

Regenerating the Conditions for Flourishing

An Interview with David Fulton

Regeneration Station: Welcome, David. Your work spans an incredible range of fields, from ethical infrastructure to executive coaching and community building. To begin, could you describe the overarching vision that drives everything you do, particularly your concept of "time-ships" and "durable communities"?

David: Thank you. My core mission is to **regenerate the conditions for flourishing** globally, starting from where we are. As a boy, I imagined designing spaceships, but after decades of experience—sailing, inventing solutions, responding to disasters, founding teams, and experimenting with failures and successes—I discovered that what truly matters is **building "time-ships"**.

I define "time-ships" as **Durable Communities**. These are communities that **embody and evolve within an ecosystem of essential processes and systems** that develop the capability and capacity for conscious collective action, benefiting both the environment and future generations. This concept is profoundly influenced by Forrest Landry's work on **effective collective choice-making in the face of existential risk**. Ultimately, my purpose is to be a **"guildmaster of flourishing ecosystems,"** meticulously crafting environments and fostering relationships where human potential flourishes in harmony with the natural world. It's about **growing durability around what matters**.

Regeneration Station: That's a powerful framework. You're a co-founder and head coach at Treehouse.coach, which emphasizes "regenerative leadership." How does your approach to leadership coaching differ from more traditional models, and what do you mean by "business beings" and "human empowerment technologists"?

David: At Treehouse.coach, we believe **true leadership transcends what we thought we knew**. Our approach integrates all of reality, emphasizing the **interconnectedness of all aspects of life**. We focus on **life-affirming leadership that operates at the level of systems**, fostering continuous growth, adaptation, and renewal, which goes beyond mere sustainability. We empower leaders to cultivate **resilience, authenticity, and purpose**.

We conceptualize businesses as **"business beings"**. Like humans, these collective entities need to **mature to wield power in service to life**. The largest governing force on the planet today isn't government; it's business, which often behaves like an immature being. We aim to help these "beings" develop the capacity for **belonging, creativity, and authentic partnership**.

A **"human empowerment technologist"** is someone who **"sees and stewards a future, honors and acts from what is truly theirs to own (choice, time, experience, validity), and collaborates to create technologies—practices, tools, structures—that serve life and help bring that future into being"**. This redefines technology not just as external tools, but as an integral part of human existence influenced by our worldviews and attunement. We coach leaders to master **four archetypal conversations**—Investor (South/Doing), Advisor (East/Knowing), Co-founder (North/Being), and Partner (West/Feeling)—aligning them with the **Indigenous medicine wheel** to stabilize projects and foster flourishing. We are also actively **growing practices** within

Treehouse.coach to further robust "indigenous resilience circles" by incorporating plants, elements, practices, and rituals more deeply into the program's units, modules, and distinctions offered.

Regeneration Station: That's fascinating, particularly the integration of Indigenous wisdom. Let's talk about Wild Build. You're a co-founder focused on "ethical infrastructure." What does that mean in practice, and could you highlight an innovation like the SoilMaker?

David: I founded Wild.Build to **co-innovate ethical infrastructure for durable communities**. Ethical infrastructure is designed to be **moveable, upcycled, and to avoid ending up in landfills**. Our projects are rooted in **regenerative design and construction** that embed community values and intergenerational knowledge into the fabric of hyperlocal communities. We **practice biomimicry**, observing and replicating nature's efficient use of cooperative elements and adaptive strategies to create structures and systems that are resilient, efficient, and in harmony with their surroundings. Our creations are as **graceful and beautiful as the forest they inhabit**, appearing as though they've grown organically from the land.

A flagship innovation is the **SoilMaker**, a **waterless composting toilet**. I've been designing and building these for decades, initially as a response to disaster relief and live event needs. The SoilMaker **eliminates problems with traditional sewage systems**—which silently destroy natural ecology and drain wallets—by using no water, producing **zero emissions**, and allowing human waste to be valuable compost. It **saves 13,000 gallons of water annually per family** and significantly reduces bills and carbon footprints. It's a practical manifestation of **"grand reciprocity"** by **reuniting humans with sanitary and smell-free soil building**. I sometimes refer to myself as a "craptalist" or "craptologist" because I believe if we learn to handle our "shit," we can work out everything else.

We also design and produce other portable structures like **WASHpops** (portable sailmaker structures for hygiene), **TREEpops** (geodesic portable treehouses), and **HÄUSpops** (portable, two-story geodesic homes and venues), all designed to merge with the ecology and avoid landfills.

