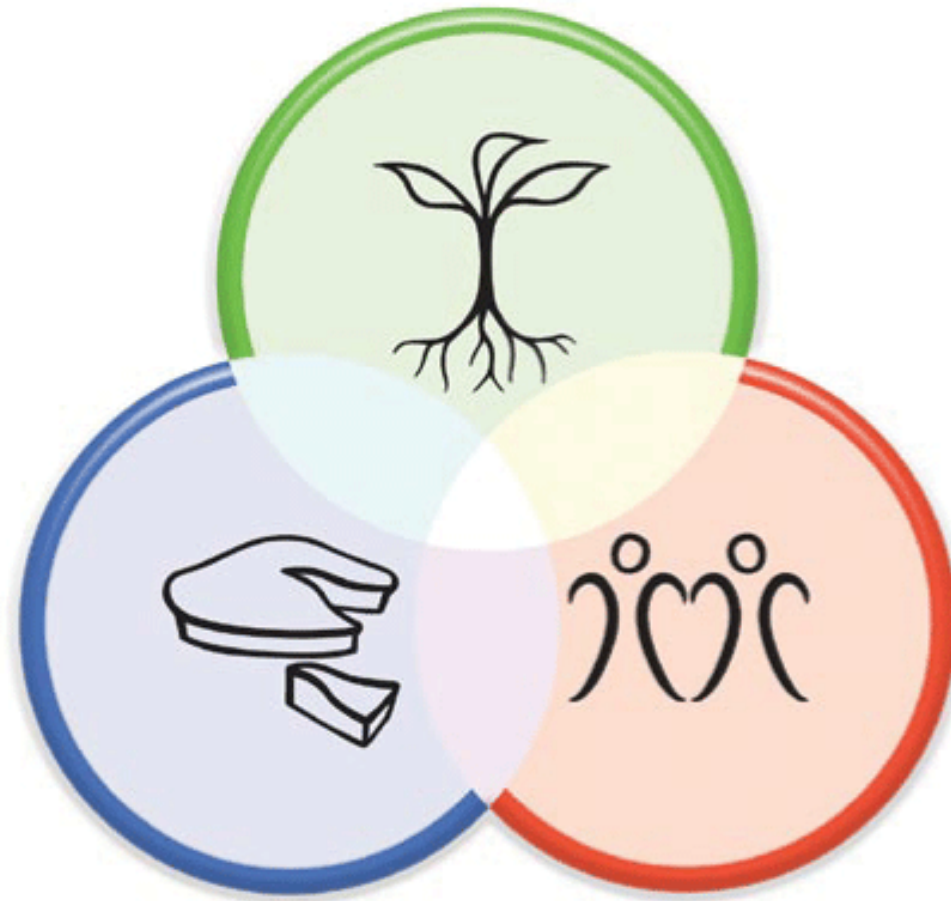


# **Diversified Income Streams and Security through Permaculture**

Can you make a living with  
permaculture?

By Blythe Barbo  
Barbolian Fields  
<http://barbolian.com>

# Ethics & Principles



From David Holmgren's website: <https://permacultureprinciples.com>

# Reality Check – What We're Up Against

- Some may say permaculture is great in theory but in practice....
- Competition; economies of scale vs. small, intensive systems; higher labor costs; many hats
- Over half rely on off-farm income (2012 Census)

# What Does it Mean to Make a Living?

- A Living Wage? Being able to pay laborers?
- Reduced expenses is an income
- Alternative economies are alternatives to cash & debt: bartering & trades
- Self reliance = free of debt = freedom. Being free of debt means our jobs have less power over us.
- As we rely locally on each other, we gain strength individually and collectively
- Greater value than money: quality of life, good food, friendships.

# The Issue of Money

- Meaningful livelihood in tune with ethics
- “Next Economy Enterprises” will
  - fulfill essential human needs,
  - be self-sustaining,
  - require little or no capital,
  - provide living wages,
  - decentralize wealth,
  - encourage simplicity,
  - embed education into products and services,
  - be accessible and affordable.

