

Inspirations

Outlined below are some of the turning points, inspiring books, concepts and projects in a number of people's lives who have directly contributed to shaping the Emergence initiative.

Emergence itself builds on and highlights the work of people and projects that in significant ways contribute to making change for the better. It feels important to consciously remember and share resources as this is such a fertile time of pioneering ideas contributing towards positive change.

Paul Allen: Collaborator on the Emergence Summit:

"As a teenager I read *The Hidden Persuaders*, by Vance Packard, it has a very powerful effect on me helping me see thought the drivers of materialism and status, and how they were created to make us see ourselves as consumers. Even back in the late seventies it seems to me to have been way ahead of its time as it was first published in 1957!

Another key influence on my life was seeing the film *The War Game*. It had been withdrawn from as the "the effect of the film has been judged by the BBC to be too horrifying for the medium of broadcasting". However, it got to see it at a peace meeting in Carlisle in the late 1970s and it made me sign up as 'Youth Organiser 'for 'Cumbrians for Peace' – and led me to the world of activism.

Perhaps the biggest inspiration for me was in 1977 with 'punk' and DIY culture that came with it. I grew up in the mid 1970s youth culture that existed somewhere between glam and prog rock. No problems if you simply wanted to follow Pink Floyd or Mott the Hoople, but if you aspired to actually participate in the culture that cocooned your teen years, to be taken any where approaching seriously you needed a lorry load of silver sequin costumes, a smoke machine, mega amplifiers, double necked guitars and a couple of synthesisers. This was, of course, way beyond the average means of your average sixteen year old. To see performances you needed to visit what seemed like stadium sized venues and opinions of what was or wasn't 'in' was dictated by a small caucus of mainstream music papers. This meant great many of us were left standing as spectators, rather than participants to our own youth culture. Then a new virus began to spread like

wildfire, instantly transforming the gods of the day, (in fact anyone over 21) into boring old farts driven by a new D.I.Y. punk spirit. By popular consent the 'pop culture' vending machine was switched off and turned to face the wall. All of a sudden anyone had permission to participate, bands pooled their sparse, cheap gear, and 'make-shift venues' sprang up in every small town. By means of scissors, glue, typewriters, photocopies, gestetners and stalls at gigs new D.I.Y. 'fanzines' spread like primordial twitter, defining who's who. I'm not trying to say that all these acts were virtuosos, but without plan, permission or punctuation - fashion, fame and fun were reclaimed by the people for the people. It is an inevitable and natural reaction from human beings who find their own stories being told to them as a commodity. Of course it didn't last, within a couple of years Top of the Pops had re-claimed a lot of ground, and the T-shirt came with the zips and safety pins ready installed, but punk gave new confidence to a generation (or three), nurturing a new path that has led to many things from stop the city to occupy. This was, of course, not the first time this has happened, be it the ranters, the blues, skiffle, or garageband – DIY culture can re-write the script!

Another key inspiration was that of James Lovelock and his Gaia theory. Just as we developed medical theory to understand how our bodies work, Lovelock developed Gaia theory to help understand how our planet works. I studied control systems and feedback theory in my electrical engineering degree, and based on this Lovelock's Gaia theory helped me grasp how should not expect the Earth to respond proportionally to the changes we inflict on it, as a system without any regulating feedback would. Regulated systems tend to hold their status quo for as long as possible, before changing in a more sudden and unpredictable manner. With global carbon emissions and de-forestation still on the increase, we may well be approaching the end of the buffered period, after which climate change will become much more severe and, more importantly, considerably less reversible. I met James a number of times and despite the fact we disagreed on the aesthetics of windpower and the true costs of nuclear power, I was deeply impressed by the depth and vision of his thinking around gaia theory. It led me to build a huge video kaleidoscope at CATY to introduce the topic to our visitors! (See attached picture)

My most powerful inspiration and the one that led me to grasp the concept of 'emergence' was the book *Chaos: Making a New*

Science by James Gleick it described to me the working behind the Mandelbrot set , Julia sets http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julia_set , and Lorenz attractors whilst also helping me understand what was happening in the minds of the mathematicians behind the work. I realised that in complex systems with lots of feedback – all sorts of beauty could emerge that was in now way predictable from the sum of the parts – after that all things became possible!!

Jenny Mackewn: Collaborator on the Emergence one day conferences and Summit

A turning point for me was reading *The Population Explosion* (Paul & Anne Ehrlich) and *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (Randers et al) both of which completely transformed my life in terms of what they were saying about how we were depleting the planet's resources.

