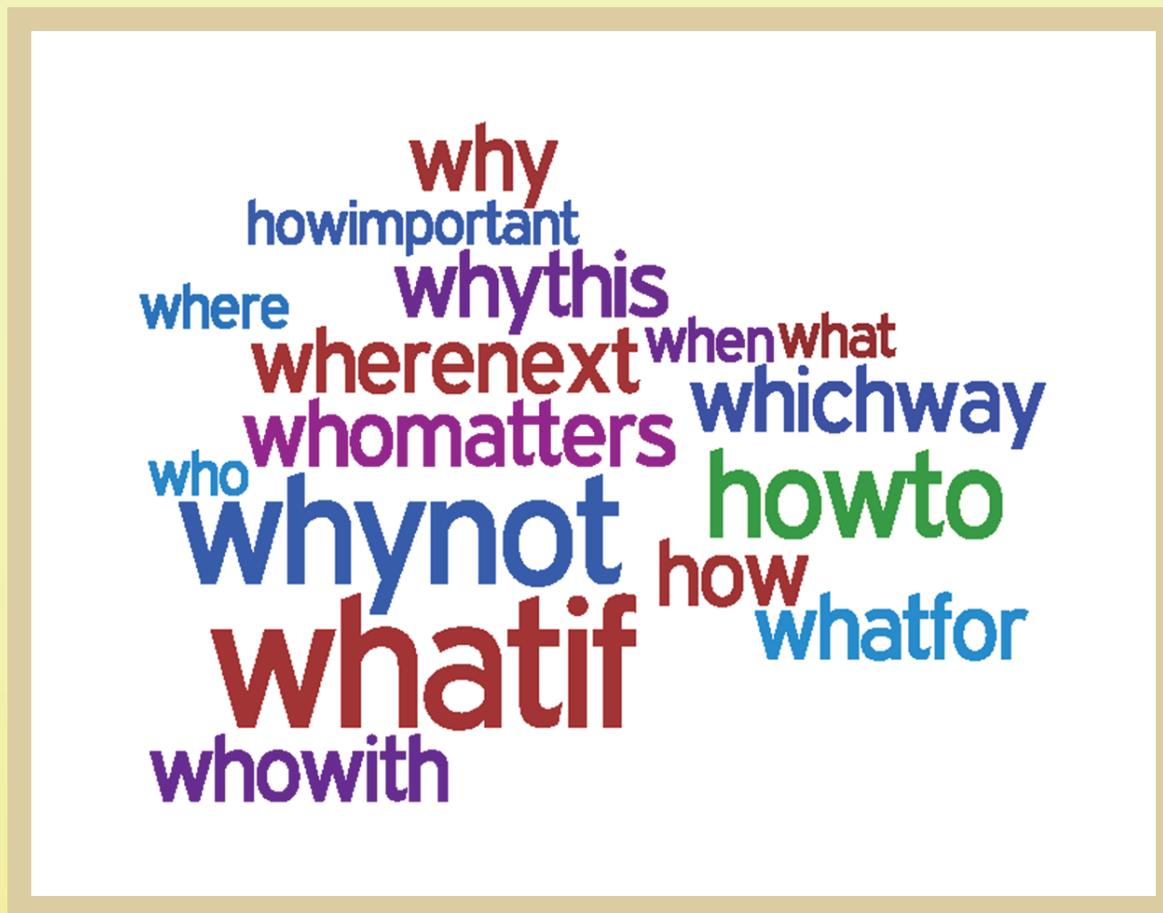
True, it is not often that we think about walking in a state of grace and gratitude because the norm is to receive grace, express our heartfelt gratitude for it, and then move on to other pressing concerns. We must remember to thank people who help us along our life journey and to share our grace, our spirit of goodwill, with others. Maintaining an attitude of gratitude by paying it forward so others can benefit is never wasted, especially in these difficult times. Like a boomerang—what we give out comes back to us manifold. Try it.

When good things happen or when a cherished wish is met, our entire being reverberates with the sweet sensation of joyful, delightful gratitude. We might pause and say, "I did it. I did it all by myself." Did we? We might add, "I am a self-made woman or man." Are we? No one accomplishes anything alone. There is always a chain of grace, seen and unseen, helping us. Where did the grace come from? Did we stop to give thanks/show gratitude to those who championed us along the way? Did we seize the opportunity to become a channel of grace for someone else?

When love comes knocking at our door, do we stop to say, "No, come back only when you can give me something more?" Love is a form of grace and gratitude waters it; makes it grow. Let us all learn to walk in a state of constant grace and gratitude so both can meet us daily at our door. May all who cross our path be touched by divine grace and remember to embrace and share their gratitude gracefully.

Elizabeth Obih-Frank believes in Positive Kismet and writes a weekly blog, [Mirth and Motivation](#) where she shares goodwill and more. She is a mom to twin girls, a real estate program director, writer, healer, motivational speaker and a social media fan. She loves a good laugh and a nice glass of red wine.

Question



Know Yourself

Know what you like, what you want, what you need as well as what you don't like, want or need. Be able to say "No," as easily as you say, "Yes." Have strong boundaries. Don't fall for the social demand to "be low maintenance." Low maintenance people are low self-esteem people. Don't be afraid to put your own needs aside—or to put them first, depending on the situation.

