



WHITU: RESILIENCE: AUMANGEA

MYCELIUM MAIL

In the space of a few weeks the world has been turned upside down. Things we thought were not possible are suddenly a reality. Planes are grounded, borders are closed, events are cancelled, workplaces and schools are shut down. The sky and water are clearing, animals are returning to habitats, and carbon emissions are dropping.

While the natural world is healing, one animal species is extremely vulnerable right now - humans. How do we respond during massive global changes? With panic, fear and judgement or with love, compassion and kindness?

Waiho i te toipoto, Kau i te toiroa
Let us keep close together, not wide apart



HOW ARE WE FEELING WITHIN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

We're scared of what this social and economic upheaval means for our communities, for people across the planet, for ourselves, and for the future of the Learning Environment.

We're also hopeful that Covid-19 will support a shift towards ethics of manaakitanga (care) and kaitiakitanga (stewardship). We're hopeful people will see systemic issues the virus is revealing, and that it will help realign value systems - from economic security to collective wellbeing.

We believe this pandemic is an opportunity for significant global learning. The rapid spread of disease shows just how interconnected we all are. Collectively we are learning how to adapt to change, slow down, and do things differently.

We are hopeful that this crisis will affirm the need for spaces like the Socio-Ecological Learning Environment where we seek to enable personal and collective resilience.

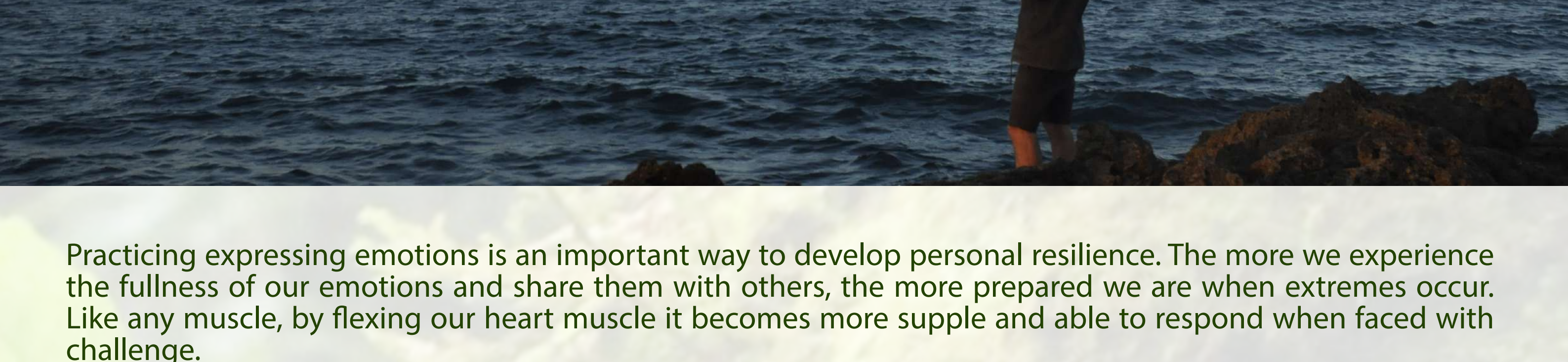
WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is how much a system can thrive with adversity and change - whether it is a person, a forest, a neighbourhood or the economy. It's about how well a system 'bounces back' after taking a hit. Becoming resilient means expecting and embracing disturbances (like a financial crisis, climate change, or a global virus) to spur renewal and innovative thinking.

We believe that this pandemic is just one of many crises that we will encounter as a society. While some crises may be similar, some will be quite different - and resilience is how we will adapt to them all.

The Learning Environment seeks to model resilience and support communities to adapt to change, embrace disturbance, and establish self-sufficient systems. This way our communities can resiliently thrive in the face of adversity.

PERSONAL RESILIENCY



Practicing expressing emotions is an important way to develop personal resilience. The more we experience the fullness of our emotions and share them with others, the more prepared we are when extremes occur. Like any muscle, by flexing our heart muscle it becomes more supple and able to respond when faced with challenge.

Another way to develop our personal capacities is through maintaining the fundamentals of wellbeing: getting good sleep, eating well, and exercising regularly. It's also important to focus on the mind through being aware of what we are thinking and challenging negative thoughts or replacing negativity with gratitude.

COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE

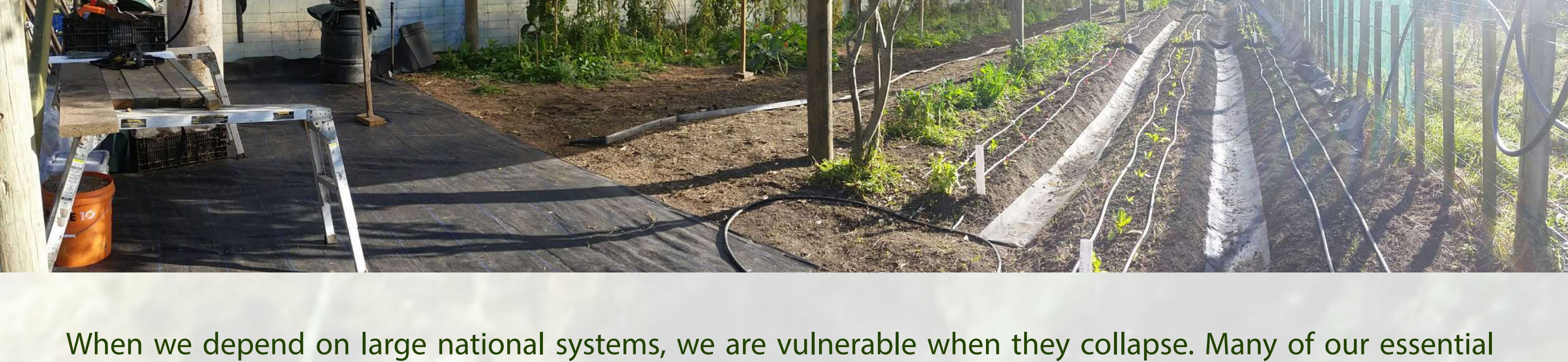


Collective resilience is strengthened through healthy, supportive relationships. For example, when trees in a forest share nutrients through the forest floor, they are more resilient than a tree on its own who depends on nutrients from its immediate area. Like the way trees in forests share, by collaborating we support each other's wellbeing.

