

Future trajectories - and the mindsets that will shape them



Caroline Ashley, Forum for the Future
#RebuildBetter
Business Fights Poverty Summit, January 21st 2020

Think about your own organisation. Which one of these best represents it?

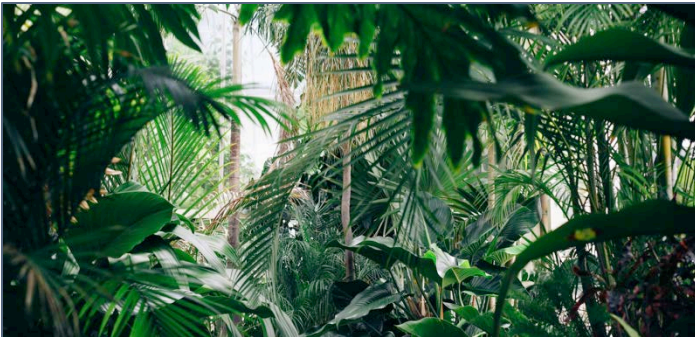
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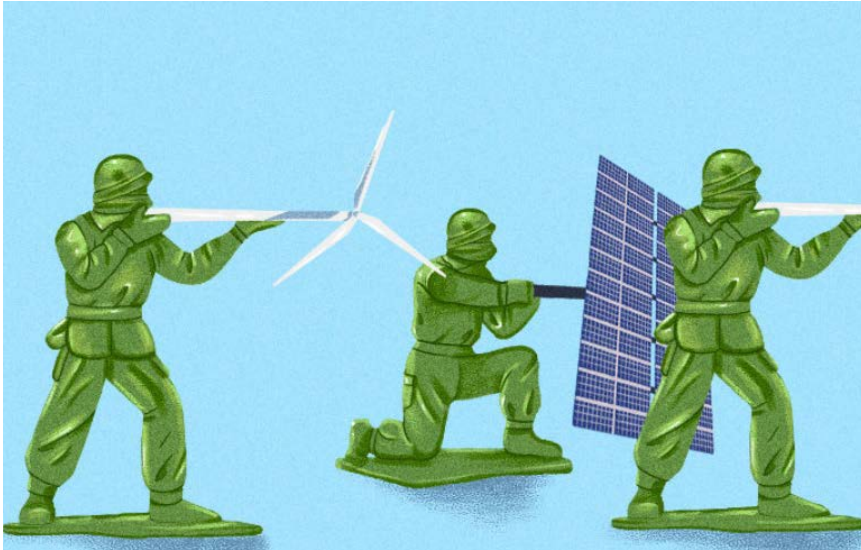
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Which resonates most?