Having a strong foundation of self-knowledge, solid self-esteem, good people skills, compassion and specific goals are a prerequisite to success. Without them you'll fail. You may not fail immediately, or all at once, but you will fail. Self-esteem, strong boundaries and assertive self-confidence that come from a belief in yourself are critical indicators of success. It's not your skill or ability that matters. It's your choices. Sound choices come from a sound foundation of self-awareness. Pursue self-knowledge and awareness first. Once you have a foundation there, the rest will follow. It's a lifelong goal to build these skills, but at least have a foundation firmly in place before starting anything else of major significance.

***Becky Blanton** is a freelance writer who lives in a 1975 Chevy van with her Rottweiler. She was also a TED Global 2009 speaker. She loves bacon, weight-lifting, running and camping, all of which play well together. She sometimes dares to run with scissors. She is on a lifelong journey to know herself, even the nooks and crannies.*

Consider Your Tracks

Consider your tracks, where they began, are now and what story your personal footprint leaves behind. Will others learn and gain from your tracks in the future?

Footprints matter. When we learn, do we develop an awareness of each other and our world?

We have tools which educate-byte-size, in minutes. We're able to view earth and the solar system with the touch of a button. What do you see? What are your tracks? Are you mindful of every step, the cause and effect?

There is seeing and there is seeing.

When you're travelling to work on a crowded bus - human bodies crammed against yours in rush hour, what do you see and where is your awareness at this time? Do you see the colour of the breaking dawn or the sun's shimmer through clouds from the bus window? Or are you flummoxed, frowning-annoyed?

When you're in the supermarket, are you mindful of what you're really buying into and the effect of your purchase power? Or are you thinking it's all too hard to care ... I just want to get home fast, feed and watch TV?

Right now we're losing our wondrous nature rapidly, because not enough of us, care enough. So what are we caring about? Me. I want this, I deserve it. I'm going to eat the bluefin tuna and I don't care if it's an endangered, almost extinct species. I don't know what I can do about exploitative fishing methods!

Do you see ocean fish simply as food or are they beautiful, perfect, wondrous, creatures that we want our children and their children to see?

We've become remote and distanced from our fellow creatures - land and sea - the earth. When did we stop seeing and how did become so unaware of the impact of our tracks?

Our collective footprint is leaving holes. Holes in: the ozone layer in the atmosphere, ecosystems, oceans, the earth, our humanity and humility, in others' lives and our world.

What can you do now that matters and will make a difference in 2010? Start seeing, develop your awareness and pay attention to your footprint - your tracks.

***Bronwyn McConville** is an entrepreneur who gives. Bronwyn is a triibester @ www.triibes.com, StorySearcher on twitter, founder, leader and creative director working to deliver change by inspiring entrepreneurship in communities. Email Bronwyn at info@brightsparks.me with your thoughts and stories about the change you would like to see happen in your community and help make change real.*

Food. The damage is done, but we now have important ways to measure it. Ask the right questions: Why is corn syrup in everything? What are patent-protected food crops? Which countries are most vulnerable to food shortages? What would it take to make our food sources more sustainable?

Buy and eat food that is real food

Fresh. No pharming. No factory farming.

Vote with your wallet

Buy food that is good for you and your family.

Tell your grocer, "I'll quit shopping here if you don't get a brand that doesn't have corn syrup in it!"

Ask your congressional representative, "How did you vote on the Farm Bill?"

Teach a young person how to shop for food

One out of three children born after 2000 will suffer from diabetes.

Undernourished children are more likely to fail in school.

Experts agree that due to poor diet, this generation of children may not live as long as their parents' generation.

Studies show that most young people are unaware of where food comes from: teach them.

Start a community garden or volunteer at one

In most cities, people are on waiting lists for several years. Why? They want to work on a committee that is doing good for the community.

Teach someone how to cook

Slow Food tastes better than Fast Food and is better for you.

People who cook their own meals from scratch maintain a healthy weight.

People who cook their own meals spend less money than those eating prepared foods.

Cook dinner for someone

Studies show that families, friends and lovers who eat together stay together.

Teach someone how to plant

This country needs to become sustainable at the local level and nationally.

This country needs to help developing countries grow their own food to feed their own people.

Define Your Objective

There are nine principles of military decision-making familiar to all soldiers. But these principles—not rules, but factors to be respected—resonate across many situations in business and in life.

But is there one that stands apart? A first among equals? Yes.

Objective: direct all efforts toward a clearly defined, decisive, and obtainable goal.

GOAL. ONE goal. One CLEAR goal. One clear, REALISTIC goal. One clear, realistic, MEANINGFUL goal. Meaningful, full of meaning. That's the heart: clear and realistic are just signs that help you recognize MEANINGFUL when you see it. "Interesting to do" or "would be nice to have" need not apply.

Have you seen this before?

- “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” (Mahatma Gandhi)
- Debt snowball/debt reduction technique (Dave Ramsey)
- The “next action” (Getting Things Done)
- No "and" in brand (Andy Sernovitz)
- "Reduce, reuse, recycle." (EPA)
- SMART goals for IEPs in special education (Peter Wright)
- Big rocks in your schedule (Stephen Covey)

What can you do now? Chart your course; define objectives for yourself: your job, your business, your community, your family, your self. You only need one worthwhile goal for each. Spend the time to craft it and frame it in a way that respects the principle by being clear, realistic, and meaningful to YOU. Be decisive—pick one goal to be the OBJECTIVE for each role.

Worried about the other goals you have at work or for the house? They're in line, waiting patiently for their turn.

There is no multitasking, and fuzzy goals are big white lies we tell ourselves: excuses for "working on" instead of "shipping." I've been "working on" and "thinking about" describing objective as part of a whole book. I've shipped this one page. Which is more important?

