4
"Belonging, Not Belongings"

An Economy of Gratitude and Reciprocity

The redefinition of abundance and success that we see in the world of social entrepreneurship may seem new, but it is not. There are many other cultures that have lived out an economy of gratitude and reciprocity. We can learn from them, from their mistakes, from their successes, and from their honest accounts of what it takes to live with a greater awareness of interdependence.

Paul Hawken claims that one of the core characteristics of impact-driven nonprofits is learning from indigenous people's resistance to globalization. While those lessons are certainly important, what is equally important is to learn from other cultures different ways of shaping our collective lives together. What we find in many indigenous cultures is far more than resistance. We find creative alternatives to our current economic system, alternatives that are grounded in an awareness of deadly mistakes and sustained by ceremonies of gratitude and responsibility.

I first encountered this way of living through teaching and working with Carol Lee Sanchez. In her writing and teaching, Sanchez was clear not to share particular indigenous rituals and stories, but rather invited nonindigenous people to live out of a deep respect for "all our relations" and with keen awareness of what it means to "use technology in a sacred manner," using our many tools in ways that are equitable and ecologically sustainable. At the core of her teaching was the forthright acknowledgment that indigenous peoples are not intrinsically closer to nature, not intrinsically more adept at living in respect with the rhythms and limitations of the natural world. On the contrary. Indigenous populations have sometimes been as destructive as current populations. The difference, as noted earlier, is that they have learned from those mistakes, tell the stories of those excesses, and commit, through ritual and daily practices, not to repeat them. Sanchez claimed that the indigenous respect for nature and ritualized checks on human greed and shortsightedness was grounded in the honest remembrance of when indigenous populations had gone awry, and had made their environs inhabitable for humans through overfishing, overgrazing, and overcultivation of the land.[1]

Sanchez described an alternative way of living with the world, an attitude of respect and vigilance described as the Beauty Way. She invited those who are nonindigenous to enter the Beauty Way, telling our own stories of mistakes and greed, celebrating as well the joy and wonder of living within limits, and with attention to the overall impact of our decisions on other peoples and on the ecosystem that sustains us all.[2]

Robin Wall Kimmerer also describes the wisdom of living with gratitude and reciprocity, a wisdom embraced by many indigenous peoples and one that others may learn from and embrace.

> Each of us comes from people who were once indigenous. We can reclaim our membership in the cultures of gratitude that formed our old relationships with the living earth. Gratitude is a powerful antidote to Windigo psychosis. A deep awareness of the gifts of the earth and of each other is medicine. The practice of gratitude lets us hear the badgering of marketers as the stomach grumblings of a Windigo. It celebrates cultures of regenerative reciprocity, where wealth is

> understood to be having enough to share and riches are counted in mutually beneficial relationships. Besides, it makes us happy.[3]

Kimmerer weaves together the knowledge gleaned from her work as a botanist and as a student of indigenous traditions to describe what it means to live out a radically different understanding of abundance and success. As in the work of Sanchez, Kimmerer's understanding of an alternative way of being is grounded in a forthright acknowledgment of the capacity of humans to make dire mistakes, to live in ways that are socially and environmentally destructive. She describes the ways in which these lessons are carried in the Anishinaabe stories of the Windigo: "The Windigo is a human being who has become a cannibal monster. Born of our fears and our failings, Windigo is the name for that within us which cares more for its own survival than for anything else. . . . The old teachings recognized that Windigo nature is in each of us, so the monster was created in stories, that we might learn why we should recoil from the greedy part of ourselves. . . . See the dark, recognize its power, but do not feed it."[4]

Kimmerer sees in the Windigo stories a core insight about survival and what threatens it, an insight common to many indigenous cultures, and an insight that is emerging in our own industrialized culture: "Cautionary Windigo talesarose in a commons-based society where sharing was essential to survival and greed made any individual a danger to the whole."[5] While such awareness is not universal, more and more people throughout the industrialized world are recognizing that what was true of indigenous societies is true of our own. We, too, are in actuality a commons-based society, and it is the utmost folly todeny those connections and fail to check our own greed. Kimmerer's analysis is pointed. While she is critical of overarching systems, she also points to the ways in which we sustain those systems through our daily choices: "We are all complicit. We've allowed the 'market' to define what we value so that the redefined common good seems to depend on profligate lifestyles that enrich the sellers while impoverishing the soul and the earth."[6]

