

Interview from the Balcony

Anneloes Smitsman: 13 Recommendations from R3.0 Blueprint for Education – How do they apply to the city?

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SPEAKERS

Marilyn Hamilton, Anneloes Smitsman

Marilyn Hamilton

Hi, I'm Marilyn Hamilton. And this is another **Interview from the Balcony**. And today I'm just delighted to have as my guest **Anneloes Smitsman**. I've been following her work over many years and now today I have the delight of having a conversation with her. And before we get started, just let me share some of Anneloes background. It's so impressive. Dr. Anneloes Smitsman is a visionary scientist. She's an author, a futurist, a system architect, and a leadership catalyst for the transition into a thrival civilization. She is the founder and CEO of Earthwise Center. She holds a Master's degree in Law and Judicial Political Sciences, and a Doctor of Sustainability. Her groundbreaking PhD dissertation into the *Heart of Systems Change*, addresses how to diagnose and transform key systemic barriers of our world crisis through a transition plan for thriving global civilization. Many of you may know Anneloes as the co-author of the *Future Humans Trilogy* with Jean Houston - this book has just been released. And maybe you've seen the first one, *Quest of Rose*. Anneloes is also the author of the bestseller *Love Letters from Mother Earth, the promise of a new beginning*. She's also written in many peer reviewed journals and chapters in books. And she is the architect of Earthwise tipping point system, the lead author of *R3.0 Educational Transformation Blueprint*, and has been connected with the SEEDS, constitution and new currency. I believe that Anneloes resides in Mauritius. And so with me residing in Findhorn Scotland, we're almost halfway around the world from each other. So welcome, Anneloes, I'm so happy to have you here with us today.

Anneloes Smitsman

Thank you so much for having me. It's such a great joy and honor for me to be with you and to explore all of these important issues together. And actually, I have ancestral roots in Scotland. Very good.

family connections. Yeah, I grew up in the Netherlands. I was born there. And if we're looking at our ancestry and a DNA, there's a lot [of connections]. Yes. And all the way up in the Nordic countries.

Marilyn Hamilton

Oh, wonderful. Yes. Oh, that's always fascinating these days to look at our ancestors. Because as you are a futurist, you know that they live in us as well as we lived in the ancestors. Yeah. So Anneloes, I was really interested and impressed with your our R3.0 Educational Blueprint. And I actually set intention or Integral City Meshworks for 2021, that what we do is that we explore "Schooling for a Planet of Integral Cities". And so I thought, wow, this is really an opportunity for us to have a conversation about education and schooling and learning in ways that I think, fascinate, both of us.

So, you asked me to share a little bit about Integral Cities before we get started. And because you created out of this set of blueprints, some recommendations, I was going to ask you to think about them in terms of an Integral City. So an Integral City, I think of as a way of looking at the most complex human system. That's what I call the city as a living, whole system that we can appreciate through complex adaptive systems. So I think of cities in terms of human systems that contain individuals, leaders, teams, organizations, sectors, communities, I worked at all of those human systems before I was called to look at the city and I realized, oh, a city contains all of those, and in itself, is a whole. And so I like to appreciate that. I think the human system of the city is visible from space - we can't really see nations. And unless you're using some of those, hi definition photography these days, you can't see individuals easily, but you can see the lights of the cities from space. So they are both an energetic pattern that I believe is shows us how complex a city is.

I've explored cities through those kinds of lenses for several decades now. And when I started, it was very new. No one wanted to think about cities from the perspective of living systems and people, it was mostly bricks and mortar and transportation systems and all the things that usually urban planners look at from a material perspective. When I discovered the integral model, working originally with Ken Wilber and then spiral dynamics and then Ervin Laszlo - I'm a multi lineage integralist.

So I was thinking that by looking at the city as a whole, we could also appreciate the living qualities of people. And I discovered also that biomimicry can help me to reimagine the city. So I borrowed from learning from Howard Bloom, who had written about his understanding of thinking about the city as like a hive, like a bee hive. And he recognized that he was seeing patterns in human interactions. So I started to see the city, not only through behaviors, and infrastructures and systems, and then I opened up the consciousness and culture. And that's how I had started to use the integral model with the four quadrants.

But then I realized, by using these living system roles of citizens and civic managers, business innovators, and the third sector or civil society, we can also look at the whole city, through how we interact together as a whole. Now, this is also interesting for a lot of people, because while I say the city is a human hive, I think, looking at a beehive, you can almost put your arms around a beehive. Not too many people have courage to do that. But it's a way of being able to hold the wholeness of a city.

So that we could see these new sciences give us characteristics of the city that I really believe are living in us. So I could go on, and I've got our website, multiple books, and but I think that maybe gives us the basis for why we're so curious about your work as a futurist, as somebody thinking about education as being willing to put your frames into blueprints.

And I love the name of your organization, Earthwise. So I think maybe I will just finish my little description by saying that I've also been impressed and influenced very much by James Lovelock, who said, Earth itself is a living system. And so I thought, if Earth is a living system, then it makes perfect sense that cities are living, and he called humans Gaia's Reflective Organs. I think cities are the organs, our organizations are the organelles, and individuals are the cells. So that's sort of my big picture, small picture and very dynamic picture of the city. Does that make any sense to you Anneloes?

