

The Clearing

DEEP
SENSING

Deep-sensing leadership
for ecological communities.

A SEVEN-DAY GATHERING, AND THE YEAR THAT FOLLOWS

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01.

The challenge

How can we develop the inner leadership capacities needed to navigate complexity and build resilient communities within planetary boundaries?

This lies at the heart of our gathering, and of what we hope to explore and create with you.

A resilient and thriving civilisation will depend on our ability to strengthen what connects us, mobilise our collective imagination and turn trusted relationships into meaningful collaboration and co-innovation. By stepping forward together we can create islands of coherence from which a broader transition may emerge.

Relationships are fundamental to this work. They create the trust and sense of safety needed to slow down, listen deeply and notice possibilities that might otherwise remain invisible. When leaders meet with open heart across communities, institutions and generations our collective agency grows, as does the courage to act.

Leadership development must cultivate the whole human being, not only technical competence and rational decision-making. Alongside the emerging AI-enabled technological infrastructure, we need a deep-sensing leadership

infrastructure: one that develops our collective capacity to perceive, understand and create at the level of the whole system.

It may lie in demonstrating the most human, ecological and socially coherent way of living with technology while respecting our planetary boundaries. To do this confidently, we must build on our core values and key strengths, and reconnect with the diversity of our roots, cultures and soil.

Our future will require leaders who can see systems as a whole, remain grounded despite growing turbulence, and hold space for diverse perspectives, enabling them to navigate uncertainty with clarity.

Developing this capacity requires places where people can pause and reflect, reconnect with their inner universe, build relationships rooted in trust, and collectively sense and imagine what might be possible.

For this purpose, we propose a living network of people, places and initiatives through which new ideas, leadership practices and collaborations can move.

Our intention is to explore what will best serve leaders in these turbulent times, and how we can create the conditions they need to thrive. Together, we will strengthen our ability to

connect with our inner agency and imagination, build trusted relationships, explore new forms of collaboration, and find the courage to act.

We will also explore how the insights, relationships and momentum can flow into our organisations and trusted networks, enabling co-innovation and contributing to more resilient and regenerative places.

The programme

The Clearing. Deep-sensing leadership for ecological communities. A seven-day gathering, and then a year that follows on.

A resilient and thriving civilisation will depend on our ability to strengthen what connects us, mobilise our collective imagination, and turn trusted relationships into meaningful co-innovation.

But ecological communities are not short of vision.

The harder part comes next. Knowing what you actually hold. Knowing what to build next, what it costs, who has to agree, and how you will know in a year whether it worked. And having the inner confidence to stand in front of your own community and say: this is what we are doing, and I will hold it.

The Clearing is designed to develop the inner leadership capacities needed to navigate that complexity. We do not separate inner development from practical action. Here, inner capacity is the soil from which tangible, regenerative action grows.

This programme is not a retreat. It is not a peer-coaching circle. It is eighteen parallel development processes run over seven

days, designed to produce eighteen islands of coherence —
concrete, actionable plans rooted in your real ground, your real
numbers, and your deepest courage.

03.

The architecture: eighteen people, eighteen hours

We gather a company of eighteen people who have already built and established successful initiatives: villages, farms, networks, businesses and schools. Over six days, we generate eighteen focused hours.

For one hour, the entire group of eighteen will focus solely on the development of your community or initiative. We will consider its ground, its water, its people, its money and its decisions.

We invite you to bring a problem or challenge you are afraid to name. We will hold it for you — not because we can necessarily solve it, but because you should not have to carry it alone.

04.

The foundation: the Place Sheet

Before we arrive, we must strip away narrative and face reality. You will complete a one-page Place Sheet detailing the hard baselines of your initiative: hectares, water sources, households, exact income, and legal tenure.

This document is shared with the other participants before anyone travels. It means nobody arrives as a stranger to your ground.

