



Principles Flashcards Key

Relinquish Control

Definition: The role of a successful design is to create a self-managed system.

Ecological Example: You set up a greywater system that pumps the greywater from your washing machine into your forest garden. You no longer need to fertilize or water your trees.

Social Example: A good organizer will organize themselves out of a job. You match people with the activities they like to do. For an event someone makes a flyer, restaurants donate extra food, musicians play music, children play in a child care area. On the day of the event everyone is doing their activities and you get to relax in the corner

Diversity

Definition: Use and value diversity.

Ecological Example: Instead of planting an orchard of apple trees you mix the fruit trees with understory plantings that support the trees pollination, pest control and nutrient accumulation. You run your chickens under the orchard to clean up drops and prevent disease.

Social Example: You take leadership from and are accountable to people that have been oppressed by our current system. You know that in order to have a culture that values people care we all must be free. We need to learn from those who have experienced first hand how the system is not working.

The Problem is the Solution

Definition: Think creatively and turn constraints into resources.

Ecological Example: Water is flooding your basement. You install a rain garden as the overflow to your rain barrel, turning the water that was in your basement into water storage in the soil and plant plants that build habitat for pollinators.

Social Example: There is a lack of living wage jobs and meaningful employment in your town. You join together with other people that have complimentary skill sets and work with your community development corporation, or a mentor company, to start your own business that improves your community.

Multiple Functions

Definition: Each element in a system is chosen and placed so that it supports as many activities as possible.

Ecological Example: Your asian pear tree provides fruit, shade carbon sequestration, and habitat for birds. You use the wood you prune off in the winter as scion for grafting onto ornamental pears and teach your community how to graft.

Social Example: Your neighborhood has a block party. At the party people help paint a mural on the side of the building that has been abandoned, neighbors put out items on their lawn for people to take, people bring their favorite recipes, neighbors meet other neighbors. There are conversations about how to make the neighborhood better. Several needs are met by this gathering.

Work within Nature

Definition: Functioning along with natural cycles results in higher yield and less work.

Ecological Example: You build soil the way a forest does. Instead of tiling you add layers of nitrogen and carbon where you want your garden to be. That material means less going to the landfill and more carbon sequestration in the soil.

Social Example: You are interested in organizing a conference around issues of hunger in your town. Instead of covering each aspect with members of your group, you investigate and involve groups that are already working on hunger. You know that linking these groups will have the greatest impact and that means less work for you.

Least Change, Greatest Effect

Definition: The less change that is created, the less embedded energy is used to create a system.

Ecological Example: You observe a new site for microclimates, where water goes, and how people move. You site your bioshelter in the one spot that gets winter and summer sun and is close to where you walk on a daily basis. Your observation leads to a well used and maintained bioshelter with thriving ecosystems.

Social Example: You move to a new town and want to get involved in community organizing there. Before you jump right in and assert your own ideas, you spend a year listening and getting to know the people and issues in this place. Once you understand the natural system of that community, its needs, assets and organizing principles, you decide to lend your ideas and skills to the labor organizers in town, where you are very effective.

Edge Effect

Definition: Two ecosystems come together to form a third which has greater fertility, productivity and diversity than either of the other two.

Ecological Example: Instead of planting in straight rows you plant in swales on contour. This allows more space for planting and keeps the plants from getting downed out during flood events.

Social Example: A group of water activists form a coalition with the clean air activists in their state. The political coalition allows for greater diversity of ideas and new collaborations on projects that did not previously exist with in their separate groups

On-Site Resources

Definition: Determine what resources are available and entering the system on their own, then maximize their use.

Ecological Example: You dig a pond to store water and use the clay you dug out to make an earthen floor in your tiny home.

Social Example: Community needs are not being met within a certain neighborhood. A few neighbors start a community mapping project to assess needs and assets from within the community. This saves community members' time, money and resources they would spend meeting their needs elsewhere.

Functional Interconnection

Definition: The (waste) products of one system meet the needs of another system reducing work, waste and pollution as the system meets its own needs

Ecological Example: You link the downspout of your shed into your pond. When it rains the pond fills and the new water keeps it clean.

Social Example: In your organization you practice the idea of a “social polyculture”. Instead of doing everything yourself you match your skills and needs with someone else with complementary skills; e.g., you do the plant research and someone draws the polyculture.

Redundancy

Definition: Every critical need is met in more than one way

Ecological Example: You use passive solar design and have a wood stove as a back up to heat your home.

Social Example: In your group or club you promote the idea of leadership sharing. You take turns facilitating meetings, planning agendas and work to train new people to gain those skills. If one leader gets busy or moves away the organization doesn't fall apart.