Creating Communities of Change: What We Learned in the Codes Forest

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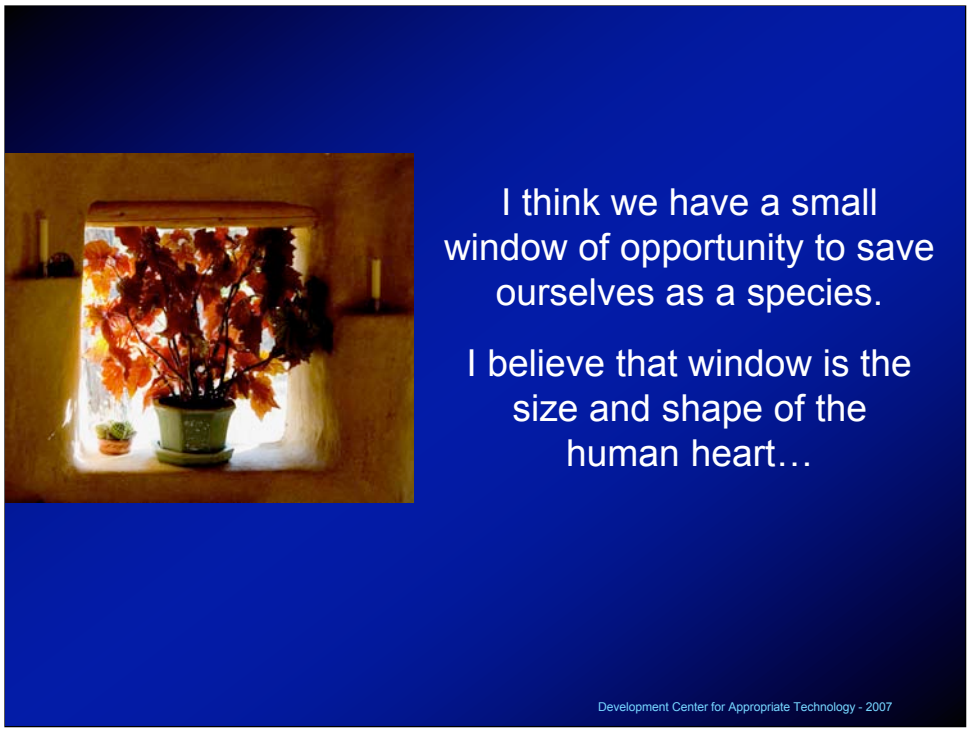
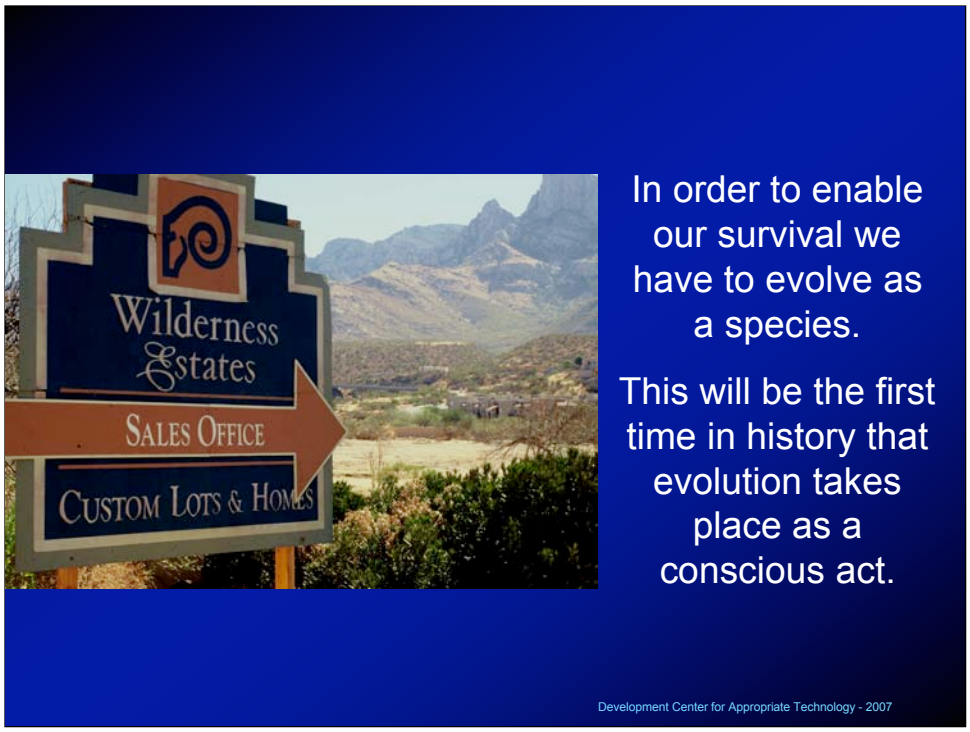


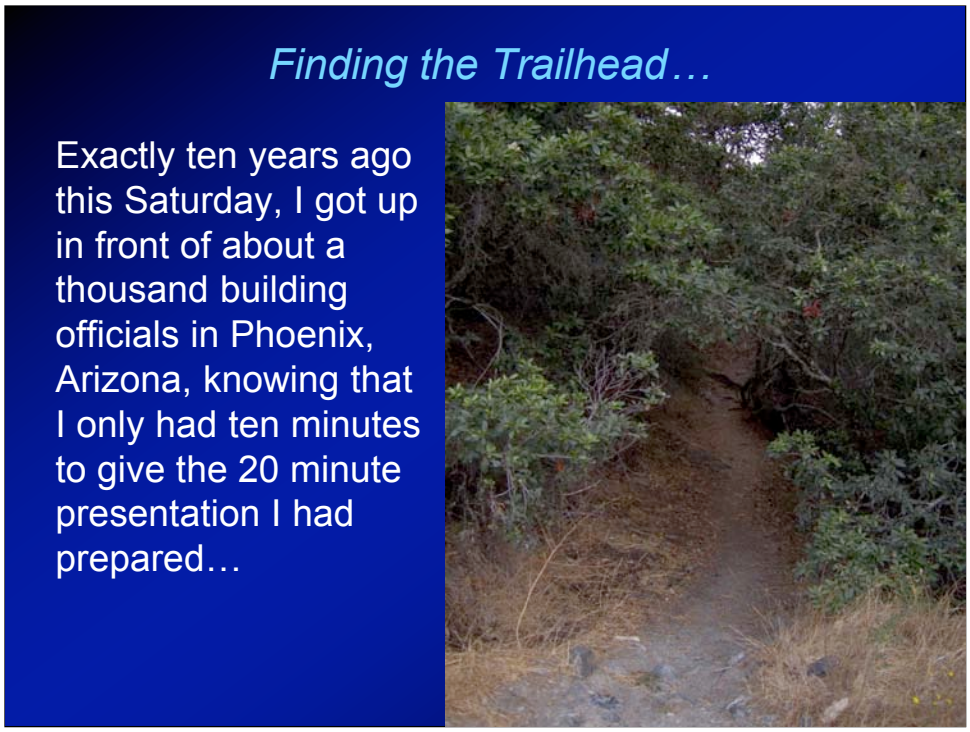
I think we have a small window of opportunity to save ourselves as a species. And I believe that that window is the size and shape of the human heart.

We have created amazingly clever human systems that have enabled us to seemingly escape the limitations of the finite world of resources and space and time that have been with us from the beginning of human presence on the Earth. But most of those systems that so powerfully operate today are far beneath the dignity and magnificenc of our species. They are constantly denaturing us - taking us away from and overriding our true nature as caring, creative, compassionate, nurturing beings. They trick us into thinking that they represent who we are and how we must behave.

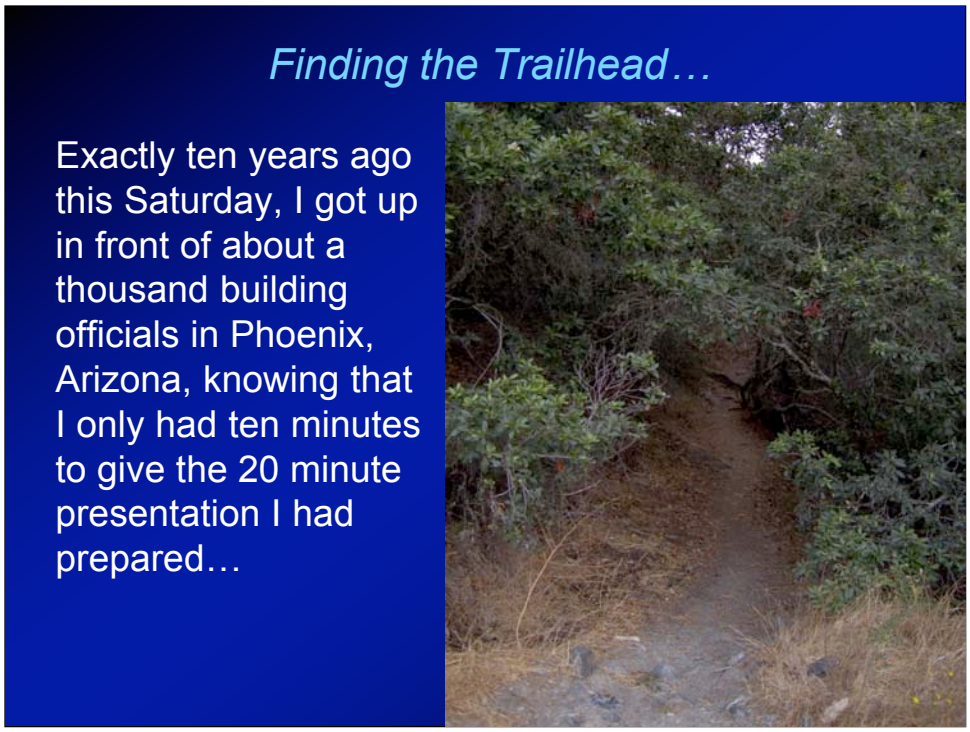


Our survival as a species depends on our ability to make an evolutionary leap - to consciously evolve as a species - to choose to change. To choose to return to our true nature. To reintegrate ourselves into the natural world - to re-member ourselves, to understand ourselves as members of the community of life.

For the past twelve years I've been working to understand what our real situation is on this little planet and to understand how we got here and what must change if humans are going to be able to survive and hopefully thrive. More important I've held an intention to find ways to reveal our true circumstances and to convey the reality that we have responsibilities to ourselves and each other and to future generations that we have been neglecting and ignoring. Because I've chosen to focus my work in the realm of building and development, it has become clear that it's crucial that we develop the ability to see and respond to the whole spectrum of risks related to the built environment - especially the relationships between natural and human systems in the context of risk and responsibility.



On September 22nd 1997, I was to give a talk on a plenary panel at the annual business meeting of the International Code Council (ICBO) - the organization representing the building officials for the western half of the U.S. Bob Fowler, the man who lead the effort to consolidate the three regional building code organizations and their codes into a single, national organization and set of codes, the International Code Council and the I-Codes, had invited me to talk about our fairly new program, Building Sustainability into the Codes. We were to each have 20 minutes for our presentation to an audience of perhaps a thousand building officials. I was intimidated by the size of the audience and who they were, so I'd prepared and rehearsed my twenty minute talk. As fate would have it, the session before ours ran halfway into our time and as they finished up, Bob informed the panelists that we'd only have ten minutes each. He said he hoped that would not be a problem and reminded me that I was to go first. I had the terrifying realization that I didn't have time to turn a 20 minute talk into a ten minute talk and that I was just going to have to wing it. We went up and sat down as Bob introduced all the panelists and then introduced me and sat down. I got up and just launched into my talk. A short way in I remember thinking that it felt like the best talk I had ever given. It was just flowing. And then as I was finishing up a point, I realized that I had used my 10 minutes and needed to wrap up. At the same time, I realized that the ending that I had was based on the other 10 minutes of material that I hadn't talked about and didn't have time to talk about. As I finished my point and tried to figure out what to say next, I heard myself talking. I remember thinking that I had better pay attention to this. What I said was something I had never thought before so we all got to hear it for the first time at the same time - even though it came out of my mouth.

