Sustainability and Resilience Require A Shift "From Me to We"

For The Garrison Institute CMC Program

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NO "SUSTAINABILITY" AT 2C!

- "Sustainability" is a <u>goal</u>—a normative concept describing the continuation and maintenance of things society values.

- But there will be <u>no</u> "sustainability" at 2C plus temperature rise!

- Likely norm will be continual crises management and <u>triage</u> to determine which functions to try to protect and which to abandon (which we might often call "<u>adaptation</u>").

My Research Question:

How Should We Think & Act Knowing 2C Is Likely?

• **Physical preparedness, and biological adaptation, are important—but we don't know much & surprises will dominate.**

• **One sure thing: unforeseen & changing physical and economic damage---and associated psycho-social stresses will be the norm.**

• **So, most important quality will likely be social resilience!**

Social Resilience

The ability of groups to work together to withstand and bounce back from adversity, trauma, tragedy in constructive ways.

Is more a characteristic of a social system than a goal.

Core Traits of Social Resilience:

- Inclusion of others
- Acceptance of diverse perspectives
- Trust and mutual respect
- Care for the wellbeing of others
- Responsiveness to the needs of others

These traits are important because they signal *reciprocity:*

By taking care of others, your needs and will also be met.

In Short

Social resilience requires a fundamental shift from "Me" to "We" focused thinking and engagement.

Social Resilience Might be Difficult Because

U.S. is a "Me" Focused Society

- "Extreme Individualism" dominates.

- Our controlling cultural narrative is to be self sufficient and to celebrate our separateness, individuality and individual successes.

- Many discount or deny presence or value of "We" focused traits.

- Our economic system and technologies reinforce this belief.
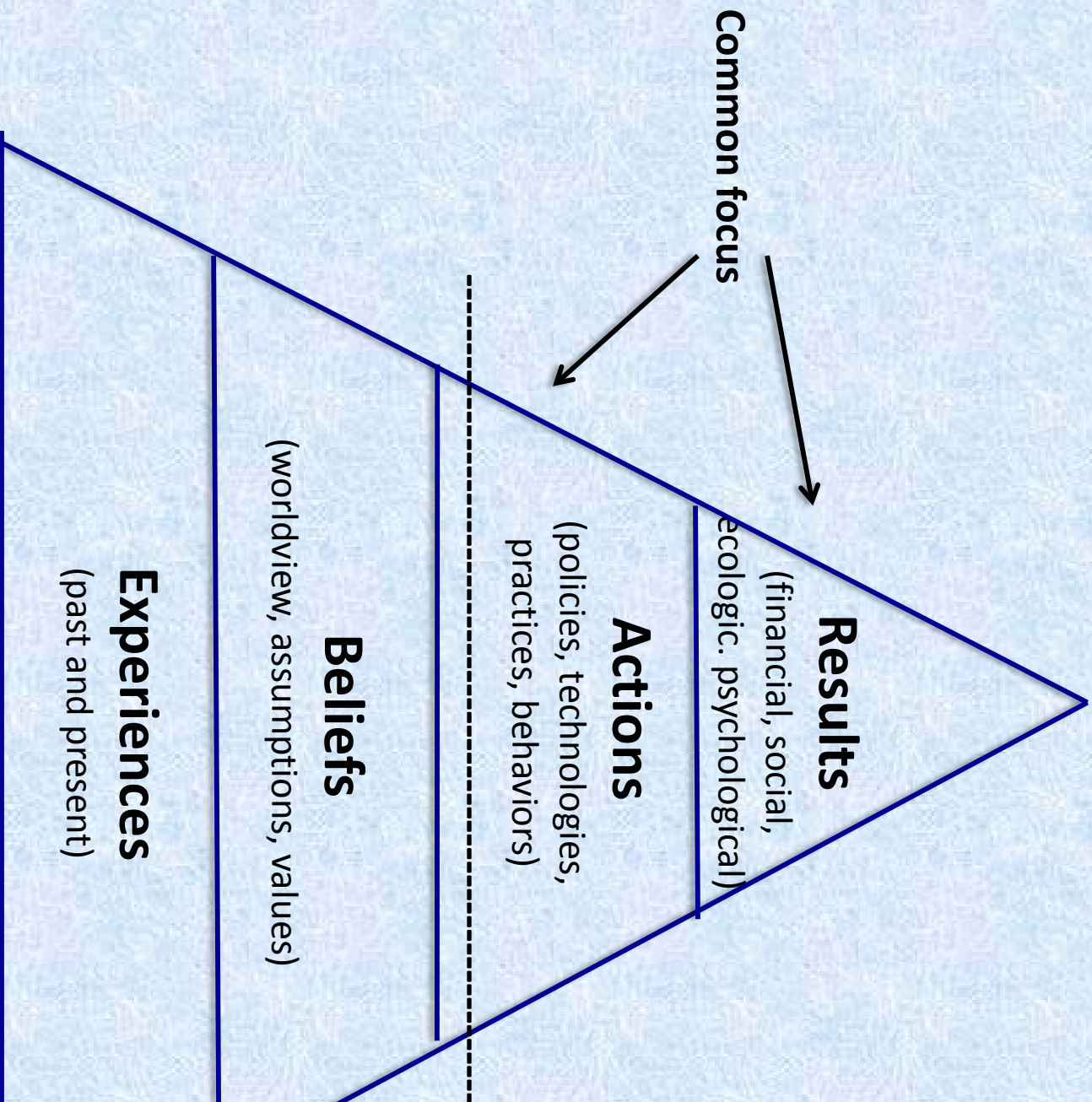
Implications For Climate Practitioners