Success breeds success. Reinforce success. Put yourself in a Skinner box of your own design and lead yourself to learn success as a behavior by setting yourself up for success rather than failure. Pick your objectives deliberately.

And what you're left with is a sense of calm determination. The goal is not to set goals—it's to achieve them. One by one.

The nine principles are Objective, Offensive, Simplicity, Surprise, Mass, Maneuver, Security, Economy of Force, and Unity of Command.

Inspired by Gina Trapani: "Activity without purpose is noise."

Rick Colosimo is a lawyer who blogs about [law](#), [corporate finance](#), and [autism](#) because people with really hard problems still need help with answers.

Make a Choice

There is a well known Cherokee story about two wolves. A grandfather says to his grandchildren ... “A fight is going on inside me, it is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One wolf is evil—he is fear, anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, competition, superiority, and ego.

The other is good—he is joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, friendship, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.

This same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too.”

One child asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win, grandfather?” The elder simply replied, “The one you feed.”

Every time you are presented with a situation which makes you feel what the bad wolf feels, take a moment to just sit with the feelings. Begin to witness them rather than to identify with them. Begin to see them as the test, and if in that one moment you can turn around your perspective and see the flip-side, even just for a moment, you have crystallized something precious for yourself. Make that choice.

If you feel fear—find courage, if you feel angry—find peace, if you feel hateful—find gentleness, if you feel disabled—find your strength. If you feel disconnected—find connection, if you feel limited—find expansion. It’s all right there, just under our noses. We have come to a time when we need not wait years to integrate changes in ourselves, and we can do this sooner if we let it in. Practice this every day and in a few weeks you will see amazing changes in the way you feel about your life, just as it is.

All it takes is willingness and a genuine desire to be happy.

Gina Stamatelopoulos “inspired by stories of tribal people, urban dwellers, hairdressers and our children. Wisdom speaks through many voices if we really listen.” Sharing, living, experiencing, laughing on www.ginastama.com

Open

We come into this life completely open. Expecting to be loved. Enchanted with ourselves.

And we learn to close. Each time we are rejected by another, or shamed for being in touch with our bodies, or scolded for playing in the mud, we close.

And as we lose our connection to our bodies, we no longer can feel what it means that 850 million of our fellow human beings are hungry. As we lose our connection to the earth, we cannot grasp that our needs for bottled water and other petty conveniences are destroying the planet for future generations.

As we lose our connection to the majesty of who we are, we give in to fear. Every time we play it safe, we sell ourselves short. Every time we reject our true calling, we squander our precious human potential.

I need you, my children need you, the island nations that will be lost when the ocean levels rise need you to not do that anymore.

You can learn to open again. Open to the miracle of life on this fragile planet. Open to the suffering of others, and to the mystery of why you, of all those who have ever lived, are alive at this very moment when the future of our species is in doubt.

How do we open? By noticing when we are afraid, and leaning in anyway. By sitting in the woods or the park each day to rebuild the threads that connect us to the natural world. By looking, as the Buddhist teacher and activist Joanna Macy asks us to do, right into the face of these times, when everything we love is at risk.

“Don’t be afraid of your heart breaking open,” says Joanna. “The heart that breaks open can hold the whole universe. It’s that big.”

Take the risk. Open your heart to rejection and your work to failure. Open to the possibility that you are here to change the world.

Christopher Landry (www.christopherlandry.com) is a writer, filmmaker and communications consultant who helps world-changing organizations tell their unique stories through a variety of media.

Connect with Place

The Internet is an amazing place. A place where we can communicate around the world, 24 hours, 7 days a week. A place where we can share ideas. A place where we can learn from each other. A place where we can look back and reflect on past ideas or explore future possibilities.

Yet this newfound place has stripped away an essential ingredient that makes us human: and that ingredient is also called place—but has a different meaning.

If the internet is promulgating the ideas of communities-of-interest, then the counterbalance to this movement is to explore and champion communities-of-place.

Communities-of-Place are very special and very personal. They are places where we can be present with others. Places to share. Places (or palaces) called home. They place the individual in the context of family AND community. They are places where the food and entertainment is local. They are places where we can debate the real issues about improving the quality of life in the community-of-place. Communities-of-place are very subjective, present and immediate, yet intimately connected to many objective communities-of-interest in the global Internet.

If there is one pressing issue at the present time, it is to rediscover and reinvigorate our natural communities-of-place. It is to displace the power of communities-of-interest with a newfound sense of purpose about very local communities-of-place.

A seismic shift is required to rediscover our physical connection with the physical planet and correct many of the mistakes and damage that we have made as we have reached out to achieve planetary consciousness.

By rethinking our connection with Place—by finding our connection with the planet—we have a chance to turn the tide.

Lorne Mitchell lives in Kent, UK and is a part-time beekeeper. [Beekeeping](#) has had a major part to play in him re-balancing himself after nine years in the British Forces followed by another twenty or so in corporate life. The bees have taught him that much is to be gained by staying local and enjoying the place that you are in right now! Oh—and eating honey isn't so bad either!

Be Present

Technology has enabled so much communication now; Always-on connections are possible just about everywhere these days. We can have video calls with friends and family around the world, talk to thousands of friends and followers on social media tools. Yet we yearn for real connections.

How many of us will interrupt a good conversation with a family member, friend, or colleague to take a phone call from someone unknown? Are we saying that the pitch from the telemarketer selling chimney cleaning services is more valuable than hearing how your son's day at school was? Do we rush through activities with the goal of just getting them done, checking off the list, without taking the time to enjoy the journey or fruit of our labours?

