

December 2021 Council Conversation

Podcast Discussion: The Good Ancestor - In calling on us to be good ancestors, public philosopher Roman Krznaric is trying to give the discussion about the future a language, an address and a face: introducing us to all the people already working to formalize the practice of thinking long-term for the common good, benefiting both present and future generations. [Access the 53 minute CBC podcast, originally aired Sept 2020, here](#)

Discussions revolved around challenges of acting for the long term, especially when business is so short term focused (quarterly, often). Employee volunteering in particular is focused on the visible, immediate needs and outputs.

Reflection questions:

1. *Who's included in concepts of the "common good" today – In Canada? In your company?*
2. *Roman shares a practice in Japan called Future Design – In decision making, some stakeholders are asked to represent today, some are asked to represent the people of 50 years from now. What would it mean to your company to use this decision-making process?*
3. *What do we do with the tension of thinking of people of today AND of the future? Where should we put our limited resources? What impact does this potentially have on your company's ESG program?*

- Decision making as individuals and societal scale, rethinking time and the common good; how to build community with future generations
- The [Long Now Foundation](#), committed to having us rethink the concept of time as it impacts decision-making. Not immediate, but 5000 years from now.
- Common good-community in decision making -- people would immediately think our common good is our members; but it isn't, talking now about global, but not across time
- When we speak of Indigenous perspectives--intergenerational memory, i.e. we don't own the land, nature, it belongs to future generations
- If we work in goals within constructs, if things feel busier and faster, and become insular, it takes a great leader to look 10, 50 years forward, and how do we break the systems now?
- If we can imagine a more equitable system in 50 years, the steps to get there, are daunting
- Today how are we investing in future design?
- Find the right partners, collaboration.

Reflection question:

4. *How does your employee community engagement program set up employees to think about greater inclusion of peoples today in their choices? Does it also set them up to think about the inclusion of future generations?*
- Some members are quarterly driven so concept of sustainability planning has been a bit of a struggle. May not see the pay off for several years
 - Somewhat of a disconnect between sustainability team (environment) and social impacts (ie. Hiroshima/Indigenous)
 - What are the calls to action right now? More difficult to meet calls to action when social change is on the table. It's more of an afterthought
 - One member has yearly training for employees (CMTT) - inclusion has now been included. Events of 2020 have now brought these to focus.
 - Days of significance in our calendars - with organization where employees can get involved
 - A lot of focus on diverse organizations, food insecurity; this time of year focus is on low-income families
 - It is immediate needs that employees are looking to help improve and provide for (animals in BC, senior isolation as a result of pandemic, food insecurity) - this has directed our volunteer opportunities