1

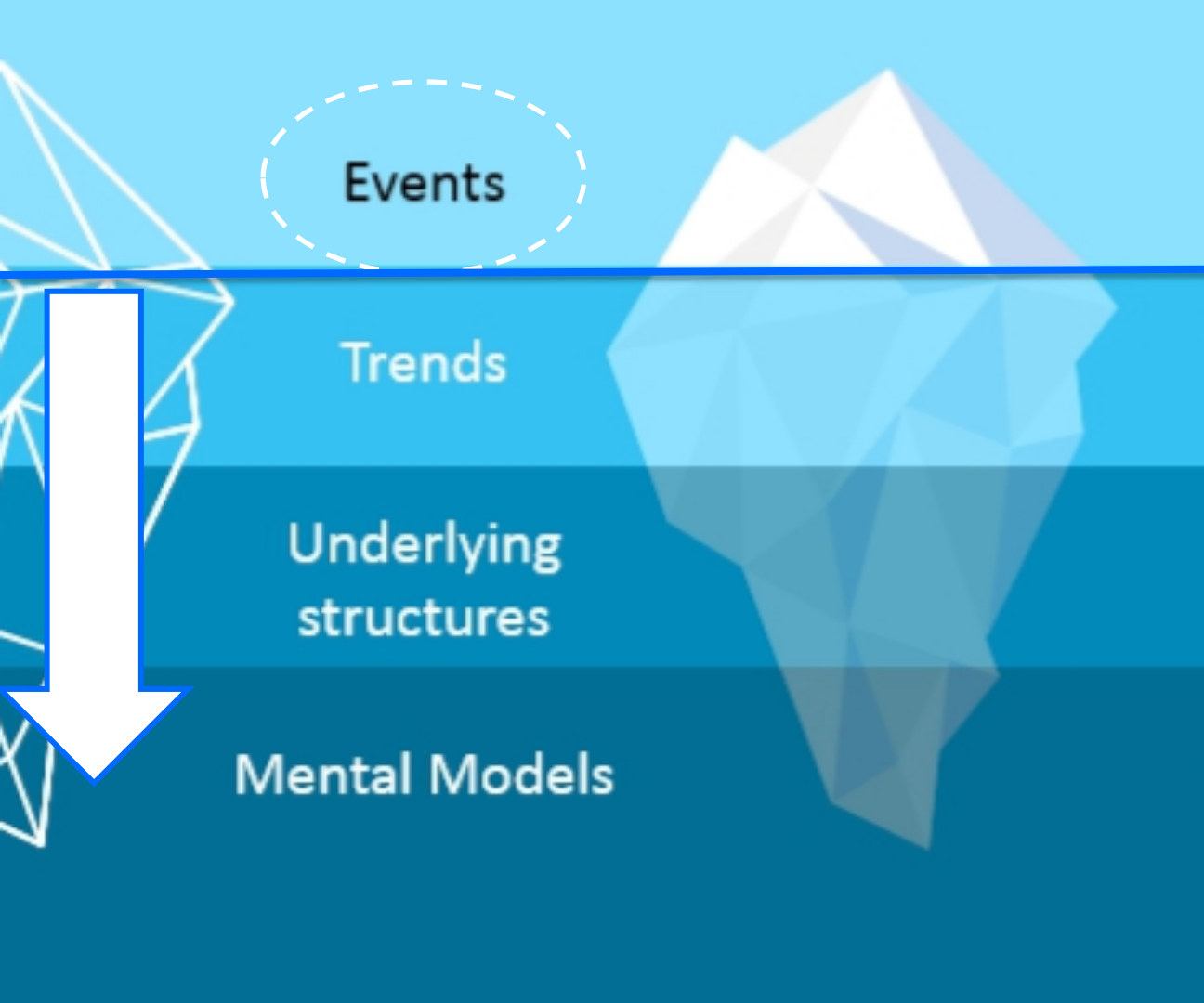
Corona virus as a battle



2

Corona virus as a portal





We see change on the surface. But what drives it?

Covid is affecting everything, at all levels

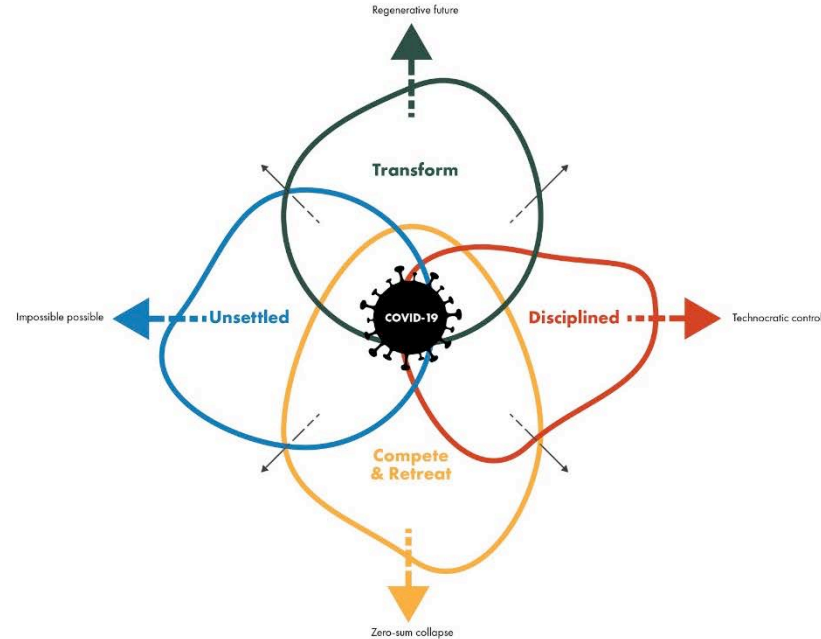
Mental models – mindsets, narratives, assumptions, paradigms are how we make sense of the world

Today's discussion

- Where are we going? What are the possible alternative trajectories to a future beyond the Covid crisis?
- Which mindsets underpin and entrench each trajectory?
- What are the implications for those trying to build an inclusive sustainable future?



Trajectories Compass



Disciplined



In brief:

- Ramped up use of tech.
- Massive increase in surveillance.
- A new bio-politics to return to some form of globalisation.
- Much more influence from the Chinese model.