Dictionaries will tell us that the adjective present means "being, existing, or occurring at this time or now."

Present listening means emptying your head of any other thoughts than the processing of input from those you are with. We're not planning the next point we want to make, or the agenda for the next meeting we are going to have, or worrying about the next deadline or shore to do. We are simply there for those we are with. We're using all senses to take in the person we are connecting with.

Be present for the people in your life. Turn off the mobile phone while having a discussion with an employee. Close the laptop during the planning meeting. Ignore the phone during family dinner time.

Those around you will notice and appreciate the connection. Be there.

Shawn McCormick is a technology leader who lives outside Ottawa, Ontario. He has a wide range of interests but mainly enjoys listening to other people's stories and learning who they are.

Change

Change management is much more than watching the cheese getting moved. Of course, being alert is one way of adapting to change, but that's more relevant for changes that are sudden and uncalled for. However, there are changes that are intentional, self-initiated or known. Something like a change of job, institution, or town (city/country). Such a change also needs to be managed, and if possible, leveraged.

Situation

Change usually brings you to a new and strange place, with new people, new work. The human brain has this habit of training itself with a routine and creating a comfort zone. Something like a larva building a cocoon around itself. When put in a new situation, it's like breaking that sheath, and leaving you all by yourself. Change exposes you, unguarded. You resist embracing the new environment quickly. Also, change makes you feel insecure, uncomfortable and vulnerable (sensitive).

Managing Change

The first step is to accept that things are changed and that you have to start afresh. Accept that you may become sensitive and that it might take some time to build your comfort cocoon again. Analyse the situation. Do a SWOT analysis. A large part of your insecurity is from fear of the unknown. When you identify your threats, this knowledge will give you confidence. When you identify opportunities, it gives you a positive attitude to fight and realize your goals.

Leveraging Change

You can actually leverage change. Change gives you a wonderful opportunity to change yourself. There always are things that you wanted to implement in your life/routine/personality/public image. Again, a little analysis will reveal your current needs: since you are in an absolutely new environ, you can start establishing yourself from scratch. Soon you will find a newer self.

Have a prosperous change.

Ujjwal Trivedi is a Software Engineer (Rails & iPhone programmer) by profession, poet at heart, marketer by choice and a pragmatic lover by nature.

Do Nothing

It seems a contradiction that my response to what you can do now is to do nothing in particular. But “nothing in particular” is the exact opposite of what we all are already busy doing, and it is time for a change.

Doing Nothing is not the same as Not Doing Something. It is like a pause in music: the spaces between the notes are a key part of the composition; the pauses help you to hear and appreciate the full value of the music.

Take a day to Do Nothing. Use your day as:

- A way of breaking out of the routine you are locked into. We all fall into the schedule trap. It feels nice and comfortable because you don't have to think. Instead, we act, we do, we react. Don't allow your routine to dictate what you do.
- A reminder that life is not work. Surprisingly, work will carry on without you. And so will your life if you are not careful.
- A chance to observe the impact your actions are having on your life and on those around you. Take stock of yourself and your behavior. Are you where you want to be? Are you who you want to be? Ask yourself why.
- An opportunity for letting ideas within you come out. What do you want do with your life? The future is wide open. There are many suggestions for what you can do now.

Take a day to do nothing in particular. Don't have a day? Take an hour. Everyone has an hour. We used to call it “lunch.” Ease up, slow down. Take a time-out. Doing Nothing can sometimes be more important than Doing Something.

Inspired by the words of Elizabeth Gilbert (Ease) and Arianna Huffington (Sleep) in “What Matters Now.”

Alan Parr is co-founder of OpenSky Consortium (opensky.typepad.com), where he provides firms with new ideas, creative thinking and insights, then experiments to drive change in people, companies and markets.

See More

We were drinking morning coffee in a cafe in Sliema, Malta when a mother, with a young baby, sat down at the table next to us. The mother held the baby on her lap and I could not help noticing that the baby was scanning everything in sight - high, low, in front, to the sides, everywhere. It made me think of the way searchlights scan every part of the night sky.

This immediately jolted me into realising how narrow my vision is, as it seems are most other people's fields of vision. How often when in a shop do we focus only on what we want and not notice what is next to it? How often do we look at a web page and miss interesting links on the side? I decided there and then that I would frequently do exactly the same scanning of my environment.

