Plenary: Regenerative Thinking | Thursday, October 29, 2026 | 9:00 -11:30 a.m.

From Burnout to Regeneration: Reconnecting to What Matters in Climate Action

Richard V. Piacentini, President and CEO – Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
Sonja Bochart, Associate Principal – Lens| Shepley Bulfinch

Learning objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Help participants identify and articulate their individual purpose and how it informs their role in climate action.

2. Understand how regenerative paradigms influence decision-making and opportunities for systemic change.

3. Explore two pathways for taking aligned, life-centered action that restores both self and system

Agenda

Welcome & Introduction

- Explore: Reconnection + Challenges

Part 1: External: Our Relational Ecology

- Are you aligning with your organization and your community?

Part 2: Internal: Our Inner Ecology

- Are you optimizing your own regenerative nature?

Closing & Reflections

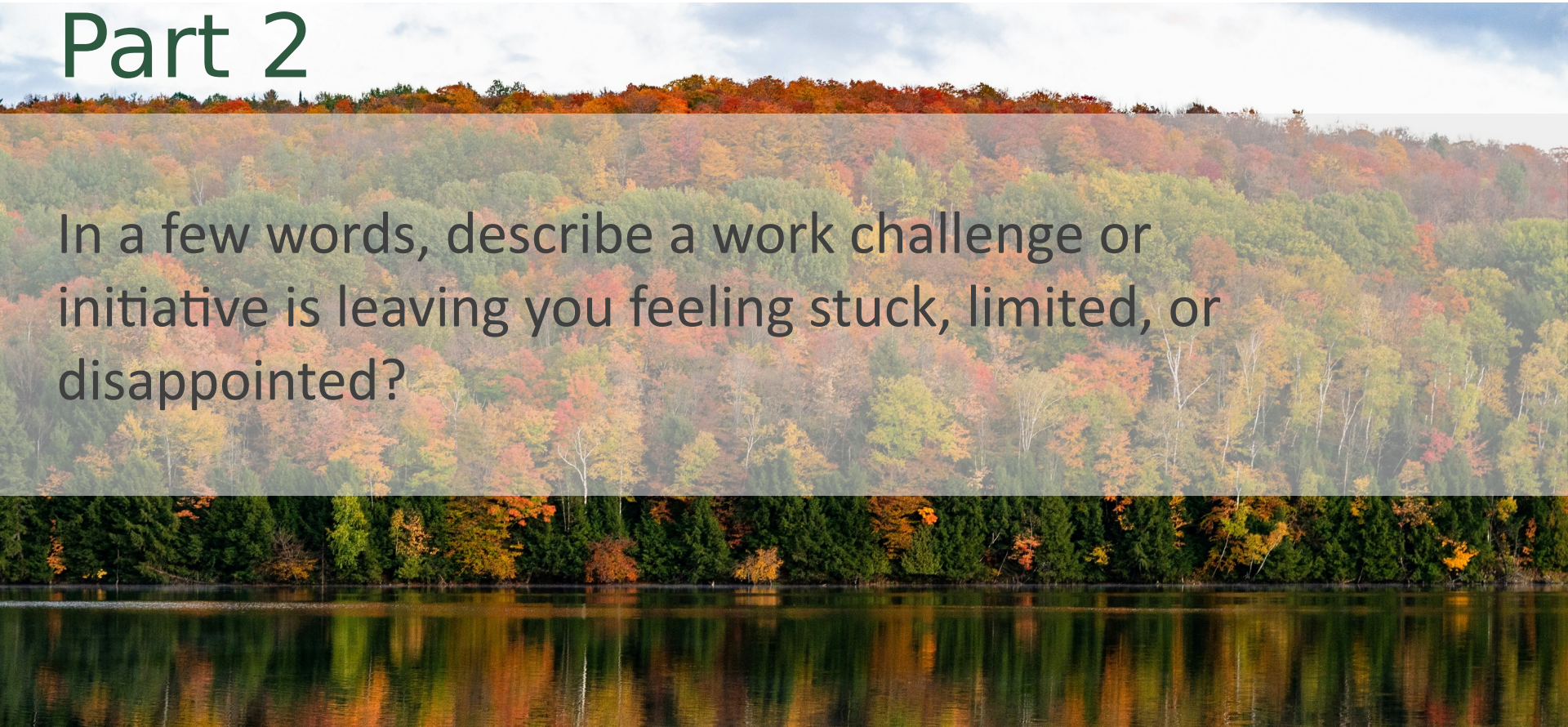
Opening Reflection Part 1



In a few words, describe your greatest purpose in your work?...