Anneloes Smitsman

Oh, complete resonance. And I love it. I love it, because it's like you are a futurist of the collective consciousness experiments in many ways. And that is for looking at the deeper patterns. Also, even mythologically, the new methods, the new story, what are these new future patterns that we're seeing? It's all about the new form of a collective that is emerging from a healthy complexity, not a degenerative complexity.

So what I'm hearing from you is actually by this approach of a city as a collective consciousness information, it could actually provide also the structural support for a whole new way of humanity, to be that collective consciousness in a way that's rooted in indigenous understanding. But now also includes, you know, the modern ways the liquid democracies, the new experiments that are happening in economics as well. So I think this is very, very powerful.

And it also - when I'm listening to you - brings a couple of things that come to my mind. One is in my, *Into the Heart of Systems Change* in the PhD research, a key element was evolutionary coherence. And you may know that of course, also from the work from Jude Currivan, which works so beautifully as well - to see the evolutionary process as a process of increasing complexity and deepening evolutionary coherence.

Now in the research that I've been working on is that if evolutionary coherence drops below a certain threshold, then the collective consciousness that is there starts to become destructive towards itself and others. So you see this degenerative pattern, increased conflict, increased divisions, this unity, and even suicidal tendencies. It's like it starts to eat itself. Attack itself as an almost an immune system disorder.

Traditionally, in indigenous communities, although they would not use that word, but they would have ceremonies and songs and ways of coming together in order to help restore that evolutionary coherence and using that also in key places sacred sites around the earth, where they're their ways of tapping into the coherence of Gaia herself, and then to be able to enact that and to be able to amplify that - done in the environments.

And so what we're seeing, if we're looking now is a kind of Healthy City pattern- thriving, regenerative city patterns and unhealthy. We could also start to look at that from the perspective of what's happening in terms of the evolutionary coherence of all the various collectives that are together and abroad together. And then if we didn't know that, if the evolutionary coherence is strengthened, that they seem natural, spontaneous cooperation, we see deeper collaboration, always in ways that are emergent and not imposed.

I think that then we would probably have the key towards this new democratic nation that is so essential right now, and including, of course, the greening of the city. But that's when we may also get closer to the noosphere in this omega point. Right ... that to show there was envisioning of the point when the global consciousness can become conscious of itself within the human experiment. So then cities by design, from that understanding of consciousness, where we're moving towards this new understanding also of the emergent collective - I think it is one of the most important things right now. And especially when we are moving into times of crisis, and greater challenges. My sense is that where we'll see either a breakdown or breakthrough will be exactly those points, where cities have become aware of themselves.

In that new light, have practiced in really proactive ways. What it means as a collective to respond with challenges – they have a story as well - that people can relate with- can feel in their hearts. That is also bio-regionally anchored. So it's not just about the old nation-state cities, but the cities of Gaia. And these can be lifelines, I really feel that this in this work that you're doing and what you're describing is incredibly important - for where we are now and where we need to be going.

Marilyn Hamilton

Now, thank you, for all those observations, they really resonate with me, you know. A couple more things I could share about my appreciation of the collective in the city is that I certainly originally thought, if we're going to have new governance, if we're going to have collective consciousness, it's more likely going to happen, where most of us are living. So in the developed world, 90% of humans live in cities, even in the developing world, it's more than 50%, now.

So I think that Gaia actually has a purpose for the cities that have emerged - though most of us do not know what that purpose is - we're in the process of discovering it. It's an evolutionary path for us. But one of the things that I've discerned as you're seeing the evolutionary, I would call it a holarchy. I've created what I call the Master Code of Care: caring for self, so that we can care for each other. And together, we care for our places, our bio regions and ecoregions, and altogether, then we care for the planet. So caring for self, others, place and planet is a nested set of fractals that are coherent. And I've always thought in the last while, as our great incoherence and fragmentation that's been happening in the world, that it is the cities who have brought together all the cultures. Most of our major cities have multiple cultures, if not all the cultures of the world living together. And it's there, we're going to have to figure out how to do it, so that we not only survive, but as you call us - to thrive. So thank you for your encouragement that my calling to look at the city has some contribution to make into consciousness.

Anneloes Smitsman

Amazing. Yes.

Marilyn Hamilton

So **Anneloes** maybe you could tell us a little bit about your R3.0. And when I was looking at it, I have not had the chance to read all of the documents, but some of them, I came across your 13 Recommendations that came out of that. And I thought that might be a good way to explore from your perspective, because you're looking at broader, I think, frames, than cities. How would you see that they would be applied in cities? And so that seems like a good point for you [to tell us about some of your work and thinking?] Let's try that.

Anneloes Smitsman

We can do that. That's, and what I'll share also, then, very briefly. Just before going there - is this slide first, beautiful, and the seven learning perspectives for regeneration and five mobility, which really forms the integral framework for the blueprints.

So the blueprint was designed really, in a family of blueprints of R3.O, which is an organization based in Europe. It has really been kind of leading the way for what is a regenerative design for the new economics, the new governance, and it's also resilient, is transformative. And they've been focusing very much also on what's the context that needs to be provided for making those deep transformational changes? Because when I was a main critic, it was that sustainability hasn't been context based, most of the time because people are not looking at thresholds, navigation, and therefore to also see what is a fair share? And how do you distribute both the responsibilities as well as the opportunities, the costs, as well as the value that's generated in the system? So they asked me to become the lead author for the educational transformation blueprints.