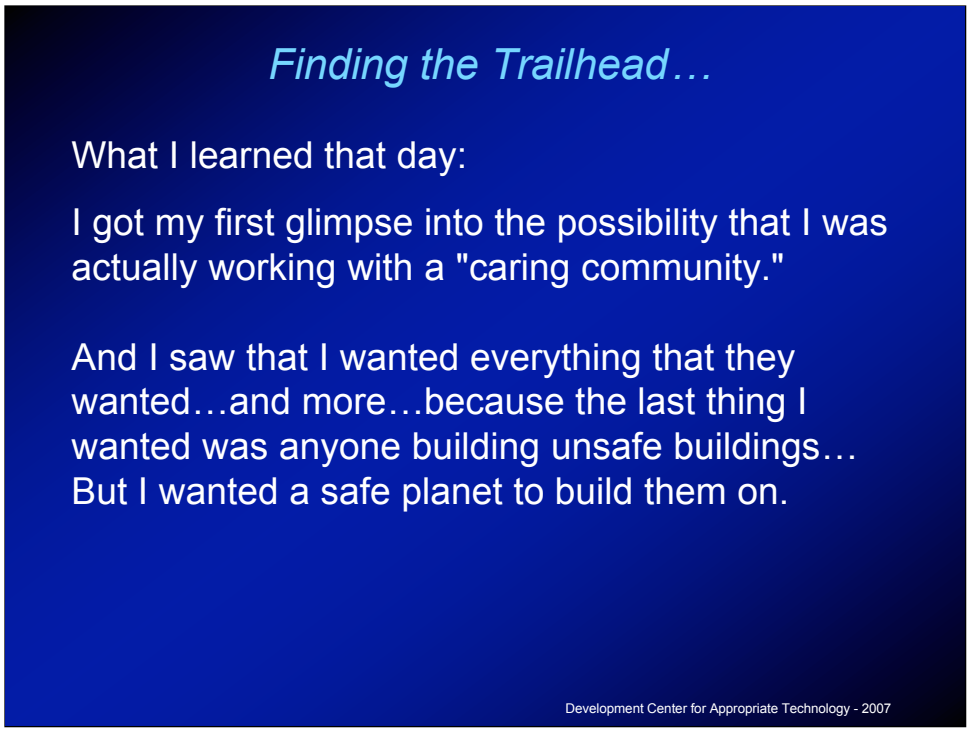


What I said was this:

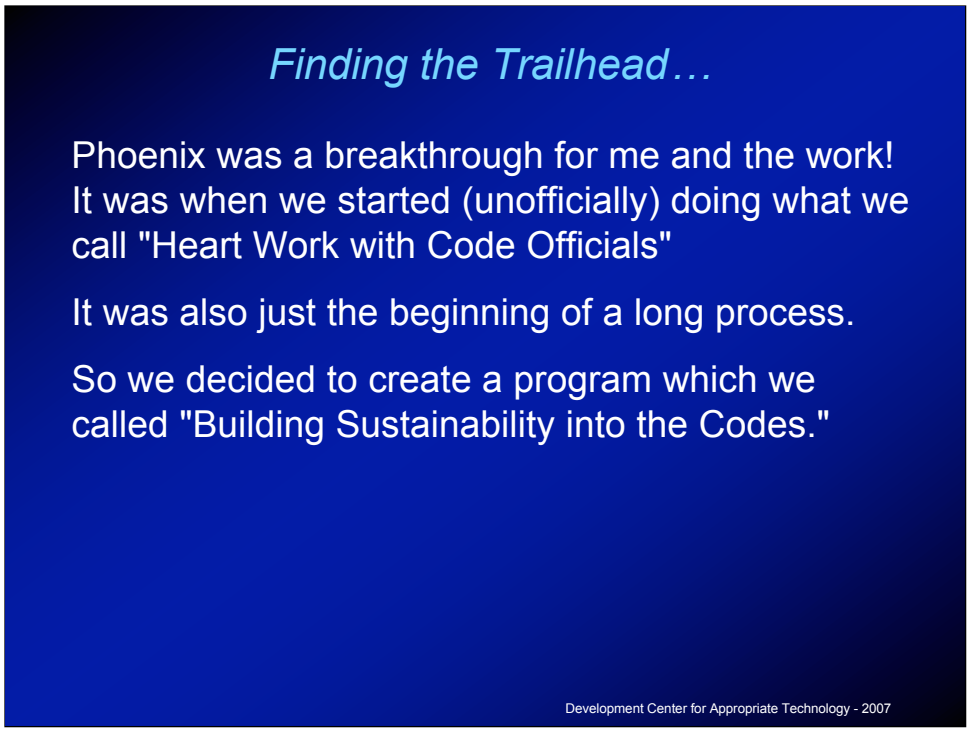
"I want to ask you a question. What goes through your mind when someone comes into your jurisdiction wanting to do something crazy like build a house out of bales of straw, or use the dirt, the earth, for adobe or rammed earth, or cob - something you've never even heard of? Or maybe they want to use bamboo as a structural material. Or perhaps they want to harvest water off the roof and drink it, or put in a greywater system, or use composting toilets. Or maybe they want to be off the electrical grid and have photovoltaic panels up on the roof and batteries. Or maybe, they're worried about electro-magnetic fields and don't want any electrical outlets in their bedrooms.

What do you think when people come in asking for permission to do these things? My guess is that your first thought is 'These people need to be protected from themselves.' And your next thought is 'Not in my jurisdiction!' As the laughter died down, I continued, "I want you to think about what is really happening because it is incredibly important. The vast majority of people who come in seeking to do these things have made a crucial discovery. They have realized that their lifestyle choices have consequences, many if not most of which are negative. Not negative for them, though. Negative for their children and grandchildren, and my children, and your children. These people are trying to take responsibility for the consequences of their choices…Is there anyone in this room who thinks that's a bad thing? I don't think so. So what is your job as a building official? Is it to keep those people from pursuing that goal of taking responsibility for what they do? Or is it to help them find the way to do it well and safely?" And I said to myself, "Shut up and sit down!" I thanked them and sat down to great applause. I thought to myself, "That was really good" and I wrote it down because I didn't want to forget it. Then I started thinking about what had just happened.

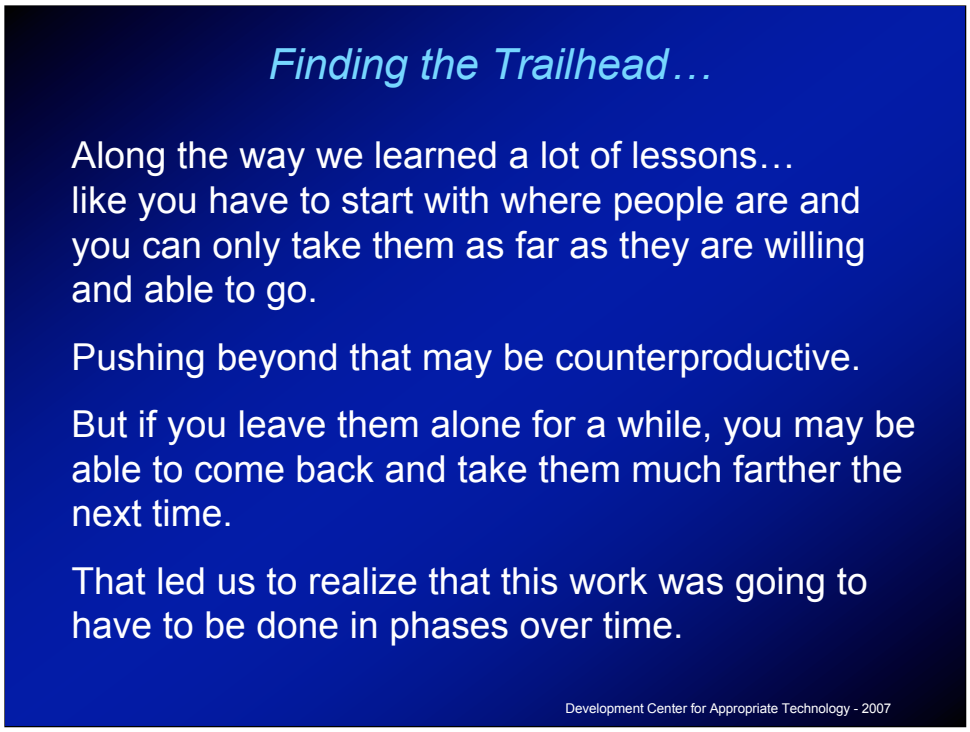
I realized that in the last two minutes of a ten minute talk, I had said something that had cut right through the resistance to these ideas in a room full of mostly conservative people. As I thought about it, I realized that the power came from a few sources. First, it was an absolutely authentic heart to heart message about what we all care about - what we are trying to protect, why we have codes. Then I realized that I had connected also because I knew what they cared about and how they thought about it. But I also realized that I had just asked them a bunch of questions. I hadn't told them anything. I had just spoken from the heart about what really mattered to me and I trusted that would also care and that they could understand it. And I acknowledged the importance of their work and invited them to a higher place from which to do it.



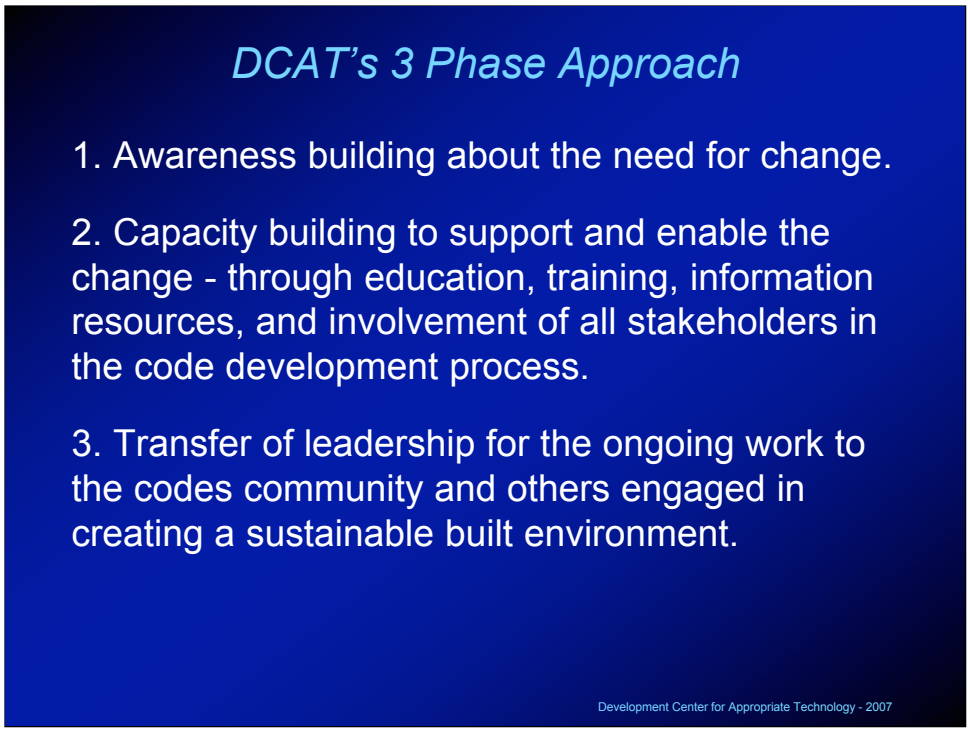
I have called that talk in Phoenix, "Finding the Trailhead into the codes work," because it was the first time that I really got at a cellular level that these were people who cared about safeguarding the public. That they were a caring community. And I saw that I wanted what they wanted and more, not less, because the last thing I want is people building unsafe buildings. But I had a much bigger field of view and a broader definition of the categories of risk and responsibility - I wanted a safe planet on which to build those buildings as well…



I started thinking of the work, unofficially, as doing heart work with code officials…connecting them to both the larger and the more personal reasons that we have and enforce codes. It led to the creation of our program Building Sustainability into the Codes.



We learned a lot of lessons along the way. We've never stopped learning them. Some came from hard experience…like that you have to start with people where they are, not where you wish they were or hope they are. And you can only take them as far as they are capable of and willing to go. Whatever you do beyond that point with them will often be wasted at best and counterproductive at worst. But if you bring them as far as you can and let them go, you can usually come back later and take them a long ways. Thinking about this and the nature of change made us envision this a process that would unfold in phases.



We saw three basic phases, though we knew the boundaries would be blurry and have many overlaps. The first phase is awareness building about the need for change. People rarely change when they can't see a reason to. The second phase is capacity building in support of the change - providing the information and educational and technical resources as well as developing resources for and involving all the related stakeholders in the process. And the third phase is the natural transfer of leadership to those you are working to influence as they internalize the ideas and it becomes part of how they think and make decisions and take on the role of moving things forward. We said for years that if you do the first two phases well, the third just happens.