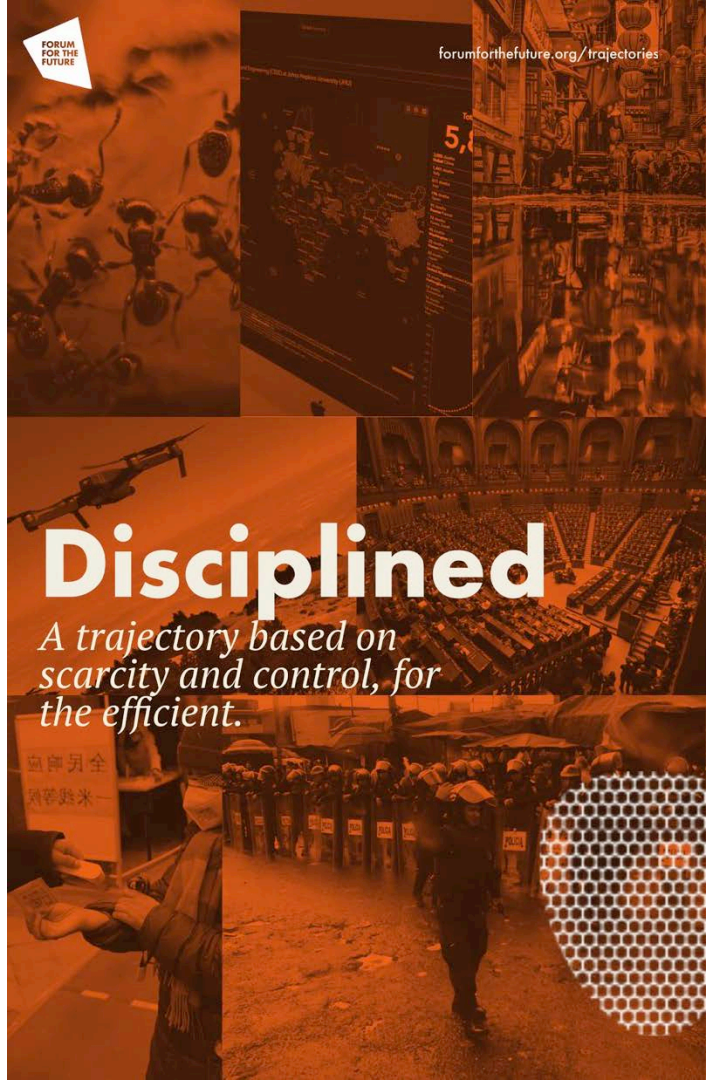
Disciplined

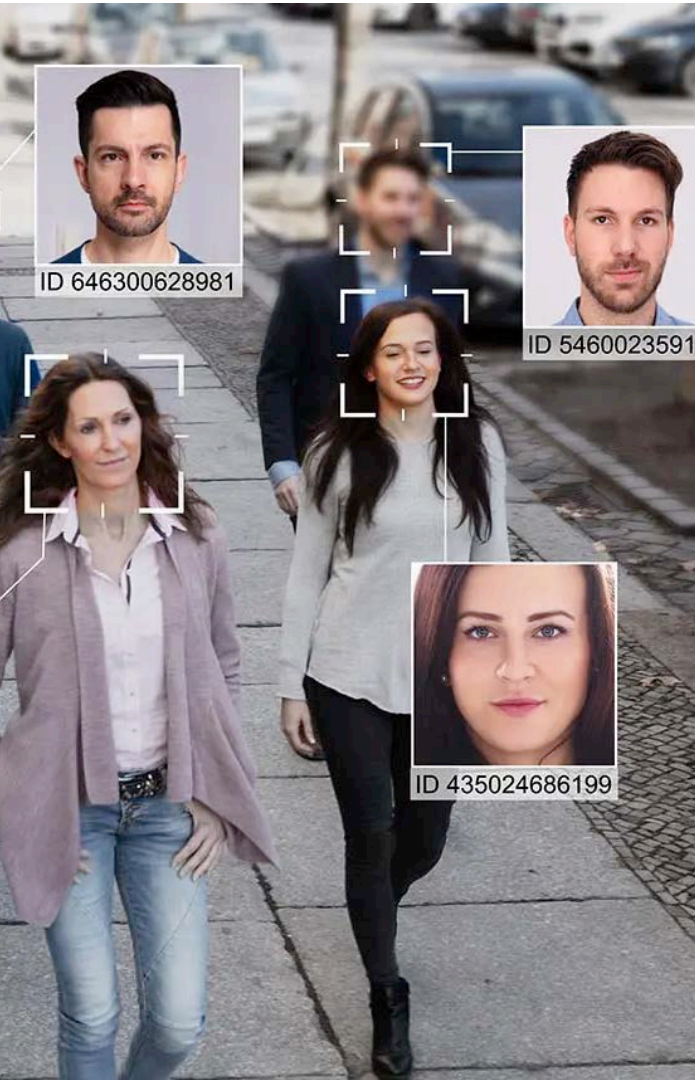
Mindset:

"Greater control is required to maintain public health, security and prosperity

Technology can help keep growth and global interconnection going as 'normal'

We are prepared to relinquish privacy concerns for this."