The capacity of a group to develop social resilience depends on both:

- The personal characteristics of the individuals involved, and

- The design of the social structures in which they interact.

Questions:

- Can areas w/high socio-economic inequity build social resilience?

- Can the top-down, hierarchical, technocratic approaches of many government planning programs enhance social resilience?

THE PYRAMID OF CHANGE FROM 'ME' TO 'WE'

Common focus

Results
(financial, social,
ecologic. psychological)

Actions
(policies, technologies,
practices, behaviors)

Beliefs
(worldview, assumptions, values)

Experiences
(past and present)

Building social
resilience
requires
changes in
all four levels
of the pyramid,
*with a major
emphasis on
the bottom of
the pyramid*

CONSCIOUSLY BUILDING SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Requires experiences that alter beliefs & help people grasp interdependencies, cause and effect, and reciprocity.

• **Must generally emphasize positive change: "we can achieve more together than alone" (thus has similarities to positive psychology).**

• **Strategies need to be designed with specific types of stresses in mind (e.g. physical damage, emotional distress due to physical losses).**

• **Requires building deliberative mechanisms and governance structures that enhance social resilience within groups.**

SAMPLE INTERVENTIONS

Level of Analysis	Sample Constructs	Intervention Types
Families/small social groups	• Acceptance of diversity of views and behavior • Mutuality • Generosity	• Interaction analysis • Group problem solving and communications • Diversity training to foster inclusion and reduce isolation
Communities/large social groups	• Collaborative ties • Reciprocity • Fairness • Distributive and restorative justice • Impartiality in decision making • Inclusive leadership	• Social resilience analysis • Equality in the distribution of resources. • Interventions that enhance group identity • Strength-based initiatives • Grass-roots collaboration that foster inclusive social networks.

(Adapted from Cacioppo, Reiss and Zautra 2011)

EXAMPLES

- **Healthy Communities Programs (CDC and others)**

Goal is to achieve health equity, eliminate socio-economic and racial/ethnic health disparities, and improve the health of all groups.

Emerged from the World Health Organization' Ottawa Charter, which describes the **"prerequisites for health"** as encompassing a broad set of variables: **peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity.**

Basic to the approach is the process of enabling people to increase control over and **to improve their health**, with **health defined as a resource for everyday life.**

Healthy Communities is a **very different way of approaching health from the traditional individualistic**, remedial medical services system that dominates America. Communities are asked to **identify & improve social determinants of health.**

•National Civic League's All American City and Civic Index Programs

Provide a framework within which communities can <u>increase their problem solving **capacity.**</u>

Provides a **method and a process** for <u>**identifying strengths and weaknesses**</u> and then **structuring collaborative solutions** to problems.

Offers an environment within which communities can <u>**undertake a self evaluation of their civic infrastructures**</u>.

Creating civic infrastructure is not the goal in itself—it is a community's <u>**first step toward building its capacity to deal with critical issues.**</u>

CoreStone Center's Children and Youth Resilience Program

Designed to be flexibly adapted to school-day schedules, after-school programs, and non-traditional youth-serving environments. Includes 26 one-hour facilitated peer group sessions, with 10-12 students per group. A shortened form of the program of 12-16 weeks duration is also available.

Each weekly session combines a structured curriculum grounded in a **strengths-based youth development approach**, with **facilitated peer support** designed to **build collaboration and community, proactively address and mitigate conflict**, and **encourage peer problem solving**.

Each session is co-facilitated by two adult leaders, typically supervised MFT or MSW interns trained in an intensive 5-day training, with periodic mentorship and support provided throughout its duration.

How can the principles and methods of these and other examples be applied to building social resilience for climate disruption?

SOME TRIG INITIATIVES

- Climate Futures Forums

- National Partnership for Climate Solutions (aka Climate Summit 2013 Coalition)

- National Climate Ethics Campaign

In Development: U.S. Climate Resilience Index

The Five Natural Laws and 'Commitments' of Shift

"From Me to We"

Natural Law	Commitment
1. Law of interdependence	See the ecological and social systems you are part of
2. Law of cause and effect	Account for all of the consequences of your actions on those systems
3. Law of moral justice	Abide by humanity's long held moral principles to 'do no harm'
4. Law of trusteeship	Take responsibility for the continuation of all life & 'do good'
5. Law of free will	Choose you own destiny

LEADERS

Leaders are called to stand in that lonely place

Between the no longer and the not yet,

and intentionally make decisions

That will bind, forge, move, and create history.

