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A CLIMATE JUSTICE COMPASS FOR TRANSFORMING SELF AND WORLD

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Climate change is a turning point in human history, necessitating human-ecological transformation on an individual, local, and global scale. Metropolitan regions offer an opportunity for collective action that can transform individuals and communities by expanding and re-integrating our localities, while making a significant impact on global climate change. The Breakthrough Compass is a conceptual tool for navigating the transition from fragmented self toward wholeness and connection to place, while transforming our world. This article offers stories and case studies illustrating how metropolitan regional climate justice coalitions can galvanize this local and global transformation.

KEYWORDS: Breakthrough Compass, climate justice, community organizing, regional equity, systems theory, transpersonal development.

We are living in an historic moment. We are each called to take part in a great transformation. Our survival as a species is threatened by global warming, economic meltdown, and an ever-increasing gap between rich and poor. Yet these threats offer an opportunity to awaken as an interconnected and beloved community. Here in South Africa, interconnectedness is described by the concept Ubuntu. Ubuntu is the philosophy and belief that our humanity is inextricably bound up in one another, and any tear in the fabric of connection must be repaired for us all to be made whole. This interconnectedness is the very root of who we are. —Desmond Tutu (Herbert and Pavel 2014, foreword)

History is governed by those overarching movements that give shape and meaning to life by relating the human venture to the larger destinies of the universe. Creating such a movement might be called the Great Work of a people. . . . This generation's Great Work is the transformative effort to change human-Earth relations from disruptive and destructive to mutually enhancing and beneficial. —Thomas Berry (1999, 1)

Climate change is a threshold, both result and cause of global environmental collapse, economic meltdown, and increasing social inequity. To turn back from the

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brink necessitates a global revolution not only in our relationship to the environment (Berry 1999) and in our human community (Klein 2014), but also in our individual psyches and local communities (Macy and Brown 2014). At the core of this transformation is expanding the sense of the self, to grow beyond an isolated, individual ego, and recognize our place in larger systems in order to arrive at true care and responsibility for our world. This article celebrates the opportunity for integration and expansion of the self, on an individual level, on an interpersonal level, on a societal level, and on a planetary level (Wilber et al. 2008) through collective action within the Metropolitan Regional Climate Justice Movement. Those taking part in regional coalitions are reconnecting fragmented localities to integrate their regions, healing themselves in the process, and making significant contributions to global sustainability.

THE REGION: AN ENTRY POINT FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

As of 2014, 54% of the world's population lives in cities (World Health Organization n.d.), and as such, strategies for reimagining and re-creating our metropolitan regions are imperative to mitigating global climate change, especially in the developed countries which produce the lion's share of carbon emissions. Scholars of regional equity movements find that many of our environmental, economic, and equity issues interact at the metropolitan regional scale (Orfield 2002; Pastor, Jr., Benner, and Matsuoka 2009; Pavel 2009). The metropolitan regional scale, which includes urban centers, surrounding suburbs and rural cities and towns, is a large enough target for global climate change mitigation, while being local enough for community members to relate to intimately.

Our regions, like our cities, exhibit patterns of segregation in class and race that also undermine ecological sustainability (Orfield 2002; Pastor, Jr., Benner, and Matsuoka 2009; Pavel 2009). This fragmentation inscribes social meaning: gated communities and ghettos, office parks and strip malls, nature preserves and prisons, farmers markets and food deserts. The landmarks that divide communities racially have a political history or a hidden narrative (Anthony 2015)—rich suburbs are one example, populated by White flight from urban centers in the 1960s as a backlash from the civil rights era (while in the present day, communities of color are being displaced from urban centers by processes of gentrification, and pushed increasingly to low-income suburbs). Historical, legislative, social, and economic forces have carved our regions into compartments of rich and poor, experiencing unequal opportunities, unequal resources, and unequal burdens of pollution and risk.

This spatial apartheid not only harms vulnerable communities and the environment, but does damage to us all. The fragmentation of our cities and regions leaves us disconnected from ourselves, from our sense of a common humanity, from our interdependence with nature, and from the social forces shaping our lives. Those with privilege may experience this disconnection as an ambient sense of unease and isolation, while those less fortunate confront daily the frustration and danger that spatial apartheid creates. The burden and confusion of moving within a

fragmented, alienating world disempowers individuals who would strive to make social change, and drives us to take refuge in consumer capitalism, exacerbating the global problems we must now urgently find the power to face.

The transformative power of regional coalitions is that they necessitate empathy and communication across geographic, race, and class lines. We must cross these spatial and cultural barriers to work with those from whom we had been segregated in our regions, and expand our sense of the “local” to encompass an integrated region. Working with the “other” as our ally, we can reclaim parts of our self that have been disowned, rejected and projected onto the “other,” to discover a common humanity and a regional home in ourselves and in the world.