(from “The Vanguard of the Regenerative Economy” by Erin Axelrod, Permaculture Design Magazine, August 2016.)

What Is Your Niche?

What Is Your Why?

What Is Meaningful to You?

How Do You Make it Happen?

# Why the Permaculture Approach is Different – and also Ideal

- Maximizes efficiencies
- Minimizes waste
- Factors in redundancies to increase security
- Welcomes diversity
- Emphasizes relationships
- Stacks functions in space & time (strategy)

# Think Like an Ecosystem!

- In nature, there is no waste
- Natural systems thrive on diversity
- The whole is greater than the sum of the parts
- It's kind of like building the soil



# How to Build Resiliency

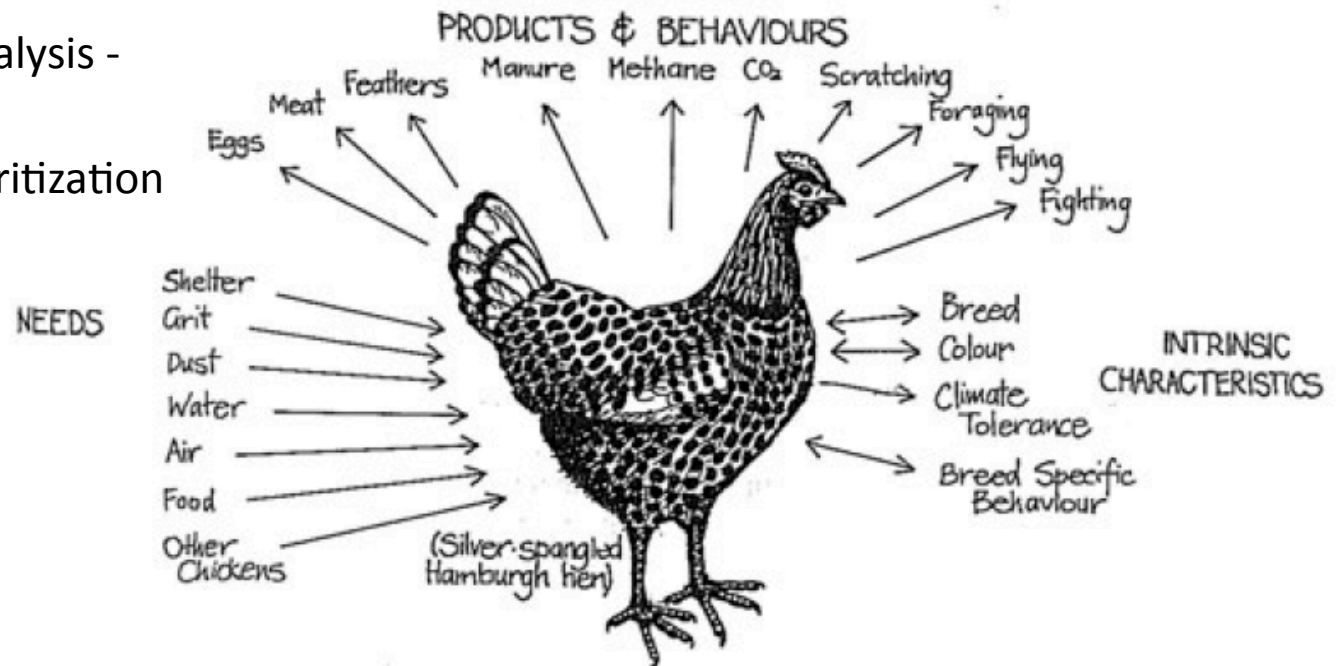
- What is it?
- Increase diversity – this is your safety net – diversify skills, products, relationships
- Ensure that each function is supported by many elements and each element performs many functions (not diversity for diversity's sake)
- The needs of one element are connected to the outputs of another; the waste stream of one might be a resource to another.
- Adaptive Management – Flexibility –
- Small & Nimble vs. Large
- Our Grandparents were all “Preppers” – be prepared for the little setbacks as well as huge disasters

# Resiliency Through Community

- Diverse network of relationships
- Building community builds resilience, stability, and a thriving local community
- The Whole is Greater than the Sum of the Parts
- It takes a village! We can't do it all. Self-sufficiency can be defined on a community level.
- Barter, sale, trade economies.
- We are stronger together!