Regeneration Station: It sounds like a holistic approach to design and living. Speaking of holistic, Foxview, your regenerative retreat in Oregon, embodies the "Triplet of Regeneration." What does this triplet—Place, Community, and Nature—represent, and why is this grounding so important?

David: Foxview, located near Ashland, Oregon, serves as a **"living lab" or "living collaboratory"** for what I call the **"Triplet of Regeneration: Place, Community, and Nature"**. This triplet forms the foundation of a **transformative commitment to regenerative practices and regenerative living**. When we consistently hold **Place, Community, and Nature together**, we create conscious access to what can be described as the **"quantum field of life"**. This awareness of the interconnected web of existence tunes us into **"grand reciprocity,"** a principle deeply rooted in Indigenous wisdom, acknowledging that we constantly receive gifts from the world and are invited to contribute our generosity.

The core practice here is **"attunement before alignment"**. This means our strategies for sense-making and choice-making must first involve deeply **tuning into ourselves, the land we are**

in (Place), practicing genuine connection (Community), and intimate involvement in natural systems (Nature). This attunement allows us to develop a nuanced understanding of the complex life we're held within, enabling effective and harmonious interventions through being in touch with life itself, the opposite of "othering".

At Foxview, we demonstrate that **economic activity can be a force for holistic flourishing** by focusing on projects that enhance **ecological health, community resilience, and individual wellbeing**. It truly is a place where **"we are IN the lab, we ARE the lab, and we ARE THE PRODUCT of the lab, all simultaneously,"** reinforcing the interconnected nature of regenerative work.

Regeneration Station: That's a profound integration of ancient wisdom and modern practice. Beyond the Triplet of Regeneration, you frequently mention the Holographic Living Model and Councilship. Could you explain these frameworks and how you integrate native and holographic dimensions into your coaching at Treehouse.coach?

David: The **Holographic Living Model (HLM™)** is a **multi-dimensional blueprint for life energy**, created by Amayae Rae and Michael Chapman. It reveals the **interconnected nature of life, where each part reflects and contributes to the whole**. HLM integrates four core energy fields: **Being, Knowing, Feeling, and Doing**. Any change in one part of a system impacts the entire system, ensuring growth and transformation are regenerative and aligned with the greater whole. We apply HLM in personal development, organizational growth, and regenerative projects to identify strengths, address imbalances, and support collective decision-making.

Councilship, as I define it, is a **dynamic practice of collective gathering and sense-making rooted in Indigenous wisdom and aligned with the Holographic Living Model**. It emphasizes **good ancestry, deep listening, shared leadership, and the cultivation of collective wisdom**. Councilship is not about traditional decision-making; it's a **space for connection, attunement, discernment, and discovery**, fostering **"power with" rather than "power over"**.

At Treehouse.coach, I specifically **lead the integration of the native and holographic dimensions into the four archetypal conversations** (Investor, Advisor, Co-founder, Partner). This means aligning these conversations with the energies and directions of the Indigenous medicine wheel, embedding a deeper, holistic understanding into their structure and purpose. My Shoshone grandmother and Indigenous heritage have profoundly influenced this integration. We are actively **growing practices** to further robust "indigenous resilience circles" by incorporating plants, elements, practices, and rituals more deeply into our program modules. This commitment ensures our coaching transcends traditional business development, enabling leaders to contribute to the flourishing of life itself.

Regeneration Station: Your extensive entrepreneurial journey is truly remarkable. With ownership in 35 startups and consulting for over 1,000 businesses across diverse sectors, what would you say are some of the most significant lessons you've learned or impacts you've achieved?

David: My entrepreneurial journey spans over **40 years**. I've launched or co-led **35 companies** and advised **hundreds, even over 1,000 businesses**, across more than ten sectors. Each venture has been a fusion of creative calling and strategic execution, grounded in place, people, and possibility. Some significant impacts include:

- **Financial Impact:** I've directly contributed to **over \$100 million in revenues for other businesses** and personally **raised over \$14 million in for-profit investment and non-profit contributions**.
- **Revenue Acceleration:** I have a proven record of **10x sales growth within 90 days** for residential solar firms, supporting subsequent acquisitions. I also scaled Raim Print Management from \$1M to \$3M in 12 months, and secured a \$1.2M annual contract with Eye Care Plan of America.
- **Record-Breaking Retail:** I founded and directed Orb Electronics in Hawaii, which set a **Hawaii state record for highest daily sales per square foot**. This was achieved through innovative marketing like the "What is Orb?" mystery campaign, interactive store design, and a hand-trained expert sales team.
- **High-Retention Sales Cultures:** I've consistently built sales cultures with **exceptionally low attrition**, even in volatile environments like Hawaii's retail scene or door-to-door industries. My approach emphasizes mentorship, internal leadership development, and culturally coherent operations.
- **Systems Innovation:** I've designed entire retail environments, sales tracking methods, gamified customer journeys, and buyback ecosystems that increased dwell time, upsell rates, and loyalty, while lowering friction and theft. I developed proprietary point-of-sale and inventory management software that enabled real-time communication with hospital and bank inventory systems.
- **Transforming Challenges into Opportunities:** I've led high-performance teams, fostering environments where creativity flourishes and individuals contribute their unique perspectives to collective visions. My work consistently transforms societal problems into opportunities for flourishing.