Disciplined

What sort of things might happen on this trajectory?

- Heavy use of tech to 'solve problems' and keep the system going
- Surveillance model spreads, tracking goes 'under the skin'
- Power more centralised in tech companies & partners
- Huge acceleration of automation
- Technology used for sustainability: transparency in value chains, normalisation of remote working, near end of business travel, information to nudge consumer behaviour

Compete & Retreat

In brief:

- Strengthening of existing nationalist dynamics.
- Collapse of what's left of globalisation & international collaboration.
- Fragmented regionalism.



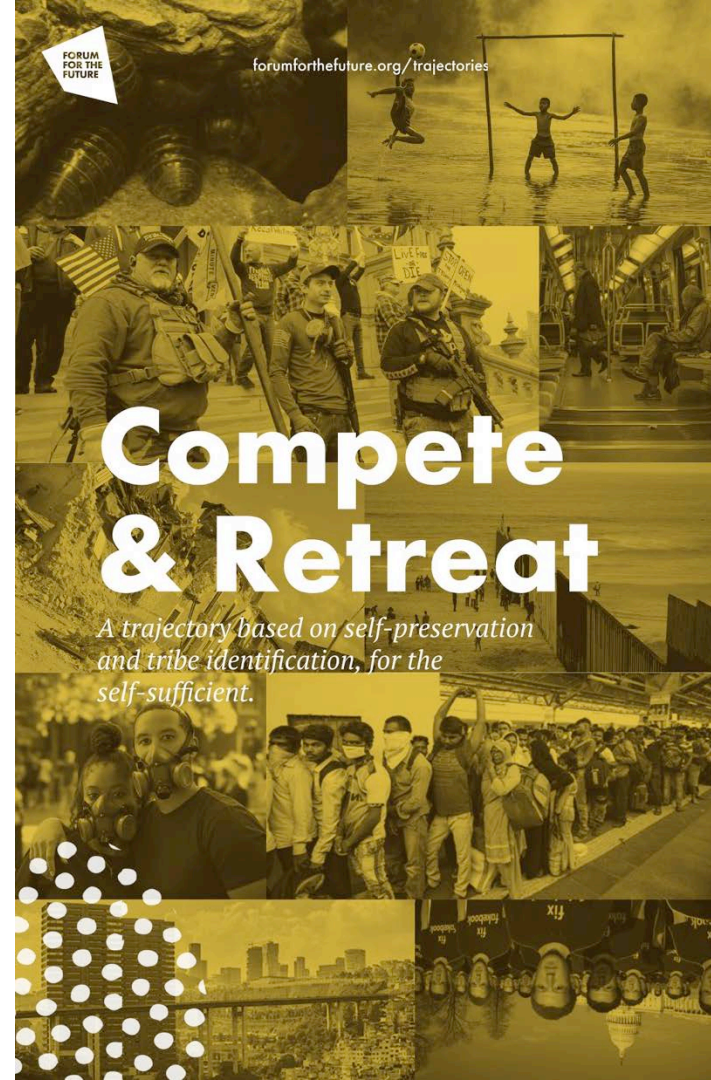
Compete & Retreat

Mindset:

"There is not enough to share.

We must retreat to protect our own kind.

We will only co-operate outside for something in return"



Compete & Retreat

What sort of things might happen on this trajectory?

- Zero sum game dynamics from nationalist leaders across the world
- International collaboration fails. Chaotic regionalisation focused on:
 - shorter regional supply chains
 - national health, food, & energy security
- Support to poorer countries only through a lens of national interest
- **Circularity driven by necessity. Increase sense of national unity and local cohesion. Focus on local economies and jobs. Protecting natural resources in our own backyard.**



**PROTECT OUR
BORDERS!**

Unsettled

In brief:

- Continuous discontinuity from cascading events/crises: climate & ecological, political, social, technological etc.
- Realisation there will never be “a new normal” - sudden and strange reversals.
- World is strange and volatile beyond all previous experience.