What do you care about?

Opening Reflection Part 2



In a few words, describe a work challenge or initiative is leaving you feeling stuck, limited, or disappointed?


A Regenerative
Shift

Part 1: Relational Ecology

External

1. **Work to shift the paradigm of your institution to regenerative**

2. Find areas of alignment within your institution and community



Four Different Paradigms for Interacting with the World

Adapted from Carol Sanford

EXTRACTIVE	LESS BAD	DO GOOD	REGENERATIVE
• Exchange Value • About Me • Fragments	• Stabilize or Arrest Disorder • About Us/Inter-connectedness • Fragments/ Stabilize them	• Improvement • About Us/ Reciprocity • Fragments/ Improve them	• Evolve Capacity • About Us/ Relationships • Whole

Measuring Success from Extractive to Regeneration

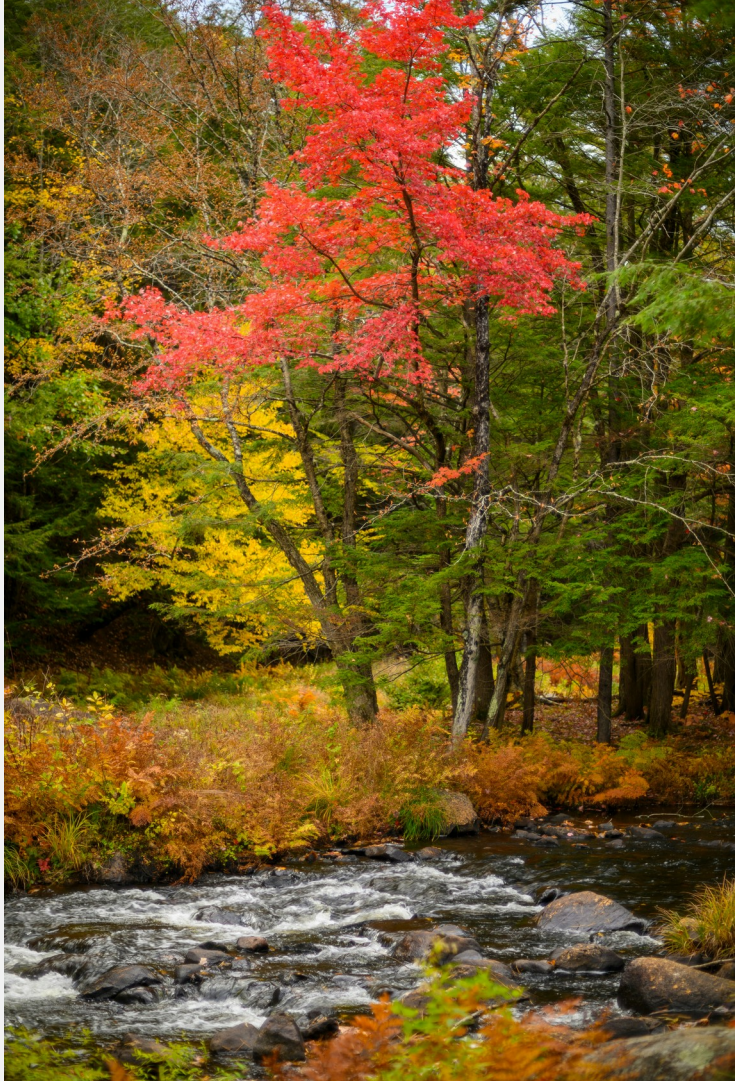
Dimension	Extractive KPI	Regenerative KPI
Cost	Minimize internal cost	Minimize total system cost
Profit	Short-term profit, ROI	Long-term value (30, 50, 100 years)
Investment Logic	Lowest up-front cost	Lifecycle cost and long-term return
Risk	Financial risk only	Ecological, social, and systemic risk
Externalities	Ignored or externalized	Reduced, internalized, and actively repaired
Value Creation	Profit extracted from the system	Value generated through the vitality of the system

Our Relational Ecology

External

A shift to regenerative thinking creates conditions for flourishing:

- Our initiatives are part of a larger whole.
- Make decisions that are good over the long-run for the organization, people, and the environment
- Future generations have a seat at the table.