So, we had our work cut our for us and we started doing it. We were invited to produce a feature issue of ICBO's magazine Building Standards in 1998 and another in 2000 and then in 2002 as well as other articles in the magazines of the other code groups. This was a way to provide good technical information to the membership and introduce a lot of ideas about why this mattered and how it related to public health, safety and welfare.

1st and 2nd Phases…

In 2002, ICBO gave us a regular column in *Building Standards* - "Building Codes for a Small Planet"
In 2003 it moved to ICC's *Building Safety Journal*.

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In late 2001, ICBO leaders asked us if we'd like to write a regular column in Building Standards. Beginning in January 2002 my column, "Building Codes for a Small Planet" began appearing in each issue. This was a huge breakthrough. We had entered the codes arena as outside environmental and social justice advocates and had built the kind of trust and relationships that allowed us to be invited inside and given a platform, as change agents, to educate the members about issues related to sustainability and green building. After ICBO and the two other regional code groups, BOCA and SBCCI consolidated into the International Code Council, the column moved into ICC's Building Safety Journal.

1st and 2nd Phases…

We produced a 50 minute video *Building Codes for a Small Planet* to tell this story more widely.

We upgraded the DCAT website www.dcat.net

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We also developed a video called Building Codes for a Small Planet to educate code officials and others about these issues. And we upgraded our website.

1st, 2nd, and Approaching the 3rd Phase…

LEADING THE WAY:
BUILDING DEPARTMENTS AS COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR BETTER BUILDING PRACTICES

We taught courses at state and regional code training and education institutes in Colorado, Texas, Kansas, Oregon, Nevada, California, Washington, Arizona and Minnesota, and at ICBO and ICC annual conferences.

What follows are examples of our teaching methods and tools…

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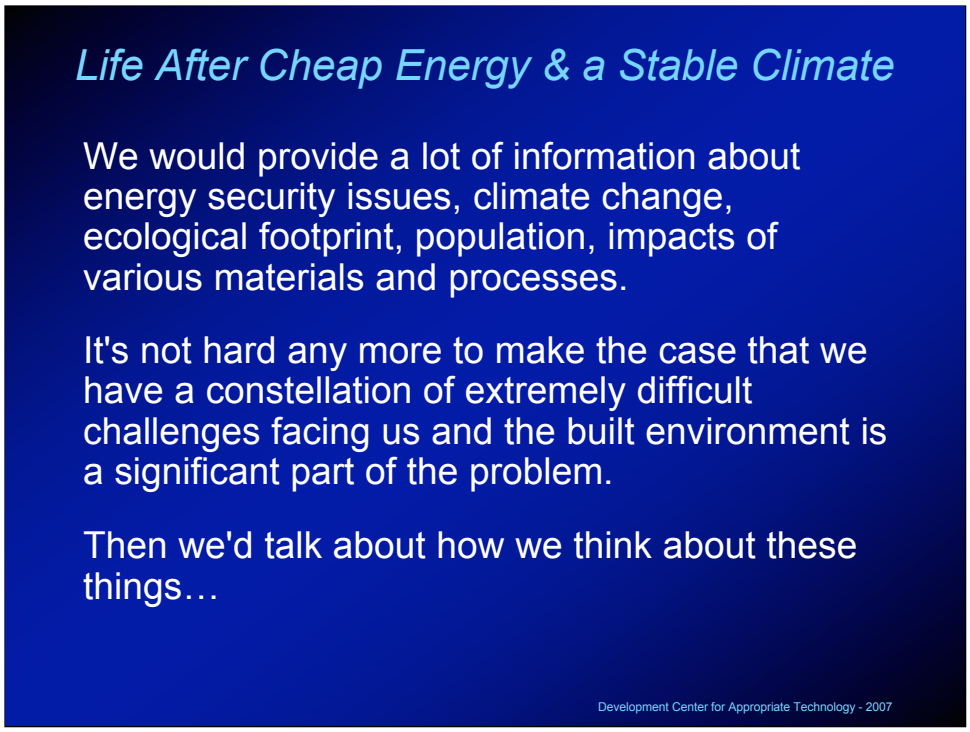
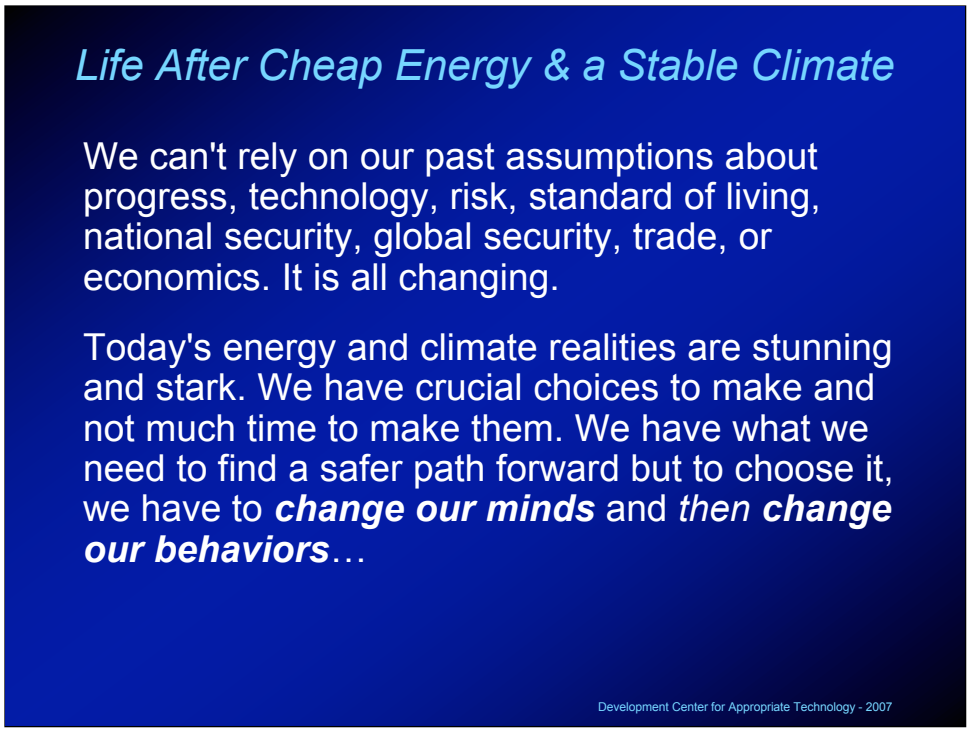
We started teaching courses at regional and national building code educational institutes and trainings all over the country. We taught some about why these things matter, some about various alternative technologies and materials and designs, and about how to think differently about risk and responsibility. We evolved ways of talking about these issues that helped bring us closer to common goals and understanding.



We created the missing context within which code officials could begin to see the whole risk profile of building and development. Today it is much easier to talk about things. Nearly everyone has heard about climate change and peak oil, species extinctions, and other environmental and social issues and their linkage to building and development. Eight or ten years ago this was not so easy to do.



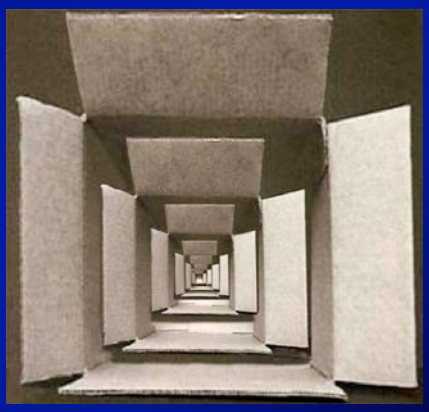
But we found ways and we're still finding ways to effectively bridge the divide between relying on what we understood to be true in the past and learning to see what was changing, what changes were being brought about by our own practices and habits and actions. We found ways to talk about our habits of thinking as well.

Get Out of the Box

We often hear that we need to think "outside the box" to deal with our problems today.

But it's a process -

expand your field of view, get out of the box you're in …into the next bigger box.



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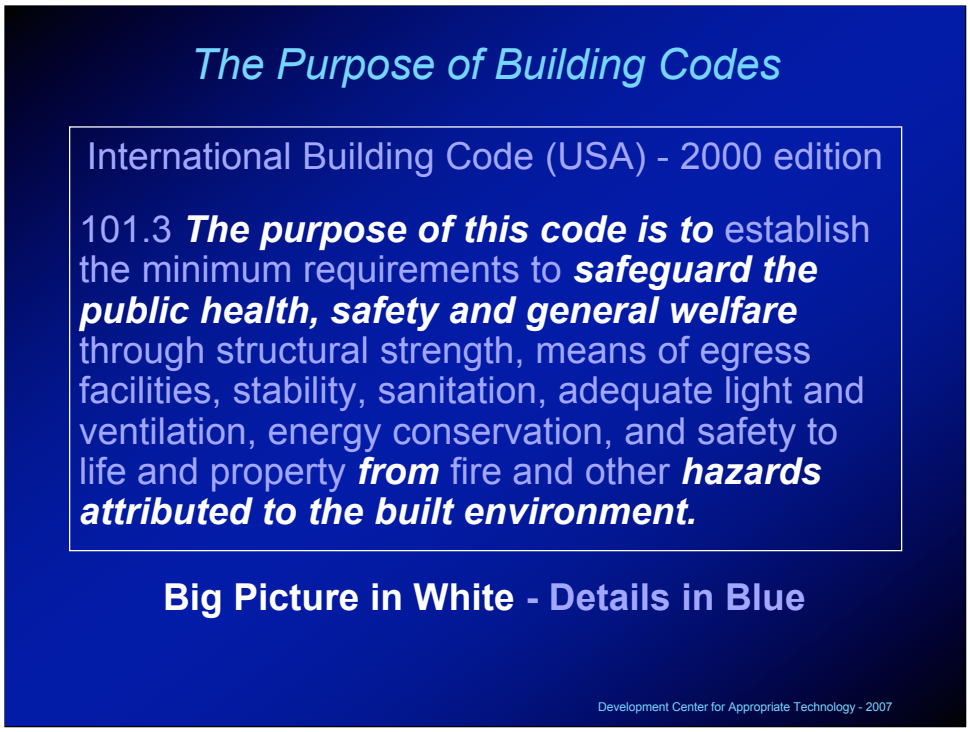
Significant changes are happening and are going to be required in virtually every human system as the realities of climate and energy and other resources, and environment become apparent to everyone. People talk about the need to think outside the box - especially with all the daunting challenges we're facing today. My experience is that it is really an infinite series of boxes. We expand our thinking and understanding and climb into the next bigger box. No one has anything remotely like the whole picture of reality or truth, and that's okay. I love this image because it reminds me that I and everyone else always has a lot to learn - that our world view is always inherently both incomplete and inaccurate. Our job is to make the largest and most accurate map of reality that we can in our time here. We have to be willing to redraw your map constantly…

To do that well, we also need to know whether we're working in the details or the big picture or some intermediate level, in the past, the present, the future, always trying to understand the context of your focus. Focus is an act of exclusion - you focus on something and by definition, you exclude everything else. If you don't know that, if you don't pay attention to that you get lost in the details or you lose sight of them. We all need to develop the habit of constantly shifting our focus and looking for the patterns and the spaces between things and their relationships. This is how we learn to keep things in perspective and proportion.



Bringing this back to building codes - here is how I view the details and the big picture in codes. This is the purpose statement from the International Building Code (USA). The statement I've highlighted in white is the Big Picture. The rest is Detail. The purpose is to safeguard the public from hazards attributable to the built environment. It doesn't limit responsibility to only hazards that occur at the building site or to only hazards during the life of the building because the hazards attributable to the built environment begin far from the building site and often end far from it as well and they begin long before the building exists and extend far into the future.

Our modern building codes are extraordinarily good at enabling us to design and build buildings that rarely burn down, fall down, trap people in emergencies, expose them to raw sewage, electrocute them, let them fall from high places, suffocate them too quickly, and so forth. Thus we think we've eliminated or greatly reduced the risks associated with buildings.

What's Protected and What's at Risk?

We've just moved those risks in space and time:

- away from the building site, and
- into the future.

What we've actually done is move those risks in space and time. We've moved them away from the building site out into all the natural systems on the planet - our life support systems, and from the present to our children and grandchildren and all the future generations of all the other species on whose welfare our welfare also depends.

Big Problems Hidden in Plain View

Looking at buildings through codes is like looking through a microscope. The individual, building-related risks fill the field of view.

