Thought Leadership

The Seven Laws of Enough

SevenStones

We need a framework to give structure and make sense of where we are headed. Over the years, as we have reflected on our own experiences in living a life of Sustainable Abundance, we have developed a framework that we call the Seven Laws of Enough. This framework offers a pathway to tap into the deep well of resource available to us as we seek and strive to become context creators and authors of our own narrative. It allows for our true nature to arise as we choose to live from a deep loving awareness. If we can connect with love as the source of life instead of our "small self" as the source of life, something profound is available to us. Our narrative that we are alone, separate and need to get all we can for ourselves shifts. No amount of getting and having will make a difference; it is love that lights the way that does the work that guides us home.

The 7 Laws of Enough

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"yeah, ever since we moved in we've been frequented by sudden earthquakes followed by massive snowstorms."

LAW 1

Stories Matter

What is my story?

We begin our journey with understanding the stories we tell ourselves and the ones that were handed to us as birthright. Our stories become a set of invisible forces—social, cultural, economic and environmental—that surround us. These stories are shaping our beliefs and assumptions and influencing our behavior and the narrative of our life. When we are unaware of our stories, or leave them unexamined, we can become reactive to them. Our personal and cultural stories do indeed matter. When we identify the underlying context and all the forces that form our narratives, we discover a new-found power. The power to create and author our own narrative.

We are made of stories. It's part of the magic of being human. Brian Swimme tells us in the documentary Planetary; "The story is the most essential organizing power within the human experience." We are woven together in the fabric of creation by layers of stories. Story is the structure that reveals our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Our beliefs about the world and all its inhabitants are woven into our stories about life, which, in turn, help define beliefs. And so, it goes 'round and round, each reinforcing the other.

Most of us, like the people in the snow globe to the left, do not recognize the system of beliefs, values, assumptions and patterns of thought that inform our reality and construct our actions, feelings, and thinking.

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LAW 2

I Am Enough

What is happening now? How is that Enough?

We propose a radical out-of-the-box idea: We are enough right now, just as we are, whole and complete. No improvement necessary. Blasphemy, we know. To even say it means there is somewhere out there a question that needs answering. Are you? Am I? Who gets to say anyway? In the very asking of the question, we may feel like something is wrong.

What if questions like these were off the table: A world in which we did not ask because the questions themselves pointed to something so absurd we could not even fathom it? What if every human already knew they were incredible, gifted, enough, perfect just as they were and not riddled with doubts about their own worthiness and sense of deserving?

We believe that it is time to take the debate off the table. Life is inherently enough. Regeneration is always happening, and we are the lucky bearers of its fruit. This is the logic of sufficiency, to embrace the actual design of life—in its rich complexity of infinite offerings and real limitations. It is our birthright to relax into the truth of Enough to unwind the tension of our separation and to express life's fullness.

Our culture and economy feeds on who we are not and what we don't have. It pushes us to consume—to look outside ourselves for our own happiness, a promise it inevitably fails to provide. By declaring ourselves as already enough, we can create a powerful mindset from which to act.

LAW 3

I Belong

Where have I felt like I belonged?

Each of us belongs. Full stop. End of discussion. Because we are here, we belong. This is a startlingly difficult idea for us to believe because we have been taught that we are separate—separate from nature and separate from each other. The truth is that we are an inextricable part of the interconnected web of nature.

It is impossible to not belong to life itself. We are life itself. We are made of the same materials all life comes from. We breathe the same air and our breath depends on the breath of the trees. Does the tree not belong? Would anyone even entertain such an idea? How could we in fact not belong here?

This does not mean that human beings do not have profound experiences of isolation or disconnection. It is not to say that we do not get marginalized or told that in fact we do not belong. The question, "Do I belong?" is a question born out of scarcity itself. We need to label questions like this for what they are: they are a profound misunderstanding of our place here.

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LAW 4

No One Is Exempt

When I let go completely, what will become of me?

Our modern western society promotes the idea of exemption: if you follow a certain diet, do certain exercises and live a certain way, you can defy old age, illness and ultimately death. We are all finite and we are going to die, and the avoidance of embracing this law causes us to be stuck in the sea of scarcity. Once we accept this truth, we open ourselves up to living a created, purposeful life.

It is essential that we understand finitude and other limitations that occur in the natural and human world. It is this very paradox—a duality of seemingly opposing truths co-existing at the same moment—that connects us to much of our scarcity thinking. That we fear death—our own and others'—causes us to behave, personally and institutionally, in ways that cause great harm.

No one is exempt. As Gina likes to say, "No one is exempt, not even me."

No one gets out alive and that makes the whole journey precious and weird and empty and full all at once. Many of us make a deal with the devil and do not even know it. Here is the deal as we see it:

> If I do all sorts of transformation work, if I evolve myself, if I go to workshops, use the law of attraction, clear my chakras, pray well, go to my church, synagogue or temple, "do my work," then somehow, some way the things that happen in other people's lives won't happen in mine. Somehow all of this work would make me exempt to... well... anything "bad."

