



# **EMPOWERING CITIZENS TO ADOPT LOW CARBON LIFESTYLES**

**STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE,  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE  
REINVENTION OF OUR CITIES**

**DAVID GERSHON  
EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE**

**"IN MY DREAM THE ANGEL SHRUGGED AND  
SAID, IF WE FAIL THIS TIME, IT WILL BE A**



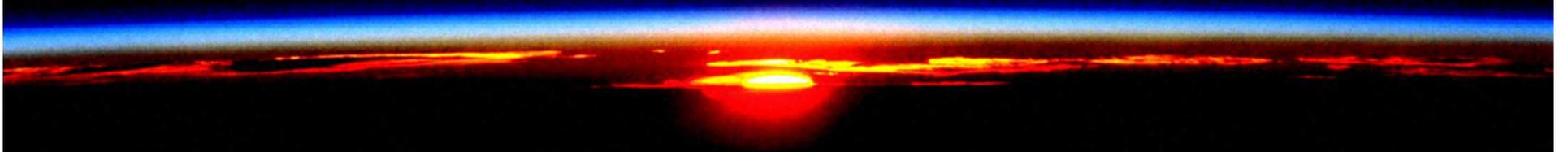
**FAILURE OF IMAGINATION.  
AND THEN SHE PLACED THE WORLD GENTLY  
IN THE PALM OF MY HAND."**

**– BRYAN ANDREAS**

**Why bother getting people to lower their carbon footprint? Is there not an easier way?**



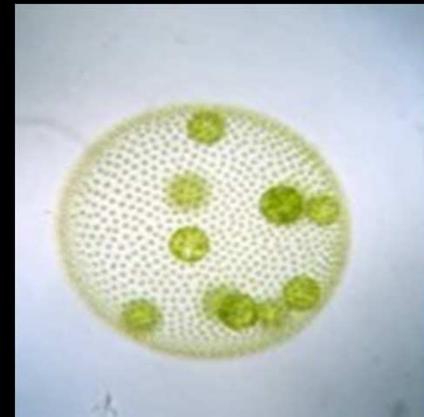
**OK, but how do we do it?**



# Traditional Approaches to Behavior Change



**A natural systems clue...**



## A social systems clue...



**One of every ten people on the planet is on Facebook**

## An anthropologist's clue...

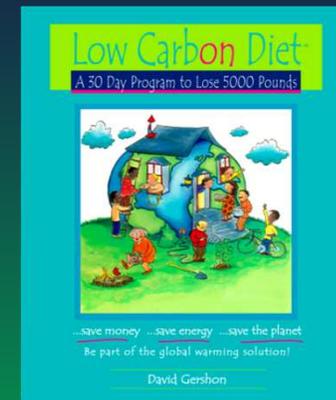
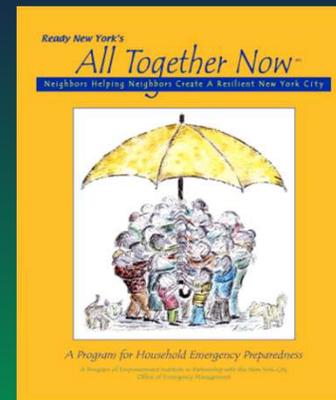
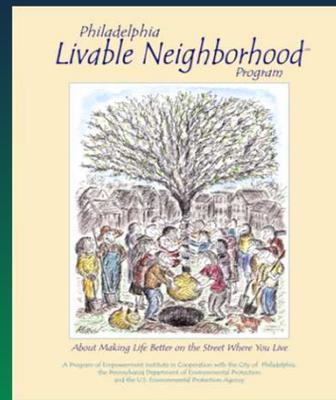
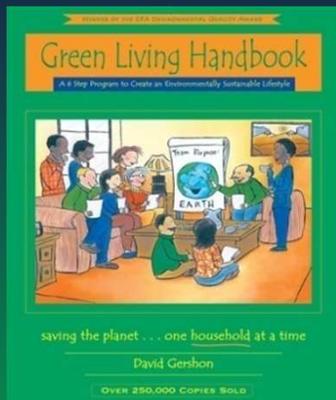