Indigenous cultures checked individual and collective greed because of its destructive effects. Indigenous cultures also checked individual and collective greed because such a way of life is less rewarding and less fulfilling than a culture of gratitude and reciprocity. Taking as a test case the hard work of "restoring the Onondaga watershed to its pre-industrial condition," Kimmerer names the value of this risky, uncertain work:

> Species composition may change, but relationship endures. Here is where our most challenging and most rewarding work lies, in restoring a relationship of respect, responsibly, and reciprocity. And love.[7]

Kimmerer describes the joy of a culture of gratitude and gives a concrete example of such a culture in her account of the giveaway:

> I don't know the origin of the giveaway, but I think we learned it from watching the plants, especially the berries who offer up their gifts all wrapped in red and blue. . . .
>
> When berries spread out their giveaway blanket, offering their sweetness to birds and bears and boys alike, the transaction does not end there. The berries trust that we will uphold our end of the bargain and disperse their seeds to new places to grow. . . . They remind us that all flourishing is mutual. . . . Their gifts multiply by our care for them, and dwindle from our neglect. We are bound in a covenant for reciprocity, a pact of mutual responsibility to sustain those who

> sustain us.[8]

While Kimmerer extols both the beauty and the possibility of living in a covenant of reciprocity, she also is forthright in her acknowledgment that it may be too late for us to correct the damage caused by a culture of individualism and heedless exploitation of the human and natural world.[9]

Kimmerer challenges us, however, to not succumb to the certainly destructive power of despair, but to choose the uncertainty and promise of the "green path." Our spiritual leaders interpret this prophecy as the choice between the deadly road of materialism that threatens the land and the people, and the soft path of wisdom, respect, and reciprocity that is held in the teachings of the first fire.[10]

Kimmerer offers an evocative vision of what it means to live both with the possibility of irredeemable destruction and the choice of honest recognition and accountability:

> The moral covenant of reciprocity calls us to honor our responsibilities for all we have been given, for all that we have taken. . . . Gifts of mind, hands, heart, voice and vision all offered up on behalf of the earth. Whatever our gift, we are called to give it and to dance for the renewal of the world.
>
> In return for the privilege of breath.[11]

While we may choose to accept the covenant of reciprocity, while we may choose to honor our responsibilities, Kimmerer is clear: we may not know how to restore damaged ecosystems.

> The land, plants, animals, and their allies among the human people are making small steps, but ultimately it is the earth that will restore the structure and function, the ecosystem services. . . . We're not in control. What we *are* in control of is our relationship to the earth. Nature herself is a moving target, especially in an era of rapid climate change.[12]

We may not know how to live with the natural world in a way that is equitable and sustainable. Knowing what is good, and wanting to do the good, does not mean that we know how to enact the good. Much of social ethics and community organizing stops with knowledge and motivation. None that I know of addresses organizational and fiscal competence. That is assumed! For those who take up the task of actually implementing desired social change, issues of competence quickly assume paramount importance: managing finances; knowing how to support, motivate, and engage coworkers; knowing how to read ecosystems; weighing possible changes from different interactions; and learning how to assess the impact of those interactions in a timely and accountable fashion, and then making timely and necessary corrections.

It is from the work of implementing policies as a leader within institutions that I have had a major shift in my understanding of an ethic of risk. While an outsider, I saw it as a matter of not knowing the impact of our efforts, yet acting anyway. Now, as a relatively empowered insider, I have learned that we can discover the impact of our decisions and policy changes. It is important, therefore, to pay attention to actual impacts and to make the necessary changes to enhance the unexpected results that are positive and to learn from and rectify the unexpected mistakes that will undoubtedly occur.