In the mid 1970's I also worked in the central office for the fledging organization Friends of the Earth, first as a volunteer then administrator then campaigner. I was especially involved in campaigns launched against wasteful packaging especially by drinks companies and to ban the hunting of sperm whales. I also wrote a couple of books on recycling at the time. This period at FoE was totally transformative in terms of the work and people I met there including people like Walt Paterson author of the seminal book Nuclear Power.

After moving away from the long hours and endless campaigning of FoE to have my children I first encountered the ecopsychologist Joanna Macy's work which was then called Despair and Empowerment work. At that time I was equally fascinated and repelled by this concept and it was not until around 2000 did I encounter her work again as *The Work That Re-connects*. Not until then did I really integrate it into my work and practice and now co-teach an intensive training 'Facilitator Development Adventure' very much based on Macy's work.

I was also very much inspired by the writings of the Jungian analyst and storyteller Clarissa Pinkolla Estes and trained extensively with Shamanic trainers from the U.S Arwyn Dreamwalker and the EHAMA Earth Wisdom Teaching and developed my own workshops using connection to the land and

medicine tools to work with individuals, organisations and communities.

Through training as a gestalt therapist I encountered the systems approach first from the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland and then with the Centre for Complexity and Management and the University of Hertfordshire under Professor Ralph Stacey.

In the early 1990's I also did a lot of work with founder of Family Constellations work Bert Hollinger whenever he came to the UK and developed my own systemic constellation work very much inspired by his original teachings.

I was also totally inspired by Rob Hopkin's book *The Transition Handbook* and the Transition movement in general which seemed to counter the doom and gloom I would sometime feel by highlighting the power of small but significant actions towards change made by individuals. I also encountered the work of Herby Girardet and also Leo Hollis author of *Cities Are Good For You* who excitingly both make the case for city living having the potential to be much more ecologically sound as opposed to going off to live on a small holding in the country.

Other books which have inspired me include Malcolm Gladwell's *Tipping Point* which analyses what exactly creates a tipping point when society goes from not being aware of something to becoming aware and taking action. I first noticed this in action when climate change moved from being at the margins to making mainstream headline news by being on the front cover of The Independent newspaper about ten years ago.

In the last five years I have been lucky enough to work at Schumacher College in Devon and worked alongside many extraordinary teachers including of Stephan Harding, his book *Animate Earth* chimes resonates very much with me.

In terms of systems theory, leadership and organizational change, I have found the writing of both Margaret Wheatley and Peter Senge deeply powerful and recommend all their work. More recently I have been working with Bob Johansen's *Leaders Make The Future* and am using this to create a new training at Schumacher College.

Also of course more recently I've been totally inspired by working on Emergence and especially the 2012 Land Journey which presented an opportunity to weave all of these strands of work together....

Lucy Neal: Collaborator on Emergence Swansea, C4O and Emergence Summit

Most of these were read at a time of 'Awakening' and I retain affection for them, mostly because I learnt to be compassionate for myself in having to deal with what I was reading about.

Here On Earth - Tim Flannery - very readable in terms of big picture and also moving in terms of human capabilities to activate change (in time). Good story teller and awe inspiring in terms of planet history running alongside our own . Read in 2010

The Re Enchantment of Art - Suzy Gablik. Just read like a book I had been waiting years to read, putting all the pieces in place for me to see clearly why and how the arts have such a central role to play at this minute in history. Read in 2010

The Work That Re Connects - the DVD and also the Book. I used to sit and watch Joanna Macy's explaining the Great Turning at night when all the children had gone to bed and I was thrown into tumult by absorbing so much 'great unravelling' news. Tears would be pouring down my face but there was something of great comfort in the stern way she held a light smile (with lipstick!!) about how we have to hold our courage and work hard at active hope. To know there was comfort in keeping such focus was immensely helpful. Read/seen in 2008

The Upside of Down - Thomas Homer Dixon. Read May 2008. This book was one of the first that helped me see how energy/environment and economy fit together and that everything really is all about the human relationship with energy. I also went to hear him speak in the House of Commons (All Party Parliamentary Group - these in themselves are really interesting sources of education from great people and free!) I thought he looked tired and tortured by it all. I wanted to give him a hug (but didnt)

Transition Town Training. March 2008. I did this weekend of training when I first got involved with the transition movement. It was intense, educative and transformative. Being handed some 'peak oil' cards and having to take part in a workshop where you had to explain to some one all about what peak oil was was like crossing a Rubicon for me. Nothing was ever quite the same again. I learnt that we have to take responsibility for the information about what is happening and step up to speaking about it on our own terms, find our own way to the story and begin to invite others into a space to exchange ideas about what comes next and how creative we could be in imagining that what next. The people I met that weekend have remained important colleagues.