My consistent pattern is to **Invoke possibility, Build infrastructure, Practice live with its market, and Regenerate**. I stay close enough to the ground to know what works, and I help others do the same.

Regeneration Station: That's an impressive track record of tangible results and systems thinking. You co-authored The Practical Flourishing Assessment (TPFA) with Rosie von Lila. Could you share the origins of this tool and the kind of impact it has had on individuals and relationships?

David: The Practical Flourishing Assessment (TPFA) is a **multidimensional, evidence-informed tool and training system** designed to help individuals and communities understand and actively **grow their own flourishing**. It integrates research and lived experience to track well-being, align actions, and grow resilience across time.

TPFA didn't begin in theory; **it began in life**. Rosie von Lila and I first created it as a **monthly attunement practice for ourselves** during a season marked by challenge, transition, and creative growth. We asked: "How do we not just get through this—but flourish through it?". We tracked the impact of intentional actions, noticing **clarity where there had been vagueness**, making **shared choices with courage**, reducing friction, and deepening our relationship. This led to a **regenerative rhythm of life and work**.

As I often say when speaking to men and couples: **"If you experience your partner nagging, start doing TPFA. It will evaporate. You'll find yourselves on the same team. You'll know what you're doing it all for"**. The **"18 Aspects of Flourishing"** became a shared compass, transforming conversations and making accountability "loving". From this lived root, TPFA expanded to become a tool, a book, a train-the-trainer program, and a research-aligned system, now in **collaboration with NYU**.

Regeneration Station: That's a powerful endorsement for TPFA. You've also been a significant force in community building and social impact, from your work at Burning Man to the "Houseless Heroes" documentary. What drives this commitment, and how do you approach transforming societal narratives around complex issues like homelessness?

David: My commitment to community building and social impact stems from a deep belief in **fostering resilient, inclusive communities** and **growing our collective capacity for belonging, creativity, and authentic partnership**. I'm driven by the idea that **"culture is the best place to store wisdom"** and that by working together, we can truly transform challenges into opportunities. In the **Burning Man community**, I've been a long-time contributor since 2005, pioneering eco-friendly infrastructure and creating large-scale community structures that have held space for **over one million people**. I was instrumental in **Entheon Village**, which housed MAPS and Zendo (a crucial harm reduction facility), fed and housed over 500 people, and served as a **"crucible to meld visionary art and visionary science"**.

I also co-founded and directed **Our Future Now (OFN)**, a three-year touring project that directly engaged **over 5 million people** across the US in meaningful one-on-one interactions around regenerative practices, organic fair trade, and human rights. OFN created a **"grassroots groundswell"** by transforming ordinary event spaces into zones of play, participation, education, and activation.

My work with the **"Houseless Heroes" documentary film** (premiered July 2018 in NYC) is a prime example of transforming societal narratives. We challenge traditional **"fix-it" mindsets**, reframing homelessness not as a problem to be solved, but as a **"profound indicator of community disconnection and systemic breakdown"** and an **"opportunity for shared growth and transformation"**. The film successfully **captured the attention of New York policymakers and public officials**, fostering a shift towards more empathetic and community-driven solutions. It has **inspired real-world action**, prompting viewers to engage directly in local shelter support and collective problem-solving, embodying Rosie von Lila's principle: **"Don't let perfect get in the way of good"**. This aligns with my broader efforts in fostering **hyper-local, community-driven solutions** that emphasize human connection, empathy, and collective capacity to build "durable community". It's about cultivating curiosity and inviting participation to discover solutions together.

Regeneration Station: Your transparency about personal challenges is deeply impactful. You've spoken openly about living with undiagnosed bipolar behavior for 40 years and the journey of restoring integrity. How has this personal experience shaped your leadership philosophy and your commitment to living a "neuro-spicy" life?

David: My personal journey has profoundly shaped every aspect of my leadership. For **40 years, I lived with undiagnosed bipolar manic behavior**. Making a breakthrough achievement to **"restore integrity with the majority of the relationships in my life"** has been foundational. I now live by the principle that **"the audio matches the video,"** meaning my actions align with my words.