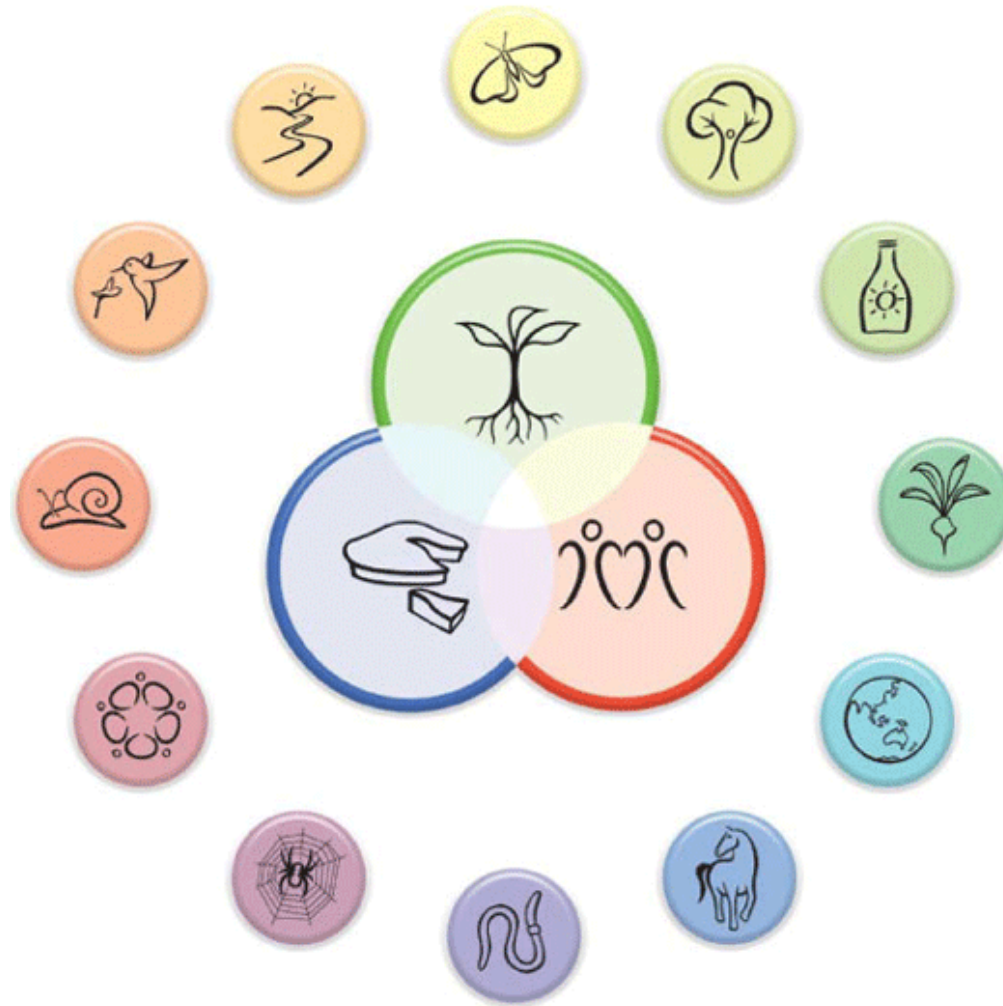
# The Permaculture Personal Landscape Assessment

- Sectors – “Sectors trump everything!” (Toby Hemenway)
- Zones – things we do every day & that produce a yield right now vs. long-term investments
- Connections & Relationships: Connect the elements to increase efficiencies; minimize waste; increase yields; forge relationships
- Guilds – Working together for mutual benefit
- Needs & Yields Analysis - Chicken Analogy
- Highest Use – Prioritization