Schumacher College November 2007. I spent a week on a residential course about transformative learning. The course itself was less central to the experience than the people I met, the place itself, the hours and hours I spent in the library taking each book down and looking through shelf after shelf. A kind of waking up at my own pace to a) what trouble and strife lay ahead b) how long how many brilliant people had been working on all aspects of systemic change and c) how I could find my own way in to being a change maker. It also connected with an evening in Totnes listening to a Transition Town meeting and I got to hear about what they were up to. I detected a 'speaking differently' quality to the evening (about education) heard Rob Hopkins speak and came home and set up Transition Town Tooting.

Early waking up moments

Creating a Cultural Commons: a programme of lectures put together by Julia Rowntree as part of the LIFT Enquiry 2001-2006. Included Vandana Shiva, Peter Sellars, Jeremy Rifkin, Lawrence Lessig. These were phenomenal!!!! Vandana spoke of the link v cultural and bio diversity and Rifkin spoke about the Hydrogen Economy. They were instrumental in getting lots of arts ecology thinking together. At the time I was busy running LIFT and only listening properly with my ears and brain. It took me several more years of 'awakening' (and leaving LIFT) to hear again what I had heard and read more with my heart and understanding how listening needed action. Sometimes it takes a whole while for pennies to drop and time to see clearly how you fit into picture.

Tipping Point: Sept 2007 - my first Tipping Point, I heard Phillip Pullman speak very beautifully about the earth and our learning and hope and I realised how personal we need to be about how we see things, how poetic we need to be and how focused we must become. At the same conference, David Buckland (Cape Farewell) said 'just find yourself a project and get on with it'. This was very good advice and I did!

Natural Change Course led by David Key and Margaret Kerr. I got an ACE grant to research *Playing For Time* and it paid for me to 'build my own resilience'. In wilderness this week long residential gave me great calmness and confidence in my own abilities to keep at the path I was on. As Macy says once you know you are a part of the web of life and can never be separated from it even in death, I realised I already had a connection to nature which when made more aware of it could be the source of courage and strength I need to counsel me in despair and tiredness. It's good to take daily joy from this.

Bread making - this is my current source of fulfillment and fun. If I can get my hands into some dough in my own kitchen and watch the yeast rise and bread prove and come out a hot crusty loaf I can rebalance myself to the world. If my youngest daughter is playing the piano somewhere around the corner at the same time, then I am as happy as happy can be.

Swimming. See here for an article I have written about how much swimming affords me. A lot and again on my own front doorstep in Tooting.

http://issuu.com/transitionfreepress/docs/ftp_issue2_summer2013_final_rev

Fern Smith: Creative Producer of Emergence

I've been involved in the arts for over 25 years now with my company Volcano Theatre www.volcanotheatre.co.uk, for me the arts is and has always been transformative. I put my heart body and soul into making work which felt like a cri de Coeur for the human race and the planet. One of the central questions we asked in our work at Volcano was 'how to live'. Volcano was and is a theatre of ideas and utopian possibilities.

As well as making shows at Volcano, my life as a theatre practitioner was enriched by creative ideas and practice around movement, voice and improvisation. I became very interested in the process of creativity, development, health, healing and transformation. This interest led me to work with a number of pioneering creative practitioners such as Frankie Armstrong www.frankiearmstrong.com, Noah Pikes author of *Dark Voices* (voice), Miranda Tufnell www.mirandatufnell.co.uk (movement) and Paul Rebillot author of 'The call to Adventure' (drama therapy). After the death of my mother in 1996 I became fascinated by the grief process and did much research into this enabling me to understand my own process and that of others. This led me to an interest in embodiment, health and trauma by training and qualifying as massage and craniosacral therapist www.bristolmassage.co.uk, www.craniosacral.co.uk

In 2010 I applied and was granted a fellowship by the Clore Leadership Programme and became fellow for Wales www.cloreleadership.org. This enabled me time to explore links between health and creativity. I was also keen to explore utopian ideas and communities. My first month on the programme was as a work-study scholar at *The Esalen Institute* in Big Sur California, birthplace of the American Counterculture movement in the 1960's, hotbed of radical ideas dedicated to therapeutic theory and practice, bodywork, permaculture and leadership www.esalen.org Esalen enabled me to marinate in these ideas and introduced me to concepts of systems theory which seemed to fit with ideas of systemic health I had been exploring in craniosacral therapy. My desire was to bring my work as a therapist together with my work as an artist and it found it's integrity and definition in the idea of the 'health of the body politic'. Body politic means likening the nation to a corporate entity. This phrase almost became a mantra and came closer to expressing ideas similar to Lovelock's Gaia Theory.