But, it's like dealing with risk with tweezers, while creating many orders of magnitude greater, generalized risk for everyone, including all future generations.

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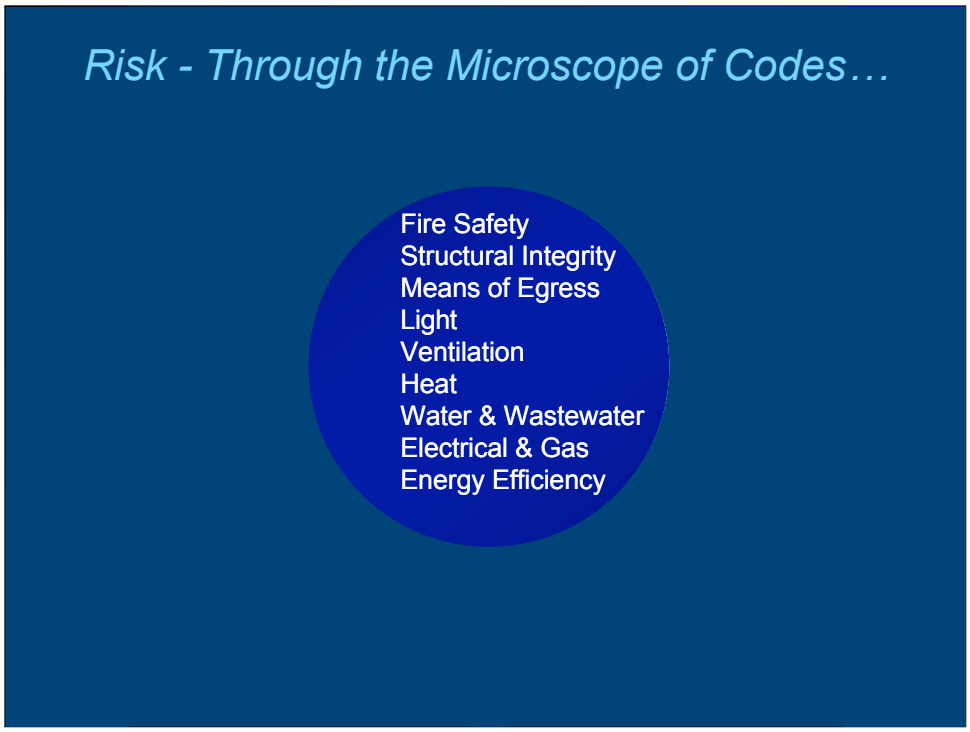
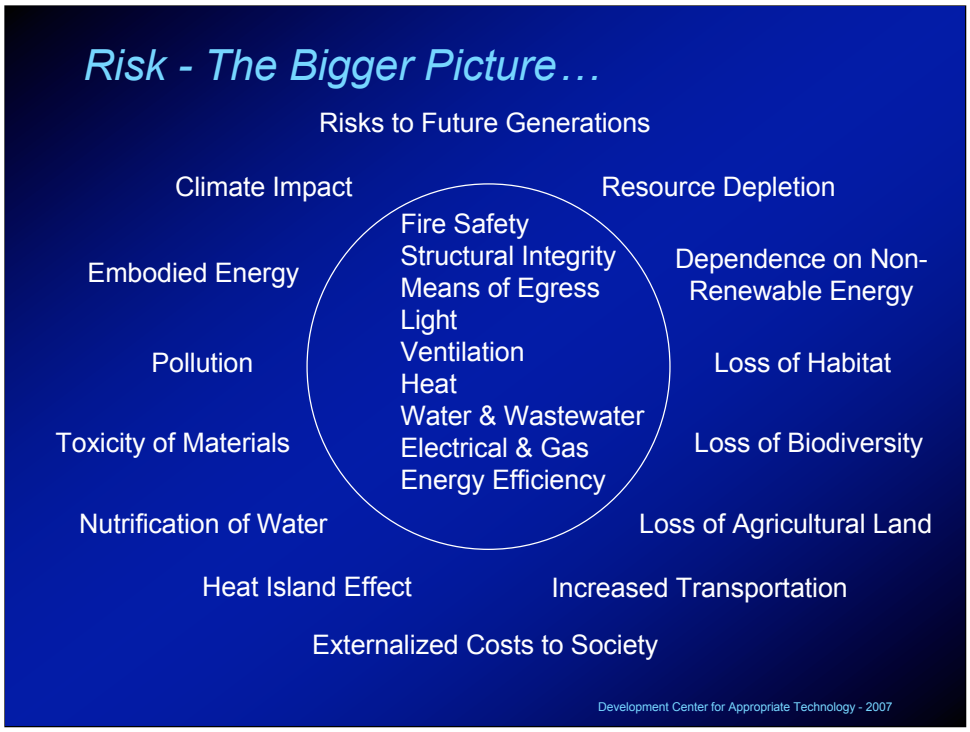
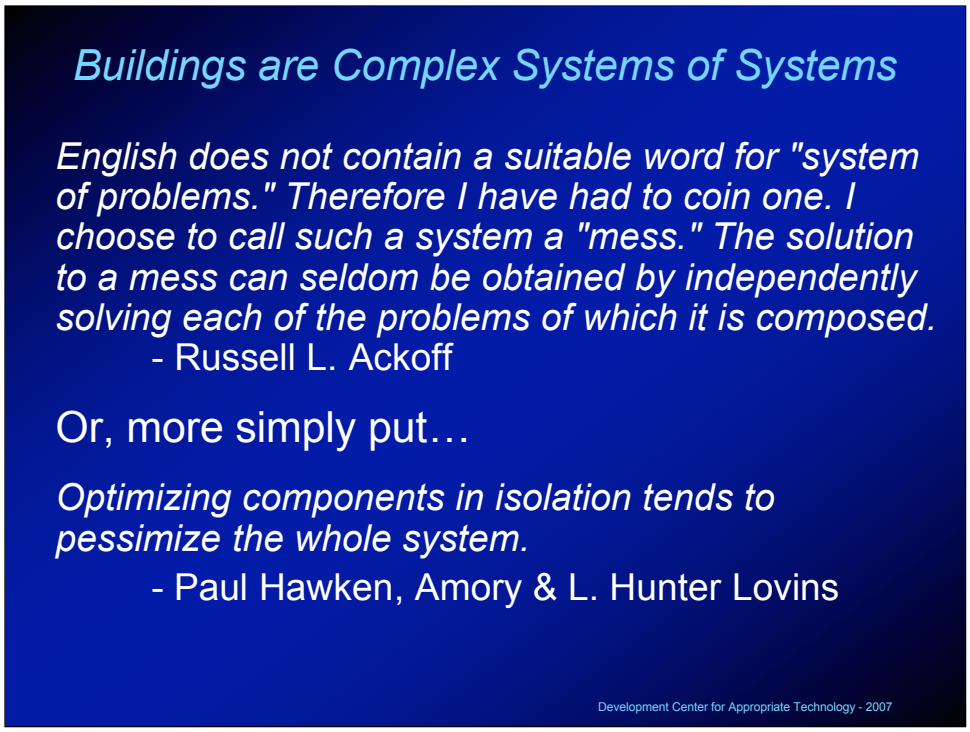
It's like we're looking at risk related to buildings through a microscope. We can see all the important risks to people in and around buildings. But important as they are, these risks exist at the smallest and most specific level and they completely fill our field of view. They're very important because they are risks to real people. But it's like we're dealing with risk with tweezers while at the same time, the actions we're taking to minimize risk at this level are creating many orders of magnitude greater generalized and distributed risk to billions of people that can't be seen through that lens.



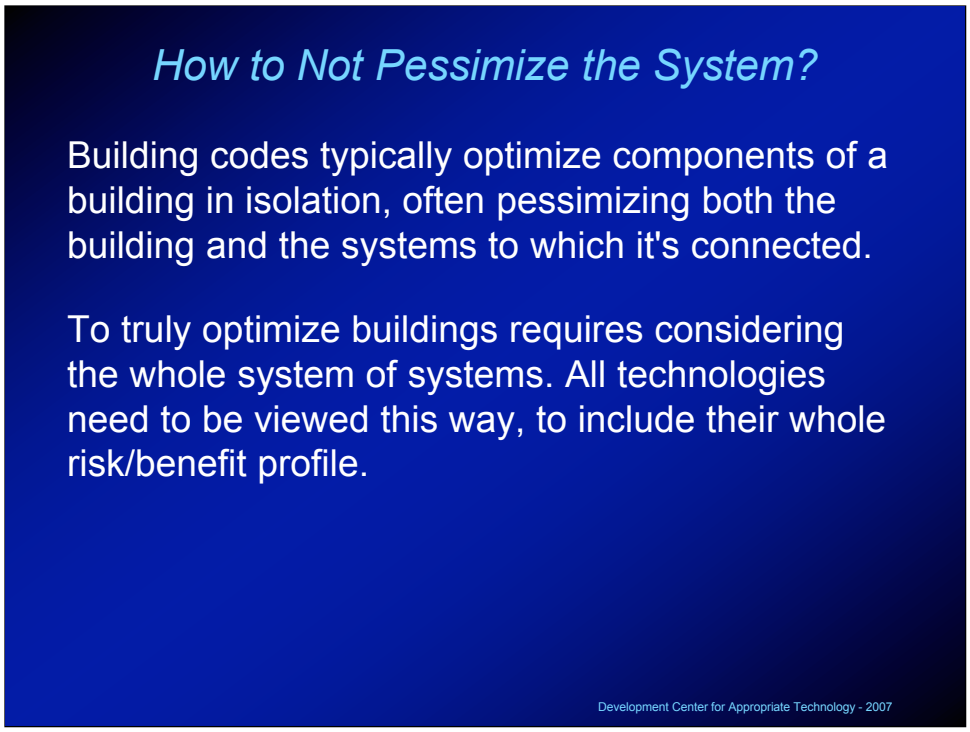
These are the categories of risk and responsibility as laid out in the codes. This is the view through that microscope…



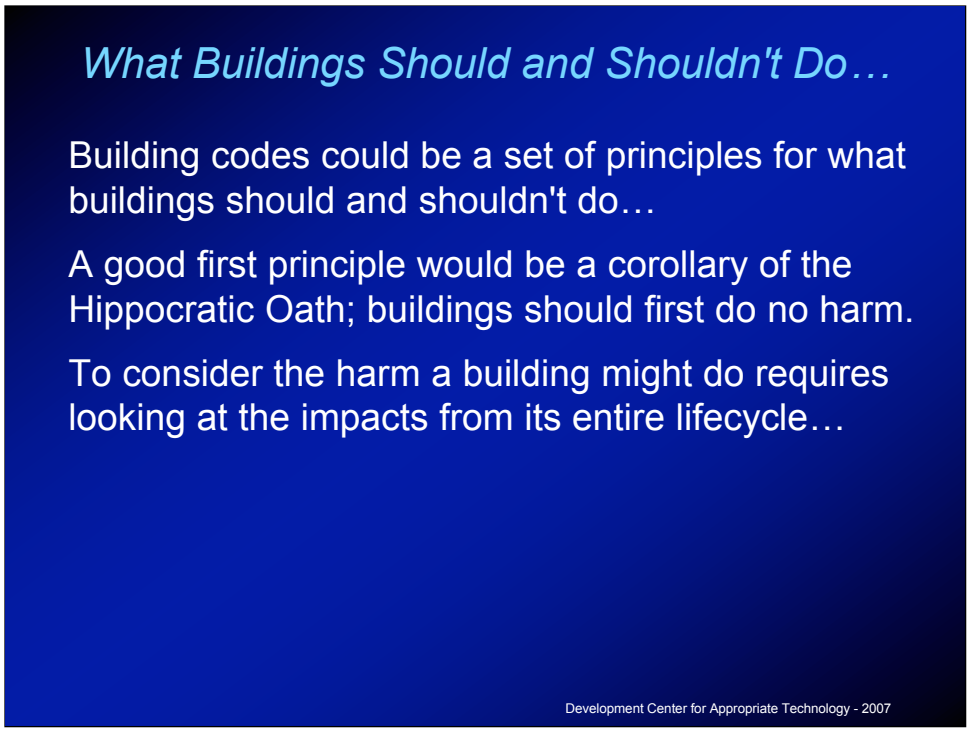
But if you take your away from that lens, you see a whole galaxy of other larger risks to all of us which are also attributable to the built environment. Meaning that they are also central to the responsibility of safeguarding public heath, safety and welfare. They are not external - they are central. And it is not a question of one set of risks or the other. We have to learn how to balance and address both sets of risks.