In seeking a term that adequately expresses this depth, we find the South African concept *Ubuntu* illuminating: “[Ubuntu means] My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours. . . . We belong in a bundle of life. A person is a person through other persons” (Tutu 2000, i).

We cultivate this expanded, *ubuntu* self when we work together, across divides of race, class, religion, sexuality, geography and nationality to fight for real sustainability and justice on our earth. The process of consciousness-shifting happens not by hearing about it, nor by talking about it, or by thinking about it, but actually getting involved: linking arms with folks across your geographic/political region to seek change together, by tearing down the physical and social barriers that separate us from each other and from sustainability.

Community-led Climate Justice and Regional Equity coalitions in California and across the United States are revealing how the work of coalition- and movement-building to transform our broken systems heals and transforms the individual in the process. In turn, those personal transformations create a positive feedback loop, strengthening leadership in the fight for sustainability, justice, and systemic transformation. Moreover, the explosion of diverse, multicultural and intergenerational community leadership in previously rarified regional decision-making processes is producing truly transformative solutions to our entrenched systemic problems.

THE BREAKTHROUGH COMPASS: A ROADMAP FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The Breakthrough Compass is a model that allows us to see this transformation of the self, coalition, and region through collective learning and action. Over the past 25 years, Breakthrough Communities has been researching, facilitating, and cultivating community-driven metropolitan regional equity coalitions, including a decade working at the Ford Foundation’s Sustainable Metropolitan Communities Initiative (with more than sixty community-led organizations, in twelve sites across the United States). Over that time we noticed a pattern in how successful collective impact unfolds, documented in *Breakthrough Communities: Sustainability and Justice in the Next American Metropolis* (Pavel 2009) and *The New Metropolis* film series (Torrice 2009). We named this pattern the Breakthrough Compass, a model that allows us to see the critical features of transformation, and

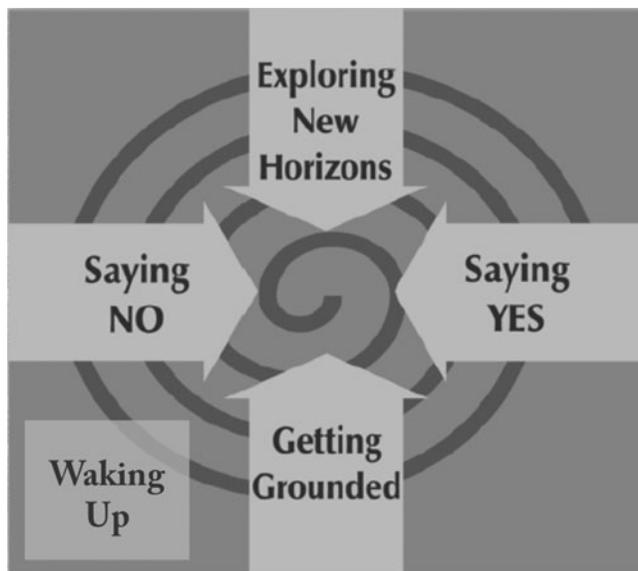


Figure 1. The breakthrough compass.

works as an accelerative tool. Since 2009, we have been observing and applying the Breakthrough Compass in a variety of coalition building and leadership development contexts, with great success.

The compass consists of five stages, with both an action axis (Horizontal: Saying No, Saying Yes) and a learning axis (Vertical: Getting Grounded, Exploring New Horizons) (Pavel 2009). The compass image and a description of each of the five stages are depicted in Figure 1.

Stage 1: Waking Up: Gratitude and mindfulness (Stanley, Loy, and Dorje 2009; Macy and Brown 2014) are often a catalyst for this stage. This can be a sudden or gradual shift in perspective, sometimes precipitated by external events. Some describe a threshold where it is no longer possible to sustain business as usual. Others experience it as a call to action. The feeling can be one of joy or pain, relief or discomfort. Often, it is an ironic combination of the two—as when a limb goes numb and regains sensation.

Stage 2: [Action] Saying No: This stage is often a stand taken in the face of an injustice. It can involve speaking up or speaking out, or a physical act of protest or resistance. Legal action can be useful to halt or delay imminent destruction, or prevent a worse harm from occurring (Alexander 2011; Blackwell, Kwoh, and Pastor 2010). “Saying No” is often a stage of collective empowerment, and consolidates multiple forces coming together.