Environmental Sustainability

What does it mean for us in industrialized societies to concretely live out an ethos and ethic of gratitude, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility? How do we accept Kimmerer's challenge and confront the possibility of irredeemable destruction and choose honest recognition and accountability?

There are people doing just that work, there are solutions ready to be tried, and more plausible solutions are continuing to be developed. In *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, Paul Hawken shares the work of a group of scientists, engineers, builders, businesspeople, and organizers who describe in compelling detail what can be done to live as humans in balance with, rather than exploiting and dominating, the natural world that sustains us.

The significance of this work is immense, and the importance of this shift is described well by Michael Pollan. Pollan recounts how terrified he was by Al Gore's 2006 documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. What was most frightening to Pollan was not the amount of human-induced climate disasters, but the paucity and lack of imagination of the solutions that were provided.

> I don't know about you, but for me the most upsetting moment in *An Inconvenient Truth* came long after Al Gore scared the hell out of me, constructing an utterly convincing case that the very survival of life on earth as we know it is threatened by climate change. No, the really dark moment came during the closing credits, when we are asked to . . . change our light bulbs. That's when it got really depressing. The immense disproportion between the magnitude of the problem Gore had described and the puniness of what he was asking us to do about it was enough to sink your heart.[13]

Thankfully, hopefully, we have more to do now—a vast array of changes in individual and collective practices that may be able to bring us back into balance with the natural world. None of these solutions are sufficient in themselves. All of these solutions are necessary. None of them are without significant challenges, whether that of mobilizing collective will or paying attention to possible negative effects. Of the 100 solutions proposed in *Drawdown*, it is profoundly reassuring, rather than discouraging, that scientists and engineers are already aware of the need to pay attention to specific risks, dangers, and trade-offs in 67 of the solutions. For example, Hawken describes both the positive potential of wind energy and the ongoing challenges.

> In the United States, the wind energy potential of just three states—Kansas, North Dakota, and Texas—would be sufficient to meet electricity demand from coast to coast. Wind farms have small footprints, typically using no more than 1 percent of the land they sit on, so grazing, farming, recreation, or conservation can happen simultaneously with power generation.[14]
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> The challenges, though, of relying on wind energy are significant.
>
> The variable nature of wind means there are times when turbines are not turning. Where the intermittent production of wind (and solar) power can span a broader geography, however, it is easier to overcome fluctuations in supply and demand. Interconnected grids can shuttle power to where it is needed. Critics argue that turbines are noisy, aesthetically unpleasant, and at times deadly to bats and

> migrating birds.[15]

An energy source that can balance the variability of wind and solar energy is geothermal energy. However, the technical challenges here are also significant.

> In the process of pursuing its potential, geothermal's negatives need to be managed. Whether naturally occurring or pumped in, water and steam can be laced with dissolved gases, including carbon dioxide, and toxic substances such as mercury, arsenic, and boric acid. Though its emissions per megawatt hour are just 5 to 10 percent of a coal plant's, geothermal is not without greenhouse impact. In addition, depleting hydrothermal pools can cause soil subsidence, while hydrofracturing can produce microearthquakes. Additional concerns include land-use change that can cause noise pollution, foul smells, and impacts on viewshed.[16]

To both experiment with new ways of using and restoring natural resources and to know how to expect and look for the unexpected is a core ingredient in human responsibility. It is how we both honor the gifts, and acknowledge the limits, of human reason.

The solutions described in *Drawdown* include different ways of paying attention to energy, food, buildings and cities, land use, transport, materials, and the empowerment of women and girls.[17] The solutions are concrete and multifaceted, and build on the insight also expressed by Kimmerer. This is not merely "stopping doing bad things"; these are deliberate attempts at restoration. The grounding for such work is threefold: genuine accountability for damage done; honest realization that we may not know the answers; and, what is of utmost importance, these choices are not based on a sense of sacrifice but on the embrace of genuine abundance, "restoring relationships of respect, responsibility, reciprocity. And love."[18]

Hawken describes the goal of creating and empowering a network of people who share common goals and are ready to explore multiple strategies for healing the damage caused by humans to the natural world and for enacting new forms of relationship with ecosystems that are sustainable and mutually beneficial.