We are not called to be popular.

We are not called to be safe.

We are not called to follow.

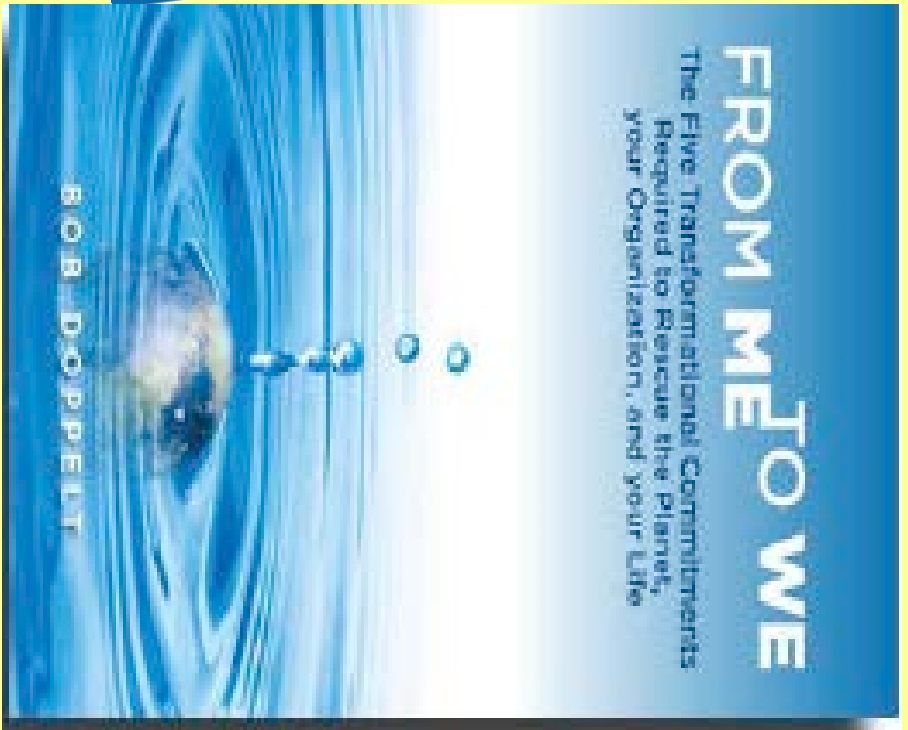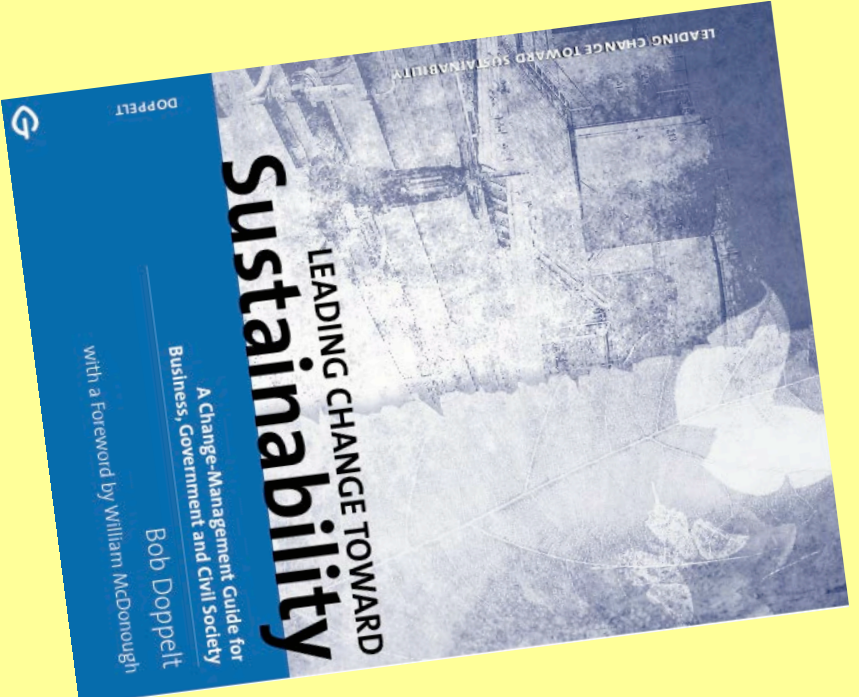We are the ones called to change attitudes,

To risk displeasures.

We are the ones called to gamble our lives

For a better world.

Mary Lou Anderson

'From Me to We':

The five transformational commitments required to rescue the planet, your organization and your life.

(Greenleaf Publishing UK)