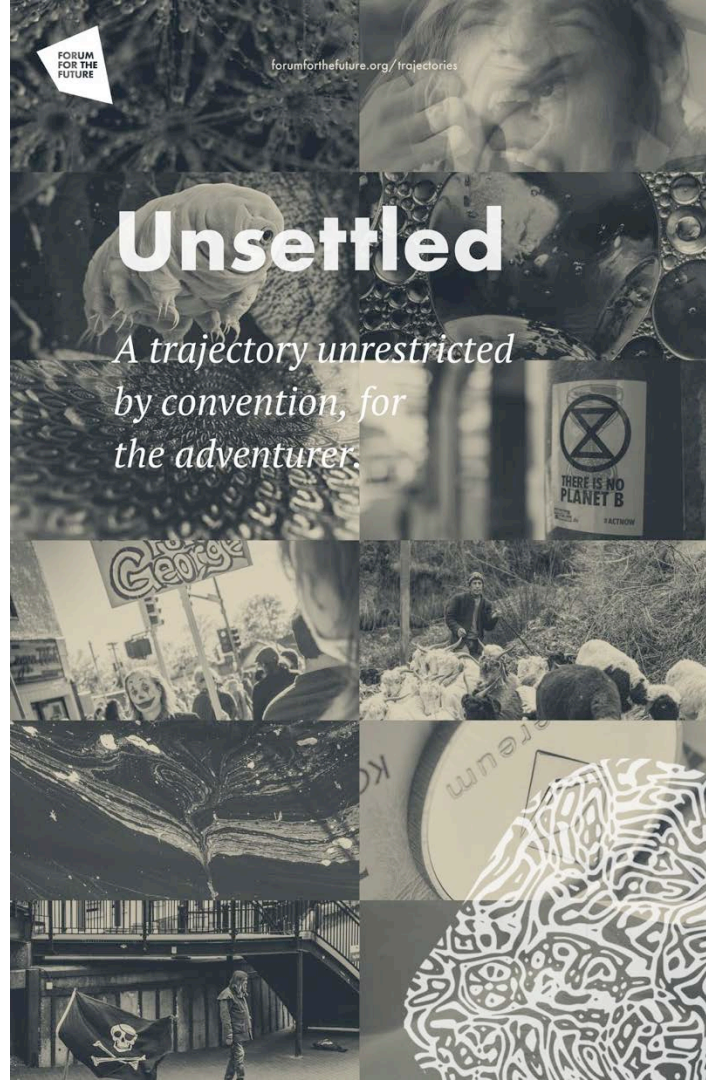
Unsettled

Mindset:

"There is no new normal, we are in 'the great weirding'."

*Much previous logic and thinking
cannot help us now.*

Radical resilience, adaptability and intuitive opportunism have the edge."



Running Out of Water



Unsettled

What sort of things might happen on this trajectory?

- Colliding and compounding events have unexpected consequences
- Institutions designed for the 20th century (i.e. almost everything) can not cope
- This derails attempts to establish a stable or 'new normal'
- Flexibility and opportunism are rewarded, anxiety is common
- Innovation flourishes, new approaches possible, value of Business as Usual declines

Transform

In brief

- Making use of this reset to accelerate a fair and equitable zero-carbon transition.
- New approaches like stakeholder capitalism, wellbeing budgeting and doughnut economics widely adopted.
- New business models focusing on resilience and regeneration.



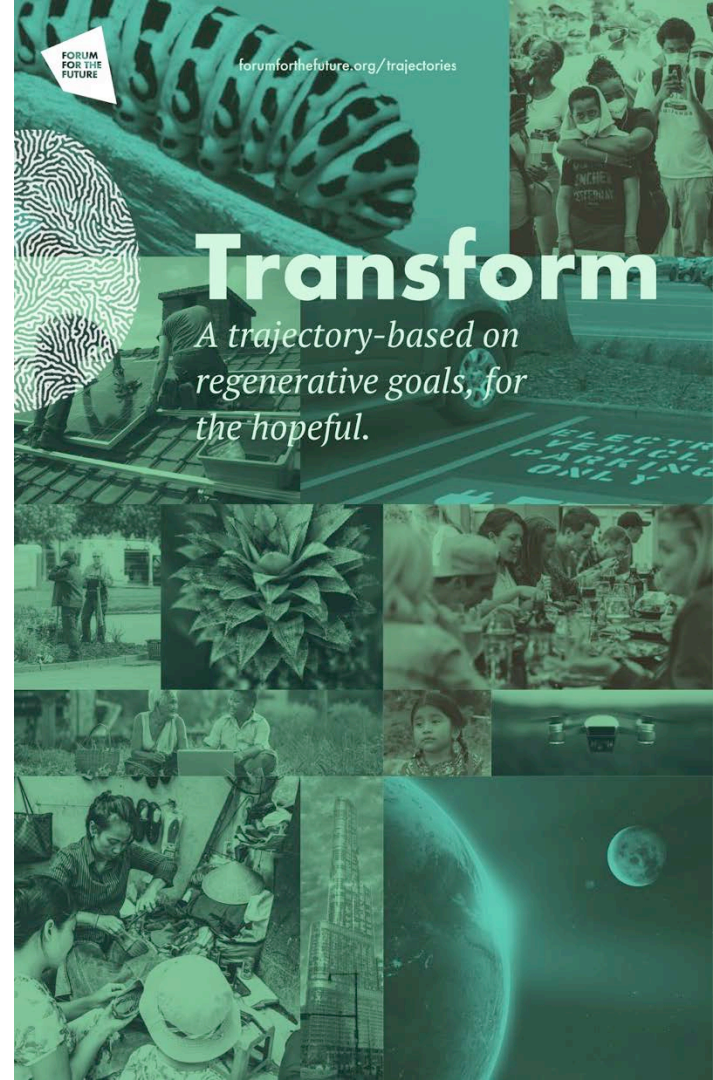
Transform

Mindset:

"Deep change is possible, desirable and happening."