# Permaculture Design Principles

## David Holmgren



# Permaculture Principles

## David Holmgren

1. **Observe & Interact** – “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.”
  - What is your niche? Where are the gaps? What problem can be the solution?  
What sorts of market changes affect your clients?
2. **Catch & Store Energy** – “Make hay while the sun shines.”
  - Minimize the need for cash. Save for a rainy day
3. **Obtain a Yield** – “You can’t work on an empty stomach.”
  - Theoretically, the yields are unlimited!
  - Why are we doing this? Return to Ethics
  - Obtain a yield today – also plan one for tomorrow – the microgreens vs. the walnut tree
  - “Yields are limited only by the imagination of the designer.” Bill Mollison
4. **Apply Self-regulation & Accept Feedback** - “The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children of the seventh generation.”
  - Self-regulation = fair share / future care; don’t damage that which sustains you
  - Adaptive Management

# Permaculture Principles (cont'd)

5. Use & Value Renewable Resources & Services – “Let nature take its course.”
  - Sustainable companies – 3 ethics applied
6. Produce No Waste – “Waste not, want not.” “A stitch in time saves nine.”
  - Waste does not exist in nature; everything is cycled. Nature is not linear; it goes in circles
7. Design from Patterns to Details – “Can’t see the wood for the trees.”
  - Look at the whole economical watershed; fine-tune the details; value holistic thinking
8. Integrate Rather than Segregate – “Many hands make light work.”
  - Our communities are essential to our success, as we are theirs; buy local!
  - Look for synergies – e.g., the garden can provide market income, reduce food costs, be a tourist attraction or a place for events, etc.

# Permaculture Principles

## (cont'd)

9. Use Small & Slow Solutions - “The bigger they are, the harder they fall.” “Slow and steady wins the race.”
  - Build on what you do well; bigger, economies of scale are not necessarily the answer; small, intensive, efficient systems are more resilient & successful
10. Use & Value Diversity – “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.”
  - Monocultures are vulnerable; value diversity in ourselves, each other, and in our communities for strength and resiliency
11. Use Edges & Value the Marginal – “Don’t think you are on the right track just because it’s a well-beaten path.”
  - On the fringe is where the creativity is
12. Creatively Use & Respond to Change – “Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be.”
  - Advantage of being small, nimble, flexible, quick to respond to changes and opportunities.
  - It’s not survival of the fittest, but survival of those best able to adapt.

# Attitudinal Principles

- The Problem is the Solution
- The Yield is Theoretically Unlimited
- Work With Nature, not Against
- Everything Gardens
- Least Change for the Greatest Effect - Leverage
- Start Slow & Small
- Use Renewable Resources
- Build Guilds, Connections, Networks
- Stack Functions in Space & Time
- Collaborate with Succession – it's a dynamic, evolving process