Stage 3: [Learning] Getting Grounded: While action can consolidate a group, a more thoroughgoing program for change is required to sustain progress. This learning stage involves research, listening to the community’s



Figure 2. The equity scenario image.

needs, understanding its history, and identifying its assets. It can include mapping the larger geopolitical, social, or ecological context in which we live and work. More than an intellectual exercise, this step often requires reclaiming deep longings and dreams that have been buried (Anthony 2017).

Stage 4: [Learning] Exploring New Horizons: Once a charting of the known territory exists, there is often a leap of imagination, social innovation, and creativity needed. From a systems perspective, this stage is where we often experience “emergent properties,” a nonlinear evolution (Wheatley 2006; Capra and Luisi 2014; Laszlo 2014). This step requires innovation, stepping into new roles, creating new allies, developing new skills, or expanding our identities and vision.

Stage 5: [Action] Saying Yes: This action stage is a pro-active movement from vision to action grounded and guided by learning. Communities build power in this stage through framing a vision for the future to mobilize the next wave of action and inspire the next generation of activists (Fullilove 2013). In this stage, we reclaim parts of the self and the region that were previously abandoned or underrepresented, creating a more inclusive whole and stepping into our power as leaders and co-creators of the world around us.

MY STAKE AND THEORETICAL ROOTS TO THE COMPASS MODEL

Whatever you have to say, leave the roots on. Let them dangle—and the dirt—just to make clear where they come from. —Adapted from “These days” by Charles Olson (1997)

This present moment of climate change offers new horizons for community applications of transpersonal, organizational, and community psychology tools and perspectives. As a professional organizational and clinical psychologist, my practice has been immeasurably deepened by collective community-driven action. Below, I provide my own journey to trace the theoretical roots which have informed our current approach. It is my hope that current work reported here will inspire those in the care professions to not only become involved in community engagement and public policy on a personal level, but also to explore new horizons and expand their practice to meet urgent community needs.

In my San Diego Catholic high school, our critical thinking and social justice curriculum was accelerated by the transformative technology of Carl Rogers, humanistic psychologist. Rogers was invited, as a consultant, to shape our curriculum in response to the growing foment of the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the environmental movement, the antiwar movement, and the growing ecumenical movement within the church, eliminating Latin and opening to the language and the voice of the people. In their courageous wisdom the nuns brought the process tools of Rogers and his team into both the pedagogy and content of our curriculum, creating space for issues of race, class, and gender. The revolutionary and evolutionary exposure to individual work, small group work and institutional transformation, coupled with a critical social theory and commitment to racial and social justice, left a tangible mark on our cohort, and set me on an irreversible quest for a life-work that was soul/sized and accountable to both environmental restoration of our living systems and the restoration of our human communities. This initiated a life-long interest in the power of learning communities, and the interaction of clinical, organizational, and eco psychology.

My hope that there would be a way to pursue this integrated learning, social and environmental action, and depth work at the university level was soon dashed. The psychology department at the University of South Carolina was focused on animal experimentation and cognitive behavioral approaches, while human development was not on the agenda. So, the rising humanistic and transpersonal psychology movements outside the university became places of refuge. I found encouraging colleagues and places to train in new applications at Esalen, the C. G. Jung center, Viewpoints— independent centers where we had access to original sources and founders like Fritz and Laura Perls, and Abraham Maslow. However, while these centers were wellsprings of personal transformation, we lacked integration with social movements.

In the mid-1970s my partners and I worked to address this gap between personal transformation and social movement by founding a Deep Ecology residential leadership and learning center on the rural coast of Maine—the first of its kind. Rosa Lane, Gayledawn Price, and I were inspired by Highlander Center from the civil rights movement, as well as the growing eco-feminist dialogue. Responding to the wake-up call of the Club of Rome and *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows 1972), we sought to bring the great “roaring inside her” (Griffin 1978) and the social, economic, and environmental collapse into focus with a response that included grieving, co-learning and mobilizing. As I commuted between our center and Harvard in the 1970s, I had the opportunity to work with Carol Gilligan (author

of *In a Different Voice*, 1982) and Mary Daly (author of *Gyn-ecology*, 1978), and many others who were part of a “feminist multiversity,” taking up the challenge of prevailing White male theories of development.

However, while we were deepening these theoretical learnings, the threat of extinction through nuclear war was compelling us to direct action. I took a sabbatical to travel to New York City and support the United Nations Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) agreements, and across the United States on a teaching and training tour in collaboration with Joanna Macy while she developed *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age* (1983). Subsequently, Rosa and I edited the *Awakening in the Nuclear Age* journal for five years while completing our graduate degree programs. These experiences provided a foundation for the building of Earth House Center in Oakland, California in 1989, as an urban continuation of the leadership development and environmental and social justice mission we had begun in a rural context on the coast of Maine in 1975.