> This is why, in creating *Drawdown* and its associated website, we sought to do more than merely perform exacting research and inform. We wanted to captivate and surprise, to present solutions to global warming in a new way with an eye towards helping draw the threads and webs of humanity into a coherent and more effective network of people that can accelerate progress towards reversing climate change.[19]

Among the 70 scholars from 22 countries who are Drawdown fellows, 40% are women. There is also a "120 person Advisory Board, a prominent and diverse community of geologists, engineers, agronomists, politicians, writers, climatologists, biologists, botanists, economists, financial analysts, architects, and activists."[20] What unites this diverse group is a commitment to model "the economics of regeneration":

> Going forward, the staff, fellows and volunteers at Project Drawdown will be modeling the economics of regeneration—jobs, policy and economic complexity—mapping climate solutions onto specific national economies ad calculating how climate change technologies and processes can generate dignified, socially just, family-wage jobs. . . . the profit that can be achieved by instituting regenerative solutions is greater than the monetary gains generated by causing the problem or

> conducting business-as-usual. For instance, the most profitable and productive method of farming is regenerative agriculture. And, more people in the U.S. as of 2016 are employed by the solar industry than by gas, coal, and oil combined. Restoration creates more jobs than despoliation. We can just as easily have an economy that is based on healing the future rather than on stealing it.[21]

This goal of socially just and environmentally sound economic development is also being explored and implemented in the work of Van Jones. In *The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems*, he describes the ways in which environmental responsibility can work in tandem with our efforts to stop racism, repair its effects, and create a racially just economy. Jones criticizes fundamental and dangerous assumptions about economic growth: "Democrats and Republicans together assured the American public that we could grow our economy based on: (1) consumption rather than production, (2) credit rather than thrift, and (3) ecological destruction rather than ecological restoration. The present crisis has exposed all three of these notions as dangerous shams."[22]

What Jones advocates is instead a green economy: "There is a wiser and more civilized alternative. Rather than continuing to base our economy on a finite supply of dead things, we can base it on sources that are practically infinite and eternal: the sun, the moon, and the Earth's inner fire."[23]

Jones also claims that the emerging green economy can also address the structural effects of racism and provide the foundation for a genuinely inclusive economy:

> We want to build a green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty. . . . We want to ensure that those communities that were locked out of the last century's pollution-based economy will be locked in to the new clean and green economy. We know that we don't have any throwaway species or resources, and we know that we can't have any throwaway children or neighborhoods either. All of creation is precious and sacred. And we are all in this together.
>
> Those words would open the door to a cross-race and cross-class partnership that would change America and the world
>
> Imagine a Green New Deal—with a pivotal role for green entrepreneurs, a strategic and limited role for government and an honored place for labor and social activists.[24]

What does it mean to live out an economy of regeneration and balance? First, multiple actors and institutions are involved, "developers, cities, nonprofits, corporations, farmers, churches, provinces, schools and universities."[25] And those multiple perspectives are all essential. Second, there are not merely abstract goals of living in harmony, but there are technical means of growing food, using and storing energy, recycling waste, to explore, evaluate, and try. Third, Hawken and his colleagues make the same significant step that we find in the work of Kimmerer. These attempts to live in harmony are based in learning from the wisdom of the natural world. Just as plants can work together for survival, we can do the same. We see, for example, in the work of the biomimicry pioneer Janine Benyus an account of a significant phenomenon:

> The more stressful the environment, the more likely you are to see plants working together to ensure mutual survival. On Chilean peaks, studies of mounded plants huddling together against harmful ultraviolet rays and cold, drying winds reveal

> complex interactions of support. A single six-foot-wide yareta, or cushion plant, ,can be thousands of years old and harbor dozens of different flowering species in its mound.[26]