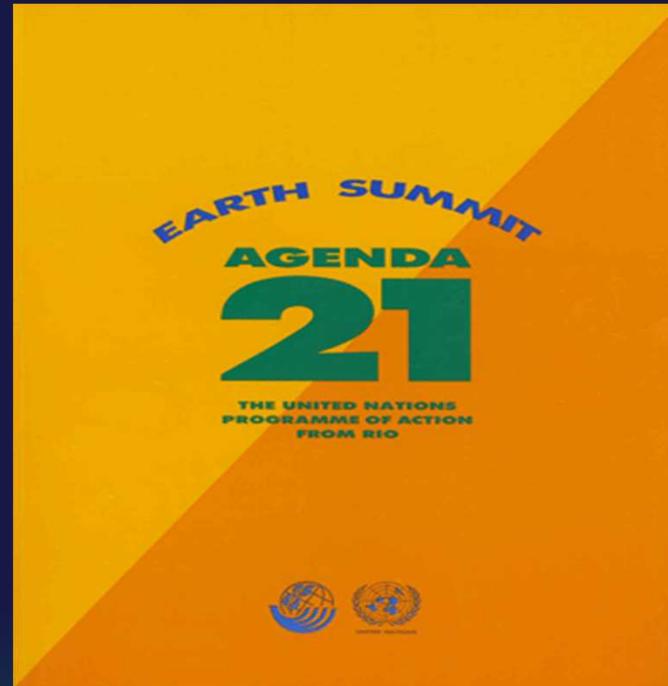
**“Never doubt that a small group of committed individuals can change the world – indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”**

**–Margaret Mead**

# How can we harness the evolutionary impulse for greater social connection and the power of small groups to address the climate change crisis?

## A two decade journey of the possible...





**“The greatest cause of the deterioration of the global ecosystem is the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production of industrialized countries.”**

**How do we get people to adopt environmentally sustainable lifestyles?**

**Will they sustain the behavior change over time?**

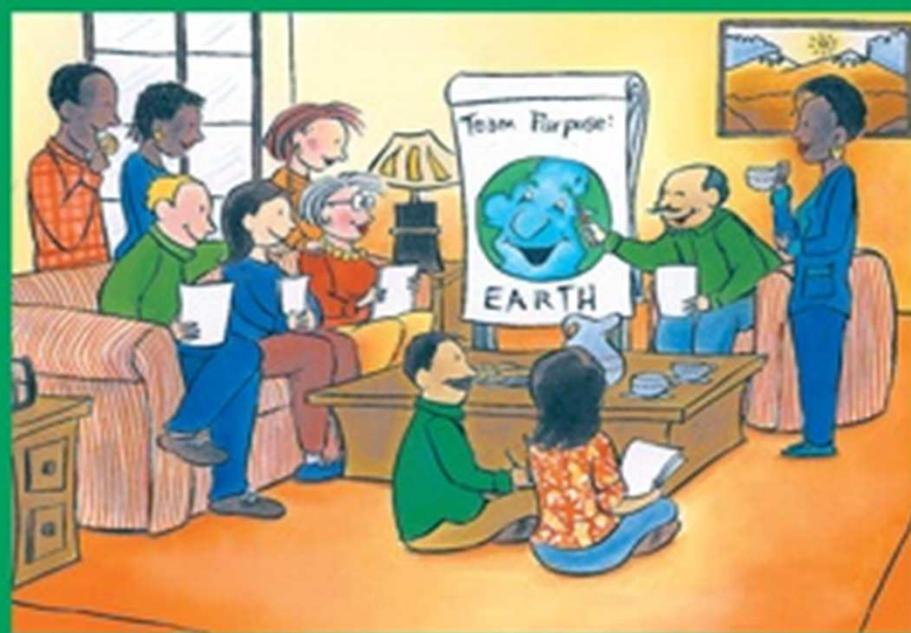
**How do we make the process scalable??**