# Feed what You Want to Grow!

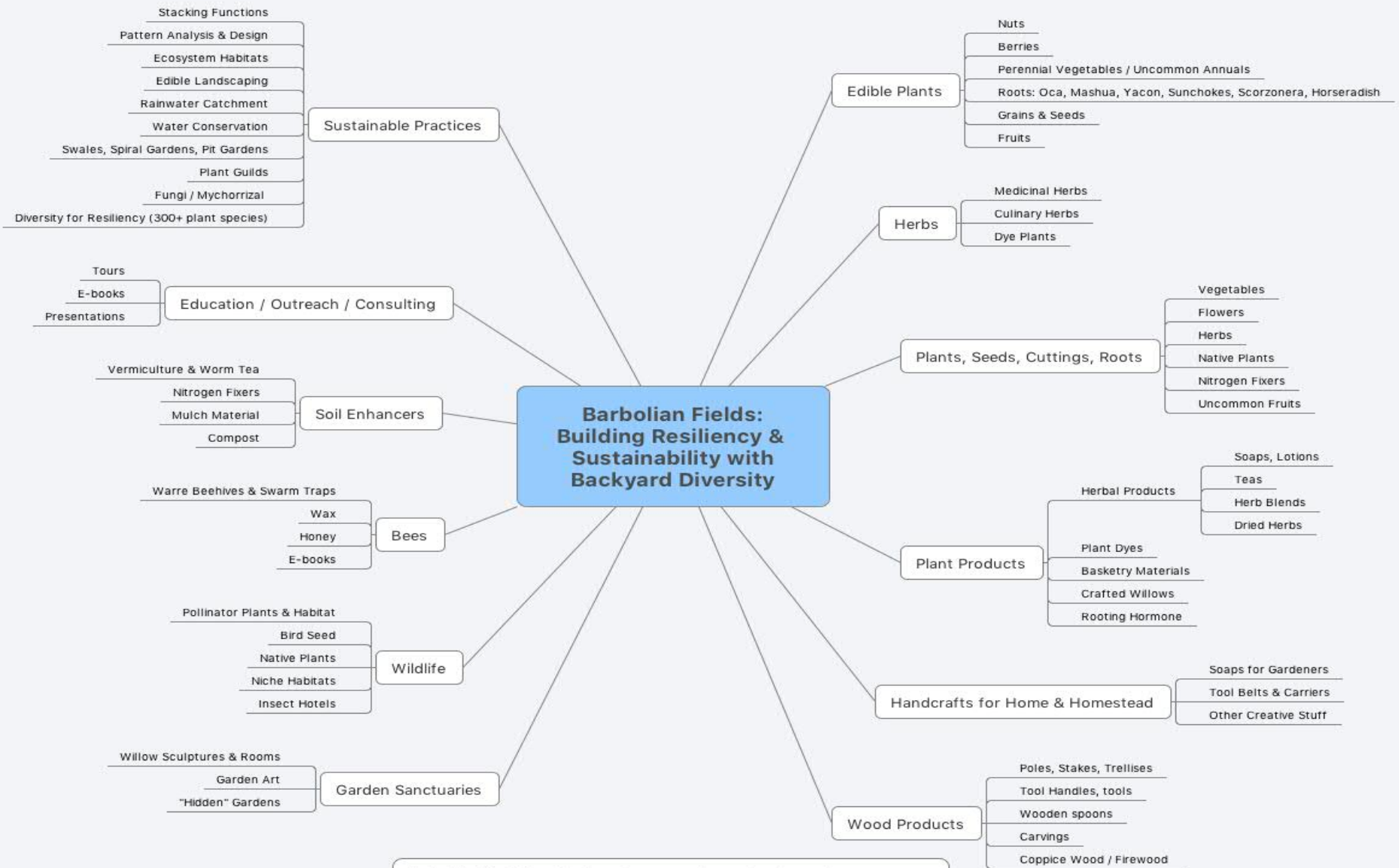
- Permaculture systems are dynamic, living things
- Kind of like building the soil – will generate more growth in time

# TOOL BOX for Business Strategy & Diversified Income Streams

In business, you sell 1) Stuff, 2) Knowledge, and/or 3) Services

## APPROACH:

- Identify your sectors
- Do your personal chicken analysis
- Identify your zones; identify efficiencies
- Brainstorm a mind map of what you can do
- Identify your clients, your niche, & your priorities
- Identify your community – Building community builds resilience. We help those we care about, and visa versa. We are stronger together.



Barbolian Fields is a backyard permaculture adventure where we grow a variety of fruits, nuts, herbs, willows, and assorted useful plants.