We can't go back to 'before'.

Planetary health and human wellbeing come first. Our fates are deeply interconnected."





"We need to address the societal well-being of our nation, not just the economic well-being."

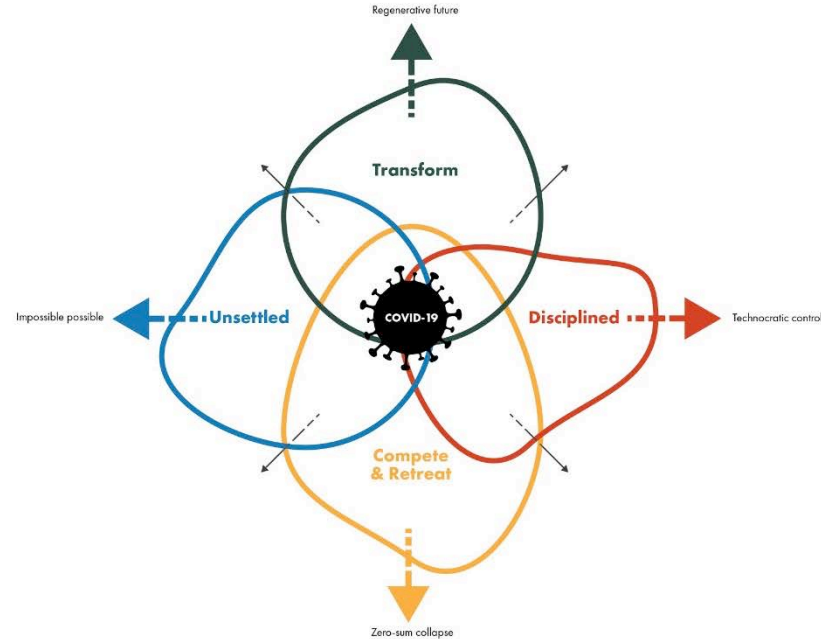


Transform

What sort of things might happen on this trajectory?

- Dysfunction and inequality revealed by COVID leads to real action
- Resilience becomes more important than profit maximisation in shareholder discussions
- Surge in information on and valuation of natural resources and equity
- Accelerating zero carbon and just transitions.
- Decentralised, distributed responses from communities and cities
- Regenerative culture permeates

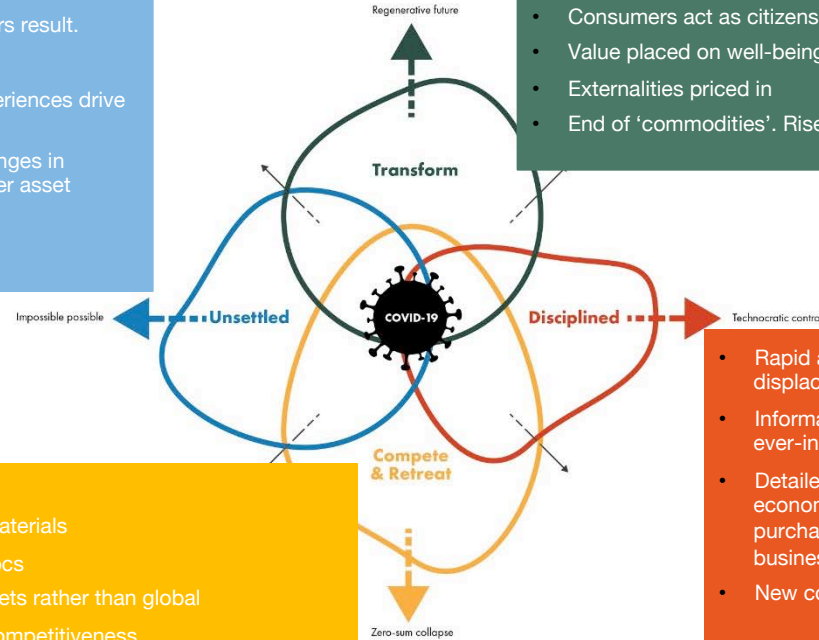
Trajectories Compass



Implications for business?