On returning from Esalen, I began to search for somewhere in the UK which in a similar way to Esalen was grounded in utopian ideas and practice. After attending the annual Schumacher lectures in Bristol www.schumacher.org.uk For the past few years I had ben introduced to *Scumacher College* (transformative learning for sustainable living)

www.schumachercollege.org.uk and *Resurgence Magazine*
www.resurgence.org/headers by the inspirational Satish Kumar.

I vowed to visit and was enabled to do two short courses at Schumacher College as a result of funding from the Clore Leadership Programme. After looking at the upcoming courses I was drawn to two in particular on Eco-facilitation led by Jenny Mackewn and Toni Spencer and one by Margaret Wheatley on Leadership in Times of Chaos. I had read Wheatley's formative book *Leadership and the New Science* some months before and was hooked by her compelling ideas of quantum theory, systems thinking, leadership and organizational change. Margaret Wheatley and the ideas expressed throughout her body of work was one of the touchstones for developing the Emergence project. (*So Far From Home, Turning To One Another, Finding Our Way, Perseverance, Walk Out Walk On and A Simpler Way*). The course in eco-facilitation introduced me to the work of the eco-psychologist, activist and teacher Joanna Macy, in particular her books *Coming Back To Life* and *Active Hope* with co-writer Chris Johnstone (specialist in the psychology of resilience, hope and active change workthatreconnects.org). My work with Jenny continued throughout the formative days of the Emergence project to the 2012 Summit and has been the source of much insight and support. During this time I also trained as a facilitator with Jenny and with Chris Johnstone in Macy's 'Work That Re-Connects' which builds on deep ecology, systems thinking and spiritual traditions www.joannamacy.net, <http://workthatreconnects.org>.

Early in the research and planning of Emergence I came across the work of the arts commentator Suzi Gablik and in particular the visionary *Re-enchantment Of Art*. I encountered a number of artists in conversation and many of them spoke of her book as being both formative and a lifeline in the current work. She became an ally and inspiration and the Emergence project which developed in 2013 'Doin' Dirt Time' is a performance of one of the interview transcripts in her extraordinary book which records her dialogue with many visionaries, activists and artists *Conversations Before The End Of Time*.

I was reading many books at this time all of which had some beautiful and inspiring truths to absorb. Memorable ones include;

David Abram's *Becoming Animal* which "explores, from within, the elemental kinship between the human body and the breathing Earth"

Thomas Berry's *The Great Work* "the culmination of his ideas and urges us to move from being a disrupting force on the Earth to a benign presence."

Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski & Flowers's *Presence* which "explores the living fields that connect us to one another, to life more broadly, and, potentially, to what is "seeking to emerge."

Joseph Campbell's *A Companion* which gives "reflections on the art of living"

David Bohm's *On Dialogue* which outlines his theories on "creative dialogue, a sharing of assumptions and understanding, as a means by which the individual, and society as a whole, can learn more about themselves and others, and achieve a renewed sense of purpose."

Alex Gray's *The Mission Of Art* on "art's power to bring about personal catharsis and spiritual awakening."

Fritjof Capra's *The Hidden Connections* in which "Capra demonstrates conclusively how tightly humans are connected with the fabric of life and makes it clear that it is imperative to organise the world according to a different set of values and beliefs, not only for the well-being of human organisations, but for the survival and sustainability of humanity as a whole."

Paul Hawken's *Blessed Unrest* that "Traces the contributions of a diverse, worldwide grassroots humanitarian movement through which conscientious individuals and organizations are dedicating their efforts to restoring the environment and fostering social justice."

As well as all the reading I felt a need to have an embodied sense of knowledge of our lived connection with the earth so Gaia and systems theory was not just a conceptual theory. I embarked on a ten day Vision Quest in mid Wales held by one of the original quest teachers in the UK, David Wendl Berry assisted by Nick Breeze Wood www.nicholaswood.net. This was a truly formative and life changing experience and enabled me to access a place of deep knowing of the natural world and the land which connects back to our early ancestors. This was perhaps the inspiration behind the Emergence Land Journey of 2012.