Jen realized this the moment her husband was diagnosed with cancer. She believed that it should not happen to her. We both believed that the economic downturn would not hit us. We believed that somehow all of the skills we had cultivated bought us a free pass past all of the nasty, gritty stuff of everyone else's lives.

Part of the US American disease is that we are entitled to somehow be above or separate from the events that impact all beings. We do all manner of things to exempt ourselves from the capriciousness of the gods. Deep in our bones we are under the impression that we are entitled to a certain kind of life. For many of us almost all of our waking hours, almost all of our professional life has been dedicated to pursuing that life.

Guess what? We aren't entitled to anything in particular: a certain house, a healthy child, a good career, a vacation home, happiness, or anything else for that matter. In giving up being entitled to any of it, I can be deeply grateful for that which I do have. Entitlement and gratitude cannot inhabit the same space. The former occludes the latter, casts a shadow over its steady luminous glow. Entitlement lives in a context of separation. Gratitude comes straight from the well of sufficiency.

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LAW 5

Resting Is Required

When was the last time I felt deeply rested?

In the scarcity story, there is never time to rest. We are constantly running, moving, striving, competing, making sure the other guy does not get too far ahead or we do not get too far behind. In our now often "24-hour work cycle" society, people are leaving millions upon millions of hours of vacation time on the table every year. And even if we do go on vacation often we still check email, check in with the office and sit in on a few calls. In the overwhelm and excess, our nervous systems don't get a chance to be in relaxation mode. In our fear of being left behind, we do not let ourselves stop and restore. If we never have an answer to the question "what is enough?" and nothing is enough, how do we ever relax or have the sense of peace and ease we long for? As we look to rest there is a place in every area of life to rest, deepen and return to our commitments.

There is resting in:

- Your nervous system
- Each other
- The grand design
- The present moment
- Enough
- Our greatness
- It's already all right.

LAW 6

Joy Is Available

Where does joy live in me?

A lightness of being is a natural outgrowth of facing our impermanence and finding a place of deep rest and stillness. Once we learn to let go, sinking into something truly embracing, the heart begins to feel buoyant. We can find a way to laugh about the hard stuff and see that it doesn't have to be all that serious after all.

Humor, laughter and uncensored joy are gifts that life gives us, but the more fixed and attached we are to our own beliefs and identity, the harder it is to laugh at life, at ourselves or at anything. We need to laugh. It is essential to our well-being. We need to free ourselves from the attachments born of scarcity if we are to rest in our being enough. As we lighten up and as we move towards our own en-light-enment, we find more joy, smiles, laughter and genuine lightness.

"No, Thursday's out. How about never—is never good for you?"

LAW 7

Love Is the Answer

How well did I love myself today?

Love is the answer to the question of scarcity. Living the six previous laws has strengthened our mind-heart connection to prepare us for an unconditional acceptance of love. The mindset of enough allows us to choose to love generously, without reserve and without the expectation of getting something in return. This is the essential point of living in the mindset of enough.

Love has one direction, and it is toward the center. It is the source of our enoughness and the antidote to hate and fear, the breeding grounds for all of the forces of scarcity. This seems to be the deepest of the teachings of creating and living within sustainable abundance. That really the universe is made of the energy of love.

What made this world? What made the trees, the bears, the bees, the planets, the waterfalls and the lions? Only some magnificent imagination, some wild and unfathomable act of generosity and love could have created all of this and then offered it all, free of charge, to all those who were blessed to have also been created. All of the great healers and leaders who have lived on this Earth seem to carry the truth that hatred is never cured by hatred, but by love alone is hatred healed.

We seem to reserve our love for only the special connections we have in our lives. The children we raise, or the men or women we have declared our love for. What if our love were offered freely, generously, fully? What world would that make? What if love is seeing ourselves and each other clearly and accepting ourselves fully for who we actually are—each and every person? What if we extended that sight to love all children, all women, and all men regardless of where they live, what they look like, or if we have or will ever meet them? We forget that love is not limited to the feeling of attraction or liking. We need to reclaim love from Hollywood. Love is being there when it's inconvenient, uncomfortable, and when you are not in the mood. Love is a discipline, practiced day after day, making an offering regardless of what may come back in return. It is the recognition and practice of expression of our and others' enoughness, no matter the circumstances. If we choose love in any moment where scarcity is lurking, we transform it.

ABOUT SEVEN STONES

Seven Stones is a leadership journeys company founded by Gina LaRoche and Jennifer Cohen in 2009. Our learning programs, coaching practice, organizational consulting engagements and groundbreaking thought leadership work are all designed to help bring about a world that is loving, courageous and just. We pursue this vision primarily by shifting the paradigm from one of scarcity to one of Sustainable Abundance® in the individuals, organizations and communities with whom we work.