Part 1: Relational Ecology

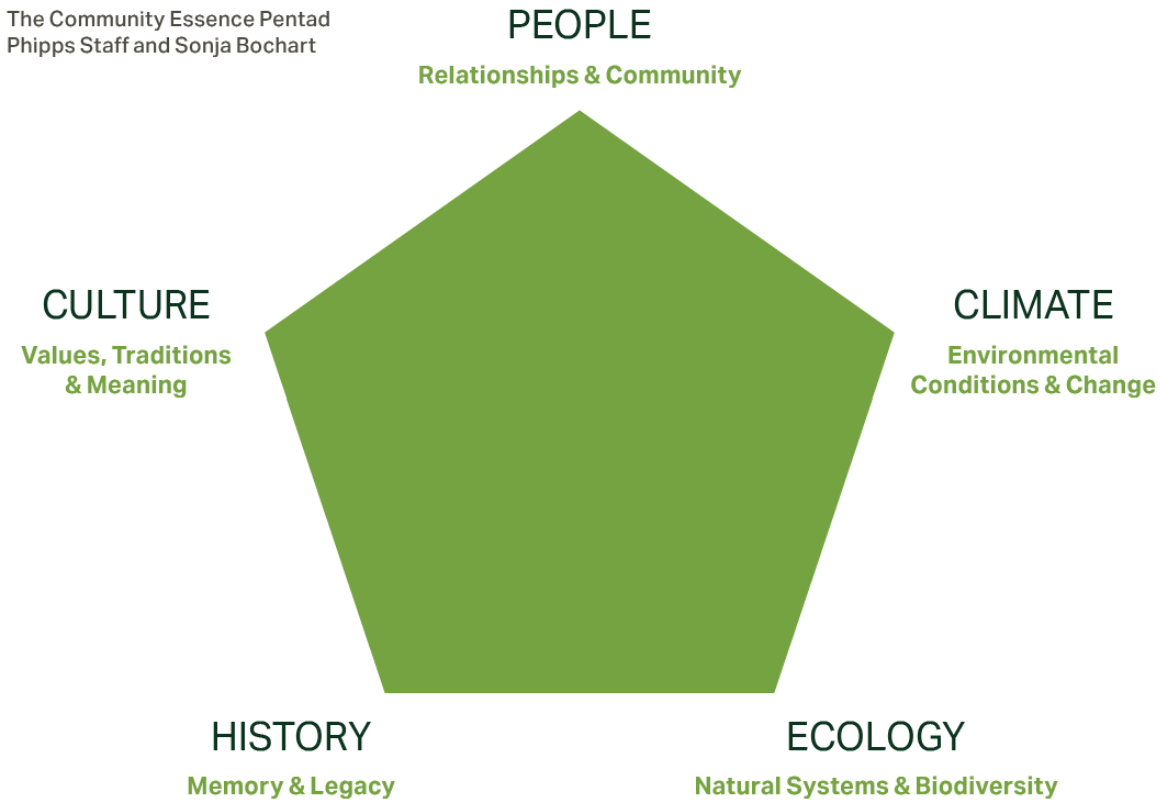
External

1. Work to shift the paradigm of your institution to regenerative

2. **Find areas of alignment within your institution and community**



Understand Your Institution and Community



Seek Out the Intersection for Greatest Potential



Activity: Part 1

How can you help to shift the paradigm of your institution to regenerative?

Where can you find greater areas of alignment with your purpose, institution and community?



Part 2: Our Inner Ecology

- Our inner state shapes how we see, respond to, and influence the world around us.
- The quality of our thinking shapes the relationships and conditions we create.
- Greater awareness helps us recognize patterns, question assumptions, and see new possibilities.
- Regenerative change begins within us and extends into the systems we influence.



Principal 1:

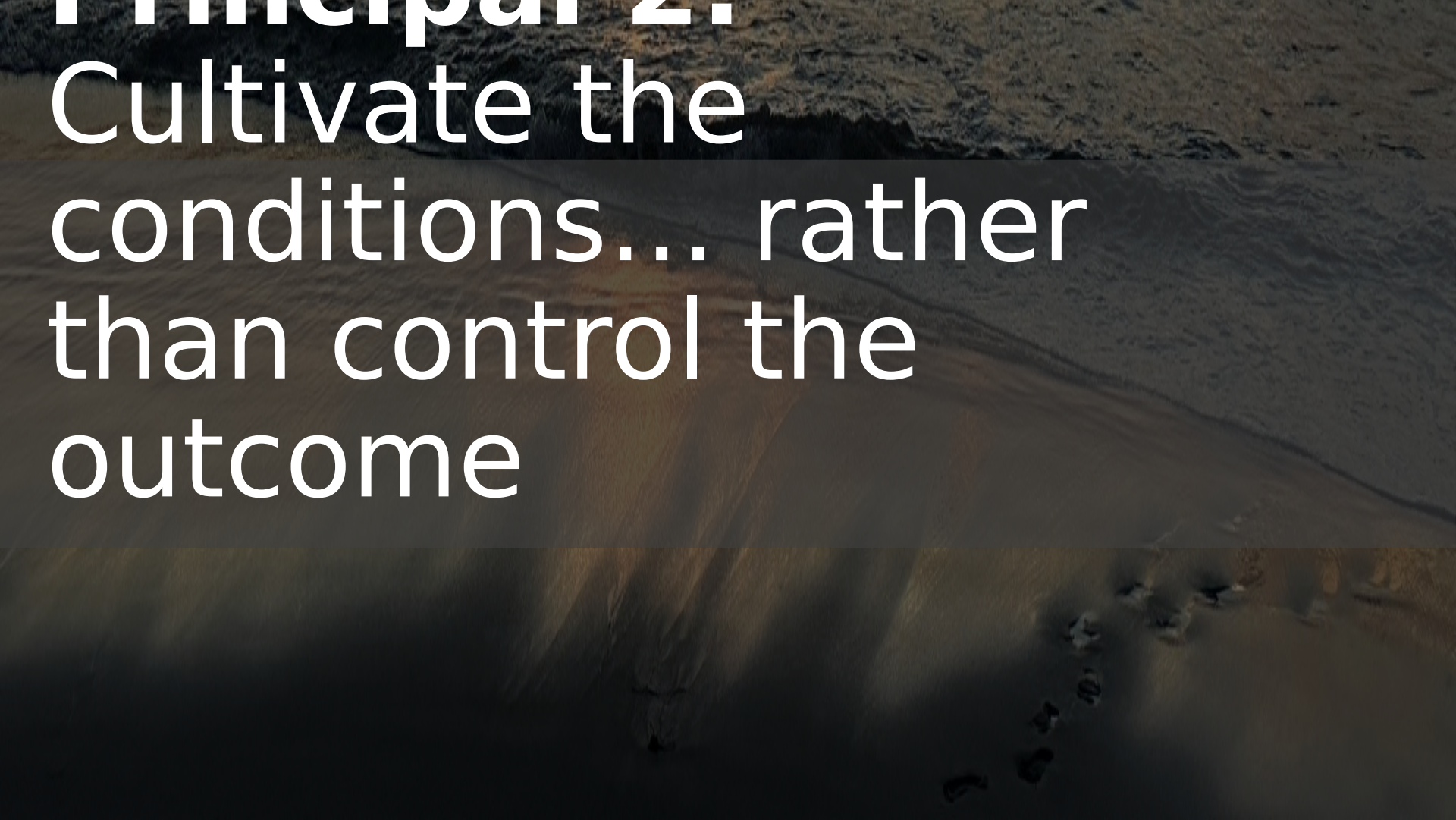
Slow Down...
and Notice what is
Already Emerging...

Our Inner Ecology

Slowing Down

- Look beyond planned outcomes to see what’s emerging.
- Notice new relationships, capabilities, trust, and opportunities.
- Recognize, and trust - the impact happening beyond our metrics.
- Pause to notice what’s growing before deciding what comes next.