During the 1990s I had the opportunity to work with Howard Schecter, Antonio Nunez, and others in developing the first graduate program in the United States dedicated to Organizational Development and Social Transformation, at the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS). We sought to bring an “integral” approach (Chaudhuri 1960) to community change efforts and integrate living systems thinking. Our holistic pedagogy supported individual transformation and evolution in the process of rigorous graduate education in whole systems transformation and culture change. During these same years, Carl Anthony, founder of the Urban Habitat program, invited me to bring this approach to the leadership development of his own staff and organization.

Carl and I were both “coloring outside the lines” of our institutions. While the groundbreaking work we led at CIIS was addressing transformation from a mind, body, spirit perspective, rooted in cosmological deep time (Swimme 1994) and theory of living systems (Macy and Brown 2014), yet even so we lacked a racially diverse curriculum, faculty, and student body. Carl had created a multiracial team which was clearly leading the nation in identifying and addressing issues which had previously been considered the purview of the White environmental movement, yet his work was seeking a transformative framework. We saw the complementarity of our work from the outset.

One of our first projects together was producing the groundbreaking film *Voices from the Community: Smart Growth and Social Equity* (Pavel and Butler 1999), which was used as part of the sustainability planning process for the nine-county Bay Area. This led to nearly two decades of collaboration on movement building and creating tools for the next generation of environmental justice leaders.

While trained in different disciplinary backgrounds—Carl as an architect, myself as a clinical and organizational psychologist—our shared vision and work partnership provided an embodied model for multiracial leadership development. Working with Carl at the Ford Foundation began an astounding journey in growing the national Regional Equity movement, dedicated to building sustainability with justice in our metropolitan regions. We are deeply grateful to our many colleagues and shared learning collaborators, including a plethora of institutions, community-based organizations, and scholar/practitioners who have generously

contributed their wisdom, experience, and leadership to this movement-building process for almost two decades.

Most recently Carl and I have brought the national lessons of this movement-building work home to our own backyard in creating the Six Wins coalition with multiple partners in the Bay Area, who have generously shared their climate justice strategies and approaches in the forthcoming book: *Climate Justice: Frontline Stories from Groundbreaking Coalitions in California*.

At Earth House Center we are currently seeking to integrate social justice action with personal transformation of consciousness. At the intersection of transforming people and place, we have been inspired by the Universe Story (Berry 1999; Swimme 1994); earth-based living systems (Macy 2014); the permaculture movement (Mollison 1988); and the biomimicry movement (Benyus 2002). In addition to our frontline struggles and conversations with coalition colleagues, we are deeply indebted to our participation as visiting faculty at groundbreaking programs such as the Pacifica Graduate Institute program on Community, Liberation, and Eco-Psychology (under the leadership of Mary Watkins) as well as the Center for Regional Change at UC Davis.

These strands of theory and action throughout my biography are the foundations for the compass. While I am indebted to theories that have created the possibility for both individual-internal and collective-external transformation (Wilber et al. 2008), much of our theory and practice still remains focused on the individual-internal. This moment requires both. I created the compass model to address this need, and have found it can be successfully applied to the individual, to the collective, and as a bridging tool between, allowing a community psychology that is both reflective and action-oriented.

It is my hope that this work will assist psychological theory in liberating not only individuals but also communities, and especially the most marginalized. Our spiritual hunger cannot be satisfied apart from the restoration of our environment and the larger Earth community, where cities are places of vibrant human celebration, exuberance, and flowering of the best of the human spirit, coupled with aware sustainable restraint and balance with the biological support system of the planet.

A CLIMATE JUSTICE STORY OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE “KEY OF WE”¹

The personal and social change strands of the Climate Justice Movement come together in the following narrative recounting a transformative moment for the Six Wins, a groundbreaking regional coalition in the San Francisco Bay Area. The story is followed by two case studies of transformation selected from over fifty organizations and several hundred fellow coalition members.

It is 5 o’clock in the morning; I am awakened by the Amtrak train sounding its horn along the Richmond tracks, our local capillary in a global system of passenger and goods circulation. A long awaited day. I barely slept knowing months of work

hang on the decision forthcoming from tonight's meeting. Nearly \$290 billion in transportation investments are on the table. Which future will win?

