

DISMANTLING NEOLIBERALISM

Dismantling Neoliberalism: What You and I Can Do – Aug 2016 – Mullumbimby – Ngara Institute

My experience is that we all have stories about things that achieved some level of success in ‘making things better’, and some things that, on reflection, were probably a waste of effort. After 50+ years of working with ‘progressive change’, and reflecting on the processes involved, I would like to share with you **10 strategies** that work (especially in conjunction with one another), and that I believe we need to do more of – and support these ideas with some personal examples. You will see how different they are from the usual approaches and recommendations, such as: funding research, writing Ministers, demonstrating/protesting, donating money, etc. These are not ‘bad’ things to do – but they are likely to be more effective if they are emergent from the sort of things I have listed below – not as ‘first actions’, which often just enable us to ease our pain and frustration, let off steam, blame others, delegate action to others, etc. I would then like to provide an opportunity for you to share one or two of your ideas and experiences (working in pairs) – and to record and subsequently share these; and then to do a ‘revolutionary visioning exercise’ that works hundreds of times better than any you may have tried up to now!

1. Publicly (and selectively) communicate successes to enable their spread – and have a daily/weekly practice of doing this – and promote such sharing (this may require overcoming fears of being seen as a ‘tall poppy’!)
2. Reframe ‘problems’ as ‘indicators of maldesigned and mismanaged systems’ that require creative redesign – rather than as ‘enemies’ to be eliminated by curative interventions – and continue to develop and apply your ‘design skills’ (in every area)
3. Meet people who need to change where they are; ask them ‘strategic questions’ and listen to their stories (rather than telling them what to do); and, with them, identify their doable next steps (however small) – avoid dreaming up ‘Olympic-scale programs’ that are unlikely to ever be implemented, and also programs to ‘measure problems’ (‘monitoring-our-extinction’ research! – one of the commonest institutional strategies for avoiding and postponing action)
4. Model what you are advocating – and acknowledge and ask for forgiveness for your ‘failures’ in doing this
5. Adopt a person with positional power, and provide them with a second chance at developing to their full potential
6. Look for areas of success, and see if the factors involved can be applied in areas desperate for such success
7. Identify effective potential mentors – contact them, learn from them, and offer to help them
8. Communicate with and thank those who have helped you throughout your life – and map and record these experiences and their influences – and share your stories with others (including your children, if you have any)
9. Recognise ‘opposition’ as possible indicators of psychological wounding – and of subconscious cries for help – not as ‘enemies’ to argue with – so listen well to clearly identify their needs, and do what you can to enable them to get their needs met (and heal their hurts)
10. Consider the complexity of the key interrelated influencing factors involved in any situation (avoid the deceptive simplicity of seeing any single factor as being the cause) – and critically select the ‘keystone’ one(s) to work with

Relationships between the Personal (psychosocial) & Socio-Cultural

(political, institutional & business structures & processes) - Stuart B Hill (s.hill@westernsydney.edu.au)

YouTube of the talk can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/RdAWokEU64M>

Note: This is presented as a dualistic table only as a teaching/learning tool – reality is much more complex

CORE ‘HEALTHY’ SELF (unwounded, significantly healed)	(MAL)ADAPTED SELVES (wounded, inadequately healed)
Loving (giving & receiving), caring, open, sense of oneness	Fearful , ‘enemy-oriented’, closed, isolated, disconnected
Social , relational, acknowledging, appreciative, supportive, empathetic, interdependent, mutualistic, gifting, sharing, collaborative (across difference), playful, celebrational	Individualistic , exclusionary, competitive, limited sociability, image sensitive, defensive
Holistically aware (internal & external), values feedback, qualitative & whole system (incl. cycles, edges & the unknown) focus, wisdom, intuition	Unaware , selectively closed-off (me-focus), quantitative, reductionist, distracted from context & whole, ‘left-brain’, linear, known & empirical focus, cleverness