- Uncertainty inhibits investment
- Business models shift for more flexibility, fewer fixed costs, zero hours contracts.
- Some firms take big bets: winners and losers result.
- Creativity/crisis prompts innovation.
- Comfort products, nostalgia, and lived experiences drive consumers.
- Investment returns go down catalysing changes in pension security, housing markets, and other asset markets.
- Companies and cities take more initiative

- New business models emerge: alternative ownership models
- Reframing of shareholder primacy
- Net positive business and regenerative business
- Regenerative agriculture, nature based solutions, circularity
- Green recovery investment
- Consumers act as citizens in their purchases
- Value placed on well-being and equality for supply chain workers.
- Externalities priced in
- End of 'commodities'. Rise of information-rich goods & services



- Reshoring of supply chains
- Restricted access to raw materials
- Trade restrictions, trade blocs
- Expansion of regional markets rather than global
- Biz seek cost savings for competitiveness
- Localised circular production systems
- Social licence requires proof of contribution to local economies
- Accelerating decentralised renewable energy
- Climate mitigation is driven by EU not global requirements: tensions over competitiveness, definitions and compliance

- Rapid automation of global supply chains, huge displacement of labour
- Information-fuelled businesses create and capture ever-increasing shares of value
- Detailed data enables mainstreaming of circular economy, transparency for all procurement and purchasing, carbon budgets for individuals and businesses
- New commercial uses of personal data emerge

Mindsets that drive the alternative futures

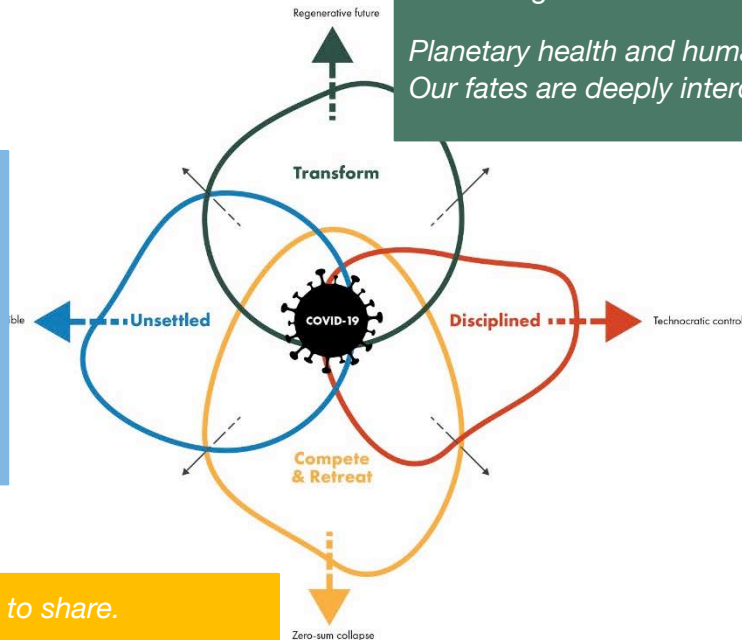
Do you understand mindsets driving others?

Can you influence them?