We focus on creating regenerative mini-ecosystems that

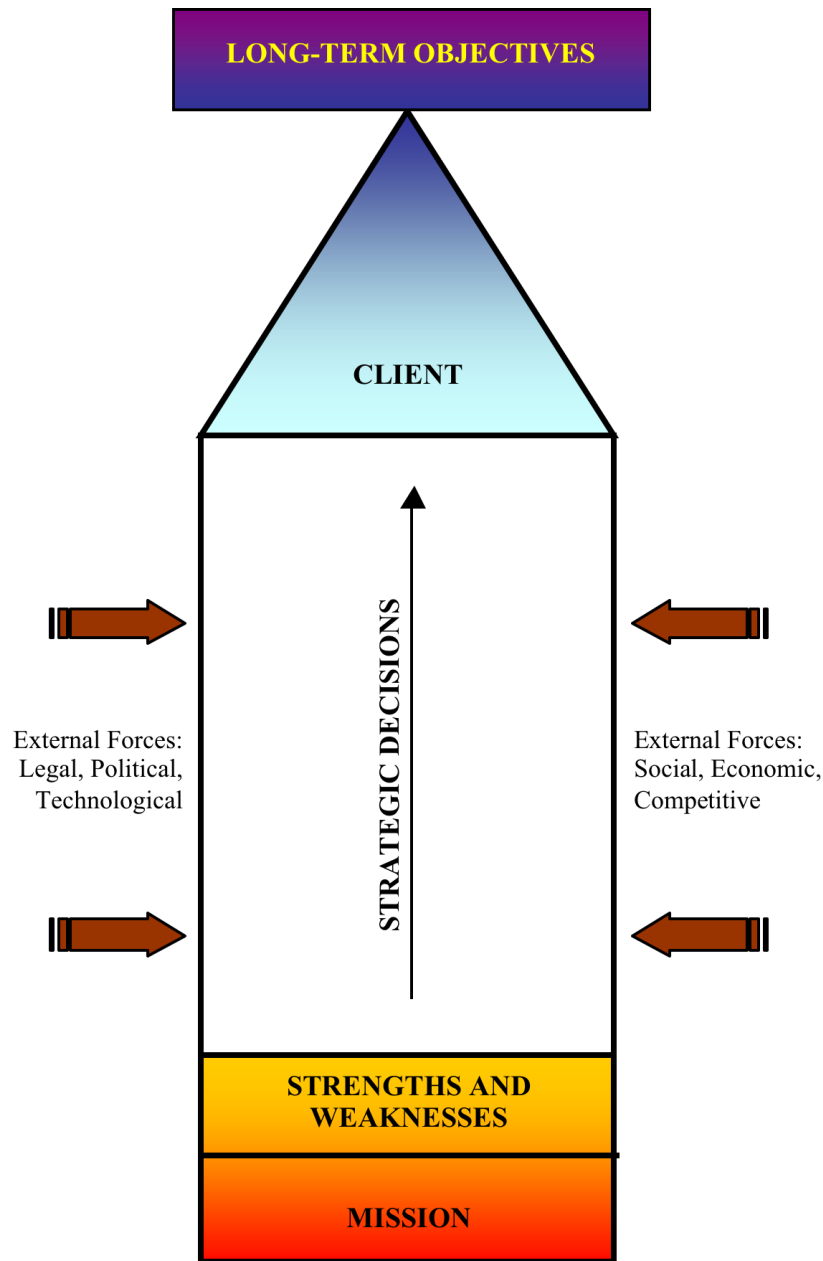
- \* conserve water,
- \* build soil health, and
- \* provide habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

We sell greenhouse materials, garden surplus, plants, seeds, handcrafts, and Warre-style beehives at local outlets and online.

# Prioritization

- The real issue is not – what can you do to make a living – it is where is the best place to focus your energy, time, \$\$, and other resources