Initially, we started off as kind of critical look at you know, what's not working within education? How is education part of the problem of our sustainability crisis? But then, along the way, I asked him, can we take a slightly different approach? Because I think we have so many blueprints out there about what's not working, I think we need to now start inspiring people. And actually, through the process of leading ourselves our consciousness starts to go into this regenerative mode, so that by us becoming regenerative in our perspectives in our understanding, and the questions that we're asking that the transformation that we're seeking responds to that process. So it's out of that, and then framed the seven learning perspectives that we can apply to ourselves, we can apply that with our family, our relationships, our communities, our cities.

Thus the organizational cultures that we form part of - really all [emerge] the different skills. So the 13 Recommendations, then - a summary really - of everything that's been explored through the seven perspectives. And each of the seven perspectives. We've explored that through three key areas. Because I really felt again that the given context is really important.

For example, if we are working with students, learning as a context - and what is the context principles that we are giving, for deciding what do we need to learn? How are we learning this? Also, how are we measuring what we think is learning and development? What is the feedback that we're creating?

So chapter one, for example, has three contextual explorations and one is the Anthropocene to better understand sustainability and context. The other one is the noosphere - to also give hope, and the interaction. That the Anthropocene for example, if we only focus on that, it may become quite hard for younger generations to take in, because they may feel we are a very destructive species. You know, what can I contribute to the solutions? Or do I even have a future - whereas the noosphere then gives us perspective that there is also an emerging learning global consciousness and that we as humans have a role also in how consciousness is evolving.

And then bringing in the new Renaissance as a context principle shows then that in order to make the jump to the next stage of evolutionary development, it requires the rebirth. And then what we're seeing is that this rebirthing and this Renaissance impulse is already happening. So just the climate crisis in itself, for example, the COVID crisis within itself, the dying and the collapse and the pressures of change are creating Renaissance conditions.

And that's so important for younger people to understand, therefore, that this transformational process is a metamorphic process that requires also the definite dissolution of old ways and emergence of new ways. So I just wanted to give that quickly as a as a context for people who are working with blueprints, and a lot of exercises and a lot of questions and practices that you can go through, and to really then start to see, what am I starting to notice differently? Or what's emerging in my own life? Or what are the synergies that are kind of happening as a result?

So then, also what we've explored - and this is especially beautiful for children - is saying, well, let's have a new paradigm understanding of life as a unified reality. And notice, the mechanistic view [frames] as if life consciousness and the universe consist of separate parts of particles held together by mechanical laws. But I really see the prior unity of life and therefore also consciousness as foundational - and matter itself even as an expression of consciousness - and letting go of that old duality, therefore, between Mind and Matter.

So we explore also, then, what are for example, under 13 qualities of life that are within us, but then also again, in the city. So if you now link that, again, to two cities...

I'm sure that in regenerative cities, we would see this as well - is that these qualities are by design, emphasis can be in the arts, that grace - it can be in the storytelling, it can be in the music. And that could even diagnose the health of cities by saying, Yes - Is it healing? Is that city healing? Do we have an expression of wisdom? Do we sense how much is that felt sense of unity? You know, how's the community doing? What's happening in the relationship? So these are all these different qualities that we also then work with, for children themselves first of all.

But of course, for all of us, we realize, this is all part of life. And knowing that, how do we then apply that? And it's through that, that we go through that process of learning for regeneration and thriving as both new ways of learning, but also new ways for engaging learning? And so for the city, then what's really beautiful? So look at that, from a way of how does the city learn? How does the city learn about itself from itself? And also, then how does the roots of one city just like the mycelial network connects with roots of other cities? And how does that sound to inform them? for people- also a sense of future?

And we also work in that on the governance of agency for regeneration – that is flexibility, which I think is really critical, again, for cities as well. And what are these new governance models? There's a lot of movements out there that are experimenting with decentralized or distributed - what they sometimes call - forms of governance.

But what are also the kind of tools and the technologies? - and part of this network is SEEDs, and a network platform called Hypha has been developing these tools - like the Hypha OS, for people to be able to, to self-organize, and to be able to also create some new tokens, regenerative currencies, and ways for people to collaborate with greater ease and share also the resources also the governance, of agency itself. So if you go that, not only do people have agency, but what's the agency of a city now as a as a living organism? And how do we empower that? And that brings me then to the context now for these 30 years.

Marilyn Hamilton

Thank you for setting the context. I really believe that that's really important. And you have such a vibrant way of presenting that. When I was writing my first book - and I was looking at the intelligences of the human hive - the first set of intelligences were all about context. This is so really resonant and generative for me, so thank you. So I think you've turned the number 13 from unlucky into lucky. What are the recommendations that you've come up with?

Anneloes Smitsman

That is so true. Yes. I felt that some when you see the movement of the patriarchal itself - like we try to suppress the 13 - whereas in indigenous cultures 13 is a number of transformation and integration. Even if we take the spokes of the wheel with its 12 points, if we even take it as a contrast, it cannot integrate unless there is the 13th in the center. So, and this is also where even with integral theory, right? Often people talk, of course, always about the quadrants. And I always say, but don't forget the fifth. Because if you don't have the center points, the quadrants cannot converge. And if they can't converge in an evolutionary space, that is the center, then they cannot be the emergence of the new - the new birth that comes out of that integration.

