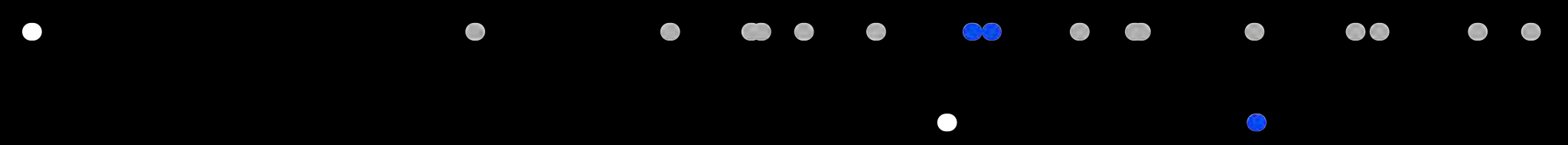


# Future stories for a new economy

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NENA webinar



**Chris Riedy**  
Professor of Sustainability Governance  
Institute for Sustainable Futures

**Institute for  
Sustainable Futures**  
[isf.uts.edu.au](http://isf.uts.edu.au)

We all think about the future.  
We anticipate, we plan, we dream.



We are all born storytellers. Stories are how we make sense of the world.



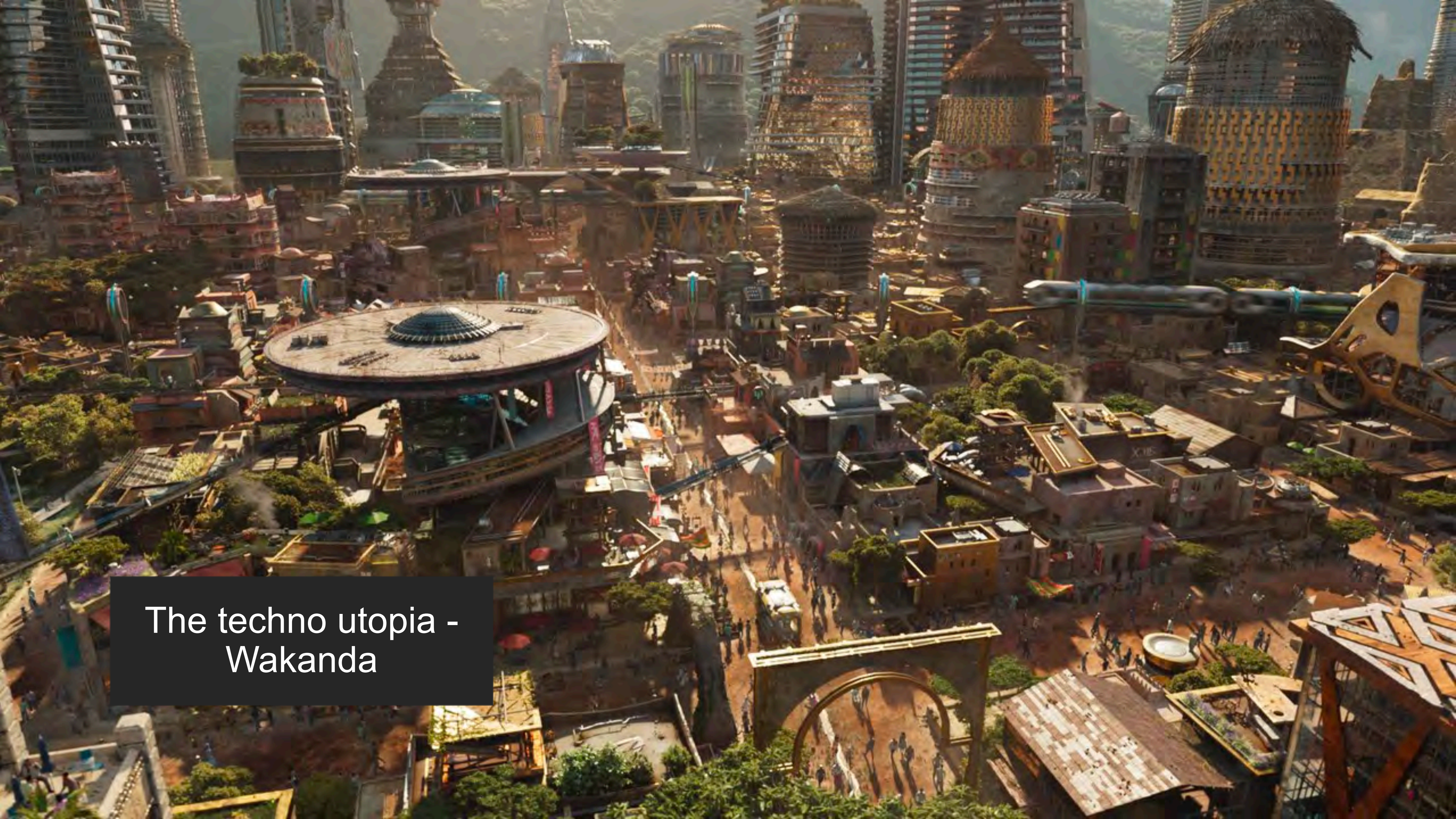
Around the Campfire

Stories about the past (history) can draw on evidence to convince us





Stories about the future are conjecture. They rely entirely on the quality of the story to convince us.



The techno utopia -  
Wakanda



# The story of Separation

We are separate from each other and nature



Competition, free markets and growth in GDP will deliver well-being



We live in a mechanical world that is ours to exploit





The dystopia – *Blade Runner 2049*





# THE GREAT ACCELERATION

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS

## EARTH SYSTEM TRENDS





Sustenance and  
discipline – Transition  
Towns





10  
ECOSOLS

BARCELONA  
2016

2  
ECOSOLS

1  
ECOSOLS

B N 1  
B N 20

"I'd rather the devil got after me than Mrs. Jackson."