Peering out my window in the Richmond Hills, through the early morning light I trace the outline of those familiar San Francisco landmarks—Mt. Tam in the distance, the orange Golden Gate Bridge. But our community's struggles and triumphs are also inscribed in this landscape—night flares from the Chevron Refinery, San Quentin death row protests. Angel Island—called the “Ellis Island of the West,” where Chinese immigrants were interned for months and sometimes years awaiting entry to the United States. Alcatraz: an island, a prison, a reclamation by First Nation peoples, a tourist destination. The cargo cranes of San Francisco and Oakland ports—like huge birds—mark the location of goods shipment, union strikes, and dirty diesel protests. The bridge between Marin and Richmond is one of many landmarks of spatial apartheid—a connection in steel girders, a division in opportunity, race and class. Our geography is likewise marked by transformation, innovation, and restoration—Regeneration after fires in the Oakland Hills, rebuilding after the Loma Prieta Earthquake, the Marin Headlands unmarred by expensive condos; commons wrestled from the husks of military outposts.

Now the phone is ringing, a whirlwind day for our coalition as we make outreach calls, strategy conference calls, prepare handouts, track the agenda, send reminders to our members as well as to the larger community. We go over talking points, share strategy on our 3-minute public comment presentations. At 5 p.m., we gather in Downtown Oakland—near the Metro Center, which has become so familiar. Sandwiched between Oakland's Chinatown, Lake Merritt and Laney College, it is a Transit Oriented Development site. Our coalition members are arriving on foot, on bikes on BART on buses, in cars. Tonight's meeting has been moved to a conference room in the convention center to accommodate the large numbers.

This is the night—the culmination of months of negotiation, mobilization, attention to mind-numbing details. There is so much at stake. Looking around the room at the sea of familiar faces, I consider the transformative journey we have shared over the last 3 years. We have made mistakes with each other; there have been misunderstandings, outrage and grief. We have learned to communicate and compromise. We have struggled together to cultivate the unity we present here tonight.

Dozens of activist groups have gathered. Our coalition members leave to eat in shifts, go home to feed their families and return to keep our presence continuous and strong—the latest in many brave strategies we have developed to stretch beyond our limits of time and money. We are learning how to hear and support each other's issues—how to create a larger whole that includes each of our self-interests, but generates something greater than their sum. We can push our creativity and our endurance further because we have built this trust with one another.

Throughout the 6 hour meeting, we hold up our orange signs—“We support an Equity Scenario” (Figure 2). This simple expression of solidarity and unity across our various organizations and sectors is a complex and phenomenal achievement in itself. Encoded within this simple sign is months of technical work, generating regional transportation and land use modeling from real community values. We have been in this same room, and others just like it dozens of times over the past months, watchdogging the process, presenting our public comments, giving

our objections. We have been reacting at every stage, saying no to exclusionary practices and inequitable plans.

But this time is different. This time, we have articulated our own equity vision and translated it into the system's native language. We have crafted a transportation-modeling scenario that could stand the scrutiny of the official professional and technical process—the Equity Environment and Jobs (EEJ) scenario. Our EEJ is a robust land use and transportation planning scenario built from the voices of frontline community members. By leading with social equity to address sustainability in the San Francisco Bay Area, the EEJ is an alternative to the business-as-usual scenarios generated by the professional staff of our regional agencies, MTC and ABAG (Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments).

The critical motion comes at 10 p.m. Supervisor John Gioia takes the floor, and proposes the motion that MTC and ABAG will include our community-driven EEJ scenario alongside four of the five official scenarios in the Environmental Impact Report evaluation. This means that one of their own scenarios will be dropped to make room for this interloper, the EEJ.

The motion is seconded, and a vote is called. As the votes are tallied, we hold our breath. How far we have come to be here—it seemed like so much alphabet soup at the beginning—vehicle miles traveled (VMT), GHG, ABAG, MTC. But we have learned so much, we have grown together, cross-trained on issues, shared techniques and tools, all while staying grounded in a foundation of deep listening—to our own deep longings, to one another, to electeds and staffers—because we understand our fundamental interdependence. To create a One Bay Area climate action plan for all, we needed to work together.

The vote is unanimous: MTC and ABAG will include the EEJ scenario. For a moment, we are speechless. This is incomprehensible, when only a few months before we had felt ourselves barely tolerated in the process. Looking at the agency members behind their microphones, it is clear that they don't know what this is supposed to be either.

But one thing is clear: this is a watershed moment for community organizing. A truly grassroots transportation plan that could affect 7 million people for the next century is an unprecedented victory. We pour into the streets screaming and yelling like the World Cup.

Later that year, to the astonishment of the regional agencies, the Environmental Impact Report would reveal the EEJ Equity scenario outperformed all the competing scenarios on greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions, as well as equity metrics. The results are in: for true sustainability, our regions need more than abstract, top-down planning methods. We need the on-the-ground knowledge of our frontline communities.