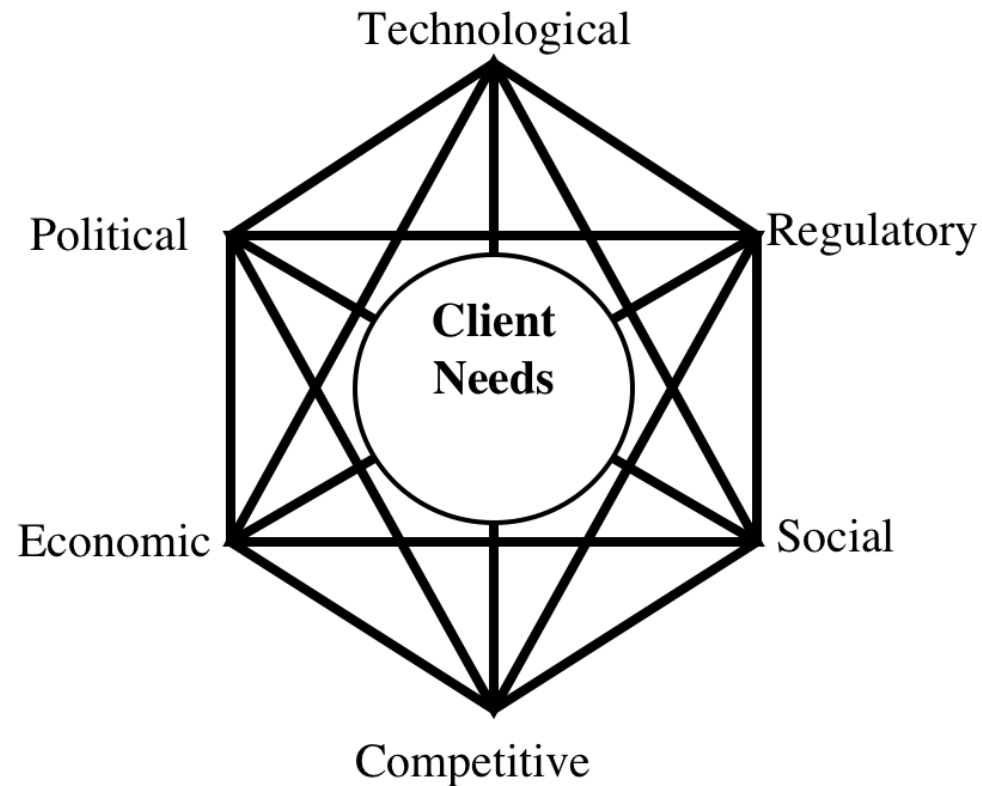
**\*\*This is why you need a PLAN\*\***



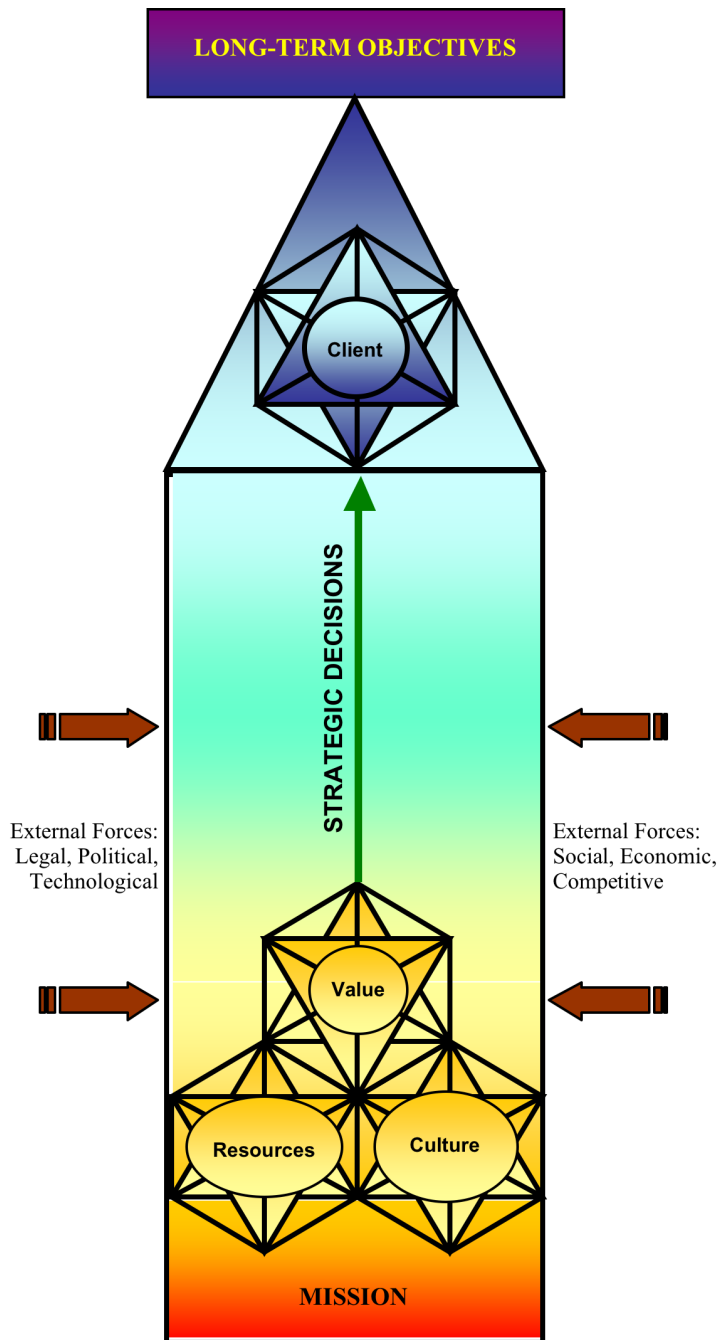
# Business Strategy: Creating a Roadmap

- Simplified: A vision, a goal, & a plan for
  - Rapidly changing markets
  - Intense competition
  - Uncertainty.
- Need to evolve, be flexible, be ready to take advantage of opportunities
- The What IF model: Interacting Factors
- The tighter the budget, the more critical the decisions

# Who is Your Customer & What Do They Need?



**Figure 1-4.** Influences of the external environment on client needs (source: primary, modified from Hutchinson & Hutchinson, 1997).



# The What IF Model of Interacting Factors

- External forces: “sectors”
- Internal environment: dynamics – surpluses, crop losses, products, schedules, etc.
- Connected by relationships
- Width represents adaptability, flexibility, ability to take advantage of opportunities
- The honeycomb is the strength
- How does your customer define value?

# A Strategy is Just a Plan on How to Spend Your Money, Time, & Resources

## The better you understand

- how things work together,
- what you can do,
- what your customers want or need,
- who you can partner with,
- the influences outside of your control –

## The better you can

- provide value,
- be creative,
- solve problems,
- take advantage of opportunities,
- plan for ups & downs, and
- decide the best place to focus your funds and energy.



# Design a Business Plan

- Permaculturists are designers (It doesn't have to be complicated. Crayons are OK!)
- A vision written down becomes a goal
- A goal delineated into steps becomes a plan
- A plan carried out becomes a reality