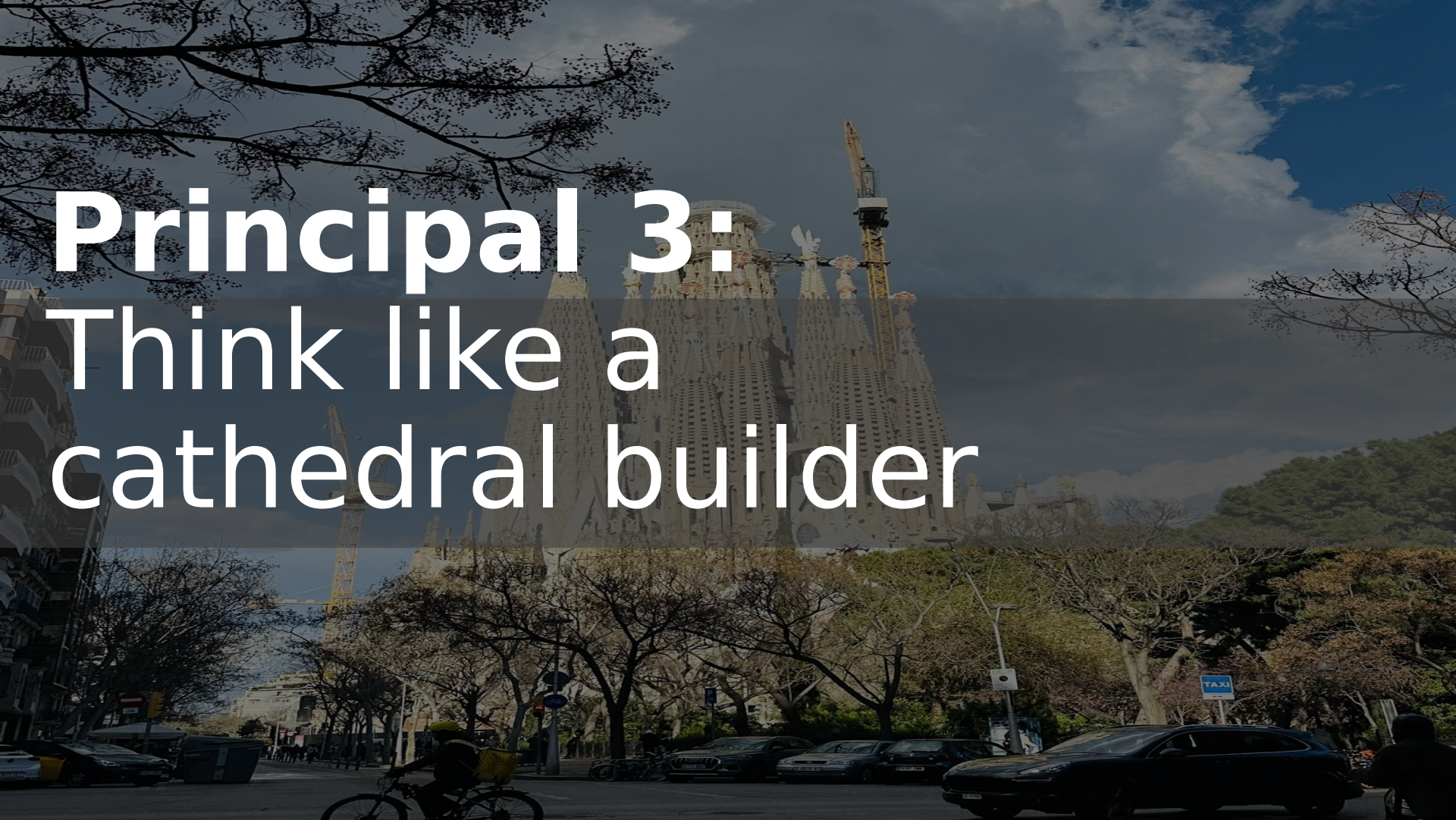

Principal 2:
Cultivate the conditions... rather than control the outcome

Our Inner Ecology

Cultivate Conditions

- Shift from controlling outcomes to enabling emergence.
- Create the conditions for people and systems to thrive.
- Foster the relationships, resources, and opportunities that support change.
- Stay attentive, learn, and adapt as things unfold.





Principal 3: Think like a cathedral builder

Our Inner Ecology

Cathedral Builder

Cathedral thinking expands accountability to include future generations as legitimate stakeholders.



Our Inner Ecology

Cathedral Builder

- Being successful means: the institution is increasing its ability to add life to people, to community, to the planet, and to generations not yet born.

- Ask yourself: When future generations look back, will this institution have expanded their choices—or constrained them?





Principal 4: Follow the aliveness...

Our Inner Ecology

Following Aliveness

- Notice where energy, initiative, and new ideas are already emerging.
- Look for relationships creating unexpected possibilities.
- Align attention and resources with emerging potential.
- Build on existing strengths and momentum rather than relying only on top-down direction.



Activity: Part 2



1. Slow down and notice what is already emerging
What is changing, growing, or becoming possible because of this work that you haven't stopped to notice?



2. Cultivate the conditions rather than control every outcome
Where might you be trying to control an outcome when you could instead create the conditions for it to emerge?



3. Think like a cathedral builder
What are you setting in motion through this initiative that others might build on long after your work is done?



4. Follow the aliveness
What small shift could open up new momentum or possibilities?

Regeneration begins with us, but it doesn't end with us.

It lives in our ability to cultivate organizations where people, relationships, and the larger systems we depend on can continually learn, flourish and evolve.


What has shifted
in your thinking?


What will you
carry with you?

Resources and contact

Richard Piacentini rpiacentini@phipps.conservatory.org
www.Phipps.conservatory.org

Sonja Bochart
sbochart@shepleybulfinch.com
www.shepleybulfinch.com

Learn More:
2027
Regenerative
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