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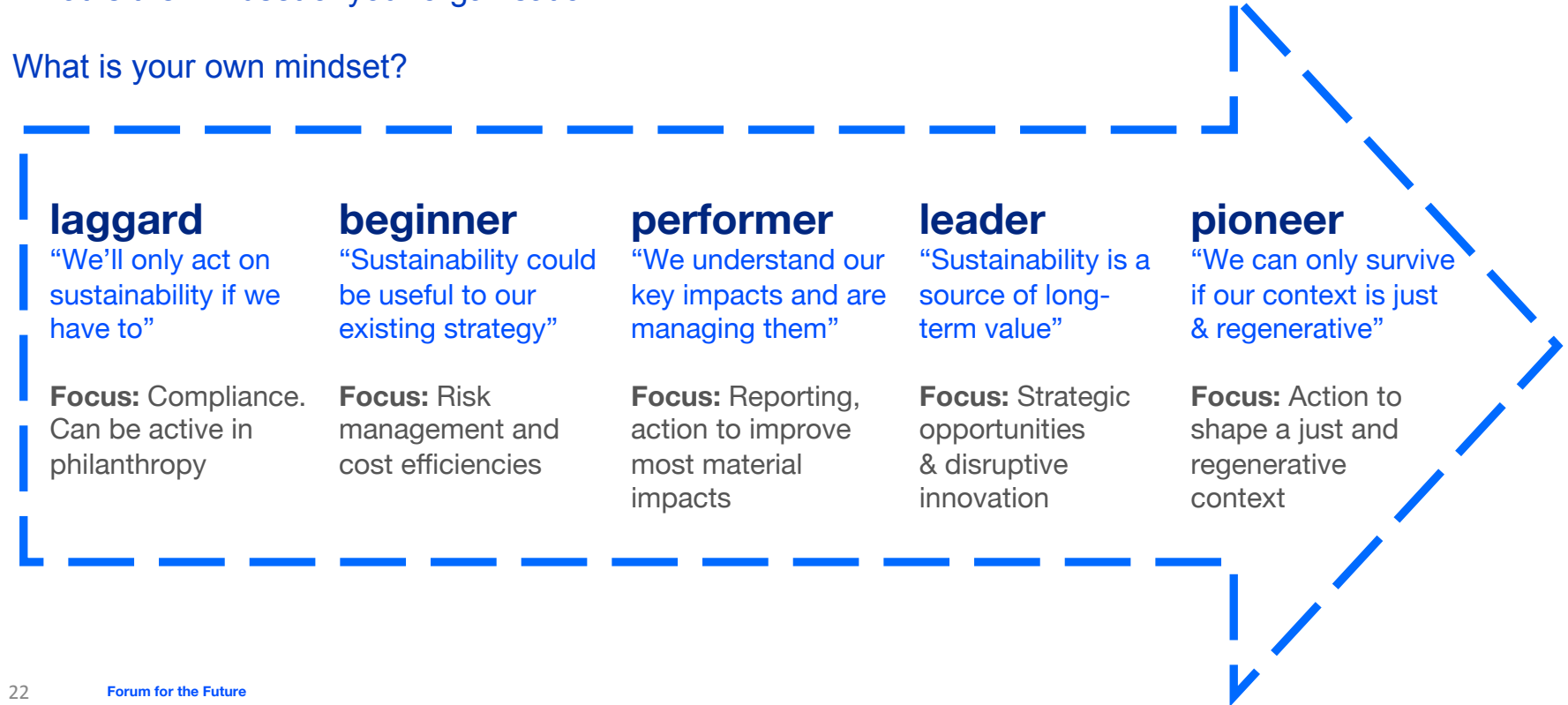
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Mindsets within business on sustainability

What is the mindset of your organisation?

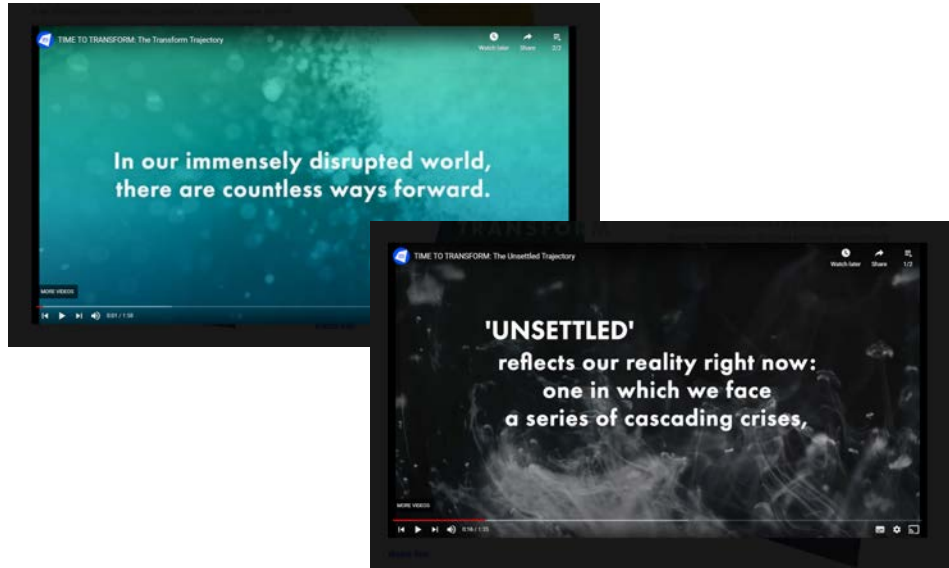
What is your own mindset?



Discussion

Resources

From System Shock to System Change;
Future of Sustainability 2020:
videos, graphics and full report
<https://www.thefuturescentre.org/fos/>



Stories of Change

<https://www.forumforthefuture.org/stories-of-change>

Understand change to create change

01 MULTI-LEVEL PERSPECTIVE • THE BIRTH OF ROCK N ROLL

Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) explains how transitions manifest through interactions between different levels of societal systems. We can use the MLP for systemic diagnosis—such as diagnosing complex challenges within societal systems such as mobility, housing or food. This Stories of Change video focuses on the seemingly sudden rise of Rock 'n' Roll in the 1950s, and our resources discuss how the MLP can help us understand the story behind this radical shift in the American music industry.



Common Cause Foundation:
values that drive change
<https://valuesandframes.org/>