These are two of my favorite quotes - a long and short version of the same essential idea - that we are dealing with systems - always. It's all connected and we can't solve any problems independently.



But the codes treat buildings as assemblies of materials, parts, equipment, - components that are not viewed in a comprehensive, systemic way. And so they have tended to pessimize both the buildings and the human and natural systems in which buildings actually exist. To get beyond this we need to see and think differently about design and buildings and technologies.



I've long thought that we should think of the codes as a set of principles about what buildings should and shouldn't do. A good first principle might be a corollary of the Hippocratic Oath - that a building should first do no harm. In order to consider the harm a building might do, however, we'd need to consider the entire lifecylce of the building…

This starts with the acquisition of resources and their transportation and processing and extends to the impacts of the building on the land and the infrastructure it requires. We'd need to consider the impacts of the construction process, the wastes generated, toxic chemicals used, the flow of resources through the building over its lifetime for repair, maintenance and refurbishing and for the services we demand of our buildings. And then we'd need to think of the impacts at the end of the life of the building and out into the future, and whether the materials are reusable, recyclable, toxic, or will just end up in the landfill.

Doing No Harm…?

This is my grandson, Joe. Does what we're doing insure that our buildings and developments do no harm to him? Or to his grandchildren?

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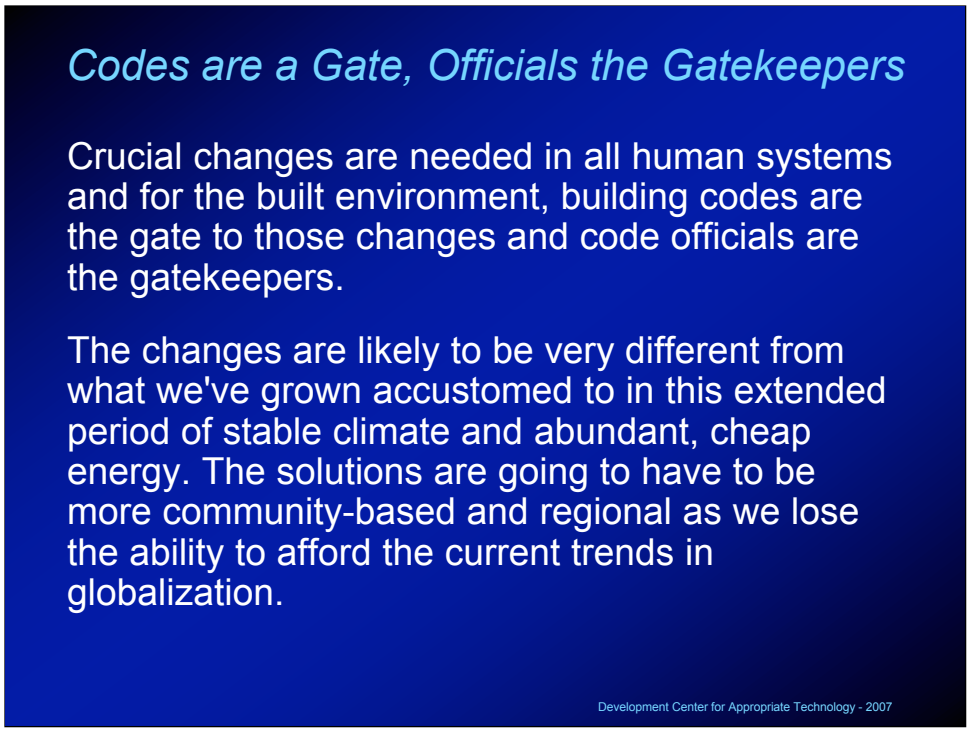
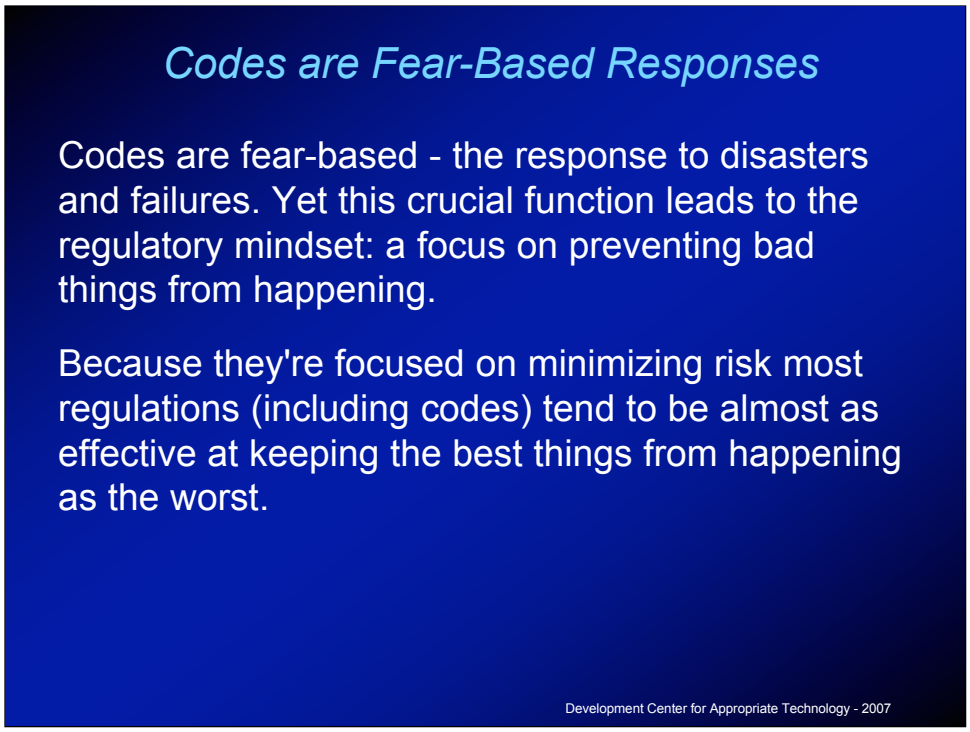
Building codes have the intention that buildings do no harm, but only certain kinds of harm, and almost exclusively, harm to their occupants. This has only recently come to include things such as indoor air quality and toxicity of materials. So we have a system that affects everything from the acquisition of resources through to the impacts of buildings extending well beyond their demolition, but focused on a very narrow set of concerns. This is my grandson, Joe. He is a big part of my inspiration for the work I do. I can't think about these issues without relating them to Joe and to his grandchildren or the billions of other children and grandchildren the world over. These are not abstract issues. They are real and personal for me as they should be for all of us. They are about our responsibility to recognize risk and dealing with it appropriately.



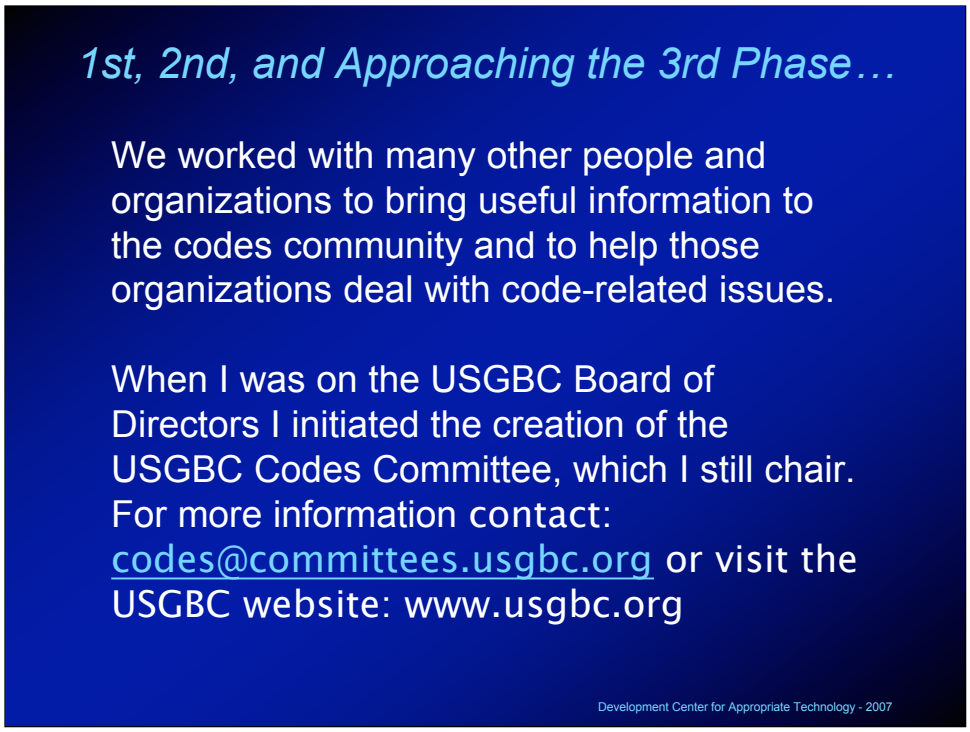
We are going to see enormous changes in both natural and human systems as a result of energy and climate realities. For the built environment, codes are the gate to those changes and code officials are the gatekeepers. This is a crucial understanding of the role that this sector plays in enabling or undermining our ability to adapt to changing realities.



Regulations are almost always responses to failures or catastrophes - thus they are fear-based responses intended to keep bad things from happening - usually from happening again. So they are focused on minimizing or eliminating risk - all kinds of risk including both real and perceived risks, technical and legal risk, and so forth. This is the same mindset that many environmentalists operate from - trying to keep bad things from happening - we're just looking at different parts of the system…

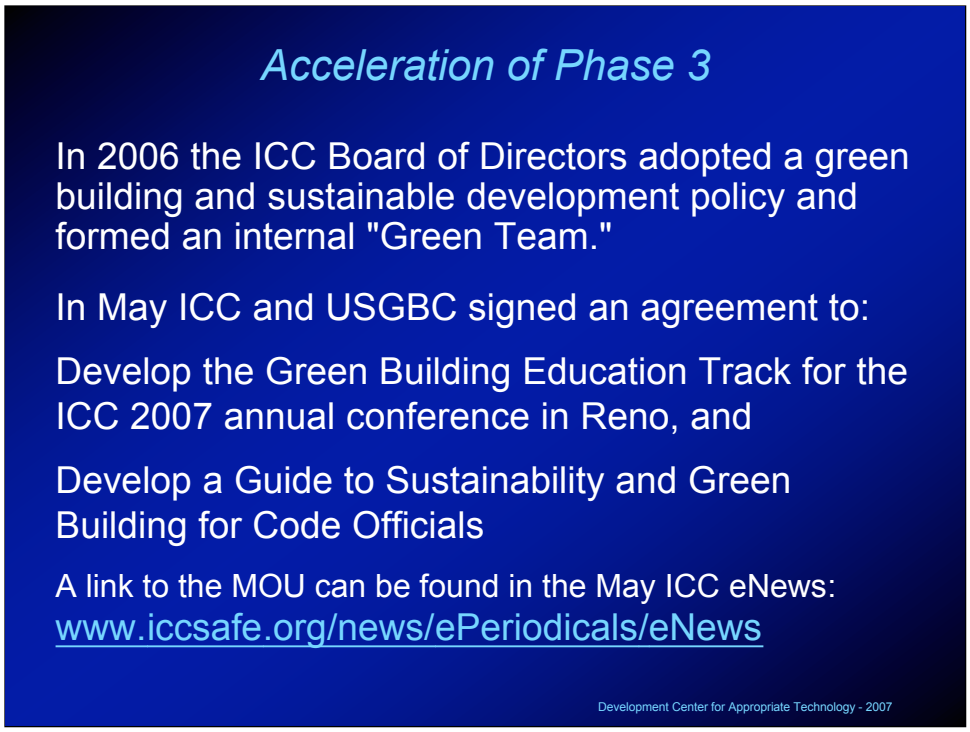
Unfortunately, this mindset, which I call the regulatory mindset, tends to be nearly as effective at keeping the best things from happening as the worst things becausee innovation or things that are unfamiliar represent risk as well and so are often resisted.

What we have been encouraging and are now seeing in more and more jurisdictions around the country are people who have begun to see the building department and the building officials within it as real community resources to enable the best things from happening, not just prevent the worst. And where that has happened, extraordinary things begin happening both in the community and in the building department. Take a good look at some of these communities and what they have and are accomplishing.



