

## What Does Abundance Mean Anyway?



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Wednesday, April 8, 2015 -- Cormac Russell

*Curator's Note: Cormac Russell's insights on the links between ego and scarcity, "eco" and abundance resonate deeply with us. Check out Paragraph 4, where he describes the difference in how you feel when you achieve by "getting one over on somebody" versus those emotions that rise out of being in flow, where you simply are doing something for the love of doing it. We're honoured to repost his blog as part of a new series we're launching on the theme of vibrant citizenship.*

Last week I received a great email from someone whom I find to be a terrifically deep thinker. They ask the most brilliant questions, such as this one: Last week in

your video blog you spoke about Ego versus Eco; is there a connection between Ego and Eco, and Scarcity and Abundance? Great question! The answer in my mind is most certainly yes.

A way into thinking about the difference between Ego/Scarcity and Eco/Abundance is to contrast the quality of feelings you have when you are praised, or feted in some way, with the feelings you have when you watch a sunset.

The feeling of praise and adulation comes from “ego;” it’s fleeting, and so can be taken away as easily as it is given. It occupies the realm of scarcity. It has the quality of a “Big Mac,” in that it feels good as you’re eating it, but then feels strangely unsatisfying on completion (or is that just me?).

Or contrast an achievement based on getting one over on somebody — where for you to win, one of more people had to lose — with being in flow, where you simply are doing something for the love of doing it, not to win, but because you were born to. Because it makes you forget time. Because when you do it your eyes dance in your head and others are enriched. The latter absorbs you in the world; the former absorbs you, in you: Eco vs. Ego.

Or think about the feeling of being “top dog.” The boss, the project lead, the expert, the one with the money or power. Now compare that with the feelings of genuine love, a moment of intimacy, conviviality, friendship. They are utterly different. To my mind these are real world examples of the difference between:

1. Ego vs. Eco;
2. Scarcity vs. Abundance
3. Me vs. We
4. Individualism vs. Community

Feelings that come from competition, self-promotion and hierarchical pursuits are socially, economically and politically constructed. And here’s the rub, they were invented for a dual purpose: to make us productive and controllable in the marketplace. I tell you “*You’re doing a great job,*” you smile and feel good; I tell you, “*You’re doing a crap job,*” and you look like someone just shot your dog. If this isn’t control, what is?

These feelings do not produce abundance, in fact they are counter productive, in that they do the opposite. They are profoundly destructive to our personal and

environmental ecologies. They are antithetical to community and even personal happiness, and erode any hope we can have of a satisfied sufficient life. Because they push us to seek more, be better, and to win at all costs. And what's the net result of the thrill of the chase? Emptiness. Writ large this looks like unlimited growth, expansionism, usury, and global dominance. Sound familiar?

Now, let's do a quick and dirty inventory of how much of our lives are filled with scarcity and how much with abundance. Think of how much time we spend in uncontrolled space, where we are doing what we're doing not for self-promotion, success or power. It's really challenging to find even one person who is not in pursuit of ego-based experiences most of the time.

This is the net result of consumerism, managerialism and individualisation. The journey back from the abyss involves getting more of the "Eco" back in our lives.

It is the perversity of the modern age, that in our shaping of reality we are considered productive only when we destroy abundance and abuse our ecology. Inversely we are labeled as non-productive when we connect with each other, our culture and our ecologies in a community way.

Most of our current stories of success, and about self-actualisation and growth more generally feed this malaise. I think therefore the antidote will not be found in the stories that Hollywood tells us, or the versions of reality peddled by the 24 hour piped news broadcasts. Or even, ironically, in the data on wellbeing and happiness that now issues forth on a daily basis from a range of wonderful charities.

Instead, I believe we will find it by revealing it together. Abundance is all around us, but it is invisible to the ego, and it shrinks in the face of scarcity and deficit-based thinking. Hence why we need to come back to our senses and see with our own eyes, hear with our own ears, and feel with our own being the assets within and around us.

That journey begins with the telling of a different story, a story about a time when you and a neighbour came together to make things better, an audacious story that defiantly starts with abundance. If you can't think of one, make it up and invite a neighbour to help. Let's fake it until we make. After all, it's only a story! Right?

"If you can't figure out your purpose, figure out your passion. For your passion will lead you right into your purpose." Bishop T.D. Jakes.

*This blog was originally posted to [Nurture Development](#) and appears here with permission.*