Marilyn Hamilton

That's a great point. Because what I drew for maps - I have five maps of the Integral City, and they're always pivoting around the evolutionary impulse at the center, so yes, that's the fifth point. Even when I talk about the four voices of the city, I always say it's four plus one. And the plus one is your other human hives in the bio region. But also each city has at the center, the purpose that it's really there for that we're still trying to articulate. So I think we're really discovering a lot of resonance between our approaches. I'm not surprised because you're doing evolutionary futures. So totally. The science and the spirituality of living systems. Thank you. So what about the 13 recommendations?

Anneloes Smitsman

1. Yes. Okay, so number one, and that's just so essential is listen to the feedback of life and our planet. So if we're looking of course at our crisis, we can see where we're not and when I'm saying listening, I mean more than hearing or knowing so listening really means I've heard I've received that and I'm responding appropriately. So everywhere we were seeing what's the

feedback that life is giving us? And our planet is saying slow down. Don't go over these really essential boundaries, please realize life is interdependent. And start to bring the human back within its evolutionary context as a family as a member of a family of life with many other life forms. So also if we if we don't listen, there's no learning so that really is the first step and it's also understanding that everything that we are doing every action every even say intention creates interaction in the fields of life. That shared by not just ecosystems or their people, but also shared by the very collective consciousness that we're talking about. And it's so important that we develop the sensors and sensing capacities to know that from what we are initiating what's coming back. Because if we don't close that loop - if we don't capture even just within ourselves and even in our own awareness, how life responds to us, then we are missing the most fundamental principle of our interdependence - because life responds to us. And if we're not kind of bringing that back in that relationship- bringing it full circle -so okay, "Gaia I'm hearing you - okay Life Yes, I remember now I put out that intention - I did take that action and what's that steering?" The person who lives their life like that consistently learns in a totally different way. And for such a person the system is a living consciousness it is not an idea it's a living reality.

Marilyn Hamilton

It's not just academic, it's not just intellectual – exactly a total sense of life and being.

Anneloes Smitsman

A sense of Yes, that's it. That's it. And now of course, if you want to take this into governance and want to take the sense into economic standards also means that when we looking at what we identify as progress, or even development, what are we measuring? What are indicators? Those are the clue to these critical planetary as well as social threshold Boundaries. Does it include indicators for wellbeing, and thus it includes indicators for this evolutionary coherence we talked about before – fluctuations - does it include indicators for measuring the health of a city in its thriving.

So thriving has the word thrive and ability and implies two things. Namely, one has the potential to thrive which is kind of given and systemic, and the other one is done the capacity to make use of that potential. And for that to become a living reality, again, that is continuous. So all of this is also part of listening to the feedback of life and our planet. We need to make this visible within our governance and within our economic systems, but also within our educational systems.

And right now, we have created human systems for governance, economics and education that are very arbitrary, very, very artificial, because there's many information or loops that have no place in it. Even in our legal systems, we don't have natural laws, it's all still based on a very human centric idea that started around the protection of, you know, the, our rights and property - nature as property. So it seems such a simple process principle, but when we really start to apply that and tests are human systems to this principle, then we start to suddenly see the need for some massive transformations and, and redesign.

2. And that brings us unnaturally to two - second- addressing systemic transferability barriers. And in my PhD research, I made a distinction between barriers and boundaries. Because when I was asking the question, why is it that we know what's wrong, we know what doesn't work. And

we so stubbornly, as a species continue towards collapse. So no knowledge of the problem is obviously not enough. And decided to kind of ask these questions in various systems, educational institutions, in private sectors, and, and I noticed that many people felt a sense of entrapment that they couldn't put a finger on. So that say, "I feel like if I started developing myself, I might lose my job." Because my ideas become too different, or I don't feel alive, life balance with my work. I feel that everything is around productivity. And/or do you feel like the goals of the system feel impulsive? I don't feel that I fundamentally can have a direction, in the say of what's really happening and, and the creation of the future, even to the most basic levels of, you know, where it concerns my family.

So what I noticed through that, is that mechanistic systems, because they impose goals, they polarize the diversity in living systems, including ourselves. And because they drive a very competitive idea of growth through exponential extractive growth, where you get this very dangerous curve. Therefore mechanistic systems, because it harms the interdependencies of living systems, they create thrivability barriers, and therefore they harm the systemic boundaries.

But most of our sustainability conversations are around the management of the boundaries. And we focus on the boundaries as the issue, but the boundary issues are only there, because we are not seeing and making visible what the barrier issues are. Unless we shift and transform fundamentally, the archetypes of growth and developments that very often remain invisible for people but are a felt experience.

And as we make that visible - put it out in conversation, create a language around that for people. It's very difficult to progress with even the next steps. And in the case studies where I've been doing this work where people want you to notice this, when they start to map out the systemic barriers within their cultures, organizations or cities. What happens then is instead of feeling it's because of them, or you know, it's the system's fault, or I can just not be with those are the people that language faults. Well, now suddenly, they notice, Oh, hold on. So that is a polarizing dynamic underneath that. I've been caught in, perhaps my neighbor as well. So before I start to see my neighbor who has a different religion, or a different ethnicity or as my enemy, maybe we're all caught in that? And then you start to notice that the barriers are no longer filtering, the perception and the relationship and the interaction. Now we start to return to the living system opportunities and start and see how to transform these barriers together. So this is really important work for cities and communities and others.

