



REGENERATIVE
Travel

Regenerative Travel Principles for Hospitality

CATCHON

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PARTNERS

Foreword

As the world ground to a halt during the pandemic, we reflected on the basic notion of why we travel, and how, as an industry, we have a responsibility to create the change we want to see for the future of our planet. We are at a turning point as a human species to reverse the trajectory of climate change with an urgent call to repair and replenish the damage to our environment and our communities. Regenerative principles are emerging as the future of tourism with the potential to create better conditions for people and lives to flourish. We now have the opportunity to rebuild a framework that brings back a transformational travel experience that creates abundance for all stakeholders—one that is non-extractive, immersive, inclusive, diverse, and equitable.

“Regeneration is a rebirth of thinking about our role and regenerating our role on the planet,” says Bill Reed (page 6). The paradigm shift to regeneration requires a change in how we think and see the world. Through this primer for regenerative travel, we examine case studies from hotels that

may have been practicing regeneration without explicitly using the terminology. We include a lexicon (pages 13 to 14) so one can more accurately use some of the standard terms and phrases we discuss. By providing a lexicon and backing it up with examples in our case studies, we hope to share a vehicle toward this paradigm shift.

Regeneration is aspirational in nature, as we can always be more eco, more green, more sustainable, and more regenerative. Sustainable travel was the first step in establishing a collaborative relationship with nature and understanding how our operations can fit into the design of the whole system. Regenerative travel takes a step further.

Anna Pollock says (page 7), “The only way we will be able to heal the earth is to improve our capability to be in a relationship with ourselves and our communities.” Tourism can be a transformative change agent that inspires a shift in consciousness for the traveler to realize their role in upholding the values of regeneration.

Travel cannot continue to be measured by infinite growth. We need to collectively draw upon tourism to holistically make net-positive contributions to the well-being of all stakeholders in the ecosystem. This can only be accomplished by understanding the value in expanding our knowledge, presence, and relationship with a given community, and the ecosystems which support those communities.

We invite you to join the journey of co-evolution through regeneration as we build our framework on the regenerative principles for hospitality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Ho". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'A' being particularly large and stylized.

Amanda Ho,
Co-Founder, Regenerative Travel, Inc.



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Chapter 1



In a conversation with Anna Pollock, Bill Reed, and David Leventhal, we explore the meaning of regeneration and how regenerative travel practices have the potential to become an agent of positive transformation and contribute to a better quality of life for all.

About Anna Pollock:

Anna, the founder of [Conscious.Travel](#), has 45 years of experience in tourism as an independent consultant, strategist, and international speaker. She is one of the leading proponents of regenerative tourism that requires a fundamental shift in perspective and paradigm to realize its true potential as a healing force and transformative change agent. She has been working with Visit Flanders, helping shift their goal from volume growth to destination flourishing.

About Bill Reed:

Bill is an internationally recognized planning consultant, design process facilitator, lecturer, teacher, and author in sustainability and regeneration. He is a principal of [Regenesis Group](#), a regenerative design, living systems integrator, and education organization, as well as The Place Fund, an investment fund focused on Regenerative ESG real estate. His work centers on creating the framework for and managing an integrative, whole and living system design process known as Regenerative Development. In addition to his stature as one of the leading thinkers in this field, Bill has consulted on over 200 green design commissions from buildings and city masterplans.

About David Leventhal:

With a background in emerging media and technology, over the last 20 years, David's endeavors have focused on real estate and hospitality following his values for regenerative, environmental, and social impact. As the owner of [Playa Viva](#) and founder of [Regenerative Travel](#), David has championed this regenerative ethos since the founding of Playa Viva in 2006. By creating a sense of place, both geographically and historically, Playa Viva encapsulates a new type of luxury for guests: one based on cultural authenticity, natural immersion, and impeccable service.



Why do we need to move from sustainability to regeneration?

Bill Reed: The most important thing in regeneration is regenerating our capability as humans to assume our proper role on the planet. Many thinkers would define that proper role as being a “steward.” However, I don’t like that as much as I like the word “gardener,” because gardener implies reciprocity and that we learn as much from life as we exchange as humans. Regeneration is a rebirth of thinking about our role and regenerating our role on the planet.

Anna Pollock: Everyone needs hope that there is a way out of the mess that we’ve created. There’s a sense that sustainability is not going to fully get us there. If we covered the planet with LEED Platinum buildings, built to the

highest levels of sustainability, this would not ensure humanity survives long-term, especially if we continue to expand our level of resource use. This distinction is important for the travel and tourism industry because travel’s current model requires the industry to continue to grow. And there’s this assumption that is not questioned—that tourism can continue to get bigger. We have a tendency to think about growth as GDP and economic growth¹, but we can also grow in ways that are less “consumptive” and extractive, such as growth in knowledge and understanding—how do we value that? We don’t need to necessarily expand physical presence. We can expand our psychological and knowledge presence, and relationships. This is regeneration.

“Regeneration is a rebirth of thinking about our role and regenerating our role on the planet.”



Playa Viva, Mexico

¹See the Social Progress Index as an alternative to GDP



How should we start thinking about regenerative travel?

Bill Reed: At the most basic level of green design—saving energy, recycling, reducing pollution, and so on—that is when we are working toward efficiency. We equate efficiency with sustainability. But efficiency only means we are doing less bad; we are being more efficiently unsustainable. The world is still not sustainable if we're dumping more carbon into the atmosphere. The majority of green and sustainable hospitality projects are working on being efficient. Regeneration is about engaging and understanding the larger life shed of the system. If we can learn and appreciate the systems of life in the places we visit, there is a chance we will take that perspective home with us and engage with places in renewed ways. Further, it's about learning to be in a renewed relationship with the people of that place. The only way we will be able to heal the earth is to improve our capability to be in a relationship with ourselves and our communities. Then we can more powerfully engage the combined intelligence of many people to reverse the damage we've caused.

Anna Pollock: What really matters is the quality, not so much the quantity of the visitor, and the net impact on the destination—is it positive? More importantly, are all of the participants in the system developing and growing in their capability to organize with themselves in the future? Regeneration redefines success as the development of capability and applies that to individuals, businesses, and communities. A hotel will go through stages of growth in terms of income and operations. So in the early stages, you are going to be keen to establish a presence in the market. You'll probably start off quite small and then grow the number of visitors per year. After a point in time, the traditional methods of success will only take you so far. Then you may start to look at other ways in which you can create that positive net impact for your people in your organization and community. How can you help them grow personally, for example, so that they're not doing the same job in 10 years? How has their capability expanded? Or similarly, you can start to look at the community in which you are working and look at ways of contributing in non-material ways.

“ The only way we will be able to heal the earth is to improve our capability to be in a relationship with ourselves and our communities.



Why is “history of place” relevant for regeneration?