Benyus writes that "[d]iscoveries about the holistic nature of forests have vast implications for forestry, conservation, and climate change. It's time to bring the same penetrating insight to farmlands. Although 80 percent of all land plants have roots that grow in association with mycorrhizae fungi, it's rare to find common mycorrhizal networks in agricultural fields."[27] We can foster, rather than disrupt, such networks, "[returning] to our role as nurturers, one of the many helpers in this planetary story of collaborative healing."[28]

Hawken and his colleagues provide specific ways of both restoring and healing ecosystems, and of living in a continuously regenerative balance with the natural world. This includes regenerative uses of energy, improved means of energy storage and distribution, and the further development and expansion of wind turbines, solar farms, and cogenerative energy production.[29] With food production, there can be both a dramatic reduction in food waste and new forms of regenerative agriculture.

While the specifics vary, the principles are the same. Each solution is a carefully crafted calibration of how to best integrate people and place, drawing on ancient wisdom as well as on new technology.

For example, Mark Hertsgaard describes the work of Yacouba Sawadogo and his practice of tree intercropping in Burkina Faso:

> Trees can be harvested—their branches pruned and sold—and then they grow back, and their benefits for the soil make it easier for additional trees to grow. "The more trees you have, the more you get," Sawadogo explained. Wood is the main energy source in rural Africa, and as his tree cover expanded, Sawadogo sold wood for cooking, furniture making, and construction. . . . "I think trees are at least a partial answer to climate change, and I've tried to share this information with others," Sawadogo added. "My conviction, based on personal experience, is that trees are like lungs. If we do not protect them, and increase their numbers, it will be the end of the world."[30]

Chris Reij, a Dutch environmental scientist, has studied the technique of "agro-forestry" or "farmer-managed natural regeneration." He states "that in Niger alone farmers had grown 200 million trees and rehabilitated 12.5 million acres of land . . . Many farmers in the Sahel are better off now than they were thirty years ago because of the agro-forestry innovations they have made."[31]

Human intervention can be, and has been, devastatingly destructive. Hawken describes the ways in which human intervention can also be restorative and regenerative:

> The usual assumption about human activity is that it makes nature worse, however well intentioned. But that has not always been the case. The productivity of the tallgrass prairies of the Great Plain region can be attributed to the fire ecology practiced by Native Americans. In Norman Myers's book *The Primary Source*, he describes going into a forty-thousand-year-old "untouched" primary forest in Borneo with an ethnobotanist. Both stayed in one spot for the day while the ethnobotanist identified the towering dipterocarps and other flora for Myers. It turns out the entire forest had been placed and planted by human beings before the

> last ice age. The Swiss agroecologist Ernst Gotsch works with deforested and desertified lands in Brazil and restores them in a matter of years to lush forest forms bountiful with food. In a video segment in which he describes his work, Gotsch pick up dark, moist soil and proclaims, "We are growing water."[32]

Our use of natural resources can be regenerative, in the emerging practice of creating "living buildings." Buildings can actually contribute to the greater good as they fulfill the following functions:

> L]iving buildings should grow food, produce net-positive waste (a water stream that nourishes living systems or land), create net-positive water, and generate more energy with renewables than they use. They need to incorporate biophilic design, satisfying humankind's innate affinity for natural materials, natural light, views of nature, sounds of water, and more. On the unnatural side of things, living buildings have to avoid all "red-listed" materials, such as PVC and formaldehyde. They are required to cater to the human scale, rather than the car scale, and intentionally educate and inspire others—building as teacher rather than container.[33]

While the technological challenges in building practices are immense, the motivation for doing this work resonates with the wisdom offered by Kimmerer, a deeper form of abundance, an embrace of a form of beauty that is consonant with "belonging, rather than belongings."