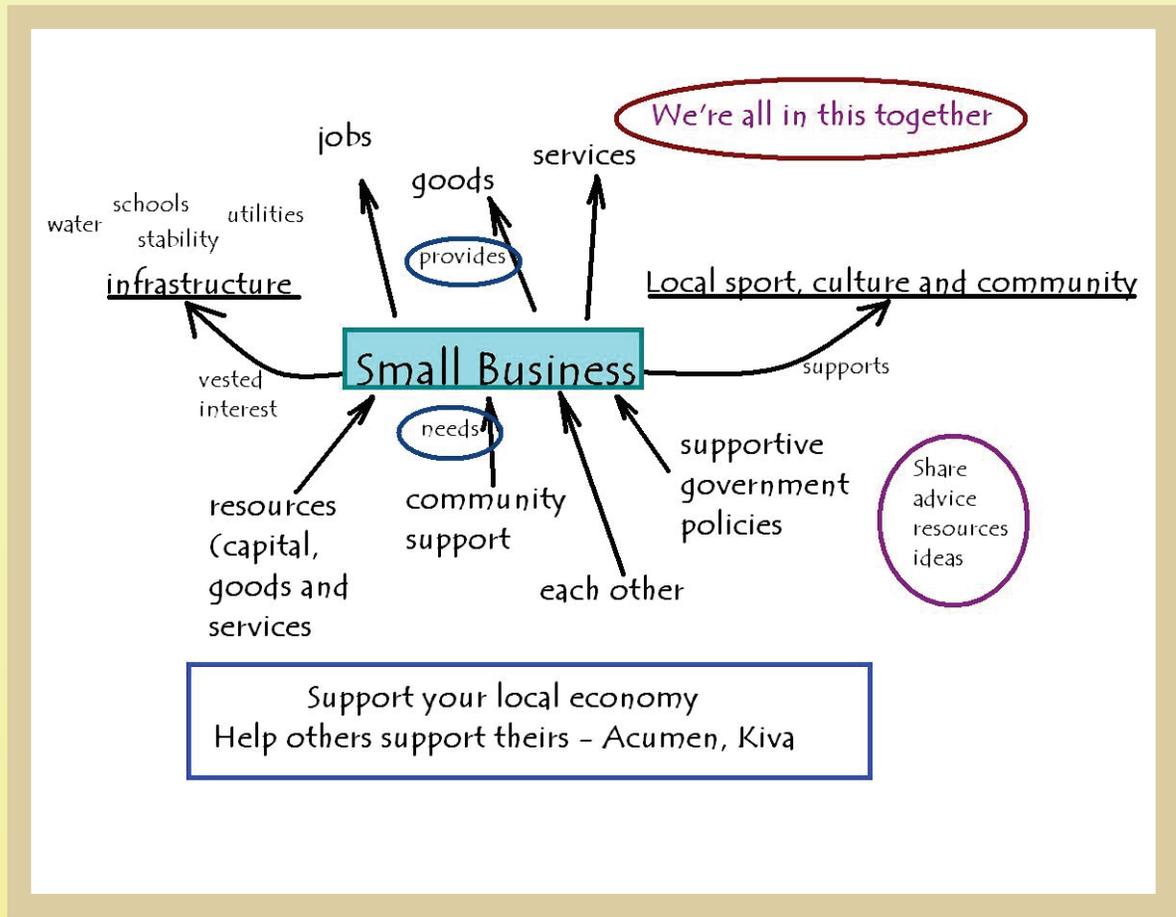
Our selective field of vision is basically a good thing; it would be tiring and pointless to observe everything. When buying long grain rice in a supermarket you do not need, nor have time, to study all the soya milk or every variation of chutney. The same as when reading a web article about marketing, the link to a gossip column about a film actor is again irrelevant. In honing these skills though, we also become too focused. There may be a link to an article about something that is also relevant. It may also mean that we are led to the subjects or products that others have made more prominent, either intentionally or accidentally, instead of following what we choose to consider interesting or important.

Here is an exercise that will re-address the balance between taking in everything, most of which is not necessary, and being so focused that you miss other things of potential interest. When you are reading an article on the web, take twenty seconds just to scan the edges. When you are in a shop take less than a minute to scan all the other things in front, and just to the side, of you. When you are traveling, take in the entire street or bus or railway carriage. This simple act of just extending your field of vision upwards, downwards and to both sides, will then become the norm. Many people have occupations that mean a large amount of time is spent staring at a computer screen. It is so easy to carry this narrow focus away from the computer screen into other areas of our life, without even being aware that we are doing it.

Apparently at one rapidly expanding company they ask job candidates if they consider themselves lucky - the reason is that lucky people probably do not have more luck, they are just more observant.

Ian Stewart is a freelance composer and musician interested in writing and promoting classical chamber music. His website is www.ianstewart.eu

Support Local Economies



Frances Schagen is uniting and empowering small business owners into a community whose aim is to live the lives we want at <http://businessownerssuccessclub.com/>. Small business together is way bigger than big business and we could be making the world better.

Strategise

The old world relied on the status quo. The new world is built on change. Entire paradigms are collapsing and emerging with increasing frequency. To most people, this is frightening. Not everyone sees the current situation as exciting or awash with opportunity. If ever there was a time for a good, old-fashioned strategy, now would be it.

Those of us who feel there is real change taking place are inundated with projects and ideas and connections. But how can we make maximum positive impact in the shortest time? How can we prioritise when we can't measure the impact of our output as quickly as we'd like? These are not easy questions (for me anyway), but they are already becoming tactics not strategy.

Clearly, for an increasing number of people, there is much work to do to lead the change that is now inevitable. Chances are, if you are reading this, you are someone who agitates, who disrupts, who is always looking for the new angle. But we have a problem—we've been brought up to respect the way things are—and to an extent, this is holding us back. Each time we accept a "norm," we limit our strategic options. And we're back to tactics again.

Well here's a thought: all bets are off, nothing is off limits, every "system" can and should be questioned against your values.

Take a few minutes to examine a system that you take for granted.

Given time to think, could you redesign it in a way that creates positive change?

Given time to act, could you implement it in a way that makes sense?

(HINT: Can WE design and implement it NOW?)

Inspired by Jessica Hagy's venn diagram in "What Matters Now"

Mark Richards is the founder of [expw: consulting](#), a boutique consulting firm concerned about how organisations communicate with their customers.

Try Virtual

If we consider the time left for direct and human contact, virtual connections appear to have diminished "real" face time. Many of us are busy building social networks with faraway friends, and "unfriend" became a recent word of the year. New technologies are an experiment. What do we lose? What do we gain?