David Leventhal: When you do a “history of place” assessment (like we did with Playa Viva), you look at the spot on earth that you occupy from a longer-term geological and archeological standpoint. This includes spoken or written history, all the way down to interviewing the town elders or local folks about their own hopes, dreams, and aspirations for this place. And then you begin to understand what your role is as a steward of the future of this place. When coming into a new place as a hotelier, you should sit on the land for a full year to understand the life cycle of that place. This same concept should be applied to the community. It’s about co-evolving and sitting with the community to understand it. You are not apart from the community—you are part of the community, and your hotel extends well beyond the boundaries of your property line.



Playa Viva, Mexico



Why is co-evolution an important part of regeneration?

Bill Reed: At an entry level, often what we're doing is extracting value. We go to a resort and extract the value of the beach and the value of the food. People fly in to have a great experience and then they go home. That's extracting value. With sustainability, we're only slowing down the damage. We have to listen to the land, the social psychological systems, learn from them, and in reciprocity, give back to one other in order to create abundance. Regeneration is not episodic. It's continually evolving, and you have to be conscious of that evolution and adjust to it as you move forward. Continual adaptation is really what regeneration is all about. We need to realize that we are in service to something larger to motivate us and to create meaning in our own lives. The idea of potential is critical to this because we are not here to solve problems. We're here to live into potential.

So the minute we start solving problems, we actually fragment the world. Putting it into a framework, there are three levels of work. There's self-development, organizational development, and finally, the actualization of what you are in service to, and that's the system.

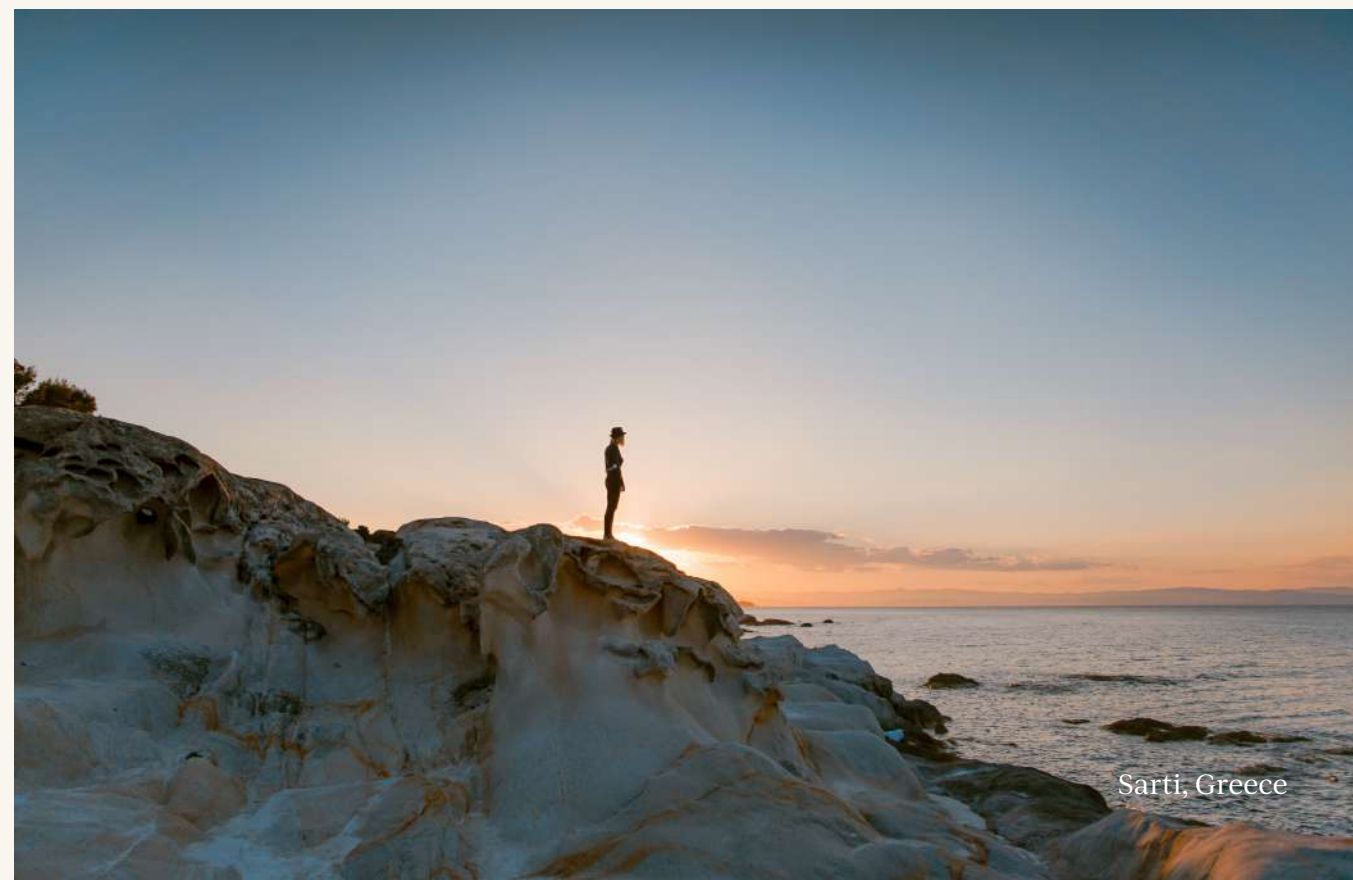
Anna Pollock: So much of this is about a change in the way we think and the reset of our perception, because once you change the filters that we use for information, the whole world changes. Many people want checklists and to be told what to do. It's true that examples help people understand new concepts, but it's only when you understand the working principles of life and become aware of life's interconnections, can you think for yourself and respond creatively to what's happening around you.

“Regeneration is not episodic. It's continually evolving, and you have to be conscious of that evolution and to adjust to it as you move forward.”





Sahara Desert, Morocco



Sarti, Greece

How can we help travelers experience the paradigm shift?

David Leventhal: At Playa Viva, while we are doing many of the sustainable things such as being 100% off-the-grid solar, making all of our own energy, and producing some of our own food, there are certain practices that we are doing which hopefully the guest can experience more profoundly without ruining their experience. It's a reciprocal process again. It's not like we're not going to feed you until you take this class on where your food comes from. We'll present the menu and talk about where in our farm or in our community your food comes from, invite you to walk the land, meet the farmers who tend to the gardens and into the community to meet the ranchers, and maybe invite you to participate in the farm. The process of engaging people in the community to understand how that place is regenerative hopefully inspires them to go back and be more regenerative in their own lifestyle.

Anna Pollock: Regenerative principles should help the hotelier see that there is a more holistic and organic way of seeing the world, and that their role becomes a change agent for their community. They can start to tend the ecosystem they're living in and provide a richer range of encounters for their guests that expand their horizons. We need to make a fundamental leap in realizing the interdependence, interconnectivity, and the dynamic nature of everything. It's about developing your capability and contributing to the capability of those around you, to essentially break down the artificial separation between ourselves and the natural world. We need travelers to have that experience of true partnership and true interconnectivity.

“ We need to make a fundamental leap in realizing the interdependence, interconnectivity, and the dynamic nature of everything. We need travelers to have that experience of true partnership and true interconnectivity.