Marilyn Hamilton

I really Like your discernment between barriers and boundaries, because within an ecology, I would say, the boundaries and living systems are both to be respected. And I love your connection with the feedback loops. But when people see mistakenly that boundaries are barriers, as opposed to ways of, I think giving the definition and qualities of a living system, and how they interact together in a healthy ecology. And, and being able to name barriers, and then see them in the system. Would you say that the barriers would be related to the fragmentation and not being able to see things as a whole?

And then when we can really appreciate that, we have new lenses to be able to see the life in our system. I love really that you started with feedback. Because I often see in systems that is the last place we look - and it's either in the middle or the end that I'm always pointing out. And we cannot do this without feedback. So I really like that you started there. And I even imagine maybe you can share something as you are a mother of two children - is do you think that teaching feedback to children in education, not just the education system, but actually in the classroom? Is that something that's learnable? at a very, very early age?

Anneloes Smitsman

Oh, absolutely. I mean, some of the background on this - my father is retired now. But he was a professor in child development, from an ecological perspective from the University of Nijmegen. And so a lot of their research showed that in the first two years of our life - and it starts already in the womb - Children are natural system sensors. So we are we are born with sensory capacities for feedback. Everything we're learning is only through feedback. And that the feedback that we are receiving, you know, for children, the way they internalize that whether that is a supportive or it's empowering or restrictive and controlling, sets up the learning patterns, unconsciously, often you see at a very, very early age. And so when I saw through his work - and sometimes we used to be part of the little experiments around that of how do young children learn when you can't speak yet - so when you can't verbalize it, and because we can't yet verbalize it, how we're sensing the interaction of feedback between our caregivers and ourselves. It's almost we are even more aware of that. And then, later, a lot of times when children go into the formal education, it's trained out of them. So the adults saying, you know, "stop acting up now you're just imagining it", or "Don't be so difficult or get over it". So we were telling them to distrust that deeper. Sensory capacities for what it feels to be part of these different feedbacks.

Marilyn Hamilton

Beautiful. Thank you. So let's see what happens when we look at the context that you talked about.

Anneloes Smitsman

4. Yes, exactly. And that's when we go in on facilitating learning as a process of life, which is a fourth point here, is so important for children. So and we're saying if it's a process of life, it also means that as honoring our cycles and as rhythms so that's a myth for children, for example, that understand that if they've been working very hard, it's an issue, there's moments just tell them a lot of "Go play, do something else". Rest and let your let integration take place, or what we'd say, for example, when I was growing up, I noticed that playing Bach on the piano, playing with my left and my right hand would greatly help me with mathematics. Because just having these different activities and ways of training your own nervous systems, and musically, and then I'll start to explore the patterns of Bach, in numbers, but also in paintings. So also, facilitating learning as a process of life means that we are helping children to discover these fractal patterns, and helping them to really see the connective patterns, the deep fluidity of life. And what happens when children grow up like that. What I've noticed also among children, is that there's a much deeper trust in us they know that Yeah, even if it's the difficult times or their nightmares, they know how to go back to nature, to connect with nature. And yes, it's so fundamental, and I've also noticed how for many, many children, this is no longer obvious. ...

I've come to the schools of my children, and we teach these processes. This is a primary school. Often children would look at me, like, really, you can talk with nature, you can connect with a tree. You know, I can, if I need inspiration, I can go out in the gardens, you know?

Marilyn Hamilton

And what strikes me that what you're sharing is that through this way of learning, children become aware, or sense they're part of nature. It's not out there. It's in here. So that's not only fascinating, but oh, I'm part of nature – part of nature's immune system.

Anneloes Smitsman

That matches in me. That's right. And then, letting them feedback they learning to also heal themselves in nature's way.

Marilyn Hamilton

So I know this last year, that's been so important for all generations to learn - to get outside and let nature do the healing, that none of our technologies for the pandemic have been effective as nature has been.

Anneloes Smitsman

5. Exactly, exactly. That's it. And then that brings me down naturally to point five. So imaginally exploring our future potentials. You know, again, children, because of their sensory capacities from an early age, their imaginative and imaginal capacities are [natural] - we're born with that. But again if we don't keep practicing that then it will be diminished.

And we make a distinction between imaginative and imaginal. So an imaginal is really also an inner realm of consciousness itself, whereby, within that there is still a state of possibility. So this is why the imaginal in the future, you are so close together, you could even say it, it is the same room. And an imaginal dimensional area within a system allows the system to renew itself. And when it renews, it's also transformed structurally, and that is really important point in development. This, we're looking at - what's the difference between learning and development?

Then we are seeing that when development takes place in children, if we go back to children again, then we are seeing also that is the emergence of new structural coupling. And that before that jump off, development is often an uncoupling of old patterns and structures and ways to then recover at a higher level of organization. And that's a developmental jump, but it means there's something within the system that is not prescriptive. It's that this is almost like where the formula, the algorithm breaks down. And you know why I feel a lot of people are saying is consciousness a simulation? What am I the simulation as part of it? But I believe it's not because consciousness is essentially not a formula. It is not a predetermined.