WINNER OF THE EPA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AWARD

# Green Living Handbook

A 6 Step Program to Create an Environmentally Sustainable Lifestyle

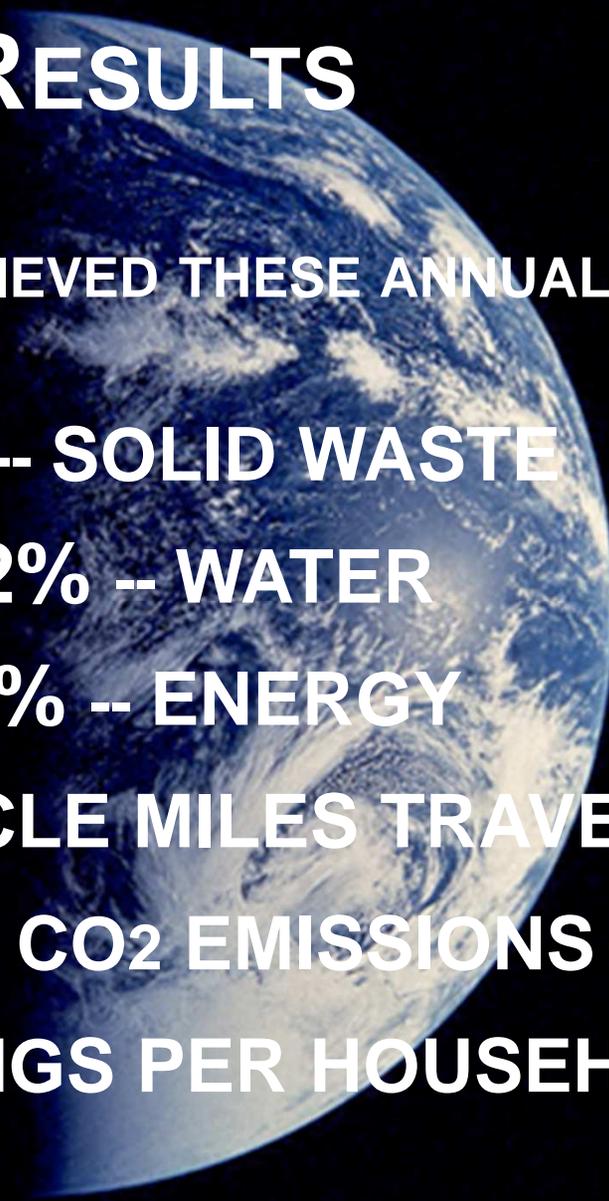


saving the planet . . . one household at a time

David Gershon

OVER 250,000 COPIES SOLD

# RESULTS



**20,000** PEOPLE ACHIEVED THESE ANNUALIZED SAVINGS

**40% -- SOLID WASTE**

**32% -- WATER**

**14% -- ENERGY**

**8% -- VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED**

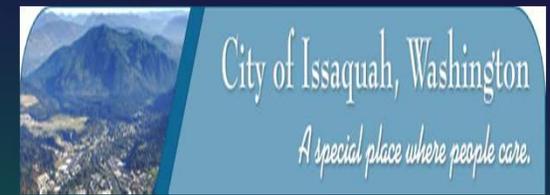
**15% -- CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS**

**\$255 SAVINGS PER HOUSEHOLD**

# Long-Term Behavior Change Sustained

“Unsurpassed in changing behavior”

“53% transferred behaviors to workplace.”





# **Innovation Diffusion Strategy**

**Early Adopters – First 15%  
(Tipping Point)**

**Early Majority – Next 35%**

**Late Majority – Next 35%**

**Laggards – Last 15%**



# **DIFFUSION PLATFORM: THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

## **TALKING POINTS**

**1. CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES  
FOR SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN**

**2. GET TO KNOW NEIGHBORS**

**3. MORE LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOOD**

**25% BLOCK PARTICIPATION**

# THE NEW YORKER



*"Please help us reduce our garbage and improve our energy efficiency and our water quality. Help us to be eco-wise and...above all...to empower others."*

Drawing by Koren; © 1994 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

**Can this methodology help drive demand for household energy efficiency retrofits?**



# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO PILOT RESULTS



**19** of **40** city departments participated

**88%** of employees attending information meetings  
joined an EcoTeam

**27** EcoTeams formed consisting of **204** households

**16** actions per household

**41%** took one or more home energy retrofit actions

## Team Member Demonstrations and Technical Assistance



**“The topic leader demonstrated how to retrofit his home. Those who did not feel they had the skills to do this action were offered help by team members. Most of the team did it.”**

**--Omar Jacobo, EcoTeam Program Manager,  
Purchasing and General Services**

# Sustainability Ethic as New Social Norm



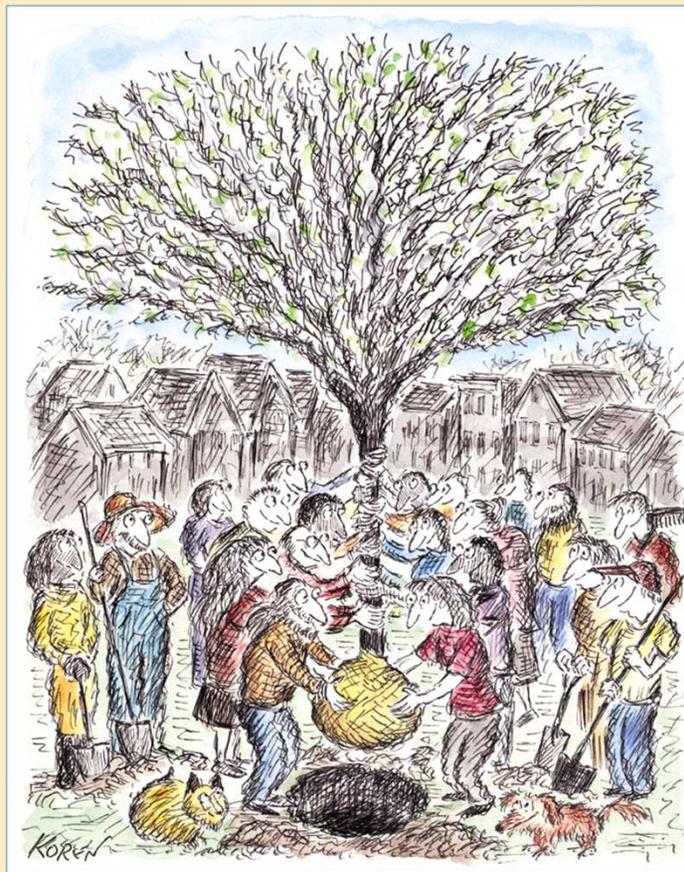
**“Our utility, CPS, gave out free thermostats and most of us entered it to 78. The team was helpful to get people to do it. We also went to CPS as a team to take advantage of their retrofitting program around weather stripping our homes and putting in energy efficient windows. Most of our team took these actions.”**