The path from “sustainable” to “regenerative”

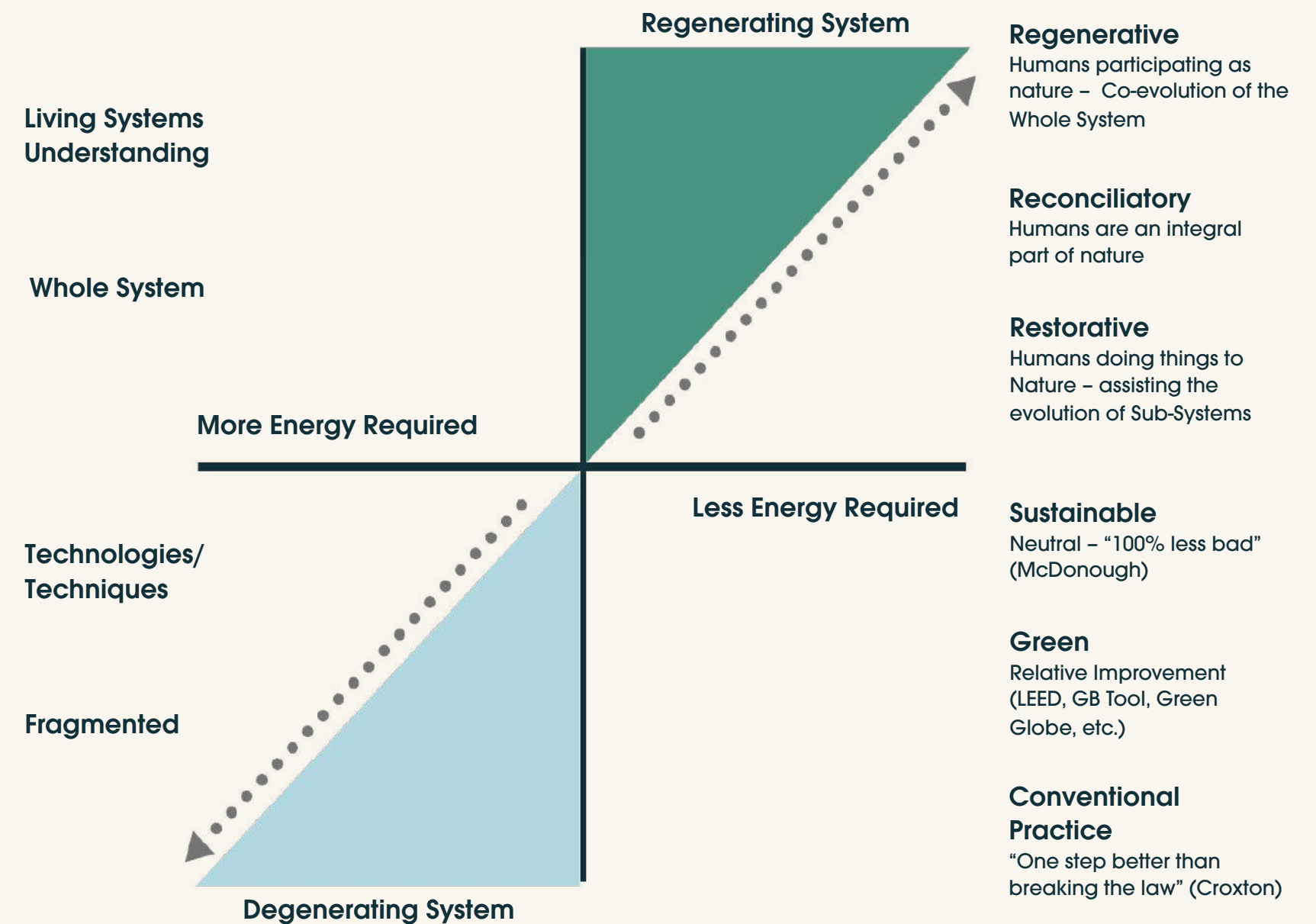
The travel industry, as it currently operates, is not sustainable. If we all agree that significant changes must occur in order for us to reverse climate change, then we agree that we must move beyond the status quo. Arguing about terminology and whether we should be green, eco, sustainable, or regenerative is not going to move us toward a better solution. Agreeing that we are all on this journey together is the only way to solve this existential threat to humanity.

From a very simplistic standpoint, being green is about doing less damage, sustainability is reaching net neutral, and regeneration is making it better. This is not to say that any of these are wrong, bad, or worse than the other; only that each of these is a step in the right direction. Each offers benefits which contribute to achieving the next result. The sustainability industry, just as ESG within the investment community, has built strong models and systems for measuring performance, certification, and accreditation. These same systems have not been fully built for regeneration, yet we are seeing great progress in

areas such as regenerative agriculture (Rodale Institute, Regenerative Organic Certification, as an example). Sustainability can measure discrete parts, and regeneration considers the whole system. Portia Hart, Standard Bearer for Regenerative Travel, states it best: “Regeneration is not about checking the boxes, getting your score and then resting on your laurels. Regeneration considers essence of the entire system and is about constant co-evolution and improvement.”

Regeneration means to transform and develop a collaborative relationship with nature and community. It is about developing a renewed spirit of relationship—with nature and with each other.

We have to change our ways to reverse our negative impact and move to a path to overall improvement, making the world a better place for all of us to live in. The core principles of regeneration say we have to think differently about how we exist.



Based on graphic by Regenesys Group



Regenerative Glossary

Regeneration

Being green is about doing less damage; sustainability, as it is generally practiced today, is aimed towards neutral impact; restoration is about making things better. Regeneration is about transforming our perspective and developing a collaborative relationship with nature and each other. It is an ongoing journey that is to be continually improved upon.

Essence

The intrinsic identity, nature, or indispensable quality of a place that is understood intuitively by its subject.

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is a party that has an interest or concern in any activity or initiative. We use this term to describe our guests, our hotel partners, travel agents, ecosystem, and the communities in which we operate.

History of Place

“History of place” means looking at the spot on earth that you occupy from a geological, cultural, and archaeological standpoint. This includes spoken or written history. The insights gleaned from this history are intended to help local inhabitants as well as visitors understand the recurring patterns of life in each unique place; in other words, the essence of place.

Honoring Place

The property or hotel is harmonious with its surroundings, promoting and enabling practices which are respectful, inclusive, and sensitive to the local people and natural environment.





Moving From Scarcity to Abundance

The move toward a system that centers itself not on maximizing growth in an effort to overcome scarcity, but on utilizing resources in a way that could continue for all future generations.

Whole Systems Thinking

Whole systems thinking is a method of understanding how elements and systems are related, and how they influence one another within a whole. An example of systems thinking is how elements such as water, sun, soil, air, plants, animals, and human beings interact and support one another as a system.

Aspirational in Nature

Regeneration has a non-material, aspirational dimension in that it focuses on the actualization of our individual and collective potential.