So the imaginal capacity of a system is the capacity of a system to renew itself through the activity of learning. And by so doing to develop into new stances new structural coupling, which then becomes the affordance, in the conditions for the creation of new futures. So the imaginal capacity is what makes us future-creative. And that means that the future potentials now, you could see that

the future already exists now as information in a state of potentiality, that we can access by using our imaginal powers.

So when I was applying it, for example, with cities here in Mauritius, I would ask people to go with me on a journey into the future, not thinking about the future, but really close your eyes. And imagine a path opening up in front of you go through that path. And we arrive now at 2030. And as you're right on 2030, take a deep breath, get a sense of how you feel, and how's your environment and how is life here now in this reality of 2030 of this more optimal expression of our consciousness? So taking them you know, through that experiment, really activating and utilizing these imaginal capacities with people will, for some of them - because it's the first time they even close their eyes- while with others it was completely new. Some of them had never meditated.

But what would happen spontaneously is when people started to share that collective vision - experiences - they found that they had amazing similarities between their visions and other people's visions. So a man would say, well, you're describing the mountain in my forest just under here in my future experience of my city. And this mountain I could see further on, but I didn't get fully a sense of it - and the woman would, for example, explain what this mountain was doing. So they would create this connective map of these visions that gave them also for the first time for many of them the experience of a collective consciousness. Yes. Exactly. So this is such a such a powerful experience.

Marilyn Hamilton

Oh, thank you, I love your connections with not only the processes you're talking about. But as you were speaking, I was remembering - if I'm correct - that as the brain develops, it actually myelinates - it actually releases connections it doesn't need. And that's what allows the brain to emerge and create the structures and be ready for new self-organization to be constantly ongoing. And as you invite us to become aware, and even sense the future coming into us and be courageous enough, when you put them in the groups that you're describing, to be able to articulate this is what I sense is our future.

And that I think ties well into my intuition that Gaia has a purpose for this collective consciousness, even for the cities and it's our opportunity to discover what that is. And as we can do it together, then the collective consciousness, the capacity for that not only emerges, but then I think it can strengthen and, grow its own ways of being able to be to thrive - as you're saying. Because I think so many people now, sort of forgo collective consciousness - that's too far out - I don't think we can go there. But what I hear you saying is, actually when we do it together, we all look around the room after we open our eyes and say, we all just went through a shared sense - we shared and entered into the future. So thanks for those stories are beautiful.

Anneloes Smitsman

You're welcome. You know, and also, when we talk about Gaia, what is the purpose for Gaia has for us? One other thing that comes often to me is that you know, we are all cells on her body, and she's gone through massive changes - it's not easy being a planet at this time. So imagine being Gaia, you're running a fever, you have all these children that are quarreling with each other and cannot seem to agree on what you are going through - so much [turbulence]- what you would want is also a sense of

peace. So by if we as cities become more coherent, there's more energy also available for her to do what she needs to do to heal ourselves and to balance herself. So I think it's, you know, we forget that sometimes what does our planet need from us, so that our planet can do what she does best? And how can we best support that? And we don't seem to realize sometimes also the impact of our collective consciousness on her.

Marilyn Hamilton

Yes. Yes, that's beautiful. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that idea.

Anneloes Smitsman

6. So yes, and number six is that this is indeed how we could be developing his future creative learning system. So the city now becomes a future creative learning system. And this is where we go further than just regenerative because sometimes people hear the word regenerative as re generative, as in restorative, repairing, which is a really important part.

But there's also the birth of new systems. Life is constantly experimenting and evolving. So it's also important that we make space not just for the race, but for being generative, not only regenerating here, and that's the that's the future-creative - so learning and development is holistic, it's integral, it's naturally future-creative. And so if in the end, when that capacity is depressed in either people or organizations or cities, then we see the rise of depression, rise of suicide, rising division, because people then they don't feel a sense of future - so they feel blocked, they feel like there's a black hole in front of them.

And when we open this up, this is what I've noticed as well. I did this in this practice, also with a group of children that were around 12 -13 years old, but they came from very abused families, a lot of violence, alcoholism, and I asked these teenagers, what is it you want for the future? And one little boy looks to me and says "nobody's even ever asked me that. I don't even know how to answer that. Nobody's asked me what I want for the future." So [I say] would you like to make a drawing? if you If you were having truly the freedom and support, how would [you imagine]? what would you want? He started drawing that. And just that very process of asking a question and him having the freedom to express that and explore that started also a healing process.

So imagine that our city is asking from us. What, am I as a city? What would you like for the future? Or would you like to live here to grow here? What city would you like to pass on to your children and other people's children? Yes, so that very process itself?