Let's take an eagle's-eye view to cover time before we called this a helicopter view.

We would walk for days or hours to meet. We could entrust a message to a traveler, hoping it was relayed without too much alteration. If literate and blessed with a functioning mail system, letters and cards saved us time. Books, once an elite possession, got cheaper and grew newsy. Horses, bicycles, and ships brought us closer together, and so did the railway.

The telegraph connected us faster. Telephone, radio and amateur radio gave us instant connections. The tone of voice carried more emotion than any medium before it, save direct human contact. Most frequent use of the phone? To make an appointment.

Finally, action at a distance. TV brought home virtual cutouts of what happened. We watched as if with our own eyes, ever more mindful of the channel's choices and filters.

Videophones took off when businesses valued remote conferences. Ever cheaper computers, webcams, and bandwidth connect more of us today. Video conveys more emotion than any medium before, be it live or recorded. Countless channels archived online. Yet, we write and read more than ever before.

What happens if you close the circle—if you meet someone whom you know only virtually?

Strike "only." Meet and expect a surprising sense of knowing each other. Feels like trust at first sight—based just on prior virtual face-time. It is not virtual trust. It feels real and earned.

I call it augmented trust. Try it.

Bernd Nurnberger is an electrical engineer, co-author of a few eBooks, blogs and tweets as [CoCreatr](#).

Enjoy Wrong Turns

When traveling, whether in life or on the road, it's a good idea to take the occasional wrong turn and see where it leads you. My life has been blessed with good friends, love, commitment and meaningful work—and many of these gifts were the result of wrong turns of one kind or another.

Think about some of the "Sliding Doors" moments in your life: a missed plane, an unsuccessful job interview, a youthful broken heart. In the absence of these "wrong turns," you wouldn't be doing what you're doing now, and you wouldn't be connected to the people, ideas and movements that are now the focus of your life. It's entirely possible that some wrong turns are the source of the life you have now.

The other "Sliding Doors" moments are the ones that feel like "right turns," but ones we never could have planned: meeting the right person at the right time, an inspiring encounter that changes your life, a compelling idea, an invitation, a glance ...

It's unsettling to think that we don't plan our lives, but that we discover them (or they discover us). What keeps us from simply drifting and foundering on the rocks—ah! remember the divine turbulence of sex, drugs and rock and roll—are "compass-values" so deeply embedded in our histories that we're likely to be unaware of them until they surface in times of crisis. We spend our early lives in a sea of unspoken value signals and if we're lucky, that sea might include some of [these](#) elements.

In the realm of sailing for pleasure, there's a delightful tradition called "[gunkholing](#),"—meandering from place to place, exploring shallows, spending the night in coves. It's not an entirely random experience—we still have to pay attention to tides and depth charts—but there's joy in the simple act of letting go, getting off the course you've charted and discovering the hidden beauty around that bend in the water.

Enjoy your wrong turns!



David Wetherow is a community-builder, teacher and writer who is working towards communities where every individual is cherished and everyone's gift is systematically identified and mobilized. His website is called [CommunityWorks](#).

Interconnect

Identifying isolating details is a defense mechanism. It's a way we protect ourselves from ideas we don't like. If you find yourself looking for the loopholes in an argument, you should stop to ask yourself what it is about that idea that makes you uncomfortable. It's one thing to fuss over minutia out of a desire to make an idea stronger; it's another to do so out of a desire to tear an idea down. If you're an attorney, that's cool. It's what you do. If you're not, ask yourself why you're acting like one.

My father taught me that there is a right and a wrong way to do a particular thing. He's mostly correct; the paths we choose tell us something about our intentions. You have to be present and willing to be honest with yourself to understand your intentions. Once you are, you've not only gained a source of power, you've also opened yourself up to intuiting the interconnectedness of all things. Seriously.

"Spirit" need not be religious or supernatural in nature. Spirit is simply a way of describing the essential qualities that make you so undeniably, powerfully you. When we engage one another in open, honest discourse, sharing and receiving ideas with great compassion and empathy, we build bridges that span what makes us different and unite what makes us the same.

Take the time to build these bridges. Look for the ideas that interconnect and not the details that isolate. Before you know it, you'll find yourself at the center of a vast web of relationships. The more you seek interconnectedness, the more others will follow suit. Your web will grow.

Your web will become a tribe.

Go. Build a tribe.

Ricardo Gonzalez is an IT leader with the pen of a poet, the soul of an artist, and a penchant for [philosophizing](#) in his basement.

Dream

"Dreamers see the world, not the way it is, but the way it should be!"

Everything around you started as a thought in someone's mind. Every structure. Every accomplishment. Even every being.

It began as a nebulous, formless vibration. A yearning for something that isn't—yet. A longing for what should be. A craving for what might.

A dream.

In time, it took form and shape. Got tangible. Became real.

But, only a few dreams come true. Those are the dreams we believed in—with all our heart.

Dreams we treasured and replayed over and over in our minds. Dreams we preserved against the ups and downs of fate. Dreams we nurtured safely in our hearts until the time was right.

So ... Dream Consciously

No, not how you dream in your sleep. Those you forget when you wake up. They have little impact, if any, on reality.

"Conscious dreams" are those you have intentionally—even when you're awake!

They are fuelled by hope and ambition, desire and want, purpose and passion. They are dreams you keep alive even when that little voice at the back of your head keeps saying you're foolish to.

Your conscious dreams are what drive you to keep going—every day of your life.

And they are dreams that come true. But only when you believe in them. Infuse them with a special energy.