Ego to Eco

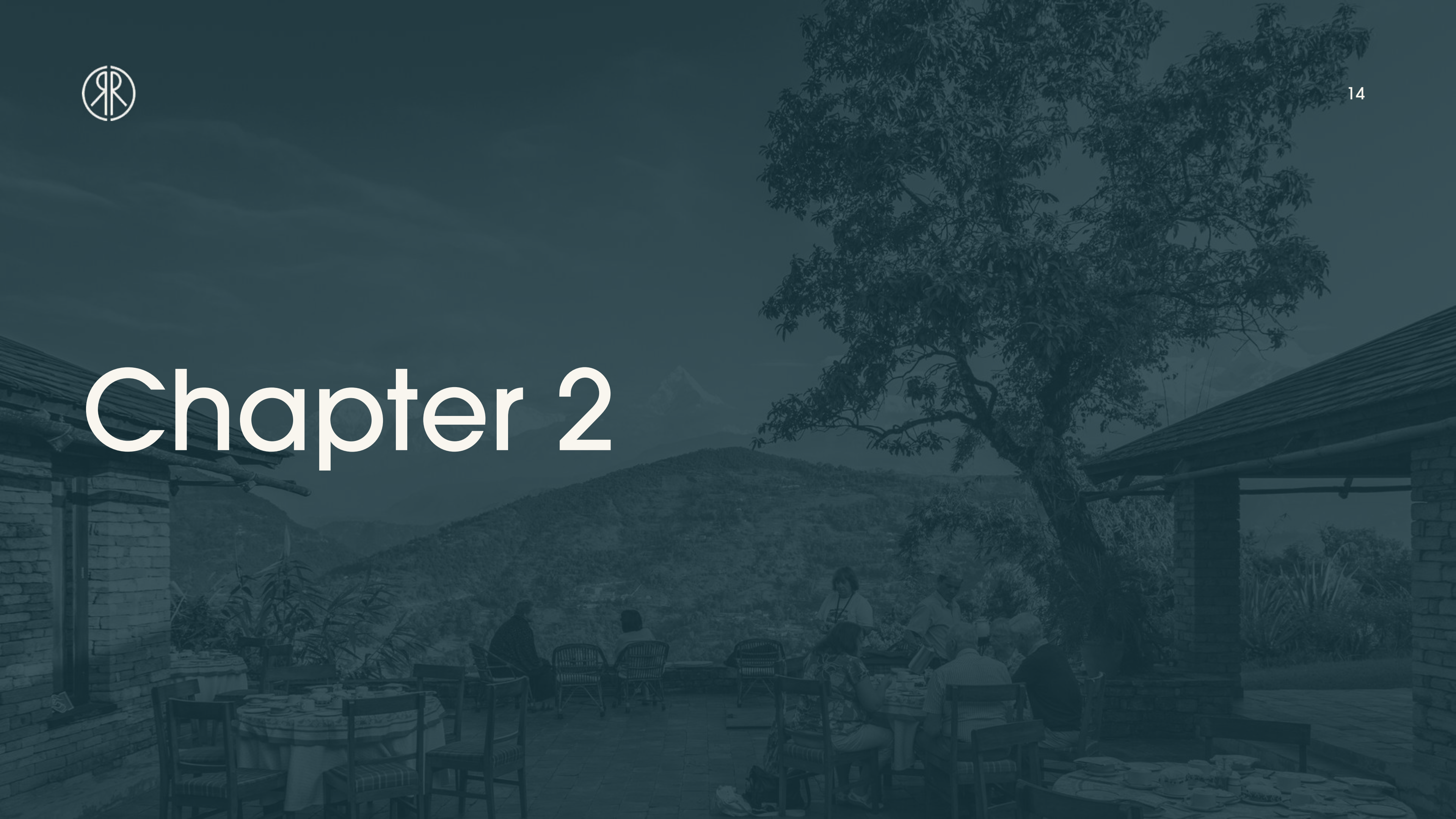
Moving from an obsolete “ego-system” focused entirely on the well-being of oneself to an ecosystem awareness that emphasizes the well-being of the whole.

Reciprocity

A harmonious and mutually beneficial exchange. True reciprocity occurs without expectation of reward; rather, there is an understanding that existence depends on the health of many other species in the forest and the interrelationships between them.



Chapter 2





Five Regenerative Principles for Hospitality

1 **Whole Systems Thinking**

2 **Honoring Sense of Place**

3 **Community Inclusion and Partnership**

4 **Aspirational in Nature**

5 **Continual Co-Evolution**



1 Whole Systems Thinking

Regeneration is an all-encompassing approach that strives to illustrate how everything is interconnected and ultimately influenced by one another through whole systems thinking. All stakeholders, including elements such as the physical land, are considered in every decision, as well as the potential ramifications those choices have on both animate and inanimate systems.

“It’s getting people out of their rooms, to the communal area, and connecting with the community that is Playa Viva, which includes the staff. From there, out into the community, and the farther out they go, the more connected they become to place,” David Leventhal, Owner of [Playa Viva](#), explains when depicting “the concentric circles of effect,” as one form of whole systems thinking. In Playa Viva’s case, this web, one of many, starts with the guest, whose experience touches everyone and everything, and sees what that ripple effect entails for all involved.

Whole systems thinking is not one-directional, but rather a mechanism to keep unearthing and learning what the place, people, and space demand in the most holistic sense. The methodology is a dialogue inclusive of all: “It’s a two-way street because it’s not just them learning from us, but we learn from them too,” Leventhal describes. In adopting such a strategy, separation dissipates and the place co-evolves as one.



1 Whole Systems Thinking

When looking at whole systems thinking applied from a destination level to the hotel operator level, one can understand how regenerative tourism plays an integral part of a healthy ecosystem, particularly for those who depend on the oceans for survival.

The health of the Belize Barrier Reef is crucial as the reef supports fishing industries and livelihoods. The tourism sector, in which diving and snorkeling play a key role, is estimated to contribute over 40% of GDP, including both direct and indirect contributions. In collaboration with fishermen, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has developed an ingenious solution that will continue to provide livelihood while regenerating the depleted ocean environment through sustainable seaweed farms. Known as “Belize gold,” the farms’ seaweed provides a holistic approach to solving problems facing Belize by giving fishers alternative employment, combating overfishing, providing a safe habitat for native fish and invertebrates, and reducing ocean acidification locally.

The seaweed project has now been recognized by TNC as one of its most successful ventures to date and is supported by Hamanasi Resort. The hotel annually donates \$10,000 to TNC Belize and encourages guests to donate to the organization while educating them on the importance of its mission. Guests can also experience and learn about the benefits of seaweed firsthand, as Hamanasi utilizes seaweed in a variety of ways from healthy smoothies to rejuvenating spa treatments. Seaweed farming represents a sustainable livelihood for many Belizeans—something that Hamanasi Resort owner Dana Krauskopf believes is integral to the region’s ability to thrive.





Fogo Island Inn, Canada

2 Honoring Sense of Place

Honoring a sense of place is an integral regenerative practice for hospitality as it allows the traveler to be fully immersed in the story of its history, touching upon every aspect of the guest experience—from the food to the design.

