

Dear Students, Friends and Colleagues,

8/18/2020

I hope this newsletter finds you all safe and your families well.

Why yes, it has been a good bit of time since you've heard from me. A lot has been happening, hasn't it? As you know, I don't write if I have nothing to say and frankly, in the last 16 months everyone else has seemingly had so much to say that there's been very little extra to add! Also, we lost my sister to the big C in December and I felt completely unprepared for that (as if one ever could be), so had to take a bit of time in order to right the ship again. In the rest of the world I've been heartily working at finding a publisher for my book. I had tried a few small and medium-sized presses but then found an editor at the third largest publishing house dealing with professional books and textbooks. She has the same passion for innovation and a great curiosity about the natural world, so Routledge/Taylor & Francis became my home. The book will be released October 21st (9 weeks from now!) so I wanted to make sure you dear people all had the opportunity to get it at a discount. (See attachment. The other attachment will be on my social media tomorrow. All love in terms of RT's, comments et. al. is appreciated and a big thanks to Carly Wheeler for the graphic!)

I fully intended to write to you about that alone because, a book, good heavens, it's been a mountain. I'll be announcing it tomorrow on social media but wanted to write to you all first because a subset of you – my past students – were the instigators for the whole endeavor. Those of you from Lipscomb University asked the first question. How do I get biomimicry into my business? I didn't have a satisfactory answer. So, I had to go find it. Along the way I met with chief sustainability officers, engineers, CEO's, heads of innovation – a wide swath of very committed folks. The main characters in the book, whether CEO, manager or entrepreneur, shared an extraordinary belief in what they were doing. When experts said it wasn't time or wouldn't work – they forged ahead. They had done their homework, emulated nature's strategies and they succeeded. If they could, so can you. And that's what I said in the book . . . along with telling their stories and sharing the lessons they learned. Anyway, thank you seems hardly enough but there it is – thank you! I have the answer now and so will you – finally.

As I said, I wanted to let you all know about the book first, but it felt a little skeazy to write to you simply about the book. (A colleague of mine assures me it is not skeazy to let you know about my book; and in fact, is a service.) Still, I wanted to be able to give you something more. So, in the midst of updating my Instagram profile and this, that, and the other all having to do with marketing and completely out of my realm, I took a break to read my Science Weekly. (Thank heavens for science.) Amazingly, I found just the thing to pique your interest on a Tuesday afternoon . . . Ants help [plant](#) native wildflowers like trillium, bloodroot and violets. Since you won't be able to read the entire article without joining, here's the summary:

Trilliums, bloodroot, violets—many wildflowers of spring in eastern North America bloom thanks to ants. The tiny six-legged gardeners have partnered with those

plants as well as about 11,000 others to disperse their seeds. The plants, in turn, "pay" for the service by attaching a calorie-laden appendage to each seed, much akin to fleshy fruits that reward birds and mammals that disperse discarded or pooped out seeds. But far from just transporting the seeds, the ants prefer some seeds over others and possibly keep their charges safe from disease by affecting the microbes living on the seed coat. The importance of this partnership is coming into focus as well. In disturbed forests, where ants can be scarce, seeds may not find their way to fertile ground, and ecosystems can suffer. The work calls attention to the need to consider these creatures in forest restoration efforts.

This amazing bit of collaboration is more fodder for emulating the partnerships found in the natural world as well as protecting habitat! An old friend and mentor once shared with me the wisdom, "Collaborate or die." Short, simple and to the point. Those collaborative spaces are the blurry regions – the ecotones - where your company or school or whatever can often find a richness which would remain undetected without such relationships. The collaborative space between you and other organisms is even richer. Just imagine – over 8 million species on Earth. If I've done the math correctly, and you have a career spanning 50 years, that means you have the opportunity to avail yourself of partnerships with over 400 species per day. That's a lot of seeds you can plant.

Here's to you and the good Earth too,

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Give good people good information and they'll do good things.

(If you've just received this single newsletter, it may be because I thought you'd be interested in this particular subject. You may or may not get others. If you want on my list regularly, e-mail me. If you want off my list, e-mail me. Thanks!)