

Harvest of the World Cafe at the EBBF conference, De Poort, “Growth or Sustainability”

Here's the harvest of the world cafe I hosted. This is based on the harvests provided by some of the hosts, and otherwise gleaned myself from the flipcharts. If you have any comments or builds, let me know. Regards, Graham Boyd (grahamboyd1 at gmail)

How do we get progress given the complexity of humans and their widely different goals?

- Start with the individual, via one on one, heart to heart conversations, expressing values.
- Bottom up, participatory processes.
- Move from 'acting from fear' to 'acting from wisdom'

What language leads to hope and action, not emasculated despair?

- The potency of our words is lost if they don't translate into action.
- Learn to listen
- Appreciate the efforts being made. (GB note: Appreciative Inquiry is a very effective tool to enable this. Contact me for more details.)
- Move to a positive paradigm celebrating and building, from our current paradigm of blame and fault finding.
- Focus on the listener's needs, not the speaker's.
- Develop encouragement, not judgement.

Small scale venture capital for responsible, sustainable values based start-ups.

- Go to the converted, rather than expend energy trying to change standard investors.
- Reach out to the community via online tools
- Create a vehicle for many people to invest small amounts.

Defining Prosperity and its Achievement

Prosperity is a state of being. True prosperity is the holistic fulfillment of all the physical and spiritual needs of the human being. The spiritual needs are related to

- the intellect (reasoning, memory, perception, imagination etc.;
- sentiment (love, intuition, compassion etc.;
- and volition

Thus wealth and growth are necessary but not sufficient conditions for prosperity. The economic system and its activities should bring about, in a sustainable way, material as well as intellectual and emotional growth, empowering people into action in the service of humanity. Prosperity should be considered the goal of human life.

How and where does the process of redefining Growth take place?

- Relate growth with values
- To reduce poverty pro-poor growth is needed
- About improving knowledge capacity

Measuring “Profitability” of sustainability to engage business community to convert.

- Triodos bank (ethical bank is its core business)
- On-line micro-finance
- 3% more for 'green' will pay for health interest and energy saving.

How can we empower ourselves and others?

- Motivation + Education = Energy
- Relevance. (personal and cultural)
- Obstacles are negative thinking and language, limited vision and lack of hope.

What do we do if ecological catastrophe is the providence to unite the human race?

- Reality is what we imagine can be, so if our mindset is opportunity we will find the appropriate steps.
- Present jointly pictures of calamity and what could be if we act together.
- For example, the calamity in Macedonia has generated two socially responsible businesses selling fair trade local products and village tourism.

Sharing

- There is more than enough, we just need to learn to share

Sharing is a deep human aspiration and makes me happy. What keeps me from sharing is fear, fear that I will not have enough, fear that the other person will take more than what I am willing to give. The other reason is upbringing: we have been taught that there are property laws - but many cultures do not have the same sense of property. Do we really own anything? Just because I "own" a piece of land, does it mean I also own the oil underneath?

We should keep what we need and share the surplus. What do we really need? Abdul Baha is said to have used only one coat, for example. Often possessions do not make happy because we are afraid to lose them, we have to repair them, etc. People who collect a lot of possessions may do so to try and fill an inner emptiness.

Often there is a win-win situation and sharing does not cost me anything but gives me more (we can use synergies, create efficiencies - for example I enjoy your company while giving you a ride).

Warning: it may be difficult to be very spiritual when you are rich.

Poverty has advantages, may be a blessing.

"There is enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed" (M. Gandhi).

And: "If we cared enough and shared enough, wouldn't there be enough?"

Sharing has to do with caring, which has to do with unity (if a baby dies in Africa it is as much a tragedy as if my baby dies).

We can share:

- talents (we all possess many gems of inestimable value)
- our culture (with immigrants)
- our time (with children, elderly, friends, ...)
- information (I have information that may be of use to you)

Institutional sharing is important too:

- Creating wealth through (social) entrepreneurship
- profit sharing (this is sometimes made difficult by corporate laws)
- it should not be judged but should be encouraged; it should not be mandatory but free.

What are the three things we can individually do now?

- Avoid the word "impossible" and keep hoping.
- Initiate a genuine and open conversation with all stakeholders on transformation
- Promote the value of work as a service.
- Promote learning with an open mind.