> Buildings that are LBC [Living Building Challenge] certified are spectacular to look at and be in. Architect David Sellers summed it up perfectly when he said the pathway to sustainability is beauty, because people preserve and care for that which feeds their spirit and heart.[34]

Why, then, do we choose a path of environmental sustainability? In the introduction to *Drawdown*, Hawken provides an unusual perspective. His focus is not protesting the actions of others, but taking up responsibility ourselves. He also offers a paradoxical challenge—this time can be a gift, a chance to make amends and move into right relations with each other and with the natural world to which we belong:

> Unquestionably, distress signals are flashing throughout nature and society, from drought, sea level rise, and unrelenting increases in temperatures to expanded refugee crises, conflict, and dislocation. This is not the whole story. We have endeavored in *Drawdown* to show that many people are staunchly and unwaveringly on the case. Although carbon emissions from fossil fuel combustion and land use have a two-century head start on these solutions, we will take those odds. The buildup of greenhouse gases we experience today occurred in the absence of human understanding: our ancestors were innocent of the damage they were doing. That can tempt us to believe that global warming is something that is happening *to* us—that we are victims of a fate that was determined by actions that precede us. If we change the preposition, and consider that global warming is happening *for* us—an atmospheric transformation that inspires us to change and reimagine everything we make and do—we begin to live in a different world. We take 100 percent responsibility and stop blaming others. We see global warming not as an inevitability but as an invitation to build, innovate, and effect change, a pathway that awakens creativity, compassion, and genius. This is not a liberal agenda, nor is it a conservative one. This is the human agenda.[35]

Craig Sieben, founder and CEO of Sieben Energy Associates, is one who has embraced this "human agenda," the "invitation to build, innovate, and effect change" with "creativity, compassion, and genius."[36]

Craig Sieben

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Figure 4.1. Craig Sieben, Sieben Energy Associates. Photo from Craig R. Sieben.

Craig Sieben may not fit the popular image of an environmental activist. You will not see one word on Sieben Energy Associates' webpage about global climate change, the environmental ravages of using fossil fuels, or air and water pollution. Yet for people who lead social enterprises or B corporations, Sieben Energy Associates is the place to go to make the triple bottom line (people, planet, profit) a reality. What you will see is how much money a business or organization stands to save by utilizing energy more efficiently. Craig's company offers to help an organization's bottom line, to improve profitability by lowering energy costs substantially. The core of his work—simple in its wording, profound in its impact: "Take the passion and turn it into a practice."

Since Craig first started his business 28 years ago, doing good for the environment is what his business has been all about. There are many ways to tackle the environmental impact of nonrenewable fuels, he says, and saving energy is definitely one of them: "Sieben Energy Associates is mission-driven. The work we do takes a stand for reducing energy use. 72% of the Co2 in Chicago comes from buildings."

Craig Sieben puts his hope in practical solutions to the world's problems, and in the power of ordinary people. He grew up believing in the inherent goodness of all people. "I believe in ideas," he says, "and the opening of minds and hearts, and seeking solutions. My parents and my Unitarian Universalist upbringing taught me to question the structures of society, to ask always, 'Am I harming others?' before I act."

In 1977, a physics major at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, Craig participated in a nonviolent, civil disobedience-oriented protest at the Seabrook, New Hampshire site of a planned nuclear power plant, where over 1,400 people were arrested and spent a week in the Nassau, New Hampshire National Guard Amory at an impromptu "teach-in" on energy alternatives to nuclear power. Later, when he returned to school and was passionately explaining why he had joined the protest, his physics professor said to him, "Craig, you've defined what you're against; what are you *for*?" Craig began to research better ways to provide energy and discovered the inefficiency of U.S. energy sources. His physics teacher handed Craig a copy of Amory Lovins's just-published article in the fall 1976 issue of *Foreign Affairs* titled "Soft Energy Paths, The Road Not Taken?"

Craig became excited about the concepts of "soft energy"—ramping up passive energy sources (solar, wind) and increasing efficiency. Craig joined the college's Board of Trustee's Buildings and Grounds committee and helped develop a plan to improve energy efficiency at Hampshire College, and energy went from 8% to 3% of the college budget during the next 10 years. He ended up writing his own degree program in community energy policy. He was inspired by the idea that by using energy more efficiently and effectively, we didn't have to build

so many fossil-fuel energy plants in the first place. And efficiency just makes sense. "The need for energy efficiency won't end when we are using 100% renewable energy sources," Craig maintains.