It can be hard to believe in dreams. They often seem impossible, unattainable, unreal. Yet believe you must, for the trite phrase is so true: "Whether you think you can, or think you cannot, you are right!"

Can all your dreams come true?

Yes ... if you believe in them strongly enough. A worthy dream is worth spending a lifetime pursuing. A positive dream energizes everyone to support and sustain it. A purposeful dream taps into the collective consciousness of humanity.

So dream. Believe. And succeed.

Dr. Mani Sivasubramanian is a heart surgeon whose dream is coming true. As an Internet infopreneur, he creates and sells information products to raise funds for the treatment of sick children. To date, 55 heart operations have been sponsored, with many more to follow. Learn more at <http://www.DrMani.com>

Be Busy-less

- Pledge to stop being a pack rat. When in doubt, throw it out.
- Pledge to kill endless to-do lists. Prioritize mercilessly, and ALWAYS work on the most important (not most urgent) thing.
- Pledge to focus on quality of time at work, and quantity of time at home.
- Pledge to own one single, solitary, lone item of value this year. Make it your super power.
- Pledge to "eat that frog" every morning. Do the toughest, ugliest, hairiest thing first, daily. (concept from Brian Tracy)
- Pledge to stop multi-tasking. In the age of computers, it's not that impressive. And, it's not that productive either.
- Pledge to procrastinate about procrastination. If it matters, just do it now. It doesn't get easier if you do it later.
- Pledge to use your Blackberry or iPhone as a paperweight half the time. Email is the parasite of productivity.
- Pledge to plan your work before doing it. Not doing so is like driving cross-country without a map.
- Pledge to say "no" a lot more often, in as many creative ways as you can muster. It will change your life. A wise person once said. "Most of us spend our health chasing money ... only to spend our money chasing health."

Save your health.

Work hard on stuff that matters.

Start to re-engineer your life away from stuff that doesn't matter.
(Most of the stuff we do, doesn't matter.)

You can do this. Now. Today. Read Brian Tracy's *Reinvention*, for an example of how.

Bolaji Oyejide is a self-development fiction writer. He tells stories about [escaping the rat race](#) and finding your true calling.

Ask Great Questions

What's under the ocean? How does a heart know to beat? What do stars taste like?

As children, we needed a way to absorb the wisdom and facts whirling around us. Our tool was *the question*. It was our straw to life's milkshake.

As we grew up, we became increasingly sure of ourselves, replacing questions with guesses, and finally those guesses with assumptions. We've lost our straw.

What we can do now, is ask great questions again.

ASK AN EXPERT: What is the most common mistake novices make in your field?

The answer to this will immediately discourage you from making the very mistake you were most likely to make. A chef once answered me, "That's easy: Over-seasoning. Just use salt, pepper, olive oil and garlic. That's really all you need - let the food you're cooking express itself!" Instantly I was a better cook. What else could you ask an expert?

ASK A LOVE INTEREST: What part of your personality do you think it takes people the longest to discover?

They might be wrong, but even if they are, you know what *they* think is the most hidden part of their personality, and that speaks volumes. If they're right, you're aware of what might have otherwise taken you months or years to discover.

ASK YOUR EMPLOYEE: Where do you think you and I could improve?

Give them the opportunity to self correct at the same time you ask for criticism. This puts them in control and minimizes defensiveness. What other creative questions could you ask at work?

ASK THE INTERNET: Why is ... ?

If you type a question into Google, it will predict what you'll ask based on what others are asking. What's remarkable about this is that more and more, people are asking Google questions, not just typing in keywords. With this new proverbial parent-that-knows-all called the Internet, we find ourselves with straw in hand, ready to drink the milkshake again. It's no mistake that typing "Why is ..." suggests first "Why is the sky blue?" What will you ask Google?

They say this is the information age because information is easier to access than ever before. We can wonder something and literally know the answer seconds later. What we can do now is ask great questions, of ourselves, each other and the world.

Here's how: Make a list of 50 questions. Do it with your friends, family or alone. Don't think, just write. You'll be amazed at the results. Do snails sneeze? What's for dinner?

David Benjamin Kopp is a music producer, songwriter, and creative analyst whose other passions include, philosophy, marketing, [graphic design](#), [consulting](#), acting ridiculous, and of course asking questions.

Simplify

We're overdoing it. Mozart in utero. Shuffling three-year olds from soccer to swimming to piano. Dunking them in antibacterial soap. Hovering at the playground, ready to swoop in and save her from that big bully, Hannah. Junior gets a C+ in math and we call the school to demand "ANSWERS!" We've come to view parenthood as project management – and our kids are Version 1.0.

Hyper-parenting is the new normal. "Keeping up with the Joneses" isn't just about cars or homes anymore. We're engaged in an arms race to build nuclear children. If you're not training a three-sport athlete by age four, it's hard not to wonder, "Will my kid be the last picked?" Suddenly, children playing outdoors by themselves (*gasp* in the street!) are a product of parental neglect.

It all seems unhealthy.

Unhealthy for kids: we're stripping them of the opportunity to make choices and fail. Which stinks, since failing and trying again is the only way humans truly learn and grow.

Unhealthy for families: lost in the shuffle is time to laugh, play, and grow together.

Unhealthy for society: we're creating burned-out, failure-fearing, helpless young adults who finally learn actions/consequences at age 18 ... or later.

Let's slow down. Drop the fallacy of perfection. Let our kids fail. Send them outside to play. Ditch a few activities. Play a game. Laugh. Seek balance.

Simplify. (Sorry, gotta run—we're late for swimming lessons!)

