

The Four ‘R’s

Resilience: What is it that we most value and how can we keep that?

How do we keep what we really want to keep? What ways do we wish to maintain as we seek to survive? We need to really have a good hard think about which of our constructed social and cultural norms and behaviours we want/need to keep, and which we can do away with. Resilience involves developing new ways of acting and co-creating reality. The way we've created now isn't working any more. I believe that resilient communities accept differences, have multiple fail-safes, respect their ecosystems and can accommodate difficulties with grace. (Aimee Maxwell)

Relinquishment: What can we let go of in order not to make matters worse?

It involves people and communities letting go of certain assets, behaviours and beliefs where retaining them could make matters worse. Examples include withdrawing from coastlines, shutting down vulnerable industrial facilities, or giving up expectations for certain types of consumption. (Jem Bendell, 2018)

Restoration: What can we bring back that has been lost or forgotten?

It involves people and communities rediscovering attitudes and approaches to life and organisation that our hydrocarbon-fuelled civilisation eroded. Examples include re-wilding landscapes, so they provide more ecological benefits and require less management, changing diets back to match the seasons, rediscovering non-electronically powered forms of play, and increased community-level productivity and support. (Jem Bendell, 2018)

Reconciliation/Reconnection: What could I make peace with to lessen suffering?

This question incorporates the idea of Reconciliation with one's death, including any difficulties and regrets in one's life, any anger towards existence itself (or God). It also invites reconciliation between peoples, genders, classes, generations, countries, religions and political persuasions. Because it is time to make our peace. What can you do to love, support and make peace with others? How can you deepen your relationships? How can you live with love, joy and peace?

RESILIENCE

- Meditation, spiritual practices, martial arts, yoga, prayer, silence
- Storytelling
- Poetry and Art
- Singing, Music and Dancing
- Traditional Crafts
- Local renewable energy and water
- Growing food
- Feeding others, eating together
- Ownership of Local Energy
- Community swapshops – eg www.buynothingproject.org, <https://freecycle.org>
- Citizens' Assemblies at community level
- Hand-made life, eco-village style living
- Changing how we educate children (so they learn the skills they'll need in a different future)
- Circles
- Pets
- Celebration
- Elders, teachers, guides, mentors
- Conflict Resolution and Non-Violent Communication
- Finding and developing local people with talents, including facilitation and community-building

RELINQUISHMENT

- Hope (about mitigation or returning to ‘business as usual’)
- Consumerist Lifestyle
- Judgement and ‘Othering’
- Adversarial politics
- Delegation (somebody else will sort this out)
- Guilt
- Ego
- Latest technology
- Out of season food
- Flying and Unsustainable Tourism
- Meat and Animal Products
- Shopping for non-essentials (clothes, shoes, etc.)
- Hyper-individualism
- Our stories about identity (e.g. my worth comes from my role, my career, my life-style, my bank account, my qualifications)
- Instant gratification
- The Growth model of economics
- Petrol or Diesel Car
- Existing ‘mainstream’ social media?
- The idea that humans have dominion over all nature
- Traditional educational curricula
- Secure pension

RESTORATION

- Hand-made Life-style
- Connecting with Nature (seeing that we aren't separate from it)
- Walk, run, cycle
- Locally grown food
- Learn from indigenous cultures
- Seed-saving
- Rewilding and permaculture, regenerative agriculture
- Shared rituals and celebrations
- Local live music
- Hand-made lifestyle e.g. woodworking and crafting
- Community living, food growing, and eating
- Gift economy
- Healing circles
- Wisdom traditions

RECONCILIATION/RECONNECTION

- The Work that Reconnects (Joanna Macy)
- Consciousness Raising and Spiritual Development
- Reconciling with our own death, including any regrets, anger, unresolved conflict. Making our own peace.
- Reconciliation between peoples, genders, classes, generations, countries, religions and political persuasions
- Intergenerational dialogue
- Social cohesion in neighbourhoods
- Making beauty
- Gratitude
- Curiosity and compassion for differing views and opinions
- Meditation, Prayer, Circling

When we reflect on the emotions involved, criticising an anticipation of societal collapse is a very understandable position to take. No one enjoys the feelings of vulnerability or fear about the future of our loved ones. However, as people are suffering terribly around the world and all western-led climate efforts have failed over decades to reduce emissions, our own peace of mind must take a back seat. We middle classes are no longer entitled to concoct stories that prioritise reducing our stress hormones over staying present and engaged with rapidly changing realities.