Empowered , vibrant, curious, creative, flexible, sense of enough (needs focussed), sense of wonder, “WOW”!	Disempowered , deadened, inflexible, zero-sum thinking, complaining, blaming, accusatory, judgemental, generalising, oppressor, never enough (unsatisfiable wants & associated neediness), “SO WHAT”!
Spontaneous (in present), free, in flow	Patterned , compensatory & controlling behaviours (in past & future focus), trapped, victim, addicted, in denial
‘Core’ visions & values , clear mission(s), purpose, commitment, focussed	Compromised & compensatory values & visions , much is meaningless & joyless
Informed appropriate action, proactive , responsible, relevant, effective	Acting out, postponing, reactive , irresponsible, over-responsible, often not relevant, ineffective (re needs & long-term & broad contexts)
Attentive to system maintenance (sust. prodn. a by-product), building resilience, life-long learning & system development, (re)generative	Productivity (profit & power) focus , living off capital & import, extractive, vulnerable, degenerating systems
‘NEW RENAISSANCE’ (?) CHARACTERISTICS GOVERNMENTS, INSTITUTIONS, BUSINESSES & LIVES	NEOLIBERAL CHARACTERISTICS GOVERNMENTS, INSTITUTIONS, BUSINESSES & LIVES
Equity , inclusion, collaboration, co-operacy, reciprocity, dispersed networks (e.g. energy gen.)	Inequity , separation, exclusion, growing elite, hierarchy, patriarchy, competition, control, centralised
Universal wellbeing, quality of life , GDHappiness, Happy Planet Index, workers’ & human standards & rights, environmental protection, appropriate aid	Possessions, standard of living , GDPProduct, declining workers’ rights, undermining the sharing economy & environment, aid as investment
Ecological sustainability , common good, nature as mentor, building non-monetary capital, the commons	Growing material productivity , consumption, profit, monetary capital & power, efficient machines as mentors
Respecting bio-ecological limits & processes , bio-ecomimicry, polycultures	Ignoring, aiming to transcend natural limits & processes , monocultures
Long-term, broad, deep : global to short-term local	Short-term, narrow, shallow : global to local
Proactive system design (to enable goals & prevent problems), context specific, management in service of leadership <i>Diverse complementary currencies, not-for-profit businesses, modern monetary theory, new economics...</i>	Reactive problem-solving , with curative overkill interventions, decontextual, with numerous harmful side-effects, management masquerading as leadership

These are 10 bold LIES (uncensored, yet-to-be-true, personal stories) **that have enabled me** (in collaboration with others) **to effectively lay the foundations for ENABLING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE** (& ‘DISMANTLING NEOLIBERALISM’)

Write YOUR LIE(S) (your first uncensored thoughts) re the below area(s) of most relevance to you

1. I publicly (& selectively) communicate my experiences, understandings & successes to enable their spread – & I have a daily/weekly practice of doing this – I also promote such sharing (despite any past fears of being regarded as a ‘tall poppy’, or being ridiculed or critiqued in any way for doing this!)

2. I reframe all (non-inherited – personal to cultural) ‘problems’ as ‘indicators of maladapted, maldesigned & mismanaged systems’ that require creative recovery & redesign – rather than as ‘enemies’ to be eliminated by/ fixed with powerful (‘magic-bullet’) curative interventions – & I continue to develop & apply my ‘recovery & design skills’ in every area
3. I meet people who want/need to change where they are; ask them ‘strategic questions’ (& sometimes reframe their situation) & listen to their stories (rather than telling them what to do); & I help them to identify their doable next steps (however small) – avoiding dreaming up ‘Olympic-scale programs’ that are unlikely to ever be implemented; & also avoid programs to ‘measure problems’ (‘monitoring-our-extinction’ research! – this is one of the commonest institutional strategies for avoiding & postponing action) – re my own activities I focus on what I call “small-meaningful-initiatives that I can guarantee to carry through to completion”
4. I model what I am advocating – & acknowledge & ask for forgiveness for my ‘failures’ in doing this
5. I have adopted a person with positional power, & I am providing them with opportunities (a ‘second chance’) to develop to their full
6. I look for areas of success, & see if the factors involved can be applied in areas that might benefit from such approaches (one of the commonest effective strategies involves systematically ‘using the media!’)
7. I have identified the most relevant & effective (in the world) potential mentor for me – I have contacted her/him, learned from him/her, & I have also offered to help her/him
8. I have communicated with & thanked those who have helped me throughout my life (list them) – & mapped & recorded these experiences & their influences – & I have shared my stories relating to these experiences with others, including my family (especially my children) & friends
9. I recognise all ‘opposition’ by others (list them & type of opposition) as possible indicators of their psychological wounding – & of subconscious cries for help – not as ‘enemies’ to argue with or overcome – so I listen well to clearly identify their needs, & do what I can to enable them to get their needs met (& heal their hurts) [Paradoxically I find this hardest to do with those I love the most]
10. I consider the complexity of the key interrelated influencing factors involved in any situation (name one) – while avoiding the deceptive simplicity of seeing any single factor as being the cause of any problem – & I critically select the ‘keystone’ factor(s) to start working with

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Latest PPTs: www.stuartbhill.com & <http://www.scribd.com/doc/55937783>

Latest YouTubes: www.wakeupsydney.com.au/Interviews/The-SandboxSyndrome.aspx;
<http://youtu.be/mzY1eZLwOdk> & <https://vimeo.com/123569201>

My latest books are ***Ecological Pioneers: A Social History of Australian Ecological Thought and Action*** (with Dr Martin Mulligan; Cambridge UP, 2001), ***Learning for Sustainable Living: Psychology of Ecological Transformation*** (with Dr Werner Sattmann-Frese; Lulu, 2008) and ***Social Ecology: Applying Ecological Understanding to our Lives and our Planet*** (with Dr David Wright and Dr Catherine Camden-Pratt; Hawthorn, 2011).