“How do we weave as many elements of our community, of its past, of its practices, of its dreams and of its stories into the fabric of how it's built and how it operates?” Zita Cobb, Innkeeper at [Fogo Island Inn](#) asks. “In my father's generation, often people couldn't read and write, so when they had to go from St. John's all the way to Fogo Island by boat, they had navigation songs to help them steer. We took fragments of a long song and wove fragments of the words into the shower of every room. You would have to go to all 29 rooms to actually figure out how to get from St. John's to Fogo Island. Most guests come and probably never really realize what it is or that it's there, but it gives us deep pleasure to know we baked it in.”

Fogo Island Inn honors a sense of place through these precise details. Through formal charrettes (collaborative design meetings), they experimented with different colors to explore how the building would disappear in atmospheric conditions and blend into the landscape. They also discussed the layout for the bathroom and how a bathroom should work. How could they reconcile, for instance, how the people of Fogo Island traditionally approached bathing without running water? In designing a modern washroom, how could they honor the past at once? The charrettes also looked at the Inn's food offering and encouraged residents to reactivate the gardens they had once abandoned. Through a return to ingredients that they had forgotten, and the discovery of ingredients that their ancestors didn't know were edible, Fogo Islanders were able to rediscover what was already on their doorstep.



2 Honoring Sense of Place

By recreating the fabric of the land and its people into the present, travelers can experience the ethos, values, and embodiment of the host. Luz Caceres and Roberto Fernández, the owners of Pacuare Lodge in Costa Rica, describe how regeneration “is in their DNA” as a result of their background and upbringing. “We grew up surrounded by the jungle and rivers, volcanoes, and outdoor adventure. We started this life mission when we were little, because we grew up in this environment. It was instinctual for us to say, 'let's stop this damage, let's repair the damage that has been done.'”

Through continual development and trust-building with the local indigenous community, Caceres and Fernández were able to ultimately help protect their traditional way of life and art forms. The indigenous were able to relearn the skills that they had lost over the years through community workshops. “One of the ideas that we proposed to them was to build one of their traditional huts on our property. Young people who were losing these techniques would have the opportunity to build the hut and embody their original way of living and at the same time, allow our guests to learn from the structure as well.”

Honoring sense of place means to understand its traits, peculiarities, mannerisms, and all that constitute and define it—not as separate parts but as contributing to a dynamic ever changing whole with its own unique essence. This identity experienced as “sense or soul of place” proves indispensable differentiation, providing a window of opportunity to learn, engage, and fully appreciate the potential of a place to benefit all.



Pacuare Lodge, Costa Rica





Fogo Island Inn, Canada

3 Community Inclusion and Partnership

Regeneration is often intuitively associated with landscapes and the natural environment. While that is undeniably part of regeneration, the fundamental cornerstone of regeneration resides in the community of people that inhabit the land.

“The word 'community,’” Zita Cobb, Innkeeper at [Fogo Island Inn](#), explains, “is a physical, tangible place where people live together in some kind of tangle with each other, where by virtue of their shared geography, they have a shared fate, and it's a healthy community.” Cobb’s definition illustrates a vehicle through which togetherness and collaboration emerge. In examining the concept of community against the backdrop of Fogo Island, Cobb describes how the early ecological mindset of the Fogo Islanders was essentially that of regeneration. “They had a really good relationship with the idea of how much is enough.” Most simply, explains, it is about relationships. “What is our relationship to this physical geographic place? What is our relationship with each other in this community? What is the relationship of the Inn to the communities that are on Fogo Island? It takes a very different kind of business model to pay your people properly. Our approach has been to be as gentle as we can with the natural world, and if we can create economic dignity for the people of Fogo Island, they're going to continue to be able to take care of the natural world. I don't think you can separate social and ecological considerations. We put social first, because we can't take care of people one by one, but we can take care of communities and then the communities can take care of their people.”