When Craig decided to make a business out of his passion, he sought out mentors in his nascent field—who subsequently become decades-long resources. "I'm not an engineer," he says. It was of the utmost importance to him to understand how to run a business that would be viable. He wanted a business that works, for everyone: owners, customers, and workers.

Craig sees his workers as his greatest asset and treats them accordingly. "People who work with me really care," Craig says. "These are people with advanced technical degrees in engineering, math, etc. Their skills and training in their areas of expertise are the best. They see every building as a challenge, as an opportunity to improve energy efficiency. They also need to be collaborative by nature, to have emotional intelligence. Each building is unique, each client is unique."

Over the past 29 years, Craig has built Sieben Energy Associates into a recognized leader in achieving energy efficiency in buildings. To quote from their website, "Our consultants and engineers are committed to generating for our clients a strong return on their investment. We help organizations save time and money. We help facility teams implement best practices in energy management. And we help the people who work, live, and play in those buildings have a more comfortable and productive day."

And every bit of the energy saved reduces the strain on resources and cuts down on CO2 emissions and environmental degradation. That is Craig Sieben's bottom line, the great secret that keeps him going: in the long run, sustainable energy practices are better for business. It is why he believes that a saner energy policy will win out in the end. "Technology is the true driver of change. Bureaucracy is a buffer against government meddling. No business can exist without creating something that people need or value in some way," he says.

Craig has some advice to people of any age who would like to make a practical difference in the world. Find something you enjoy, that gives you a tremendous amount of joy. Help solve problems, improve life for others, put a smile on their faces. Aim for a bigger impact: learn to lead, to organize people, so you can expand beyond what you can do alone. Develop your entrepreneurial skills, learn effective management, how to make a profit. Do your research, know your area, where the opportunities are.

Realize that with an average lifespan of 80, you have several 25-year careers possible in your life. Become interested and interesting, take care of yourself, learn all you can. Look at the world. Learn where the breakdowns are happening, the trends. Respond and provide value, expertise. In the explosion of information, use discernment and good judgment, separate the noise from what's important. How much stuff do you need? What do you love, what makes you happy? How do you define success? And how do you make a living? You can have a big impact on the world well into your 80s or even 90s.

Sieben addresses the basic challenges named by the economist Juliet Schor in *Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth*. While we are relatively skilled at identifying what is wrong with our socially and environmental destructive economic system, we are also limited by an inability to imagine plausible alternatives. As Schor states,

> Climate destabilization, economic meltdown, and the escalation of food and energy prices are warning signs from a highly stressed planet. . . . But the mainstream conversation has been stalled by fatalism. We're better at identifying what can't be done than what we need to accomplish.[37]

In *Plenitude*, Schor describes an emerging environmentally responsible economic order, one not built on sacrifice and scarcity but grounded in a deep appreciation of what creates genuine and sustainable bounty—the plenitude that is possible as we move from an economy of endless consumption and growth to responsible connections to other people and to the natural world.[38]

Key Insights for Progressive Practice

In his professional life, Sieben lives out practices of plenitude, and enables others to do the same, helping them both use less energy and operate with greater economic efficiency. The challenge of this work is as much technical as it is adaptive. Within some theories of leadership, there is an emphasis on adaptive change, the basic changes in culture and vision that are required to fundamentally reshape an institution.[39] While changes in values are essential, in themselves they are woefully insufficient. It is not enough to want to live in reciprocity with the natural world—we need to know technically how to do so in our energy use and production, in our systems of agriculture, and in how we construct buildings and transportation networks. What we see in the proposals in *Drawdown* and in Sieben's work is a creative way of living out the basics of human and planetary survival. As Schor states, these challenges are technical as well as ethical: "The economy is broken in fundamental ways, as are the local and global ecosystems on which it depends. Quick fixes won't solve its problems. Creating a truly sustainable system will require ecological restoration and technological innovationover a period of many years."[40]

The work of Sieben and the participants in *Drawdown* is what happens after people know what is wrong and choose to live in a new form of abundance. This requires as much technical expertise and experimentation as it does a fundamental ethical choice to move from exploitation to reciprocity.[41] It requires a wholehearted rejection of the Windigo of extractive capitalism and a resolute avoidance of the Windigo of forgetting the partiality of all our knowing, and our ongoing capacity for error. Recall Kimmerer's challenge—we may not know how to restore damaged ecosystems. Recall as well the honesty of the scientists in *Drawdown*, already identifying the trade-offs and risks of 67 of the 100 practices that they endorse.