LILLIE MAY  
CARROLL  
JACKSON

ECOSOL  
TERRA COMPARTIDA

V FIRA D'ECONOMIA SOLIDÀ  
FESC

ECOSOL  
TERRA COMPARTIDA

20  
BANGLA PESA  
BANGLA PESA  
BANGLA ISHIRINI  
20

NG'OMBENI-PESA  
for goods and services of members

DOLLARS

NG'OMBENI-PESA CRO-VOUCHER  
NG'OMBENI-PESA

25

50

10

TIEN BRAND

B

MARKSHARES

MARKSHARE

1 C 3000

Ecological  
economics

Degrowth

Circular  
economy

Wellbeing  
economy

Steady state  
economy

Collaborative  
economy

*Buen  
vivir*

Transformation –  
Regenerating nature  
and ourselves

Post-  
development

Gross national  
happiness





Image: Richard Register, Eco City Builders

**Collaborative economy**  
– citizen governance and prosumer networks

**Circular economy in the welfare state**  
– the government rules, supported by industry

**Local self-sufficiency**  
– household production in locally governed communities

**Automation for quality of life**  
– robots produce while citizens enjoy leisure time



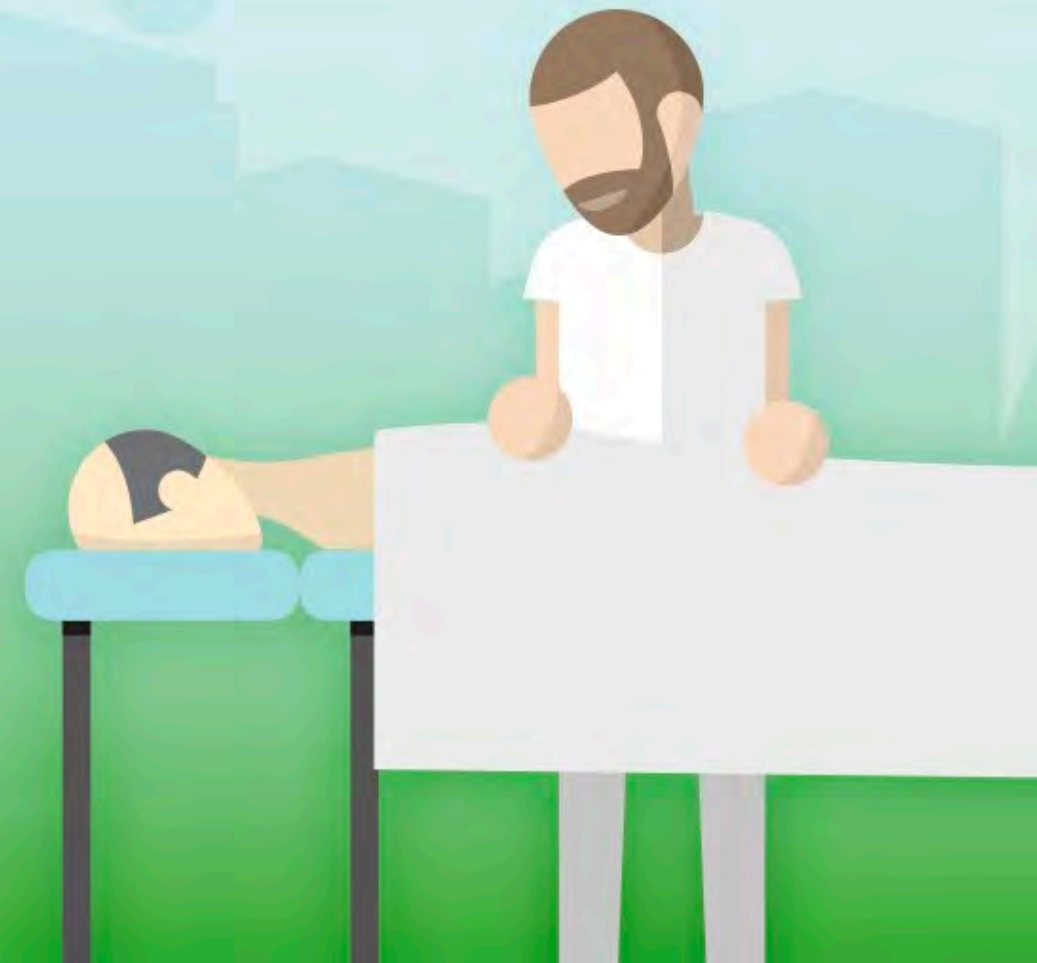


## EMPATHY

### ECONOMY

#### A reformed tech ecosystem

Self-regulation by creators and users of tech results in a more harmonious labour market, with greatest jobs growth in hi-touch sectors

