

Swerving

[December 19, 2018](#) ~ [Nora Bateson](#)

The work of the coming decades is not the work of manufacturing, of software development, or of retail seduction, it is the work of caring. Caring for each other and the biosphere. In that care there is the hope of finding new ways of making sense of our own vitality. The 'my' in my health is not mine; rather it is a consequence of my microbiome, my family, my community, and the biosphere being cared for. The work ahead is not clear or clean. It requires intense integrity, patience in ambiguity, fierce dedication, raw vulnerability, bleeding humility, and the poetry of explorers.

There are sufferings now. Because there is suffering there is the possibility of mutual learning. Non feeling is a non option.

But it is different than before. As it becomes clear that there is a critical need for systems change, fissures are forming in the idea of fitting in.



One suffering is the suffering of being incompatible with the going game, where the grooves and pathways of life others presume normal are impossible, uncrackable, and untenable. The isolation of knowing there is a frequency that others can hear, and not finding it. It is like the instructions are in another language, written in invisible ink. The realm that others occupy, comparing successes, jobs, credibility and status, is mostly abstract, out of reach, and to fit into it requires extreme inner acrobatics.

Another suffering is that of fitting in. This is the suffering of finding oneself so synchronized into the contextual pattern structures that it is impossible to perceive or shift or change the habituated systems of day-to day. This is the suffering of successful compatibility in the dominant socio-cultural assumptions such that every move seems to feed the monster of current institutional insanity. This stuckness is waterproof to knowing the deadly consequences of not-changing both to humanity and countless other organisms. Like a Kafka story, the visceral experience is of recognizing that the logic of the surrounding systems has consumed play and rebellion. You will lose your job, your status, and your credibility if you swerve.

One suffering is the suffering of loving someone who is suffering.

This is a terrible time to be normal, (whatever that is) when the mandate for ecological survival is contingent on breaking from the sense making that is entrained.

But to orbit outside the flows of the current systems of modern life is to be excruciatingly isolated.

It does not serve to facilitate numbness to this pain. It hurts because it hurts. The tears are cultural, conceptual, and ecological.

The double bind of this era is that continuance of our species requires discontinuance of current means of survival. Business as usual is a swift endgame. Yet the rent must be paid, and breakfast must be possible. To live through next week is to take part in systems that are destructive to the future.

To get unbroken a breakthrough is needed.

So:

There is need.

Those who are in step and rhythm with the way things are, despite future incompatibility with life.

Those who read the signals and follow the signposts in the map of today.

Those who have fitted infinite capacity for contextual response into one frame of limited contexts.

Need.

Those who are hearing another tonality.

Those who make sense in another way.

Those who do not fit.

What does it mean to fit into a rapidly changing world?

Any small window of another sensorial experience is more precious than gold now. It is time to listen carefully. It is time to pay attention in wide ways. Let logic unravel into warm complexity.

The fodder for this mutual learning is connections connecting in unexpected ways. Discovering flavors of thought.

Mapping textures of knowing.

Together we are traveling in tenderness through wordless gestures. Offering one another unframed contact. Un-labeling each other is the greatest rigor and the greatest gift.

Allowing multitudes of selves to mingle and form new ecologies of communication.

Abandoning the flatness of analysis that prides itself on non-emotional rationality.

If the interaction is not funny, angry, curious, confused, indignant, and at least a little bit destructive... it is not worth ten minutes now.

In a changing world what is healthy or not healthy, what is it to know yourself in a culture that is unweaving itself? Who are we, now? And who am I in my complexity in relation specifically to you in your complexity?

I am resisting the antiseptic distance, and diving into relationships of mutual learning. Relationships in which there is an acknowledgement that it is a violence to reduce ourselves and each other to definitions, titles and labels. I am not gone, or fragmented, I am real and confused and unscripted. As such I am no source of tricks or easy methodologies. I am not interested in technique. It obscures the unsearched for complexity. Rather I am a sea anemone, all tentacles sensing into our combined vitalities and learnings exploring our mutual dignity. Noticing paradoxes and contradictions, tones and strangenesses. There—in the warm data of our interactions is where entirely unanticipated possibilities are to be found.