Now, the choice of including us has taken deep root. There is no going back.

As an activist participating in the Six Wins coalition, I was thrilled with our victory against global climate change, and for regional equity. As a clinical and organizational psychologist, I was equally stunned by the local victory that got us there: the personal evolution of our members and transformation of our community in the process of achieving a collective impact. I have waited for the moment to tell this story, and also to invite you to join the individual, collective, and systemic evolution that is hatching at the forefront of regional climate justice activism.

CLIMATE JUSTICE COMPASS EXAMPLE: DAVON²

Davon is 25 years old and has worked for ten years speaking on behalf of the West Oakland community and mentoring other young people to do the same. He is an African American, gay man of deep Christian faith, an AmeriCorps member, and an activist, organizer, and educator. During the first round of Plan Bay Area, he was a peer leader and instructor with New Voices Are Rising (a project of the Rose Foundation). Davon grew up in West Oakland, a low-income African-American community, and comes from a particularly challenging background. “I grew up in foster care here in Oakland and always felt like a reject. I always felt like people overlooked me. I was very reserved, and I kept people at a distance. And I was drug dependent and alcohol dependent at fourteen, a freshman in high school.”

Davon’s development as a community organizer and spokesperson for West Oakland’s disadvantaged communities not only made a real impact in the future of the region, but transformed his life forever.

When developers began targeting their Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) projects near the West Oakland BART station, a commuter rail station located in one of the East Bay’s most impoverished neighborhoods that is the closest to San Francisco, people began to talk about the “revitalizing” of West Oakland. Yet when Davon heard about the TOD’s plans for his community, his initial gut reaction left him puzzled. The TOD was supposed to reduce GHGs that cause climate change, encouraging people to walk and use public transportation more often, and bring jobs, infrastructure, and beautiful new architecture to West Oakland. Yet he felt deeply uneasy hearing about it. Davon decided to investigate his intuitions by talking to some of the elders in his community.

I was like, why am I not excited? And so I went home and I talked to my family about it and they’re not into politics. . . . [I asked] does it sound good to bring in a whole lot of houses and apartments and jobs centered around transportation? And my aunt said “Yeah, sounds fine as long as I get to keep my own house.” And that’s where it clicked.

His neighbors, his family members, and his community confirmed his apprehensions—if the city attempts to “beautify” West Oakland, its long-time residents will lose out. These projects cause rents to skyrocket, cause mass displacement, and decimate community support networks (Fullilove 2005). While West Oakland residents have had to deal with the disproportionate burdens heaped on their low income community for decades—air pollution from the Port of Oakland, the 880 Diesel Truck corridor, the rail yard station, elevated asthma and cancer rates, they have relied on their community networks for resilience. Once the area becomes “desirable,” West Oakland’s long time community would be threatened with displacement, unable to reap the benefits of “beautification,” nor “economic growth,” instead forced to relocate to low-income suburbs, severed from their community as well as reliable public transit. These realizations motivated Davon to become involved:

So now you want to beautify Oakland and kick us out? . . . That's when I decided I have to be involved with this. . . . I made it my business to be at every single ABAG community meeting, from Fremont to Oakland to Walnut Creek, wherever there was a meeting they were going to hear me.

How do we reconcile the urgent need for sustainable urban planning, for public transit and walkable, bike-friendly neighborhoods, with the needs of vulnerable communities? Working within a new alliance between diverse Bay Area communities, academia, policy, and advocacy, Davon and the Six Wins were able to bring these seemingly conflicting causes into alignment through the EEJ scenario. The EEJ included affordable housing measures in TOD and other new public transportation projects, showing how the Bay Area can benefit from reducing GHG while protecting vulnerable communities from displacement. Gentrification pushes public transit users out to low income suburbs, away from job centers and public transit and forces many transit users to buy cars. Davon's advocacy work in the coalition demonstrated how better environmental outcomes are produced by ensuring that jobs, housing, and transit remain accessible to all, instead of being compartmentalized in our regions.

Davon identified the most profound moment of transformation in his work in the Plan Bay Area process as when his community stood up in favor of the EEJ in Plan Bay Area. For months, he had been speaking at regional agency meetings, which were mostly populated by White people who did not represent the community constituents. During this particular crucial meeting, grassroots organizers had used their resources to bring frontline community members to speak. The transformative moment came when a young African-American woman took the stand to give a brief statement in support of the equity measures, and asked all those who supported it to come forward and stand behind her. Davon recalls,

I looked around and I realized how many people were walking to the front. I literally got goose bumps. So many youth, so many people standing in support of what this young lady had to say. . . . And I was just like, wow. We really aren't as alone as we think we are. That was the moment of transformation for me and it was confirmation that I was doing the right thing.