Our work at DCAT expanded to working with many other organizations. Among the most important is the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). I was on the Board of Directors of USGBC for five years from 2000 through 2005. While there I initiated the formation of the USGBC Codes Committee which I chair. We are now working directly with ICC on a number of initiatives and you can learn more on the USGBC website.

In the past year all sorts of things have started happening within and around ICC.



The ICC Board adopted a policy on green building and sustainable development. ICC created an internal green team, signed an agreement with USGBC, partnered with the AIA, NAHB and others.

Acceleration of Phase 3

ICC has a new headquarters in the National Association of Realtors LEED Silver building!

ICC Moves into the Future

by David Eisenberg

When ICC moves into its new headquarters on the 4th floor of the National Association of Realtors (NAR) building at 500 New Jersey Avenue in Washington, D.C., more will be elevated than the offices of its officers. The visibility and standing of the largest building code organization in the U.S. will take this as it gains greater access to the federal government and other national and international organizations.

"Our new world headquarters will be just two blocks from the Capitol," says CEO Richard P. Weiland. "And having our offices in a 'green' building in D.C. shows our corporate commitment to conquer the environment. Green technology is going to play an important role in our collective future—not just in the United States but around the world."

"It was a big plus that the best space available turned out to be a green building," agrees ICC Board President Wally Bailey. "This move fits in perfectly with our mission of safeguarding the public and demonstrates our commitment to good corporate citizenship."

The NAR building is one of Washington's greenest office buildings, having achieved a Silver rating under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system. Among its key features are energy efficiency, stormwater collection, high-efficiency HVAC and lighting systems, water-efficient fixtures and waterless urinals, excellent daylighting and views, and the use of recycled-content materials.

"Back when I made my three-year commitment to serve ICC as CEO, among my goals for the organization was moving our headquarters into a higher profile office in the nation's Capital," said former CEO James Lee Witt shortly before he turned leadership over to Weiland.

Once the decision was made by the Board of Directors to move the headquarters from Falls Church, Virginia, to the District of Columbia, staff began the search for an appropriate space. "We needed a great place in D.C. for the staff to work and for the Board and our members to come and to meet," recalls Weiland. "We looked at a number of other buildings, but when we saw the NAR building we liked everything about it. That it was also a green building was a big bonus."

"The combination of the location, features of the building, and its energy and environmental performance and accessibility to everyone made it the right move for ICC," says Senior Vice President of Government Relations Sara Yerkes, who is overseeing the move for ICC.

"This organization is about our members and about our mission, and visitors need to feel the quality of the I-Codes and the mobility of our organization when they enter our offices" adds ICC COO Dominic Sims. "They'll get that in our new headquarters where we'll be better able to accommodate visitors and meetings."

ICC is proud of this move, according to Weiland. "More and more, people are looking for new ways to live in harmony with the environment. This is an opportunity for us to 'walk the talk' and be in the forefront, demonstrating our leadership."

One of the options that ICC considered was seeking LEED certification of the build-out of the space using the LEED-CI (Commercial Interiors) rating system, but because the timing was so tight for the design and construction the decision was made to forego that process. However, the lease requires that fitting out the new space and its ongoing

This building has waterless urinals, rainwater collection, 40% energy savings over comparable buildings and many other green features. The ICC is PROUD to be in this building!

Development Center for Appropriate Technology - 2007

ICC moved its headquarters into a LEED Silver building in Washington DC - a third party certified green building.

The ICC developed a green building webpage linked from the ICC homepage.

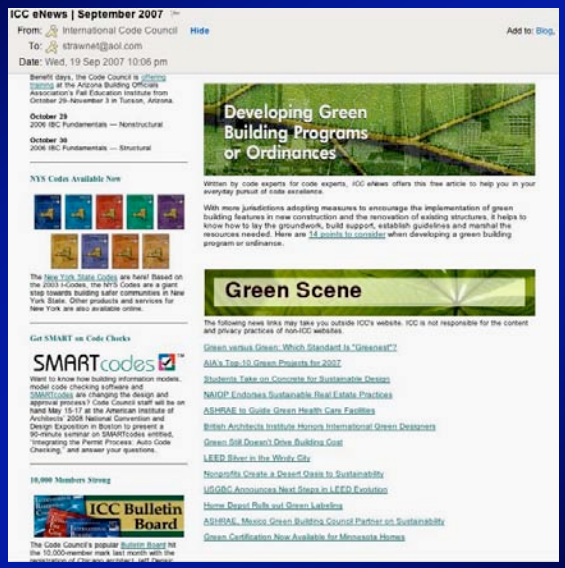
www.iccsafe.org/news/green/index.html

Development Center for Appropriate Technology - 2007

Green building information can be found on the website as well as in many ICC periodicals.

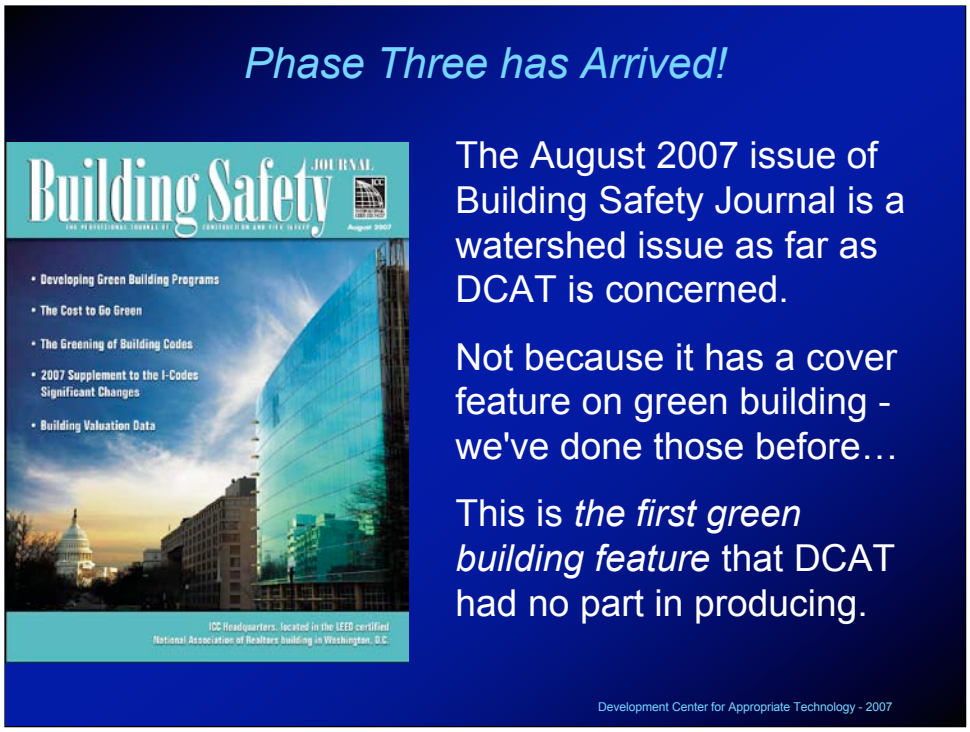
The ICC partnered with the AIA to co-sponsor a Green Codes Summit in July in Washington, DC. I was invited to give the opening presentation at that summit and ICC leadership was represented through the whole day.

ICC Newsletter - September 19, 2007



Development Center for Appropriate Technology - 2007

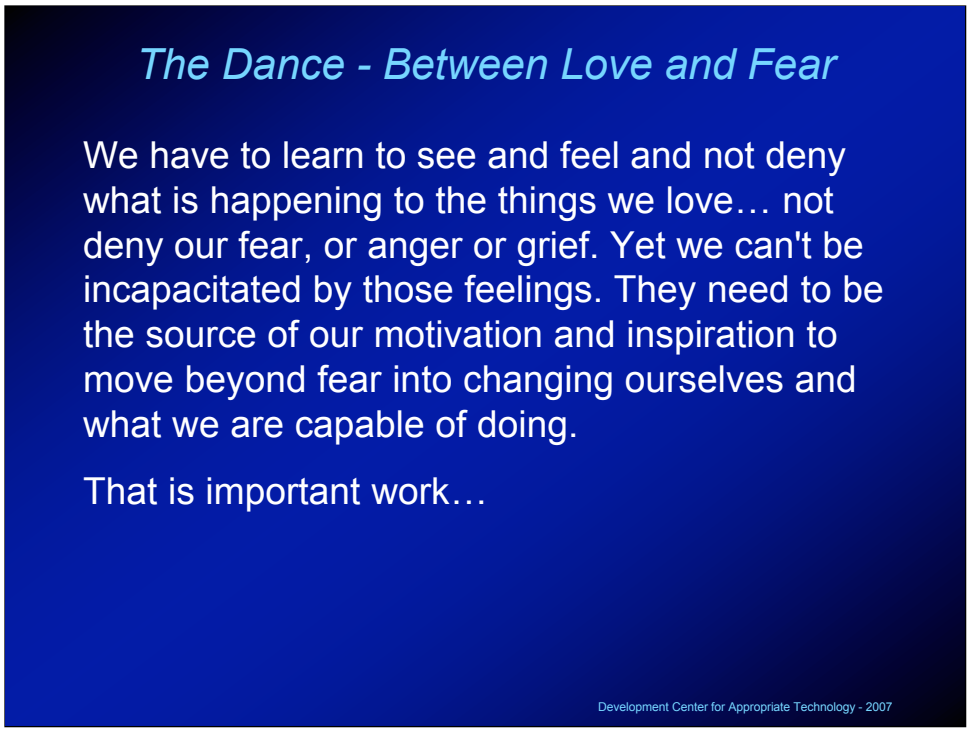
ICC's various publications are providing more and more good information about green building and issues of sustainability with each passing month.



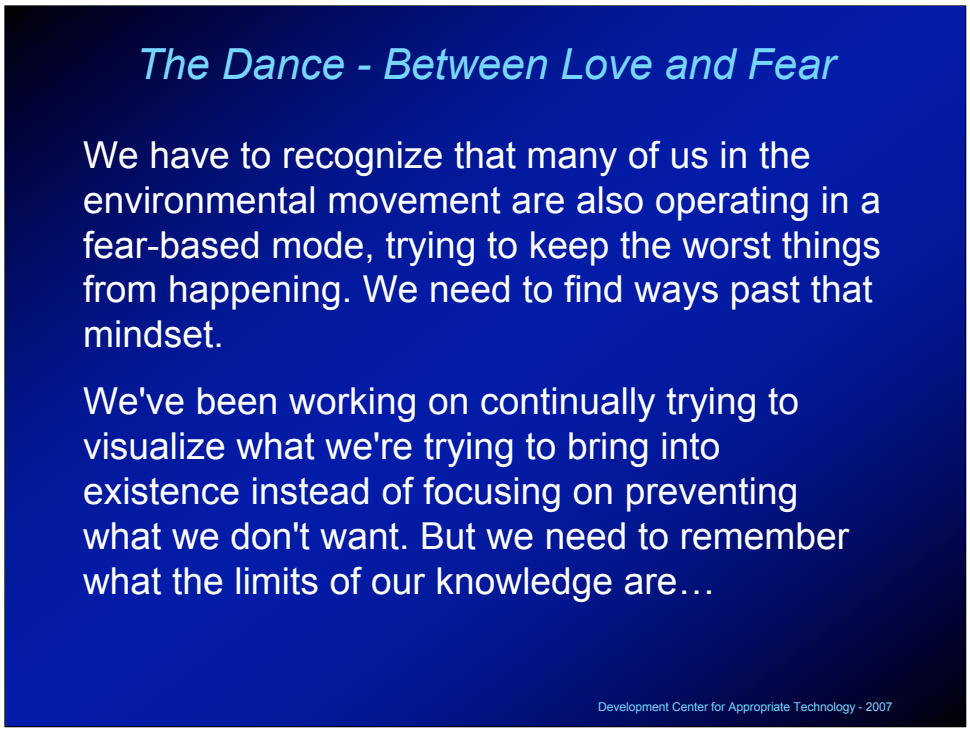
And with the August issue of Building Safety Journal, the third phase of DCAT's vision of change came to real fruition. This is the seventh feature on green building and sustainability in these magazines since the first one we put together for ICBO in 1998. But this one is different. DCAT had nothing to do with this producing this feature. ICC did it themselves and did it well.