Marilyn Hamilton

Yes, that's really beautiful. And that connects to some of the thinking I've been doing around this. What the indigenous invite us to do is to think about seven generations from now. And so I love the idea that you invite the child to imagine what city would they like to pass on to their next generation, while they're still thinking as a child, because I think they can probably get very close to a real wellbeing and positive place - I can imagine that they would want to share that with their peers,

Anneloes Smitsman

7. They would want to share that - that's right, and often have not been asked, because everyone around them is so busy. And they always [just endure] when asked to do the certain task or learn in a certain way that there's not enough space - you can pool that creativity and I think that creativity is really what makes us so human - is what is the heart of our humanity that we need to keep nurturing. And that is what we come into from those processes. Then designing for regeneration, flexibility, is also designing for these practices, designing for these questions. And designing not just for sustainability - you can't create a good marriage with sustainability, you know, you don't sustain your marriage, or your relationships with others. And so you want a thriving relationship. So going further, and then initiating a nurturing what I call the R.3.0 approaches, and that is, when we go back again, to these systemic barriers - that we see underneath these systemic barriers as a result of mechanistic archetypes is a very dualistic conception of life. And dualism in those ways. When it becomes really stifled and very tense, then it becomes also very polarized.
8. So we really need third way approaches for being able to address that. And that's a big word right now, also, I think it relates to cities also - when there's all these new waves of migration, what does integration in a city mean? Some people, they may be afraid, what does it mean absorption is integration, absorption or being absorbed into our collective that I will forget my cultural roots, my ethnicity, and my ancestors will just be annihilated in this process. And so it can bring up a lot of fears and concerns?

Or does it mean Oh, we're going to just agree to disagree, which is not transformative, you know, we're going to you stand here. I stand there. Don't come any closer. I'm going to co-exist so that we're not going to call on [each other].

So a third way approach is to initiate and nurture - that is first of our making, again, the tensions and polarization visible in the same way. Yes. And then really the very much integral approaches that you work with, so really for people to understand what's the larger We, and where this perspective and that perspective come from? Could be actually common roots? And what's the kind of third principle here so that the third way emerges?

It is not an absorption; it is a new approach. It's a new understanding. It's a new perspective, it's not a compromise, because a lot of people feel like, okay, I can't win this battle. So to get out of the duality, I will just let it go. I won't go on here anymore. I'll just let my point of view go, then. No, then we haven't come to a third way ground.

Third Way only happens when there's truly the emergence of a new understanding new perspective that's larger than what I was before.

9. So then we see that the collective itself has been growing and developing and evolving and that requires and does (number nine) powering collaborative agency - we can't get them to competitive agency. We need to collaborate - collaboration - saying yes, yes, yes. And I think that when we come to the governance aspects of cities, there is a huge role in there for being

able to invite to guide but also to reward collaboration for people who are living there? And also collaboration with nature? So this is empowerment.

Marilyn Hamilton

Thank you. I'm going to tag that for maybe a future conversation. **How do we reward collaboration?** Because I'm sure that will open up a longer conversation. Yes. At least our exploration?

Anneloes Smitsman

10. Absolutely. Absolutely. Because there's so many ways to reward that. And yes, then we number 10, communicating patterns that connect rather than patterns that disconnect. You know, what is in the media, what stories are communicating what information is coming around, but bring it in again, also back to (two above) - children to give them a role in telling and creating stories. How can they become the new storytellers, of the emergent future in their city, they want to see – this is so important. But also, we can communicate patterns that connect, even if we are valuating, the health of an organization to see what happens in these communicative patterns? How and who will make a decision? How is power distributed? We need to ask for permission for what and how does it circle around. So communicate patterns that connect and communicate with connective patterns, is really important also as an evaluative tool for cities to see our life flows, or an R.3.0 regenerative because that structure of communication links back to the city - is the city able to learn and develop as a collective. So what are the collective learning capacities of the city? So that brings things right back there?

Marilyn Hamilton

And what it linked right back up to is number one to the feedback system? Yes, that's it. And I think we've had a lot of experiments over the last year where our usual communication processes and channels have either been shut down or diverted to be completely online. So we're really in a, I think, the stage now where we need both to reconnect person to person, group to group, but also to recalibrate the kinds of media that have emerged so we can sense the feedback loops that we need. Yes. So I think the communication patterns are really powerful.

Anneloes Smitsman

11. Really, really powerful. Exactly. And that helps. And also for number 11, acting as a sizable learning community. We can't do that if you if you don't have these connective patterns of in our communication. So acting, and also the recommendation of acting as a “flying football” learning community, to people to understand this future can be acted on now. So if people are saying well, if we do ABC, then such and such will happen, and then we'll go into being drivable? No, no, no, that's not the right approach. **Act as if you're living it now.** So act your future to act be the future. You wish to live and be it right now. Act as that. And then when we ask ourselves that question, say that you are having a leadership role or an education role in your city - if I am a leader now, I am also that consciousness, over-tribe for learning community. What as a tribal learning community, would I do differently now? What would I need to change? What do I need to strengthen? What would I need to perhaps let go? So even standing in taking that place, not just about what does my role and position asked me to do? But what as a tribal learning

community? Am I required to do right now? We already inform them again - the feedback to number one? Yes. Different feedback loop? Yes.

Marilyn Hamilton

And I like the “**as if**” - that sort of a process I use on myself when people are saying, Well, how can you possibly do that? And they say, Actually, I'm not sure yet. But **I act as if I know**, and that opens up the possibilities. And if more of us do that, and compare notes, I think that I see a lot of barriers that have emerged in urban habitats because of the last couple of years [that we could discover and release]. And we need to give ourselves permission **to act as if there is wellbeing - as if we're thriving**, and maybe just take the tiniest step forward in the **as if** so that it can start to recalibrate us to invite the future in - that is the sort of the approach I take.