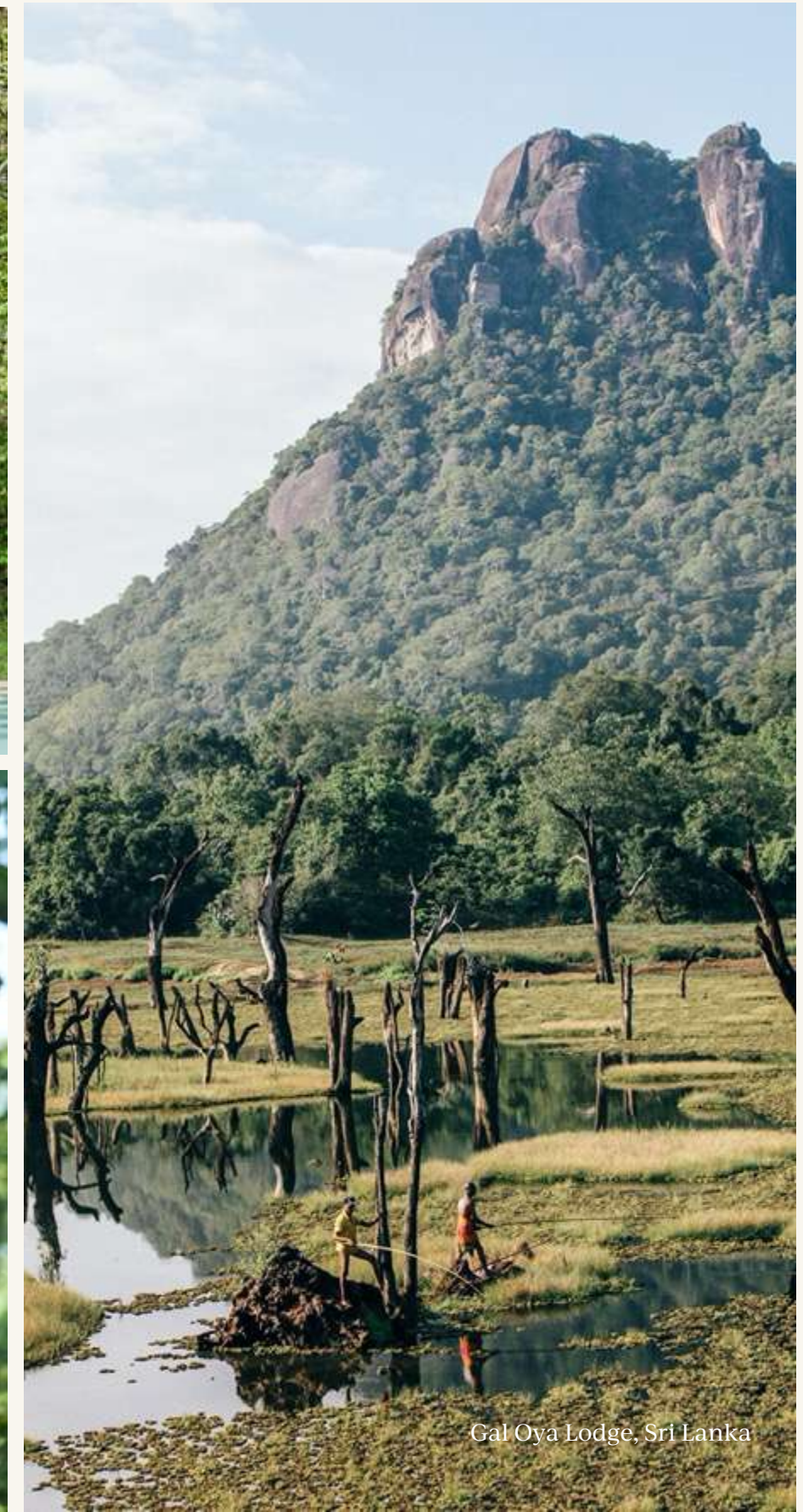


3 Community Inclusion and Partnership

By incorporating all stakeholders with diverse experiences and intimate knowledge of the landscape, the potential of the land increases exponentially—and by extension, the need to protect it. Operating under this methodology rewards the traveler with authentic experiences, and the hotelier, a relationship whose dividends cannot be measured.

Before Sangjay Choegyal, Director of [Gal Oya Lodge](#) in Sri Lanka, began construction, he realized the importance of cultivating a relationship with the local indigenous community. He explains, “We wanted to make sure that we were working hand in hand with the veddas so that we weren't accelerating the demise of their culture.” The open dialogue between Gal Oya and the indigenous communities offers a chance for all parties to voice concerns and become part of the ongoing evolution of the space. As a result of continual development and communication, Gal Oya and the veddas developed ‘vedda walks’ as an offering for its guests. These walks offer a unique glimpse of a culture that is rapidly disappearing.

Choegyal and his team also include the community as valued stakeholders in the physical construction and operation of the lodge. “We made sure that nothing was imported and that everything was made by local artisans. We hired local contractors and builders which cost us more in the long-term and took more time. But we wanted to ensure that it was almost a community exercise to build this new lodge.”



Gal Oya Lodge, Sri Lanka



Six Senses Laamu, Maldives

4 Aspirational in Nature

Aspiration is defined as the desire and ambition to achieve something. When placed within the regenerative context, this desire is translated into actualizing the potential of all, individually and collectively. Unlike traditional business relationships where the shareholder return and bottom line take precedence, regeneration opts to take into account all stakeholders. Anna Pollock depicts aspiration in action “when you're creating the conditions for life to thrive because life, imagination, aspiration, all of these things are latent in the potential of that community. The challenge is you can't prescribe solutions. But you can create the conditions for that essence of potential to emerge.” Aspiration is the vehicle through which potential is realized.

Six Senses Hotels Resort and Spa CEO Neil Jacobs describes their resorts' unique role in inspiring guests to reconnect with themselves and develop compassion and gratitude, which contribute to their well-being and, consequently, the regeneration of self. "It is with greater consciousness and a willingness to dive deep into yourself that you will reconnect. You will regenerate, you will contribute more, and you will have a more well life."

Jacobs states there is a shift in consciousness and a newfound desire to reconnect. “People want to come out of a travel experience in a better place than when they went into it,” Jacobs explains. “So much about wellness and regeneration goes hand in hand because it's ultimately about our consciousness, our interactions, and our respect for one another. The question is how to articulate it in a hotel stay. I think we can influence how people live their lives through our programming.” The aspirational development is ignited by the experiences Six Senses strives to instill in the guest journey, with the ultimate hope that these leave a lasting impression on the traveler, even upon their return home.

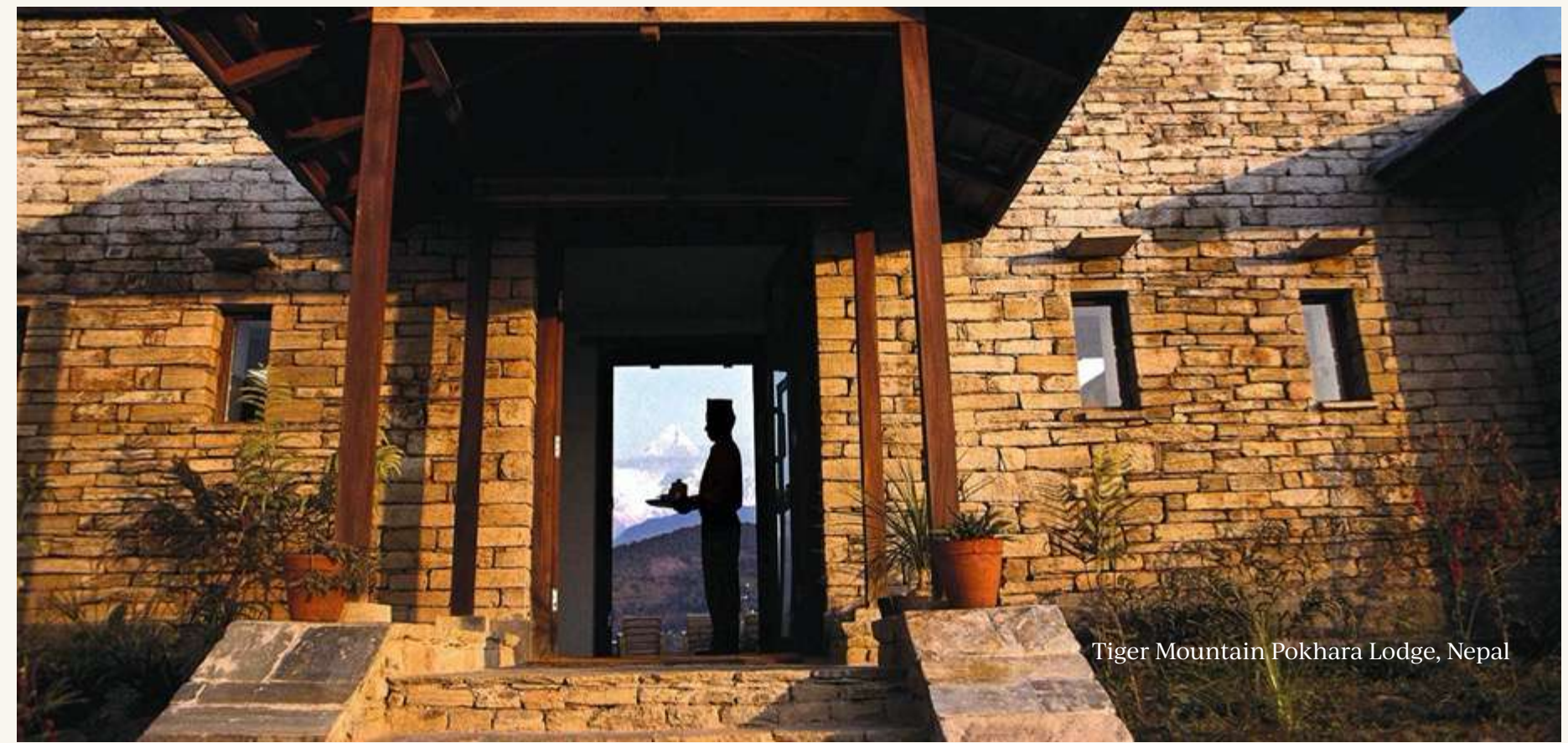


4 Aspirational in Nature

Building upon the notion of travel as a change agent for transformation, Marcus Cotton, Owner of [Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge](#), explains how the essence of their Nepali jungle backyard is captured in their mission and aspiration for their local community and guests. “Our mission is that tourism should be a force for good—for the local community, but also for travelers to have awareness of regeneration.” At Tiger Mountain, this aspiration creates an experience in service to a larger purpose.