These changes are all hugely encouraging. And they are also just first steps as we begin to address the realities we all face. It's crucially important that we've overcome inertia of rest. Things are moving and moving in the right direction. And they're accelerating. But we have a long way to go…

So the code officials are coming on board at a crucial point in time. We have great work to do together as we begin to envision a different future.



We also need to work at recognizing and not denying the potential that facing the things that are happening in the world can be frightening, depressing, and even incapacitating if we don't have ways of dealing effectively with our fear, anger, grief and other emotions that tend to lead some people to deny that anything is happening or anything needs to change. We can learn to turn these things into the motivation and inspiration for the great work we now get to do. This is crucial work too.



Lots of us in the environmental movement are also operating in a fear-based mode, What we've found is that it is important to not deny what is happening, and to take actions that help prevent the worst things from coming to pass, but that is not nearly enough. What is needed is to focus on creating what we want, working to keep bringing into existence those things that bring joy and vitality and hope into our work and our lives. And we also need to acknowledge the limits or our understanding as well

We need to address what I call the great modern myth, which is the hubris of thinking that we know what we're doing and we're in control. That there is someone somewhere who is keeping track of all this and keeping us safe. That is an illusion and we need to learn to see it as such and take responsibility for our choices and actions.

When we realize that most of the consequences of much of what we do are unknown and unintended, we could begin to develop the intention of minimizing the unintended consequences, making that part of our decision-making processes.

Addressing the Great Modern Myth

Thinking deeply about our choices of materials and systems might lead us to develop a preference for doing things as locally as possible, as simply as possible, and doing as little as possible of those things that we know are harmful or about which our knowledge and understanding is limited.

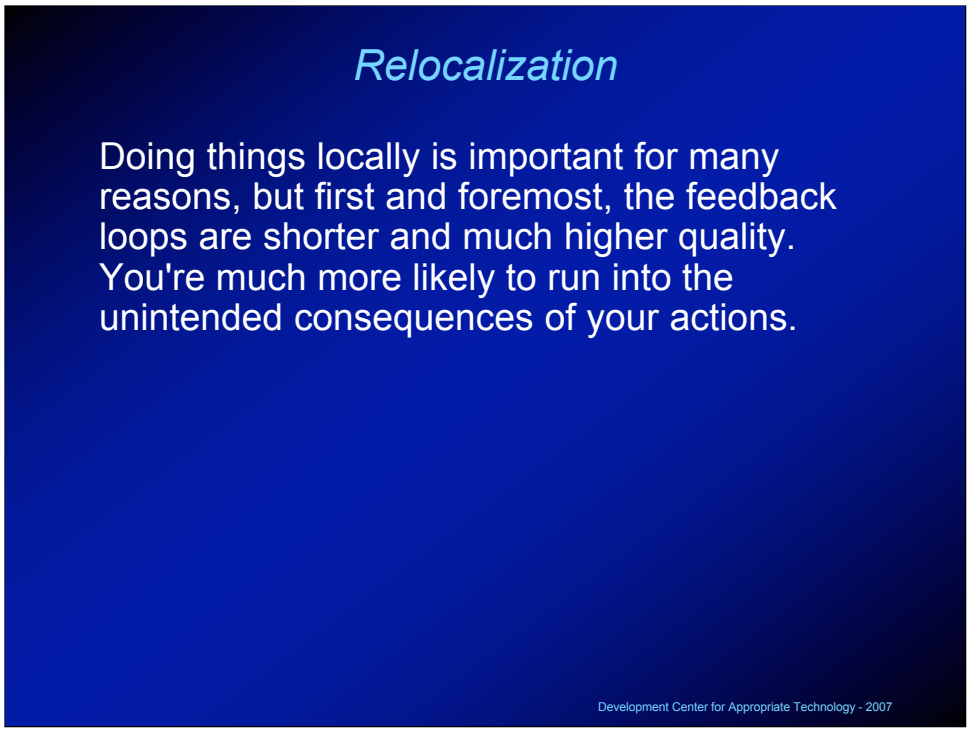
Development Center for Appropriate Technology - 2007

Thinking about the issues of how little we know about the consequences of what we do can guide us to develop preferences for simpler, more local, more natural materials and systems and a more precautionary approach to our choices.

The name of my organization is the Development Center for Appropriate Technology. Many people ask what makes technology appropriate? A standard definition of appropriate technology is that it is the simplest or lowest level of technology that you can use to do well what needs to be done. I contrast that with our cultural bias that tells us that higher technology is always better, that there is an obligation to always use the highest level of available technology one can afford, and that when new technology is introduced the old technology becomes obsolete and is no longer useful. The reason we care about the level of technology that is used is that higher levels of technology come with higher levels of unintended consequences and at some point the consequences are not merely unknown, they are unknowable, especially in the time frame in which we must make our choices.

Appropriate technology isn't necessarily low tech. It is the right level of technology for what must be done, based on the specific use and real needs, circumstances, and to the degree that they are knowable, the consequences flowing from its use. It can be high-tech or no-tech or anything in between.

The best definition of truly appropriate technology is that it is technology that doesn't make people or their communities dependent on systems over which they have no control. If we think about this seriously, it means technologies that enhance the local capacity to meet local needs - which is the true foundation for sustainability and for real security.



There are lots of reasons to do things locally but one of the most important is that the feedback loops are much shorter and much higher quality when we do things where we are as opposed to hundreds or thousands of miles away where we will likely never run into the unintended consequences of what we're doing.

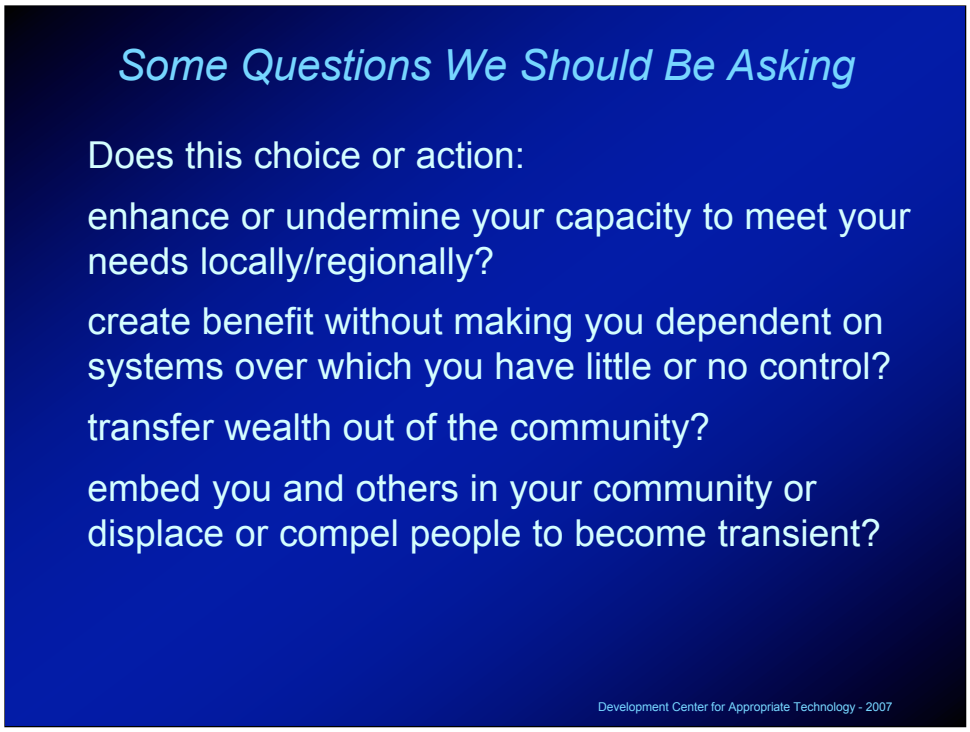
And where security is important, there are few things more important than enhancing local and regional community self-sufficiency. This is actually the only rational strategy for long term security - helping everyone, everywhere strive for regional and local community self-sufficiency. This strategy is not against globalization, per se, it is about relocalization and it is about creating durable, healthy and robust economies, ecosystems and social systems.

As energy becomes more expensive and less readily available, the redevelopment of local and appropriate solutions will become ever more important. And this will necessarily change the ways we think about risk and benefit. We will need to become more adept at dealing with change and complexity.

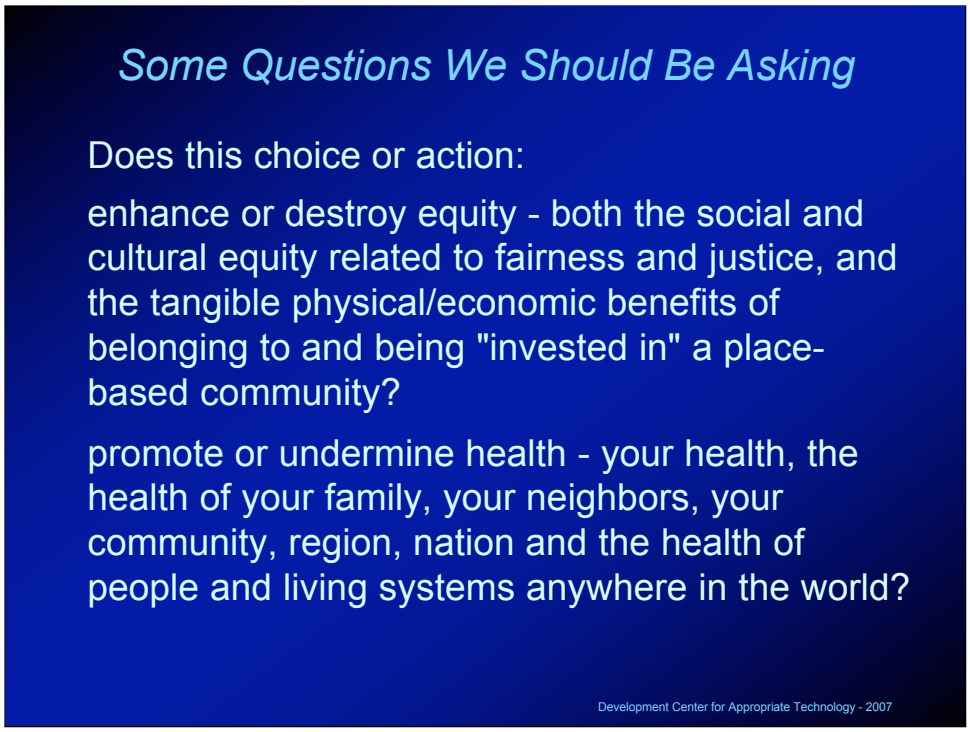
Here are some resources about the relocalization movement.

We need to keep stepping back and looking at what we're doing, what it is producing and whether that is what we want.

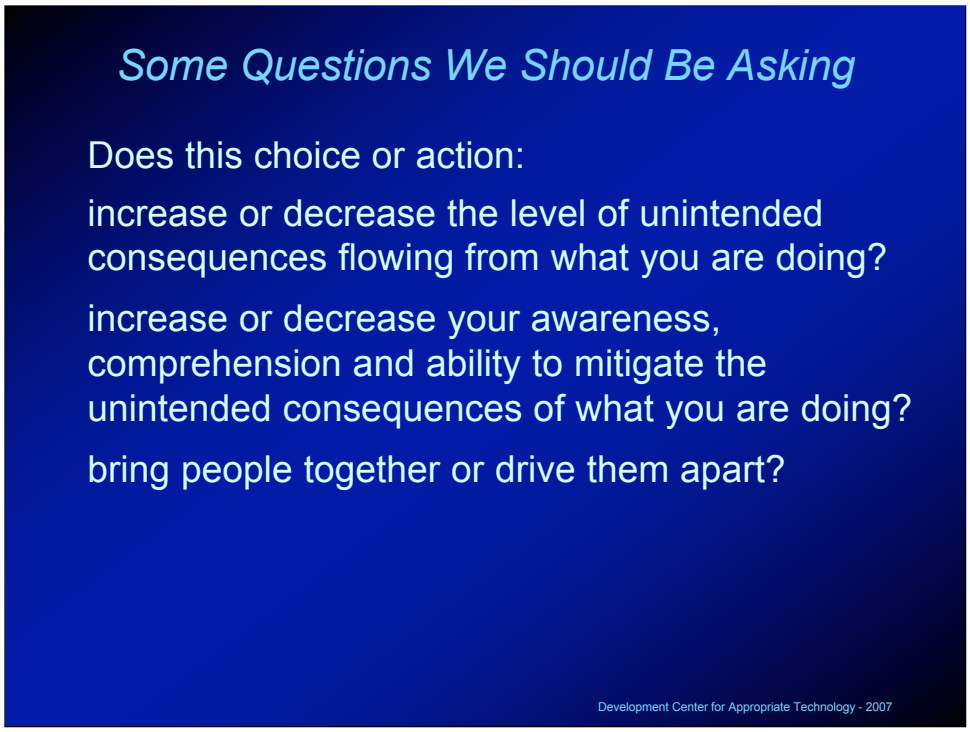
And as we get clearer about what is needed for us to survive as a species, and to really thrive - all of us and all the other species in our larger family of life, we have the opportunity to choose a new course. To do so means we need to be asking new questions in regard to everything we're doing.