Anneloes Smitsman

I know that's it because then we embody the future, we bring the future into being. Yes. So become these future-potential ... Already they exist now in a state of potentiality. Every living thing is **as if** it is already here - now we are embodying it, we are living out reality, we are communicating at the deepest level of our being - that as a reality. And that also starts to reorganize the information of patterns around us to start a home and harmonize with that.

12. So it's incredibly important that we're then also celebrating what comes in. So when we celebrate that now also as a rite of passage, we start to acknowledge that it is a reality – that it is not just something that's only aspirational or all would have been, could have been. No, no no good - make it celebrated now and celebrating rites of passage moments also means creating collective moments for the grief and not only the wonderful feelings that we like so much, but also saying, look, we've gone through a huge death. Right now. There are so many - notice people dying, now our ecosystems, dying plants, animals dying, their dreams dying, their intentions dying, their hopes are dying. It is so, so important that we pause also, and can grieve together and acknowledge that right before we go back into the rush of doing things - and, and then work with these moments of death, of dissolution of the learning goal now as places for the rebirth.

That's what the regenerative Renaissance is - what we started with early was so important with, and also when there's the emergence of new states, new perspectives, new understanding, a sense of even new identity - that that too, is celebrated. Because very often when something is just coming out, and it's still so young - like later that the baby needs more care and support and needs more holding as a community - for it now to really come into being. And these are really, really sensitive, vulnerable little moments where this new emerging life in this new form, if it's not welcomed, its first experience of our own collective - here is now not so sure if this is safe? And it may retreat, and it may even never fully come into being. In indigenous communities, again, the word is “rites of passage” - a person may get a new name, or a new totemic relationship. And so there's a celebration of the acknowledgement of the shift in that person. And the whole community is growing and is richer for it because this person has now gone through this major rite of passage.

And so celebrating this as a city I think is incredibly important. And may also for a lot of you for radicalizing actually really help them because it may be that they are subconsciously, or unconsciously looking for a rite of passage in the old pattern. And the old pattern is, you go close to death, you go to something very dangerous, very risky. But they learned there's a new pattern also, that's more gentle, which we can grow and evolve, and we don't have to push everything to the actual danger.

Marilyn Hamilton

Yes, I'm thinking, this sounds a lot like a quest. Right? Yes. Yes - and invite the future in, not only individually, but collectively. I am going to let you finish your 13th comment. And then I want to tell a little story from Findhorn that might make you smile.

Anneloes Smitsman

13. Oh, I love that. So yes, the 13th Recommendation is invest in the future of life and finding worlds - and so we invest, of course first of all with our hearts - we invest with our intentions, we invest in where we put our attention. We also invest in terms of where we put our action, our resources, our commitments, our engagement, and as well, financially and many other ways. But it's also to broaden this understanding of what do we mean with investment? So from a city perspective, that means also what are we making a priority? What is a space on the agenda? What are the goals that we are supporting? And what are the goals that may not be aligned with this that we need to say no, no to. So this investments in the future of life as a future ancestor realizing we are all future ancestors of these new civilizations that are seeking to be born is really essential.

Marilyn Hamilton

It's beautiful. That's a beautiful way to complete your set of recommendations. When you were talking, about the celebrating the special moments rites of passage - that reminded me of something that's happened recently this year in Findhorn Ecovillage. We had two fires that destroyed our community center and our sanctuary, and of course, as you breathe in, it was yes - it was really a huge loss for the consciousness and culture of our community, as well as the infrastructure - and totally changed how we could even behave. We couldn't eat together anymore, that sort of thing. And there was a huge brownfield that was left from the fire sites. So over the last number of months, those have been gradually cleared. And there's been an invitation for people to come work with the Park gardeners on Tuesday mornings and help to re-plant and reimagine that whole area. So we've gradually watched behind the fences, as things have been cleared away. And they said that they were going to leave this part of the area for some wild flowers, and that they were going to just allow grass seed to grow. They weren't going to use turf - they were just going to invite nature to come and grow grass.

So last week, I walked by, after I had been previously. You know, when you lay grass down for a while, it doesn't look like anything's happening at all. I saw this little sign affixed to the fence. It had little baby carriages on it. And it said, "Be very quiet, baby grass is growing, and it needs its rest." And by the time I finally saw that sigh, all of a sudden, the entire field had gone green- you know, like, WoW. And it was like, oh, it touched me so deeply. And the little sign itself was like a way of both inviting participation in what the intention was there. - But when I saw that the grass had grown, and all sorts of other plants and flowers had decided to join in the celebration, you could say that nature itself was giving us

feedback, and the feedback that people had given nature was now apparent too. And just on the humorous side, I just felt, well, that was a great way to celebrate what had meant so much to us in that area. And it gives me huge hope and expectation of ongoing thrivability that we've had to let go of some of the things that were central to our place and be open to what else now can come. So I think that's maybe a way to capture the essence of what we have been exploring.

Anneloes Smitsman

Yes. It captures all the 13 points, in fact. It's beautiful, beautiful.

Marilyn Hamilton

Well, thank you. I thank you - your recommendations are beautiful, and I really appreciated how you've expanded on them. And I think we could take each one of them and do another, conversation about them. So I just want to say thank you so much for joining me on the balcony today. I look forward to some more conversations.

Anneloes Smitsman

Me too. Me too. Thank you very much.

Marilyn Hamilton

Thank you