Phil Haussler is the author of [Following Featherbottom](#) and curator of [Project OpenBook](#), a community-generated poetry book with proceeds going to children's literacy.

Know Your Purpose

As the conductor raises his arm slowly, baton in hand, the orchestra-machine looks upon the conductor, ready to begin to play their instruments upon receiving a cue, a lead, a wink and a nod ... it's time for you to begin.

This moment of acknowledgment from the conductor to the orchestra is a connection between individuals with a shared purpose.

Each instrument in the orchestra is perfectly crafted and in tune.

Instruments when played solo produce beautiful sounds that command attention.

When instruments come together, as in an orchestra, the solo sound plays along in harmony with many other perfectly crafted, in-tune solo sounds. Together, their shared attunement, with purpose and intent, produces a musical work that fills the ear with harmony, a sense of applause soon due, and exclamations of "That was awesome!"

Connectedness is effectiveness, but connectedness with purpose can mean perfection personified.

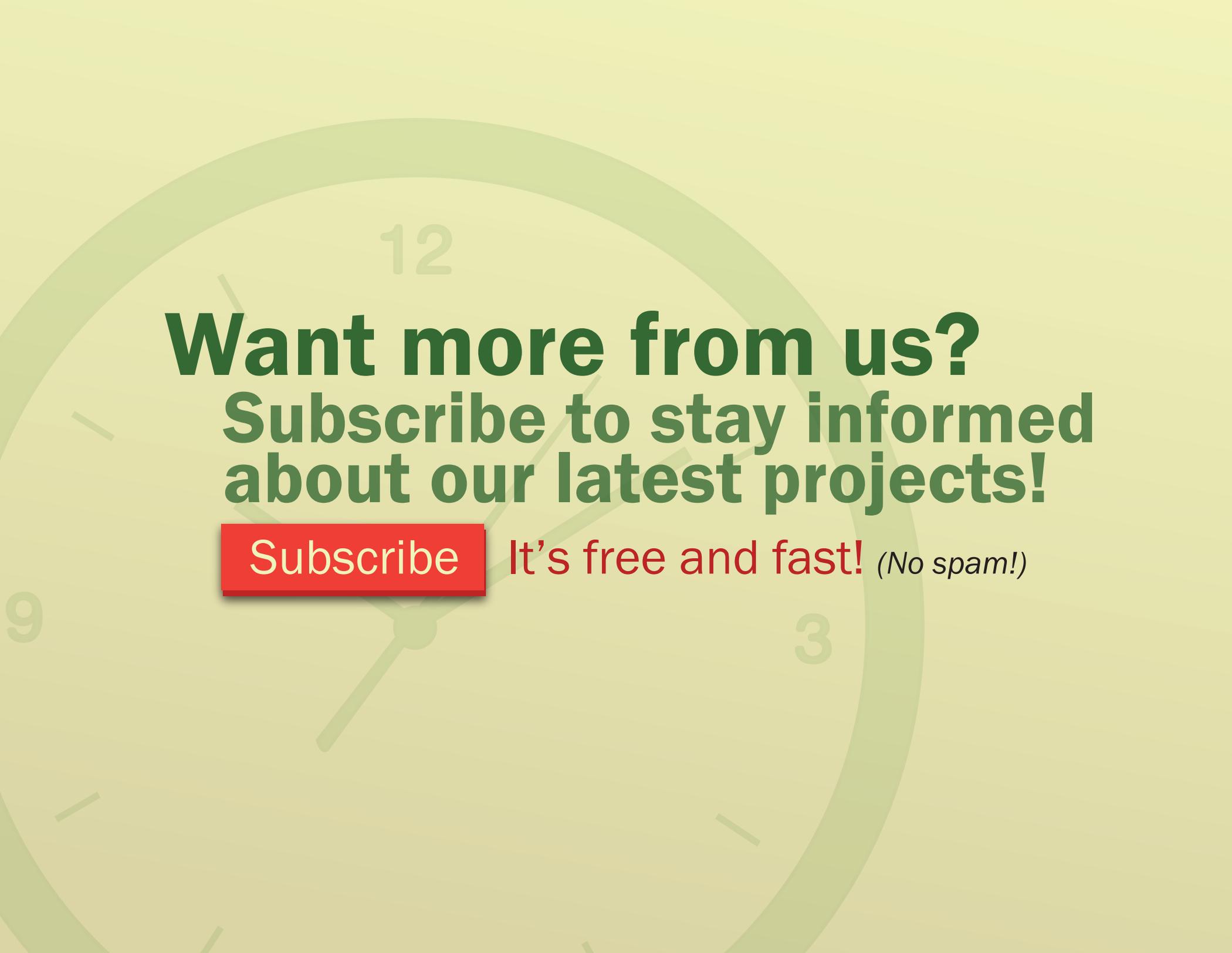
When an orchestra connects with purpose it produces a beautiful sound that touches and inspires.

When people connect with purpose, creativity flourishes, innovation occurs, change happens, people notice and ideas spread.

We are connecting, but are we connecting with purpose?

What You Can Do Now ... Here's How, is to know your sense of purpose, to connect and effect. Your time is now and here is your cue.

Bronwyn McConville is an Entrepreneur who gives. Bronwyn is a triibester @ www.triibes.com, StorySearcher on twitter, Founder, Leader and Creative Director working to deliver change by Inspiring Entrepreneurship In Communities. Email Bronwyn at info@brightsparks.me with your thoughts and stories about the change you would like to see happen in your Community and help Make Change Real.



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