At [Playa Viva](#), potential rests in what most would envision as a problem. “Playa Viva is at the base of the watershed because it's the estuary,” owner David Leventhal explains. Instead of choosing to overlook this natural feature, Leventhal decided to highlight the water basin's role in the community. “That watershed empties into our property, and we feel we have a responsibility all the way up the watershed, whatever goes into it and touches us. And so it's not just the town next to us. There are multiple levels: the first thing is the trash that enters. We need environmental education on waste and waste streams, and we need to bring kids down to the beach, to clean up. They see waste doesn't just disappear. We need to connect them to that system and empower them.”

By looking at the long view and connectivity that exists at all levels of community in the form of this estuary, Playa Viva's actions illuminate the collective potential of the environment. When potential is witnessed at all levels, what often appear to be obstacles become mechanisms to imagine, delight, and inspire places and whole communities.



Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, Nepal



Great Plains Conservation, Zimbabwe



5 Continual Coevolution

Regenesis Group’s Bill Reed affirms that regeneration is not episodic: it evolves continually, and one has to be conscious of its evolution. Continual adaptation is the essence of regeneration.

Dereck Joubert, founder of [Great Plains Conservation](#), judges their narrative against what was done in the past and what they wish to accomplish in the future. “Systems are evolving all the time. We’re looking at service, because we can always improve that. What have we learned that can make us more caring? Caring is key. Almost every relationship we have in the world is based on caring. Our reaction to lion population falls and pangolin scale poaching all stem from an uncaring. In a world with a dramatically increasing human population, it’s going to be harder and harder, because people are going to be more focused on looking after themselves.”

Joubert recalls a conversation in 1995 with the Okavango Community Trust aimed at convincing them that tourism would be more sustainable than hunting. As he looked around the table with blank stares, he took off his belt and laid it on the table, and shared how this was an example of a byproduct of tourism in Kenya. He had purchased the belt for a sum that equated to more than most in the village earned in a month. After introducing the idea, Joubert was later approached by a poacher who was interested in working as a guide for Great Plains. The erstwhile hunter became a leading guide, and eventually, a shareholder—expressing an example of how the coevolution of people and place can ultimately create a successful model from poaching wildlife to protecting wildlife for tourism.



5 Continual Coevolution

Portia Hart, founder of [Blue Apple Beach](#) in Colombia, states that the hotel's relationship with the community is constantly developing through employment and educational opportunities. "When we opened, the community was happy and everybody wanted to work for us. We have a fantastic relationship, because it's not just about hiring local staff. Our guest activities are managed by locals, and that flow of wealth goes directly to the people. We have a network of 300 people who in some way depend on or benefit from our hotel. We're always learning about how we can be more contributive and be better neighbors. We have seen positive changes with our staff—people building their houses with bricks and mortar for the first time, going on vacation and taking an airplane for the first time, sending their children to university for the first time... If you give people the opportunity, they seize it and fly."

Hart is now working with the local tourism authority to start a sustainability fund where companies can choose to make contributions themselves or through their customers, as in Colombia, there is no local tax that goes back into tourism. Such a fund can assist small businesses like Blue Apple Beach achieve sustainable and regenerative changes to their operations. "For me, it's really about making the whole city better rather than just my business. A destination is not regenerative if it only has one or two responsible businesses. I would like the whole destination to be seen as responsible."

Through a regenerative mindset, there's an unwavering desire to do better and recognize the potential in evolution throughout human development, infrastructure, and the economy.



Blue Apple Beach House, Colombia



Chapter 3



Measuring Impact

The mission of this white paper is to address the question: Is regenerative travel a buzzword or a paradigm shift? With the understanding that one cannot improve on what cannot be measured, an important part of our objective is to address how to quantify the impact of regeneration through a high-level overview. We invite rigorous scientific, academic, and analytical studies to participate in our next white paper, which will focus solely on assessing the impact of regenerative travel.

Regeneration is a design principle where we take learnings from the natural world to create an interconnected system that replenishes and restores what has been damaged. For regenerative practices to be successful and sustainable, we must look to measurable impact through science-based evidence, in order to track ongoing progress and compare results.

Without measurements, we cannot gauge success or if indeed our efforts are resulting in tangible improvement. Measurable data is also the only way to observe and analyze long-term environmental, cultural, and societal impact—beyond our own lifetimes and those of our businesses—that may be unknowingly detrimental to communities and the land upon which they depend.

Established sustainable tourism practices insist on the measurement of independent and discreet elements of an operation, such as waste, water, carbon, and energy, with the ultimate goal of reduction. From a regenerative perspective, this information is applied by practitioners who consider the entire ecosystem, human and environmental, and all of its interconnected parts, with the aim of replenishment, repair, and restoration.

Whereas a business traditionally measured its success through the bottom line—the financial wealth created for its shareholders—regenerative businesses measure success through the financial, social, and environmental wealth created for all their stakeholders: the triple bottom line. The truly regenerative business uses information and data to improve its impact beyond its geographical boundaries, and even beyond its own existence.



Solar panels at Olas Tulum, Mexico



Operate with Radical Transparency

For Fogo Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Inn is a shared asset where 100% of operating surpluses are reinvested into the community in order to secure a sustainable and resilient future for its people. According to Zita Cobb, Innkeeper at [Fogo Island Inn](#), “The number one thing every consumer can do every day, for every dollar spent, is to demand to know where it goes. There's an enormous industry growing around certifying properties in sustainability. Can we simply aim to have radical transparency about where the money goes? Instead of arriving at a property which would then encourage me to give money to the local school, how can a property build local welfare into their business model?”

This led the [Shorefast Foundation](#), the nonprofit organization behind Fogo Island Inn, to create their Economic Nutrition label, which uses the same instantly recognizable visual format as a food nutrition label. Be it for a night at the Inn or furniture purchased from the woodshop, the label details in a “Where the Monday Goes” section specifying the distribution, including labor, raw materials, commissions,

administration, and marketing. Just as importantly, a second section called “Economic Benefit Distribution” details what percentage stays in the local community, in the state, the country and beyond.

This rare and radical financial transparency has three principle effects. Firstly, improved buyer awareness of the economic power they wield. Secondly, there is enforced accountability on the vendor's extraction from or contribution to the local economy. Finally, a shift of preference takes place for vendors to their local supply chain. Travelers are empowered to make informed spending choices that align with their own values, while a more sustainable and resilient local economy blossoms.