*Even when fires are raging outside their door, floodwaters rising around their feet, and the supermarket shelves quite bare, will some people become angry at those who wish to act from presence and love, instead of power and calculation. The reason for that, I believe, is because of the culture and ideology we have lived within, and continue to uphold, despite its destruction of the planet. In that sense, you could be like cultural magicians, inviting people to **imagine new ways of loving themselves, each other and the world.***

Jem Bendell (The Collapse of Ideology and the end of Escape) 28/6/20

*When I hear certain environmentalists reject the possibility that it's too late to prevent dangerous climate change from breaking down most societies, I hear them e-s-c-a-p-e-ing our situation. I hear **entitlement** to avoid emotional pain like despair and to preserve do-gooding personas. Also, there is the entitlement to have their perspective heard by another, including by attacking individuals they don't know. I hear an adherence to the project of natural science in an unsophisticated way, which suggests a need for **surety** to an extent that causes stupidity. I hear that humanity is in **control** of our destiny within a turbulent environment and that we should somehow control our own emotions and those of people who listen to us. I hear the idea that individuals have the **autonomy** to change within our current system through voting, consuming differently, or through activism as if we didn't have bills and taxes to pay, creditors breathing down our necks, children to feed and clothe, intransigent politicians, security services infiltrating our activist movements, and unrecognised ideologies calling us like sirens to our collective destruction. I hear the quasi-religious attachment to the idea of material **progress** and therefore the inability to conceive of courageous creative action without guarantee of material betterment. And I hear assumptions of **exceptionalism**, when activists ignore how it is already too late for many people. There is also exceptionalism when some activists say that they comprise the unique few percent of a population who must change everything or imply that the environmental predicament overrides all other considerations, include matters of rights and accountability.*

<https://jembendell.com/2020/06/28/the-collapse-of-ideology-and-the-end-of-escape/>

Why do modern humans oppress and destroy life on Earth?

The ideology of e-s-c-a-p-e, where each letter of the acronym describes a way of thinking and feeling, which co-produces our (now empirically-observable) omnicidal culture. The ideology expresses itself through us due to our understandable, but problematic, aversion to impermanence and death.

Entitlement involves thinking “you must make me feel better.”

Surety involves thinking “I will define you and everything in my experience so I feel calmer..”

Control involves thinking “I will try to impose on you and everything, including myself, so I feel safer.”

Autonomy involves thinking and feeling “I must be completely separate in my mind and being, because otherwise I would not exist.”

Progress involves thinking and feeling “the future must contain a legacy from me, or make sense to me now, because if not, then when I die I will die even more.”

Exceptionalism means assuming “I am angry at this world because much about it upsets me and so I prefer to think I’m better and/or needed.”

I demand that you sanction my...	I demand that climate activism or deep adaptation...	I demand that climate activism or deep adaptation makes me feel...
Entitlement	meets my existing desires, hopes and expectations	inspired, moved, elated, validated and justified in my demands and consumptive desires
Surety	gives me a guaranteed known alternative for the future	certain, safe, redeemed, hopeful, comfortable, righteous, positive and “rescued” when I feel uncomfortable or fragile
Control	empowers me to have everything on my terms	morally and intellectually authoritative and legitimate in determining meaning, direction and justice
Autonomy	affirms that everything is my choice including interdependence and responsibility	free to make choices and have those affirmed as legitimate (regardless of the consequences for others)
Progress	allows me to determine the way forward according to my vision of what is real and desirable	that my life has/had purpose and that I will be remembered for the important legacy I am leaving behind
Exceptionalism	validates my self-image, my feelings and my ideas as legitimate, unique and indispensable	praiseworthy, enthroned, exalted and deserving of my privileges

Sharing space - c.15 minutes

There can be no question that we are living in times of extraordinary turmoil and change.

- How does it feel when you consider the global situation today? (let alone in the future!)

When we give ourselves space to fully feel what is present, often we can become aware of feelings such as Fear, Grief, Anger, Guilt or Numbness. These are normal responses.

- Allow yourself to feel and to share, one at a time. While someone is sharing, hold space for them and silently witness. There is great power in being held and seen like this.
- If there is time for a second round, you might consider reflecting on one of the Four Rs:

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Relinquishment: What can we let go of in order not to make matters worse?

Restoration: What can we bring back that has been lost or forgotten?

Reconciliation/Reconnection: What could I make peace with to lessen suffering?

What if the most powerful work we could do at this time was in coming together, building strong communities of kindness, forging deep connections with one another and falling deeply together into the well of love and shared compassion that we can find as our hearts break a little and fall open?

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Resources

Jem and Deep Adaptation

<https://jembendell.com>

<https://www.lifeworth.com/deepadaptation.pdf>

<https://deepadaptation.info>

<https://jembendell.com/2020/06/28/the-collapse-of-ideology-and-the-end-of-escape/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/deepadaptation/>

<https://jembendell.com/2019/09/16/please-dont-shut-up-mr-franzen-breaking-the-taboo-on-our-climate-tragedy/>

<https://iflas.blogspot.com/2019/07/compendium-of-research-reports-on.html>

Film - Oskar's Quest - on YouTube

<https://jembendell.com/2019/03/24/grieve-play-love-short-film-on-climate-despair/>

<https://jembendell.com/2019/11/12/deep-adaptation-qas-for-2020/>

(Includes Q&A with Caroline Hickman - how to talk to children about climate change)

Jilani Cordelia Prescott

If you want to know more about the work that Jilani does, bringing people together (online at the moment!) through music, song, dance and sacred practice from many traditions, do email jilanicordelia@gmail.com

or have a look at YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjQuDrGhHRF9tNXE00y0tw/>

or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JilaniandRobert/>