His community was behind him. Doing the right thing for the environment could also be doing the right thing for his community. When a mainstream, White-dominated environmental movement turns a blind eye to frontline communities experiencing the worst effects of environmental destruction, it is hard for vulnerable community members to see their role in the movement. By working to heal the social and environmental abuse inscribed in our metropolitan regions, Davon was able to bring these fragmented parts of himself—an environmentalist self, and a marginalized community self—to a whole, and bring this wholeness to his community, to the movement, and to the Bay Area itself. Due to the advocacy of vulnerable community spokespeople like Davon as well as through partnering with equity advocates within policy making and academia, the coalition saw great success in getting equity measures included in Plan Bay Area. In Davon's case, we

see how action towards healing in the social and environmental system, can bring about healing in the self and the new growth and expansion of the self ignites the movement. By being a voice for his community in the Regional Climate Justice movement, Davon found harmony, strength, and leadership in himself, as an environmentalist and a community activist, and contributed to a more equitable and sustainable Bay Area. The following narrates Davon's transformation through the lens of the Breakthrough Communities Compass.

Stage 1: Waking Up: *Waking up* to his intuition that eco-friendly development was not always good for all communities, to the realization that he and his community have important knowledge about these Regional processes.

Stage 2: [Action] Saying No: Davon *said no* to displacement, disempowerment, and erasure of his community's voices.

Stage 3: [Learning] Getting Grounded: Learning about climate change, Transit Oriented Development, and public participation processes.

Stage 4: [Learning] Exploring New Horizons: Stepping across a race and class divide, becoming a youth of color public speaker in these White, adult suburban places.

Stage 5: [Action] Saying Yes: *Saying Yes* to his voice being heard, his life and leadership being valuable; building community participation in these regional planning processes, training the next generation of youth leaders, envisioning a sustainable and just future and contributing to the EEJ scenario. Davon says yes to his vision:

My vision is an Oakland that is sustainable, an Oakland where the residents know each other; an Oakland where you don't have to be afraid to walk your child down the street . . . I want home ownership in Oakland and a reliable, consistent public transportation system and a police force that is focused on creating community. I'm looking for togetherness and connectedness. That is my vision.

Davon is currently the Academic Intervention Specialist at Safe Passages, West Oakland Middle School, and an advisory board member of New Voices Are Rising. He serves as an ambassador for his community and is considering the possibility of public office in the future.

CLIMATE JUSTICE COMPASS EXAMPLE: DR. ALEX KARNER³

Dr. Alex Karner is 31 years old, currently a postdoctoral research fellow in the Global Institute of Sustainability at Arizona State University with a Ph.D. from the University of California at Davis in civil engineering. He is White, born and raised in a low income household in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Alex was working with the Six Wins coalition on Plan Bay Area during and after his dissertation work "Transportation Planning and Regional Equity: History, Policy, and Practice" (Karner 2012).

Alex describes his transformative journey as he contributed significant technical assistance that resulted in victories for climate justice in California. He started his educational career as what he calls a “normal civil engineer”:

I had really just bought into the kind of mainstream narrative of what success is and what technological progress can achieve. I didn't really think critically about my position or privilege . . . I didn't know about things like racism in a really deep way. These simply aren't taught to undergraduate engineering students . . . So much of what happens is about a process of socialization; you become convinced that engineering is really important and engineers are always doing the right thing and the way that engineers think about things, the technical mindset, the rational mindset, the efficient mindset, is *the* correct way.

When Alex began college at the University of Toronto, he encountered more racial diversity than his hometown in Niagara Falls, and was exposed to critical perspectives on race, class, and privilege through friends in the humanities and social sciences. While he hoped to unite this perspective with his engineering lens in grad school, he was not yet aware of how his own field was implicated in global structural inequality. Alex says he was enthralled by the promise of travel-demand modeling for civil engineering and regional planning.

Travel demand models . . . are complex simulation models that estimate the future travel patterns of a population. My initial thinking about modeling was that this is really great. . . . [But these models] build in a lot of assumptions. They require a lot of complex demographic forecasting. They require specialized and high-powered computing systems. They typically require substantial financial investments . . . The models are not accessible. They're becoming increasingly complex. It's really difficult to dig into them without specialized training . . . They don't really do a good job of telling us about the impacts on different racial groups, so impacts on people of color are essentially ignored.