## Element Matrix – Look for Synergies & Relationships (also conflicts)

<b>Product/Service/Know-how</b>	<b>Farmer's Market</b>	<b>On-site, Farmstand</b>	<b>Local Shops</b>	<b>Fairs &amp; Events</b>	<b>Online / Mail Order</b>	<b>Offsite Clients, Groups</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
E-books					X			Editors, graphic designers	All year
Eggs		X						Local food & farm outlets	All year, but especially March-October
Firewood		X	X					Stove sellers, chimney sweeps, other firewood harvesters	Mostly fall
Fresh produce	X	X	X					WOOFers, interns, others	April - October
Herb blends	X	X	X	X			X	Holistic practitioners	All year
Plants	X	X	X	X				Local nurseries	March - June
Pruning Workshop						X		Local orchardists, nurseries, Master Gardener groups, etc.	January-February
Saw sharpening; small engine repair		X						Tool & eqpmt outlets	All year
Seeds	X	X	X	X	X			Local outlets	Collect in fall Sell in spring
Value-added products: jams, sauces, gourmet vinegars	X	X	X	X	X			Commercial kitchen	All year
Water system design						X	X	Landscapers, builders, hardware specialists	March - October
Woodworking: Wooden spoons, tool handles, gift items	X	X	X	X	X			Other crafters	All year, but especially Nov.-Dec.



# Marketing: Tell Your Story

**People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. If you talk about what you believe, you will attract those who believe what you believe. ~Simon Sinek**

Go forth and prosper!  
Do good things!  
Make the world a better place.  
Teach others.  
Help one another.

“The only ethical decision is to take responsibility  
for our own existence and that of our children.”  
~Bill Mollison, 1928-2016