Many African tourism models, such as that of [African Bush Camps](#), embrace transparency, local impact, and fair distribution. For every night sold at any of the camps, \$10 is donated to the [African Bush Camps Foundation](#) (ABCF). Operating around the core pillars of education, conservation and community development,

ABCF have reached 13,000 households, or 55,000 people, surrounding their camps in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana. “All our operating areas are of ecological importance globally. The responsibility to illustrate this positive impact allows us to tell the story, raise awareness, and earn further support,” says Beks Ndlovu, founder of African Bush Camps. “Our actions with the communities must not leave them dependent on us. Rather, we help leverage their positions so that they won't need us forever. They can sustain themselves in the future, and will have been a part of the regenerative culture through good practices of managing their lands and livestock in such a way that they are increasing their wealth and well-being.”

When sustainability practices and regenerative practices come together, it creates a resilient local ecosystem and a resilient community.



Place Equal Importance on People and Planet

Achieving the changes required to reverse climate change and salvage natural ecosystems requires human collaboration and activity on a global scale. For societies and individuals to change habits and ways of life, they require security, good health, education, and stability as a starting point. Human equality is required in every community to achieve this goal.

According to Patricia Dwyer, Founder and Director of [The Purpose Business](#), “We must look to data, as you cannot manage what you don’t measure. If we consider ESG (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance) as the KPIs of sustainability, we then must question how we experience sustainability from both an environmental and social aspect. The issue is ‘social,’ as when we look at welfare, gender equality, supply chain, transparency, and product responsibility, the metrics were far less organized up until now,” Dwyer says. “What COVID-19 has done is bump the social side up the agenda. Regenerative approaches are questioning, how do we calculate the ‘social’ better, and in a more comparable way?”

How does one measure the impact of diversity and equality on the travel industry? In November 2020 the Black Travel Alliance published the results of [The Black Traveler study](#) with MMGY Global, showing that the Black travel market is worth over \$109 billion. The sustainable and regenerative travel community has an obligation and an opportunity to ensure its goals are promoted across broad national, racial, religious, and socio-economic spectrums, as well as to track how this is achieved, so that the largest possible proportion of human society understands the earth’s needs and limitations.



Collect Data

Portia Hart, founder of [Blue Apple Beach House](#) and the [Green Apple Foundation](#), and Standard Bearer at Regenerative Travel, emphasizes the importance of collecting data in upholding the core principle of constant improvement. “The idea behind regeneration is that you can always improve something, somewhere, that will in turn have a positive impact. The goal of today is to contribute 1% more than yesterday, so we must know where we are today, and where we were yesterday. The only bad data is no data.” At Blue Apple Beach House, where the staff recently implemented a project toward becoming a zero-waste property, the data itself is a source of motivation. “Seeing all the measurements you’ve taken over a month in black and white, and telling a meaningful story—for example, that 70% of waste is diverted from landfill—inspires you to progress to the next chapter,” says Hart.

As well as helping to compare the effectiveness of different approaches, data enables actors to benchmark against industry peers. This creates a sense of constructive rivalry as properties strive to keep up with, and perhaps overtake, each other. At Regenerative Travel, the member hotels are obliged to collect data on a minimum of 30 metrics, covering both environmental and social aspects of their operation. As data is collected via the [Greenview Portal](#), which is used by over 30,000 hotels worldwide, any participating property can get a sense of where it sits and how it can improve in order to maintain its market position and competitive advantage.

We invite you to join us for the next round and submit your case studies on measuring the impact of regeneration. Email: amanda@regenerativetravel.com for more information.



Blue Apple Beach House, Colombia



Chapter 4



Three Easy Steps To Start Your Regenerative Journey

Step 1 Determine your value to your community

“Ask yourself what value you can add to your community,” says Bill Reed of [Regenesi Group](#). “Look at the five capitals of sustainable development. Differentiate between the kinds of capital: financial, natural, produced, human, and social. Once you begin to understand all of the different stakeholders who are involved, you can begin to understand how you can work together more consciously, mindfully, and collaboratively to enhance that experience for the guests.”

Juliet Kinsman, Sustainability Editor at [Condé Nast Traveller](#) and founder of [Bouteco](#), notes hotels often seem paralyzed in thinking that they are not “green enough” and have an initial resistance to go down that road. “I always use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guide,” Kinsman says. “Look at all 17 of the SDGs and choose three issues that you can work towards alleviating the problems of such as clean water, poverty, and hunger. If you can do good work on even just one issue, that’s what’s important. That is the beginning of regeneration.”



Blue Apple Beach House, Colombia



Step 2 Understand your supply chain

Kinsman believes that travelers must think about the greater good, and not only how things affect them. As a result, it's the host's and travel agent's responsibility to steer customers to the products that help benefit more people.

“In a post-COVID world, people will look at the cost of travel more than ever. Hotels and travel agents have an absolute duty to look beyond profit and think about where the customer's money will go. We are all responsible for an ethical supply chain,” says Kinsman. “People are waking up to this, but we need middlemen to explain that travel is the same as organic food systems. Most people will just buy the cheapest food in the supermarket. Those who do buy organic, buy it for their own personal health. We all have to think about the greater good in order to reverse climate change. Capitalism can be the solution as long as we make business more responsible,” she says.





Step 3 Inspire transformation through the guest experience

How can you create the circumstances for regeneration through your guest experience? Creating the space for engagement, interaction, and understanding for travelers to learn and experience the vibrancy of a place is an important first step in inspiring a transformative shift.

“You must engage travelers in a collaborative discovery of life,” says Anna Pollock, founder of [Conscious.Travel](#). “You must create the conditions for the guests to have these shifts in perception. It's critical for the entire ecosystem, including the hotels, travel agents, tour operators, and the destination, to be aware of each other's interdependence. We can't save the Earth, but we can save the Earth place by place. This is why regenerative tourism is so important: it helps our places come alive, and that's the beginning of a healing process.”



Somalisa Acacia Camp, African Bush Camps



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About Regenerative Travel

Regenerative Travel, a benefit corporation providing support services to a network of independently owned eco-luxury boutique hotels who are dedicated to the highest levels of social and environmental impact. Through sharing individual best practices and through collaboration, Regenerative Travel enables the Regenerative Resorts hotel collection to work together to achieve significant economies of scale and to make a deeper impact.



About CatchOn, A Finn Partners Company

CatchOn, a Finn Partners Company, is a brand communications consultancy with offices in Hong Kong and Shanghai. It is part of Finn Partners, a global integrated PR and marketing agency with a travel practice that consists of top PR pros in Destination Marketing, Lodging, Aviation and Cruise, F&B, Health and Wellness, Responsible Tourism, Economic Development, MICE and Trade Representation, Crisis and Image Management, Promotions and Experiential Marketing. Our 100+ person travel group spans the globe with offices in the United States, the United Kingdom/Europe and Asia.