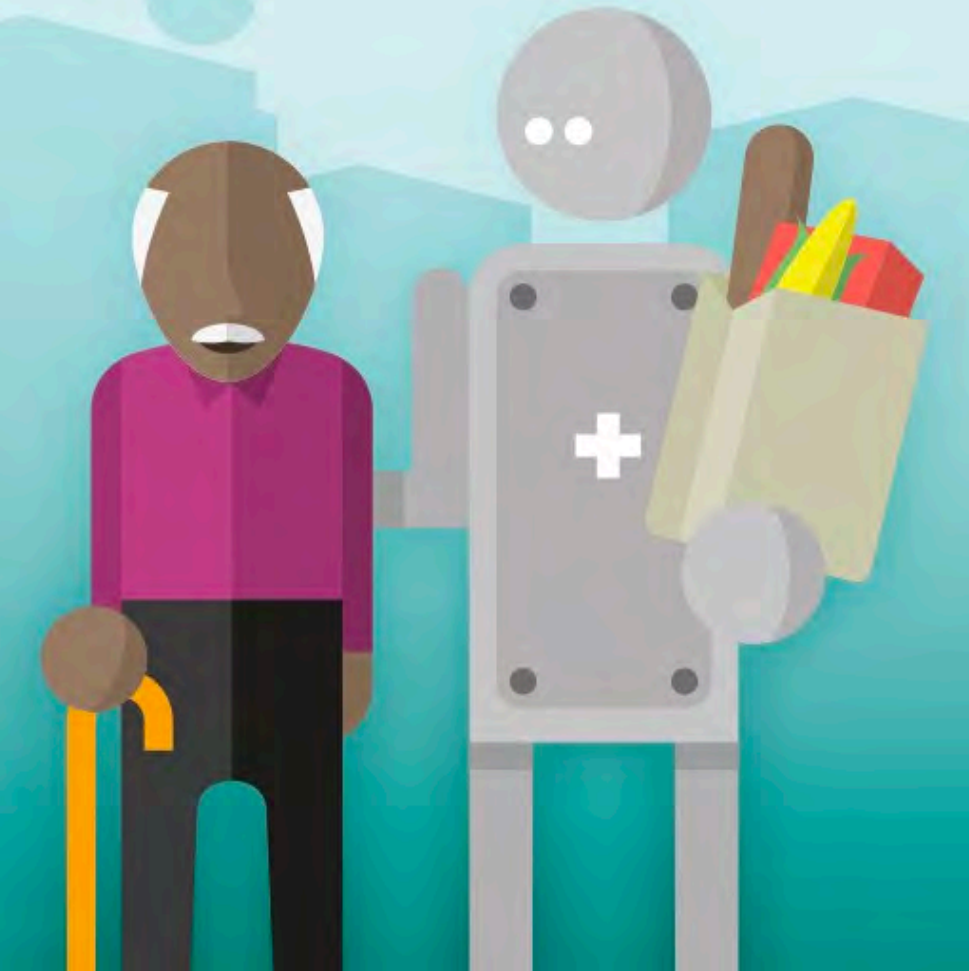


## BIG TECH

### ECONOMY

#### A world of mass automation

Game-changing technological advances lead to mass automation and an abundance of cheap goods and services



## PRECISION

### ECONOMY

#### Hyper surveillance

A future in which proliferation of sensors and big data analysis cranks up the level of surveillance and gig work



## EXODUS

### ECONOMY

#### Economic crash and an exodus from urban areas

Economic slowdown ushers in another prolonged period of austerity, leading people to seek out alternative ways of living





SDG

Transformations Forum

...accelerating our pathways to flourishing futures

[HOME](#)

[WHAT WE DO](#)

[WHO WE ARE](#)

[CORE IDEAS](#)

