

## The Power of Place

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Friday, June 21, 2013 -- Otto Scharmer

I have just returned from the annual [BALLE](#) conference in Buffalo, NY, dubbed by *Businessweek* as “a Davos for Main Street.” It was a fantastic meeting. Several long-time members of these annual gatherings described this one as a watershed that felt different and opened up new spaces of connection and possibility. “What is it that made this one different?” I asked.

Here are some of the themes that I heard folks describe in answering this question and in reflecting on the meeting as a whole:

- Linking the new economy and the local economy with the deeper issues of personal transformation and spirituality
- Treating the whole set of acupuncture points that the new economy movement is focusing on (money, food, place, ownership, technology, entrepreneurship, leadership, collaborative consumption, etc.) as a set of interrelated issues that need to be addressed as a whole
- Linking the discourse of economic transformation with the transformation and evolution of economy theory from “ego-system awareness” (neoclassical economic theory) to “eco-system awareness” (something that we try to articulate in our [new book](#), which was also launched at this event)
- Reconstructing the evolution of the economy and the evolution of economic thought as the embodiment of an evolving consciousness from ego-system to eco-system awareness.

The speakers at the meeting were extremely inspiring. [Janine Benyus](#), founder of Biomimicry 3.8, talked about ecological performance standards for cities and about

safe, circular, local productions. [Judy Wicks](#), co-founder of BALLE, talked about two patterns of growth: as an invasive species (examples: McDonald's, Coca-Cola) or as a place-based eco-system that builds self-reliance and resilience for all (example: [Zingerman](#)). [Nipun Mehta](#), founder of [ServiceSpace](#), shared some amazing stories that exemplify the transformative power of generative generosity. [Michelle Long](#), executive director of BALLE, talked about the “me to we” movement, about leading through love — changing the world by opening your heart. [Eileen Fisher](#), founder of Eileen Fisher Inc., talked about the power of awakening the deeper sources creativity as a new starting point for change that puts individual transformation first.

And on and on... A wonderful web of connections. And yes, this meeting tells all of us that something very important is happening on planet earth right now. It's a moment of slowing down and sometimes disruption that creates a new space of awareness among, around, and within us. This moment calls for our attention... now!

We will take all these sparks — and others from other countries — to the next level of manifestation at our upcoming Global Presencing Forum on Transforming Ego-system to Eco-system Economies here in Boston at MIT. We are in the final stage of figuring out the date and will announce it in about a week or two.

*This blog was originally posted to the [Otto Scharmer site](#), and appears here with permission.*