

An Invitation to an intimate retreat into radical social change
and organisational transformation for leaders, funders and entrepreneurs
– relaxed and informal, stimulating and provocative.



Bellagio, Lake Como
12-15 May 2020

SOCIAL ACUPUNCTURE: ENERGY, EMOTIONS AND ECOSYSTEMS – A JOURNEY TOWARDS A MORE IMPACTFUL LEADERSHIP

Why this Retreat?

In recent years, there's been much talk about system leadership and system change. But many of the social and organisational challenges we seek to tackle are enmeshed in ecosystems – sets of people, organisations, and real and imagined communities that are more or less tightly related or fragmented; have porous boundaries; that grow and evolve; that have intricate rational and non-rational feedback loops. Now here's a paradox: ecosystems don't have leaders; but there are leaders within ecosystems. So what is ecosystem leadership?

Well, we know it isn't five-year plans – either of the Stalin or major consultancy variety. Or top-down command-and-control (often, frankly, lots of command but little control). It's not (just?) driven by data and evidence (our AI friends notwithstanding). And it's not even human-centred/co-design, which has an absolutely key role to play, though not as great as its attempted imperialism over the innovation and social enterprise space would suggest.

To survive and thrive, ecosystems require nutrients. Nowadays, many leaders, it appears, self-identify as enabling and empowering. But are they nurturing? Are they as attentive to the emotional as the rational, to the cultural as the structural?

Such grand and abstract aspirations, whilst important, are no better than grand plans unless we know where to start. Tapping into the energy flows in the ecosystem is key: hence, at last, social acupuncture.

Acupuncture is the healing art of exerting pressure on energy channels called meridians to release the flow of energy, or Qi. By analogy, social acupuncture is the strategic art of exerting pressure on the key, often invisible, energy channels in ecosystems to bring about social change.

Leaders in ecosystems, agents of social change, transformers of organisations are social acupuncturists. And they are also great tellers of stories, or even of fairy-tales, weavers of narratives that connect together disparate developments, initiatives and changes. They are sensors and sense-makers.

But they are humble: humble about their own power and influence; humble about their own experience and expertise, valuing and respecting others'. They are connectors and integrators.

In this retreat I will share my journey through Governments, organisations and communities, large and small. What I have learnt, and have yet to learn, through working with politicians and professionals, senior managers and side-lined employees. And I will guide us on an exploration of what it means - practically, emotionally and theoretically – to be an impactful leader in an ecosystem. To be a great social acupuncturist.

David Albury
Retreat Orchestrator

This unique retreat will be facilitated by David Albury and Jan Owen AM

David has been a senior manager in two universities, Head of Education Practice at the Office for Public Management, Principal Adviser in Tony Blair's Strategy Unit, Director of Innovation Unit Ltd and Design and Development Director of the Global Education Leaders' Program.

He currently is helping with a review of the New Zealand Government's Joint Venture on Family and Sexual Violence, assisting the Royal Society of Arts move towards more programmatic working, and supporting Goodstart, Australia's largest provider of early learning, redesign their offer to children and families and redesign the organisation. His thinking and practice is informed by all this and a mash up of organisational development, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, Judaism and innovation theory.

Jan works at the intersection of social policy and innovation, education and entrepreneurship. She has founded and led multiple organisations and collaborations in Australia and internationally and is a sought after global speaker and strategy advisor.

Her lifelong work and commitment to unleashing the talent of young people, driving social innovation and entrepreneurship, and transforming education has seen her recognised as one of Australia's 'True Leaders' in 2018 and the Inaugural Australian Financial Review and Westpac Woman of Influence in 2012. Jan is the author of Every Childhood Lasts a Lifetime (1996) and The Future Chasers (2014).

The Venue: Villa Ponti, Bellagio, Italy

Inspired by famous Italian architect, Gio Ponti, this mid-century Villa spread across three acres of beautiful forest and gardens, has stunning 180degree Lake Como views.

With an infinity swimming pool, sauna, spa, bocce court, sunken conversation lounge with fireplace, multiple indoor, outdoor living and eating areas there is ample space to work, play, unwind, recharge and reboot!

Likely weather in May at Lake Como: average highs of 16C/61F, with 11 hours of sunshine each day on average, but likely to be rain on 50% of the days (though there were only 5/31 last year)

More here: www.villaponti.co

Investment:

1850 euros (single) / 1600 euros (double) for 3 days / 3 nights ALL inclusive of the retreat workshops, accommodation and 3 delectable meals a day with dinner prepared by a local Italian chef.

The Program

Day 1: Tuesday 12th May

Arrive 2pm, start at 3pm with an introduction to the retreat and getting to know each other through sharing our personal stories and experiences of social change and organisational transformation.

Dinner



A guide to your social acupuncture journey.

Day 2: Wednesday 13th May

Session 1: Exploring ecosystems: the complex and the complicated (weather permitting, on the banks of Lake Como)

Lunch

Session 2: Leadership: from the organisational pyramid to the nurturing cradle

Dinner

Day 3: Thursday 14th May

Session 3: Movement building and organic growth

Lunch

Session 4: Sensing, sense-making and storytelling

Dinner - with an exploration of Jewish rituals and narratives

Day 4: Friday 15th May

Session 5: Reflections and next steps

Lunch and depart



PLACES ARE STRICTLY LIMITED TO 18 MAX.

To find out more information and book your place contact Jan Owen:
jan.caroline.owen@gmail.com

We look forward to welcoming you to Social Acupuncture at Villa Ponti. Ciao! David and Jan

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