This experience has fostered a deep commitment to accountability, transparency, and grounding my leadership in rhythm. I embrace what I call a **"neuro-spicy" life**. This term, which I credit to my friend and business partner Matt Johnston, points to the wide spectrum of neurological experiences and honors their gifts and realities, rather than viewing them as deficits.

This personal work fosters vulnerability, responsibility, and accountability in my leadership. It has taught me the importance of **clearing and healing regularly** and rediscovering one's spark and purpose. My leadership is not abstract; it's lived. It's about meticulously crafting environments and fostering relationships where human potential can flourish in harmony with the natural world, building resilience and deep connection for generations to come. It's about choosing to **allow transformation where it matters in partnership, stewardship, and legacy**.

I believe that **"being up to something" that is "big enough" and involves other people is essential for a truly alive life**. It means taking risks and engaging with the fundamental dimensions of human ownership: **choice, time, experience, and validity**. This approach ensures that we are always available to life in a new way, contributing to the grand reciprocity of existence.

Regeneration Station: Your journey is a testament to resilience and transformation. To conclude, your work draws from a rich tapestry of wisdom. Could you share some of the key thinkers, methodologies, and traditions that have most profoundly influenced your holistic approach to life and work?

David: My holistic approach is indeed shaped by a diverse array of influences:

- **Buckminster Fuller:** His concepts of **"Spaceship Earth," ephemeralization** (doing more with less), and **comprehensive anticipatory design science** profoundly shaped my understanding of coexistence, ecological balance, and ethical infrastructure. I was introduced to Fuller's ideas via an AM radio broadcast as a boy, which reawakened a profound sense of belonging to an intricate, intelligent web of life.

- **Forrest Landry (my mentor):** He deepened my access to **effective collective choice-making in the face of existential risk**. His work on technologies being **predictive** and the understanding that **culture is the best place to store wisdom** are central. I also helped create his Ephemeral Group Process (EGP) Inquiry Coach Training Program, which is Layer 2 of his "7 layer stack of technologies for durable community".

- **Indigenous Elders and my Shoshone grandmother:** Their influence is profound, leading to the integration of **Indigenous wisdom and practices** like Councilship and medicine wheel teachings, fostering **"power with"** and **"grand reciprocity"**.

- **Julia Cameron (author of "The Artist's Way"):** Her work profoundly influenced my **personal creative recovery** through daily rituals like morning pages and artist dates. She showed me that **creativity is "an intimate collaboration with the universe itself"**.

- **Riane Eisler:** Her work on "**Partnerism**" and "**caring economics**" advocates for an economic paradigm based on cooperation, mutual respect, and nurturing life, redefining wealth beyond purely financial metrics.
 - **Robin Wall Kimmerer:** Her concept of "**Grand Reciprocity**" from "Braiding Sweetgrass" emphasizes humanity's role as **co-creators and stewards**, actively contributing to life's ecology, challenging the notion of "taking" from nature.
 - **Amayae Rae and Michael Chapman:** They created the **Holographic Living Model (HLM™)**, a multi-dimensional blueprint that integrates Being, Knowing, Feeling, and Doing to reveal the interconnectedness of life.
 - **Matt Johnston:** Co-founder of Treehouse.coach, he influenced my understanding of "**human empowerment technology**" and the concept of "**neuro-spicy**," noting that "people rarely rise to their full potential, instead, they shrink to the level of their systems".
 - **Rosie von Lila:** Described as the "voice of human flourishing," Rosie co-authored TPFA with me and influenced my approach to work with **care, curiosity, enthusiasm, and style**. Her principle "**Don't let perfect get in the way of good**" guided the "Houseless Heroes" initiative.
 - **Danny Cohen:** His Nonviolent Communication (NVC) teachings influenced my foundational readiness criteria for **relational competence for deep work**, emphasizing empathy, needs-awareness, and distinguishing feelings from evaluations.
 - **United States Coast Guard Academy (USCGA):** My experiences as a platoon commander, achieving a **zero attrition rate** by implementing an innovative "power with" leadership structure, and sailing tall ships profoundly shaped my understanding of leadership, systems, and purpose. It's where I realized my calling to launch "Seascape," a tall ship program as a floating school for youth. My work is also deeply influenced by my **long-time contributions to the Burning Man community** and **extensive disaster relief efforts**. These experiences provided fertile ground for pioneering eco-friendly infrastructure and creating large-scale community structures that have held space for over one million people.
- Ultimately, these influences coalesce into a singular focus: **regenerating the conditions for flourishing**, one authentic, place-rooted, care-driven initiative at a time.