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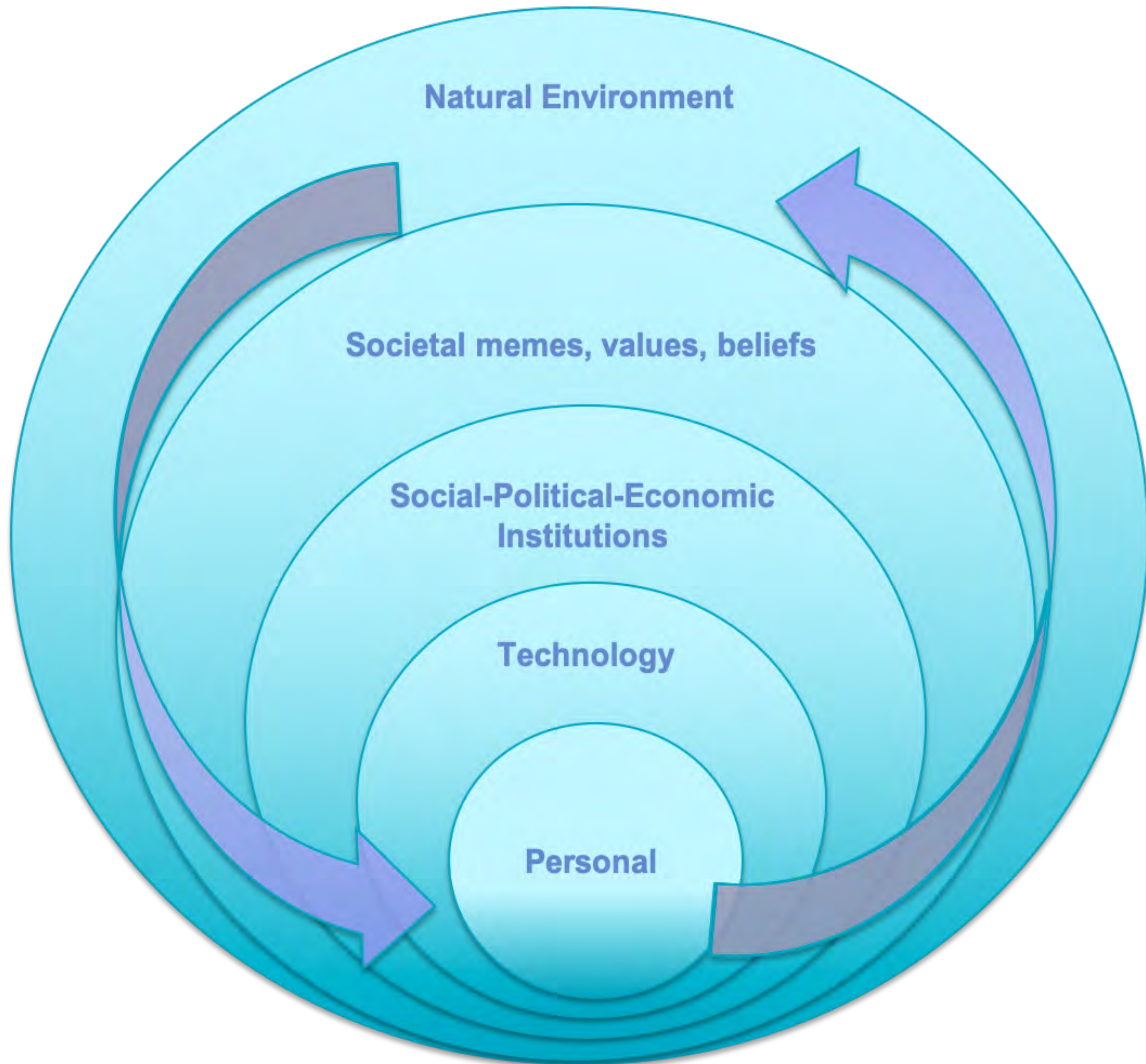
# MANY **PRESSING** CHALLENGES

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REQUIRE TRANSFORMATION, RATHER THAN INCREMENTAL CHANGE & TRADE OFFS...

