



Nine design lessons found in nature



Nature runs on sunlight

- What is an organization's version of sunlight? Sunlight is a free, constant, renewal able resource that fuels all life on this planet.
- Sunlight requires photosynthesis to translate the sun's energy into something that supports life. What is an organization's version of photosynthesis?
- What is the relationship between leadership and photosynthesis?



Waste is never wasted

- Nature uses waste to fuel new life. In nature waste is recycled or upcycled. Can we say the same for our organizations?
- What do we waste in our organization?
- Can we design and lead our organizations in a way that recycles or upcycles what we currently waste?



Fits form to function

- Nature constantly adapts form to fit function. A mountain stream will take on many different forms on its way to reach sea level. Why are human organizations so focused on form over function?
- How might an organization be structured to allow for the letting go of form to align with function? How is letting go of form connected to innovation and adaptation?
- What is an organization's version of function? Could it be purpose?



Rewards cooperation

- Nature teaches us that cooperation is essential in any interdependent system. What are the conditions in organizations or communities that are conducive to cooperation?
- In a world that is increasingly integrated, how do we create systems that reward cooperation among divisions and staff?
- What would senior (and other) teams look like if people understood their interdependence and authentic cooperation was rewarded?

Notes:



Banks on diversity

- What is the innate value of diversity in an interdependent system?
- Why does a diversified portfolio make so much sense in investing but not in our organizations?
- What is the risk in homogeneity?
- If our organizations banked on diversity, how would it change the way we see difference in our work environments?



Depends on local expertise and self-organization

- Nature tells us that context matters, so solutions that work in one place don't work in another. What if we assumed that each person and place and organization was unique? How would that impact our assumptions of universal design or one solution fits all situations?
- How would this principle change the way top down policies are framed and implemented?
- What would a decision look like if it left implementation to local control based on the expertise and understanding of their context?



Curbs excess from within

- Excess by definition generates waste. What forms of excess do we experience currently?
- What would our organizations look like if they only used the energy it needs to achieve its goals?
- What kinds of internal organizational design would create a culture that curbs excess from within its organizational boundaries?



Taps the power of limits

- Nature thrives within limits of temperature, moisture, soil conditions, location, etc. Organizations rarely embrace limits and see limits as challenges to overcome. What is the value of recognizing limits in our organization?
- How does innovation increase by tapping the power of limits?
- What would budget cutting look like if the organization recognized the limits of resources and focused on the allocation of what they have that would allow them to thrive?



Solutions disappear into the system by leading from a living system mindset

- Traditionally we add new organizational initiatives, like strategic planning, on top of current workloads. When nature adds things, the interventions disappear into the system. What would strategic plans look like if they were robust enough and designed in a way that totally integrated it into the organization without adding work?
- How would our change leadership differ if the criterion for success was that change was incorporated into the system, fully supported by our organizational employees?
- How much waste of energy and money is used to hold change initiatives in place because they are designed to be layered on top of the work instead of deeply integrated into the day to day work?


Notes:

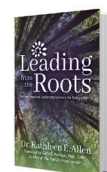
✉ **Speaking Engagement Inquiries**
 david@leadingfromtheroots.com

✉ **Consulting Inquiries**
 kathleen@leadingfromtheroots.com

☎ **Phone**
 320-654-6845

🌐 **Website**
 kathleenallen.net


Leading
 from the
Roots



Available at
amazon