We also ask you to name the inner or relational barrier preventing you from moving forward — because you cannot navigate planetary boundaries without real data, and you cannot navigate human systems without self-awareness.

05.

The core mechanism: the Hour

Attending closely to others for six hours a day is demanding. To do this, we rely on a repeated, rigorous sixty-minute form.

This process is an exercise in collective intelligence and ego-displacement — the crucible where inner leadership is forged.

01. Ten minutes — you speak

You state the facts from your Place Sheet, and name the real problem. Uninterrupted. Most people find their actual problem around minute eight.

02. Ten minutes — questions only

The group may ask anything, but may not advise. Questions force the group to truly understand your system before trying to fix it.

03. Twenty-five minutes — the group works it

You sit in silence and take notes. The group talks about your place as though you were not in the room. You hear what people actually think, not what they would say to your face.

This requires immense inner grounding and the capacity to sit with discomfort. The group must name three things aloud before the time ends.

04. Ten minutes — you speak again

What moved? Which of the three things do you accept, and proceed with?

05. Five minutes — the envelope

You name one action and a date. It is sealed. You open it alone, three weeks after you leave.

The six-day journey

Each day is framed by a provocation drawn from the Naturally Smart material, pointed at a specific domain of building an ecological community. Each domain requires a specific inner capacity.

You choose which day, and which question, your place most needs.

Day one. What is this place?

Ground, water, boundary, tenure.

Rootedness. Confronting physical reality and stripping away abstraction.

Day two. What do you want this place to be?

People, households, purpose.

Empathy. Moving from my vision to deeply understanding who this is actually for.

Day three. What would nature do?

Soil, food, cycles, energy.

Ecological coherence. Designing within planetary boundaries, sensing into natural systems rather than defaulting to technical fixes.

Day four. What are your intentions?

Money, legal form, first build.

Courage to act. Bridging imagination to materialisation. Putting a price tag on a dream and making the first move.

Day five. Are we acting wisely?

Governance, decisions, power, conflict.

Holding turbulence. Facing power dynamics and failure. Modelling a socially coherent way to handle disagreement without rushing to resolution.

Day six. What moved?

Measurement, evidence, succession.

Letting go. Separating ego from the project. Evaluating what needs to end, and cultivating the humility to change course.

Day seven: materialising coherence

No new content. The inner work of the previous six days crystallises into tangible output.

01. The brief

You stand and state your agenda. You then hand in a one-page Development Brief.

This is your island of coherence — a grounded, realistic, numerate plan that respects planetary boundaries. It is the document you can put in front of your community, your council, or your funder.

02. The witnesses

You ask one other person in the room to witness your year. This formally initiates the Living Network.

The year that follows: the Living Network

An island of coherence cannot stay isolated. The programme extends into a year of supported action, turning trusted relationships into meaningful collaboration.

Three weeks after. The envelope

You open your sealed card alone. One action, on the ground.

Monthly. The witness call

Your witness does not ask what you achieved. They ask: tell me what you noticed this month. This keeps you connected to your inner landscape and to the subtle shifts in your community, rather than only chasing targets.

Quarterly. The grounding

Once only, the witness asks: what has actually changed on the ground since we last spoke?

Twice a year. The return

The whole group gathers for one full day. Four people run their Hours again. The Development Briefs are revisited: done, changed, or abandoned, and why.

What is asked of you

This design gives up visible curriculums and shared case studies. It depends entirely on candour. There is nowhere to hide.

Real numbers on the Place Sheet, including the ones that might be embarrassing.

A real problem or challenge, not your best story.

Full attention to all the other places, not only your own.

Honesty when something has failed. This is the hardest one to admit, and often the most powerful to work through.

You will leave with a clear, actionable development brief, a grounded inner practice, and a living network of peers who have looked at your hardest problems and refused to let you carry them alone.

A basis for a future world.

The Clearing

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for ecological communities.

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Eighteen people. Eighteen hours.