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## Deep causes

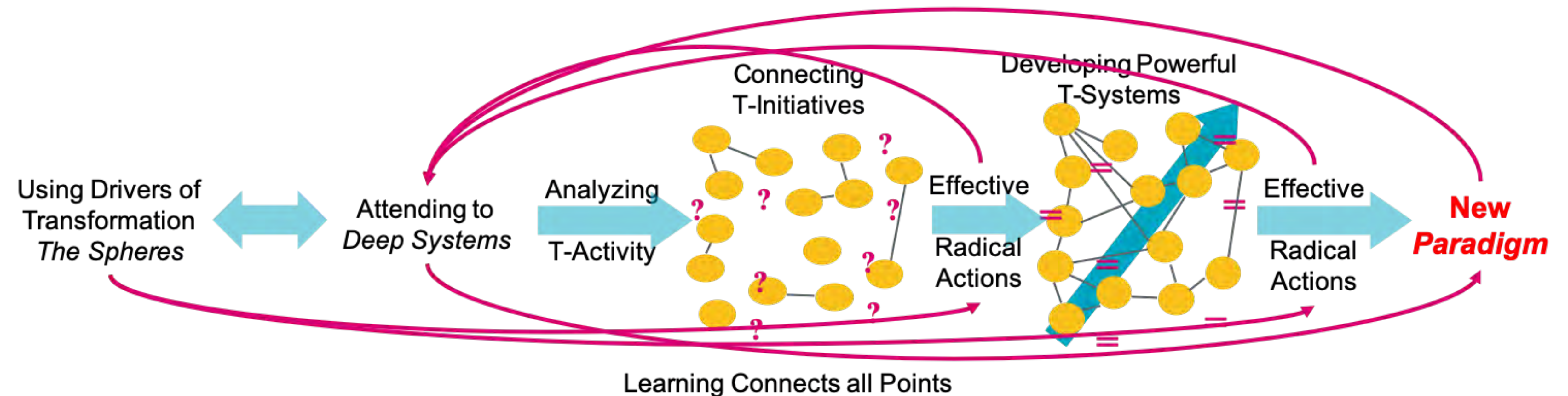
1. Capacity
2. Evaluation
3. Financing
4. Governance
5. Innovation
6. Narrative