What does it take to keep generative, self-critical work alive? How do we know that our efforts are valuable for more than ourselves? This requires the embrace of the challenge of ongoing critique and immersion in the paradoxical joys of global connection and cultural humility. We are fortunate that there is yet another social movement that has just this as its aim, the network of public and private universities that make up the Engagement Scholarship Consortium. In the next chapter we will explore the work of universities that have expanded their mission from research and teaching to include engagement with society, "rethinking and reinventing the future of a world at risk."[42]

1 Sanchez, "Animal, Vegetable, Mineral," 215–218.
2 Ibid., 221–227.
3 Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 304.
4 Ibid., 304–306.
5 Ibid., 307.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 336.
8 Ibid., 382.
9 "We are deluged by information regarding our destruction of the world and hear almost nothing about how to nurture it. It is no surprise then that environmentalism becomes synonymous with dire predictions and powerless feelings. Our natural inclination to do right by the world is stifled, breeding despair when it should be insuring action. . . .

"When my students learn about the latest environmental threat, they are quick to spread the word. They say, 'If only people knew that snow leopards are going extinct,' 'If people only knew that rivers are dying.' If people only knew . . . then they would, what? Stop? I honor their faith in people, but so far the if-then formula isn't working. People do know the consequences of our collective damage, they do know the wages of an extractive economy, but they don't stop. They get very sad, they get very quiet. . . .

"Despair is paralysis. It robs us of agency. It blinds us to our own power and the power of the earth. Environmental despair is a poison every bit as destructive as the methylated mercury in the bottom of Onondaga Lake. . . . Restoration is a powerful antidote to despair. Restoration offers concrete means by which humans can once again enter into positive, creative relationship with the more-than-human world, meeting responsibilities that are simultaneously material and spiritual. It's not enough to grieve. It's not enough to just stop doing bad things" (Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 327–328).
10 Ibid., 371.
11 Ibid., 384.
12 Ibid., 336.
13 Michael Pollan, "Why Bother?," in *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Every Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, ed. Paul Hawken (New York: Penguin Books, 2017), 52.
14 Hawken, *Drawdown*, 3.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 7.
17 Ibid., vii.
18 Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 336.
19 Hawken, *Drawdown*, 216.
20 Ibid., x.
21 Ibid., 217.
22 Jones, *Green Collar Economy*, 2.
23 Ibid., 10.
24 Ibid., 22–23.
25 Hawken, *Drawdown*, 217.
26 Ibid., 217.

27 Janine Benyus, "Reciprocity," in *Drawdown*, 215.
28 Hawken, *Drawdown*., 15.
29 Ibid., 22.
30 Mark Hertsgaard, "The Man Who Stopped the Desert," in *Drawdown*, 118–119.
31 Ibid., 118, 120.
32 Hawken, *Drawdown*, 170.
33 Ibid., 188.
34 Ibid., 189.
35 Ibid., xi.
36 Interview conducted by Sharon Welch and Lynda Sutherland. Vignette written by Lynda Sutherland.
37 Juliet B. Schor, *Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth* (New York: Penguin Press, 2010), 1.
38 Ibid., 4–7.
39 Ronald Heiftetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Cambridge: Harvard Business Press, 2009).
40 Schor, *Plenitude*, 13.
41 For further exploration of specific examples of the technical means by which the values of reciprocity can be expressed, see the book edited by Juliet B. Schor and Craig J. Thompson, *Sustainable Lifestyles and the Quest for Plentitude: Case Studies of the New Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).
42 Judith Ramalay, "Plenary Session," Engagement Scholarship Conference, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, October 9, 2013.

Chapter 5. Global Connections and Cultural Humility