

SESSION Three: Regenerative Development at a Neighborhood Scale

There is an old Permaculture principle: The Problem is the Solution.

Behind this idea is the insight that most of the problems we hope to solve are symptoms of an underlying disorder. Problems point the way toward deeper levels of wholeness and potential.

Example: After years of fighting the *problem of weeds* in my garden, I realized that they were a *symptom of bare earth* uncovered by either living plants or dead plant material. I began to mulch with straw and leaves. This not only discouraged the growth of weeds, but kept the soil moist, prevented it from getting too hot or cold, and fed the soil organisms that enriched the soil, making healthier plants. The problem of weeds pointed me in the direction of a *nodal intervention* that helped to realize the *potential* of the garden.

- 1) Think about a project, personal or professional, that was intended to solve a problem.
 - a. Did it solve that problem? If so, for how long and at what scale?
 - b. What could be the systemic potential the problem indicated?
- 2) As you go through your day, notice how often you focus on problems or potential. Take note of these events. Also notice the mental state or energy these two different perspectives provide.
 - a. Which helps you be more creative and open in your thinking? Why do you think this is?
 - b. Try using the phrase "*the problem is the solution*" or "*work from potential not problems*" as a way to remind yourself to consider this other possibility. Note what difference it makes.