*You may tell a tale that takes up  
residence in someone's soul,  
becomes their blood and self and  
purpose. That tale will move them  
and drive them and who knows  
what they might do because of it,  
because of your words.*

*~ Erin Morgenstern*

# Transforming narratives

- Dominant deep narratives (e.g. neo-liberalism) contribute to the sustainability challenges we face.
- We need to find new memes, stories and narratives to counter neo-liberalism and support the transformations we seek





# The story of Interbeing

We are a community of living beings on a living Earth



Cooperation and collaboration is needed to provide a safe and just future



We *are* nature and should work to regenerate the Earth





# Some tentative principles

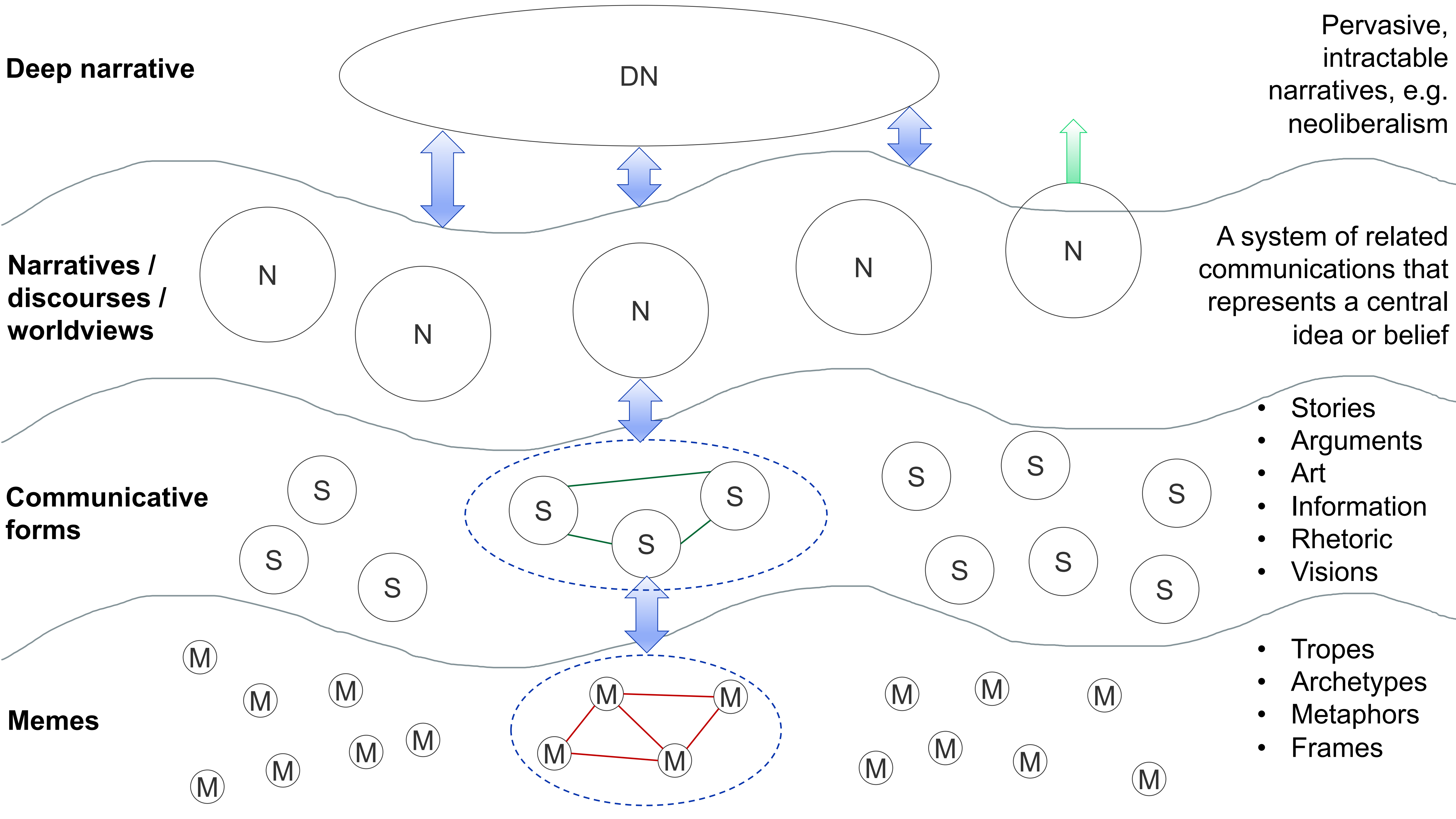
- The story of a transformed future needs to grow and interweave from the grassroots, not be imposed by an elite – it must be crowd sourced but somehow steer clear of the dangers of populism
- The story must accommodate diversity but have enough common ground for most people to get on board
- The story must respect planetary limits, provide social justice for all, and regenerate what has been lost
- One promising approach is to identify ‘memes’ that can be incorporated into stories of the future