When Alex was asked by the Six Wins coalition to work on the Equity Environment and Jobs scenario, he got involved with a diverse coalition that changed his outlook. Looking deeper into the ways transportation and land use modeling were being used, he realized that while they were sophisticated, in the end they were often misused to produce results that justified business as usual. At the same time, Alex was collaborating with Six Wins community advocates and discovering a clearer and more realistic understanding of a sustainable Bay Area through listening to community needs first. He states, “It was really important for me to be really engaged—I was . . . just really listening to folks and making sure that there was a dialogue.”

The results of the community-driven scenario were astounding. Against the five official regional agency scenarios, the EEJ scenario performed better not only on equity metrics, but also on greenhouse gas reductions, proving that people drive less when there is equitable access to jobs, affordable housing, and public transit. Lowering these emissions and lowering poverty are aspirational goals that work together to improve sustainability in our regions.

Now, Alex challenges the myth of scientism from the inside. The process of listening and learning to the most vulnerable communities in the region assisted in transforming his understanding of his mission in life. Alex provides a local expression of an increasingly accepted global testimony that technical fixes alone are not going to save us. He reflects,

I would advise other engineers or planners that want to do this type of work . . . [Don't] assume that your technical knowledge gives you an advantage over the embedded or non-expert knowledge of advocacy folks . . . it's important to . . . allow their insights to inform your work. Don't establish a hierarchy between different types of knowledge where your technical knowledge is above their embedded or non-expert knowledge about the process.

Alex's transformation through the Breakthrough Communities Compass includes:

Stage 1: Waking Up: *Waking up* to the call for academic partnership with social justice.

Stage 2: [Action] Saying No: Alex *said no* to the doctrine that technology will save us, which silences community knowledge.

Stage 3: [Learning] Getting Grounded: Understanding the limits of transportation modeling and the opportunities for translating community input to improve it.

Stage 4: [Learning] Exploring New Horizons: Making his expertise available to vulnerable communities, taking their knowledge seriously, criticizing the dominant paradigm in his field.

Stage 5: [Action] Saying Yes: Contributing to the community-driven equity scenario, improving climate change solutions, making a difference in Bay Area policy and the lives of vulnerable communities.

Alex is now a thoughtful critic of regional travel demand modeling, and is an advocate for community participation in regional decision-making processes (Karner and Niemeier 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, compassion and service to others enhances the humanity of all, including oneself. As South Africa overcame the trauma of Apartheid, we discovered that *ubuntu* builds extraordinary resilience, enabling our people to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize our community. *Ubuntu* tells us that we can create a more peaceful world by striving for goodness in each moment, wherever we are. —Desmond Tutu (Herbert and Pavel 2014, Foreword)

The global context of climate change is a threat and an opportunity, creating the hatching conditions for regional and local transformation to occur. This urgency demands that we attend to our interconnection with the biological processes of our

planet—the sequestration of carbon, the rainforests, algae, plankton, bees, urban forests, ecosystems—and requires us to re-root ourselves in our interdependence with all life-forms, as well as our diverse human communities. This shift in mindset cannot ultimately be regulated or legislated; the technological, social, and political spheres are necessary but not sufficient to create the pathway forward. The word *ubuntu* comes closest to what we have found to be that profound evolutionary force, that of our already interconnected world.

The metropolitan regional level is a powerful place to enter this work, where we reweave the fabric of our selves by reconnecting our regions and winning real victories for global sustainability. In discovering our region as an integrated place for the self to call home, we find our home in the universe. The igniting of hope will occur as we overcome the physical fragmentation of our cities while also reweaving the fabric of our communities and selves through our multiracial, multiclass, regional climate justice coalition building. This action into the world becomes self-reinforcing as the momentum grows. The interplay between individual and collective transformation progresses through five observable stages. This pattern has been named The Breakthrough Compass and can be used as a roadmap for coalition building and leadership development.

The Breakthrough Compass shows the growth of the self and community through collective learning and action in the context of global climate change. Separated, fragmented selves become more powerful and coherent through this essential fusion at the intersection of learning and action. Thus the global breakdown of economy, environment, and equity also provides an unparalleled opportunity for a breakthrough—a reimagining of our purpose and a comprehensive coming home to our place in the Universe.

The steps we take now make new earth grow beneath our feet. The steps we take now decide what kind of earth that will be. (Herbert and Pavel 2014)

NOTES

1. Adapted from: M. P. Pavel. Forthcoming. *Climate Justice: Frontline stories from groundbreaking coalitions in California*.
2. Adapted from: M. P. Pavel. Forthcoming. “Interview with Davon. E. (2013),” in *Climate justice: Frontline stories from groundbreaking coalitions in California*.
3. Adapted from: M. P. Pavel. Forthcoming. “Interview with Alex Karner (2013),” in *Climate justice: Frontline Stories from Groundbreaking Coalitions in California*.

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