More recently I have encountered and been inspired by the work by the Dark Mountaineers Paul Kingsnorth, Dougald Hind and others who all contributed to *Dark Mountain's Manifesto*, Anthologies and *Uncivilisation Festivals* www.dark-mountain.net

I've also become interested in the role of myth, the deep imagination and storytelling in order to come closer to being able to articulate the times that I am living through and begun a year long training with Martin Shaw www.schoolofmyth.com and Ian Rees www.annwnfoundation.com/awen-training.html

In the middle of all this there was of course the formative visit to *Navdanya* in India to be part of a teaching led by the environmental activist, scientist and anti-globalisation campaigner Vandana Shiva who is a role model and inspiration for so many www.navdanya.org.

This has been a lifetime of reading, incredible ideas and nourishment. I now feel a need to digest this in whatever way I can and be not just able to articulate it but to find a way to live it in my own way....This journey has only been possible by the light shone by all those who walk before us and good humour and love of those who walk alongside.

Rhodri Thomas: Co-creator of Emergence

My journey started as a student in Essex University studying Environmental Biology. One of my lecturers was CF Mason who wrote a seminal work *The Biology of Freshwater Pollution*. It was the only book I kept once I had graduated. Dr. Mason and other lecturers at Essex introduced me to the rich complexity of life and how human beings interact with nature. Concepts such as vegetative succession of sand dunes and the zonation of saltmarshes may seem esoteric but in these ecological microcosms are to be found the fundamental laws of the universe.

That is a key thing for me - the interconnectedness of all things. It was while I was at university that I first began to investigate Buddhism and I have been a dabbling Buddhist/Taoist ever since. But I can't commit because to commit to a faith or a doctrine is to deny the validity of everything else. I think there is a little bit of truth in everything. For me however the scientific method stands

as a supreme achievement of human development (when it is done properly!). The stepwise proposition, testing and repeated testing of an hypothesis is not very dramatic but with a regal pace bit by bit, layer by layer, generation by generation it reveals absolute truth. When this objective rigour is combined with the intuition and imagination of art then humanity is at its best. I guess I am a Renaissance man and its no accident that the greatest scientists are usually creative, imaginative people. It frustrates me that art and science became separate cosmologies but I sense that now, in the new paradigm of wholism, they are coming back together.

Which leads me to Howard Odum. He, like me, studied ecology - the systemic way that all life is interconnected. Unlike me he made a lifetime career out of it and gave the world a whole new perspective. Odum was the grandfather of modern ecology and he directly inspired Bill Mollison and David Holmgren the founders of Permaculture. I discovered Odum when I returned to university in my late thirties having decided to give up acting because as a lifestyle it was too insecure. In my years away from science I had discovered Chaos Theory and the thrilling way that it showed that seemingly random events were in fact the results of highly complex and interconnected causes - more evidence that the universe is a complex whole. Odum recognised that our world of technology and material excess is in fact an anomaly in human development because it depends entirely on fossil fuel. Once fossil fuel is gone, we will have to return to a simpler, less material lifestyle. In the past, low energy civilisation was only possible through hierarchy and slavery, so any low energy future, if it is to maintain our current standards of equality, justice and human rights, must be accompanied by a system of morality and ethics - back to Buddha and the Tao.

The late Dr. Steven Harris shared my enthusiasm for Odum and Permaculture but towards the end of his life modified his views because while Odum called for "a prosperous way down" to a lower energy state, Steve could not see how justice and equality could be guaranteed without a cheap and easy supply of energy. So Steve advocated a drive to develop technology through sound science - more energy not less! But in that scenario the need for morality, kindness, values, spirit is still there because a more technological world will raise difficult challenges and require compromise. Nuclear energy and genetic modification for example

would solve many of our current problems if used responsibly but they would only do so at an uncomfortable price.

That's one of the fundamental laws of the universe that I learnt at the start of my journey - there is no such thing as a free lunch. Those of us engaged in trying to bring a new paradigm of wholeness and sustainability into the world should never forget this. To think you can end hunger, stop climate change, protect biodiversity, enshrine equality, legislate for fairness and guarantee human rights without compromise or contention is a delusion. All one can hope to achieve is a fragile, dynamic balance. Which is why we always need art because we will always need to dance along the tightrope of existence and have people to teach us how to when we forget.