# Storytellers construct stories from ‘memes’

- **Memes:** foundational cultural artifacts that shape belief systems, attitudes, ideologies, and the like, including phrases, words, images, symbols, or other types of artifacts that resonate with people (Blackmore 2000)
- Some particular important kinds of memes for stories include:
  - **Metaphors:** understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980)
  - **Frames:** Mental structures that order our ideas; and communicative tools that evoke these structures and shape our perceptions and interpretations over time (Holmes et al 2011)
  - **Tropes:** a commonly-seen theme or element of a story that becomes recognisable through repeated use, e.g. the hero’s journey
  - **Archetypes:** a type of trope (usually a character) that represents something universal about the human condition, e.g. a hero, villain, trickster, scapegoat or mentor







**Dignity:** Everyone has enough to live in comfort, safety and happiness

**Nature:** A restored and safe natural world for all life

**Connection:** A sense of belonging and institutions that serve the common good

**Fairness:** Justice in all its dimensions at the heart of economic systems, and the gap between the richest and poorest greatly reduced

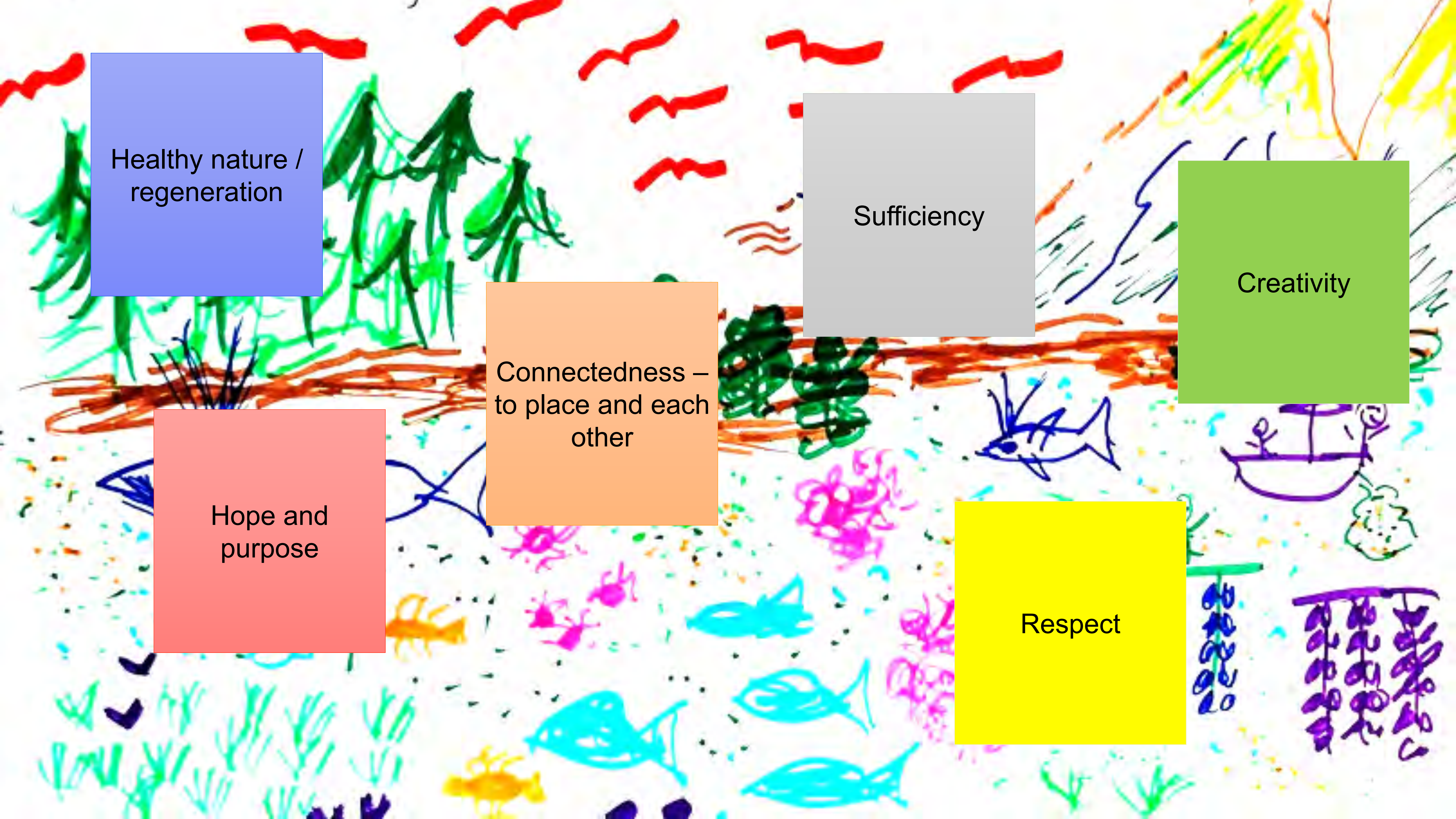
**Participation:** Citizens are actively engaged in their communities and locally rooted economies

## A simple visioning process

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1. Take participants through a guided visualization exercise to imagine they are in the future, say 2040.
2. Ask them to draw what they saw / felt during the exercise.
3. Pair up with someone else to talk about their visions and identify common memes.
4. Roll up into groups of four to share and find common ground.
5. Depending on group size, repeat or open up into a discussion about what memes have emerged.





Healthy nature /  
regeneration

Sufficiency

Creativity

Connectedness –  
to place and each  
other

Hope and  
purpose

Respect

New Stories for a Sustainable Future  
([planetcentric.net/blog/new-stories](https://planetcentric.net/blog/new-stories))



Professor Chris Riedy

Institute for Sustainable Futures  
University of Technology Sydney

[Christopher.riedy@uts.edu.au](mailto:Christopher.riedy@uts.edu.au)

0402 043 386

Planetcentric.net