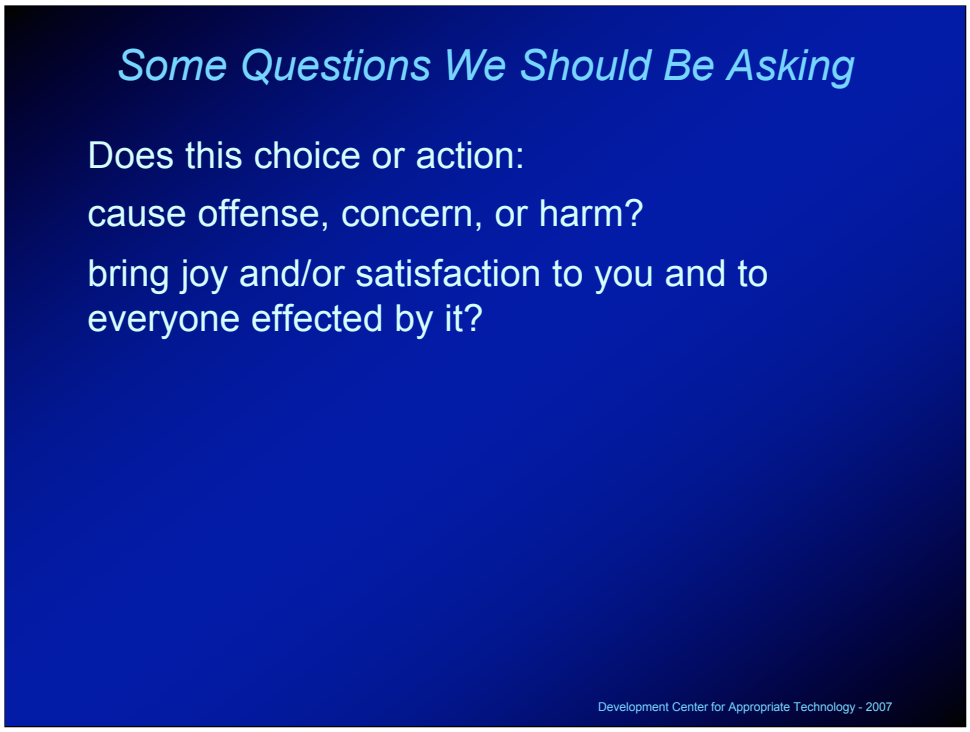
Here are some of the questions that I've been thinking about…questions that we should ask about public policy decisions, business decisions, and our own personal decisions and actions.



These questions might be asked publicly as a regular part of the public process in all communities.

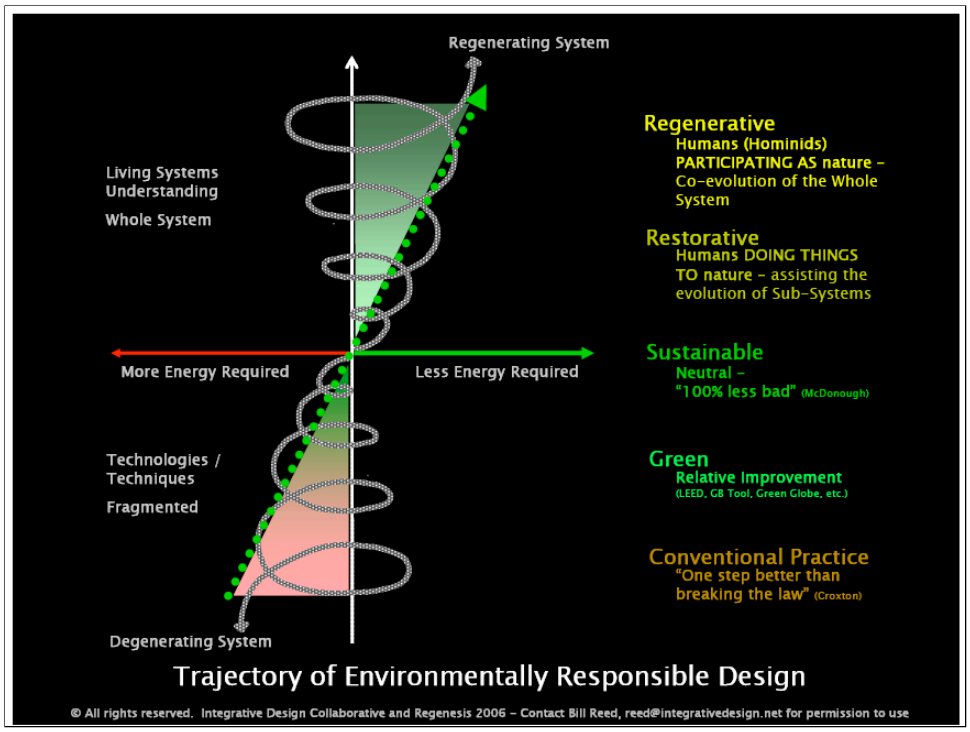


And if we were asking them out loud and having real community dialogue about them as we seek mutually beneficial answers and solutions, we would find ourselves in a very different process than what we're used to.

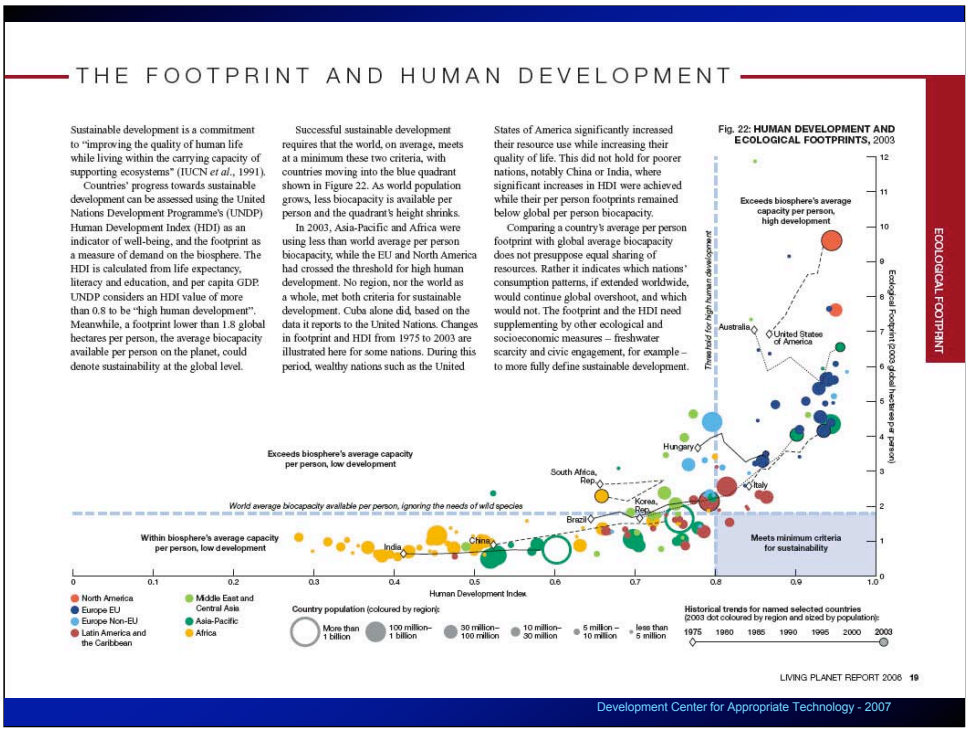


And ever since that talk in Phoenix ten years ago, I've been convinced that having the right questions is far more important than having the right answers.

We now get to choose to take the next step. What an amazing time to be alive!



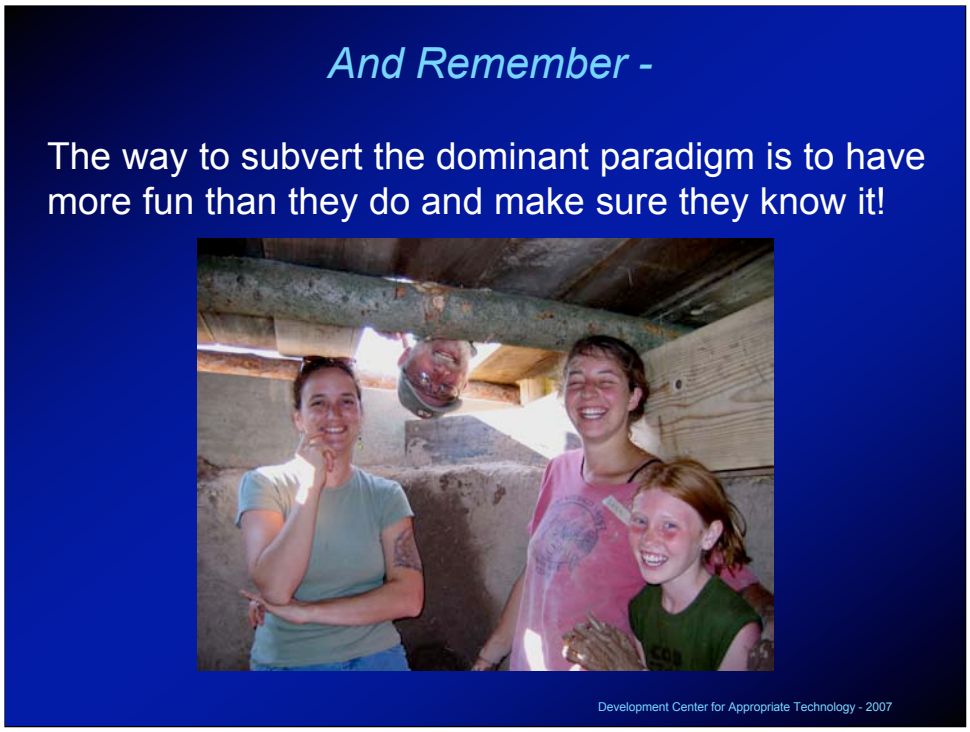
There are many people envisioning a very different way of thinking about building and development, looking deeply into the way nature and natural systems work and evolve. As we begin to shift our thinking and our understanding of place in the community of life, new opportunities emerge for fundamentally different ways of conceiving of and creating the things we need. And as we seek out these systems that fit us back into the co-evolutionary flow of life all kinds of possibilities emerge.



The concept of ecological footprint is based on looking at how much productive land area it takes to support a certain activity or population. Taking the world's productive land area and dividing it by the world population reveals that we are now exceeding the earth's natural systems capacity to provide resources and absorb the wastes of our human activities on the planet. The latest development in ecofootprinting has been to combine ecofootprinting with the human development index in one chart. The vertical axis on this chart represents ecological footprint on a per capita basis. The horizontal dashed line in this chart represents the global average bio-capacity per person, ignoring the needs of wild species. The horizontal axis is the UN Human Development Index and various countries and regions of the world are mapped out on these two scales. The ideal - something that might be sustainable - is to be in the shaded box in the lower right corner, where the ecological footprint per capita is low and the Human Development Index (a measure of overall well-being) is high. As we can see, we are a long way from that ideal today but we can begin to visualize a world in which we are living in harmony with nature and natural systems and also living well. These are the kinds of things we will need to start measuring as carefully and assiduously as we now measure economic activity.

There are new fields opening up such as biomimetics - the study of the way nature works, not to manipulate and exploit nature but to learn from nature and create human systems that work with the same principles and effectiveness and harmony.

But the reality is that these changes are changes that must take place within each of us first, not out there in the world of technology and economics. This journey to a sustainable and regenerative future will be the real heart work as we remember what we are part of, what we are capable of, and what our true nature is. This is a journey of the heart and those of us with the luxury and privilege of options have an added task of making room in our own hearts for future generations and for all those who don't have options and can't speak or act for themselves.



And finally, a critical piece in this puzzle is that we must nurture our spirits and find joy in this work.

Thank you!
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Thank you.