"Everyone is a bit scared, but we are less scared together"

A great way to support collective resiliency is collaborating with an abundance mindset rather than a scarcity mindset. An example of the scarcity mindset is the way people are currently 'panic buying' at the supermarket. Everyone feels they have to protect themselves, meaning others miss out on essentials. In comparison, neighbourhoods that collaborate are able to take stock of shared skills, pool resources and realise their collective wealth.

SELF-SUFFICIENT SYSTEMS



When we depend on large national systems, we are vulnerable when they collapse. Many of our essential systems such as energy, food, water, waste, education and healthcare are centralised systems. Shifting these systems to be more localised, decentralised and self-sufficient means they are less vulnerable to catastrophic disturbances as there are less people relying on one large system. It also means if one goes down, there are several down the road in a different neighbourhood. There are many small steps towards producing our own essential resources e.g. growing your own food, catching your own water, re-using containers, and composting.

In some cases, centralised systems do work well - if they are managed effectively with people's wellbeing at the centre. This pandemic is highlighting differences in centralised decision-making globally - where some governments are taking longer to respond to the virus than others. In Aotearoa we are very grateful to have a government who has responded quickly relative to other countries to move into 'lock-down' - a clear statement of prioritising people's health and wellbeing over 'business as usual'.

HOW IS THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT RESPONDING AND WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Even at this stage, without the Learning Environment being based in a place, there is a lot we can do using our existing systems and networks to support personal and collective resilience:

Checking in and connecting - we're utilising our ability to communicate online and checking in on family and friends around the world.

Deep sharing and listening - as a group we are actively coming together to share how we are feeling during these times, to connect to each other and develop personal resilience.

Personal preparedness plans - Each of us are taking stock of personal supplies - on the farm this looks like fresh veges, seeds, animals, fuel, firewood and a water supply. For the rest of us this is things like a stocked pantry, making sure we have personal medication, all we need to self-isolate and prepare if one of us gets sick.

Community support and collaboration - Each of us is currently working to support our communities, including:

Connecting and collaborating with neighbours - leaving contact number in letterboxes, checking on anyone at risk, and setting up a whatsapp group for the street to stay in touch and share skills and resources.

Helping people into online communications systems - e.g. Zoom, Skype, Slack or whatsapp.

On Waiheke we set up a volunteer army to connect people who need help to people who can help.

We've set up a local [Waiheke Kindness Pandemic](#) page to promote compassion and collaboration.

Through [Tough Talk Sam](#) is continuing to provide an online platform for people to share and connect.

Growing food - A little bit of food grown by everyone lessens the impact on our centralised food systems. On the farm the team are setting up large-scale food growing systems to support themselves and their local community.

Self care - Each of us are utilising this time to slow down and check-in on our personal wellbeing. We're focusing on activities to take up a healthy life-style, stay hydrated, exercise and eat good food.

Supporting local organisations - as we head into economic instability we're actively ensuring we continue to support locals - whether buying from a local grower instead of the supermarket, or offering time to support a not-for-profit (online).

HOW WILL THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT RESPOND IN THE FUTURE?



Once we're set up on land with infrastructure, the vision for the Learning Environment is to be a space that demonstrates and builds the capacity for personal and collective resilience. This includes:

- Training people in disaster preparedness and self-sufficiency so they are ready for disasters in the future
- Revitalising natural ecosystems to reduce the impact of natural disasters
- A community hub for sharing knowledge, skills, resources and information
- Wellbeing support and advice, including mental health and first aid training
- A space to gather, connect, dance and celebrate
- Model resilient businesses and land-based systems.

WHAT IS SUPPORTING YOUR RESILIENCE?

We'd love to hear from you about what is supporting your personal and collective resilience through these times.

Hunkering down questions
We leave you with these questions which we are attempting to answer each day as we are 'hunkering-down':

- What am I grateful for today?
- Who am I checking in on or connecting with today?
- What expectations of normal am I letting go of today?
- How am I moving and nurturing my body today?
- What beauty am I creating, cultivating or inviting in today?
- What am I proud of today?

WHAT'S FEEDING US

Thanks to all of you who have sent in juicy bits and bobs! Here is some of what is feeding this community:

Four circular icons representing different contributors: a book (Wild Mind Bill Plotkin), a microphone (Tending joy and practising delight Rose Gay), a play button (Te Tiriti Based Futures), and a megaphone (Social Distancing Festival).

WHAT'S FEEDING YOU?

What are you reading, listening to, watching, and doing that's relevant to this kaupapa? We can help spread information through the network to provide nutrients for this community.

Reply to this email with relevant information and links.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

We would love to hear from people who are keen to engage with the Learning Environment. If you are particularly interested in funding the initial purchase of land, then please get in touch. Now is the time.

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