**-- Frank Garcia, EcoTeam Program Manager,  
Police Department**

**Can this methodology help our cities create more livable neighborhoods?**



Philadelphia  
*Livable Neighborhood*<sup>sm</sup>  
Program



*About Making Life Better on the Street Where You Live*

A Program of Empowerment Institute in Cooperation with the City of Philadelphia,  
the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# Results



**101 BLOCK-BASED TEAMS FORMED**

**63% HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION PER BLOCK**

**3 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS PER BLOCK**

**25 CITY OR STATE SERVICES INTEGRATED INTO PROGRAM**

**\$4,500 VOLUNTEER TIME CONTRIBUTED PER BLOCK**

**12% ENERGY SAVINGS PER HOUSEHOLD**

# Partner Feedback



**“THE LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM IS A WINNER!”**  
MAYOR JOHN STREET

**“REMARKABLY EFFECTIVE! IMMENSE POTENTIAL TO  
TRANSFORM BEHAVIOR AND NEIGHBORHOODS.”**  
CHRIS PATUSKY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
FELS SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, UNIVERSITY OF PA

**“ONE OF THE TRUE SUCCESS STORIES IN  
CITY GOVERNMENT.”**  
JOHN HADALSKI, PROJECT DIRECTOR, CITY MANAGER’ S OFFICE

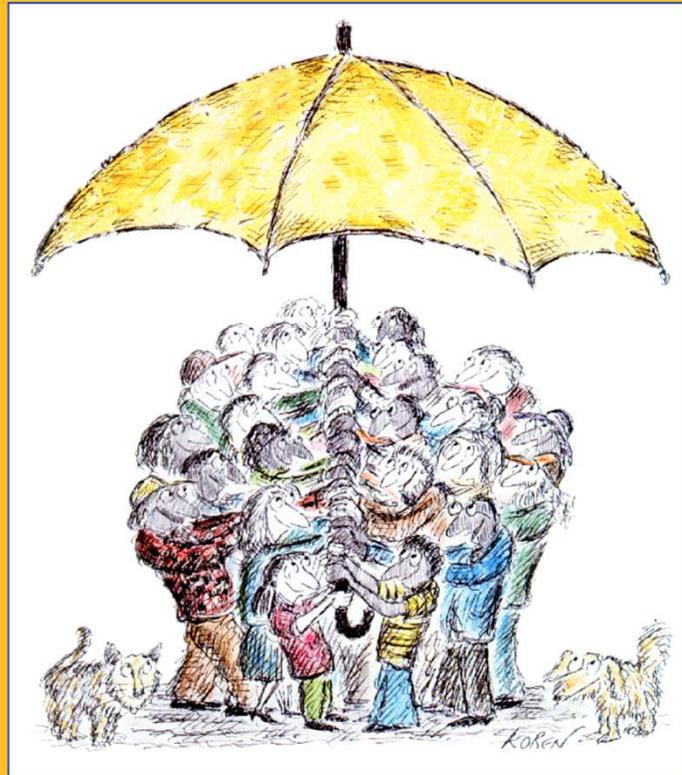
**Can this methodology help create more disaster resilient communities?**



*Ready New York's*

# *All Together Now*<sup>sm</sup>

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Create A Resilient New York City



*A Program for Household Emergency Preparedness*

A Program of Empowerment Institute in Partnership with the New York City  
Office of Emergency Management

# Results



**PARTICIPANTS – 1,500**

**ACTIONS TAKEN PER HOUSEHOLD – 11**

**INFORMATION MEETING RECRUITMENT RATE – 68%**

**TOP ACTIONS TAKEN – FOOD AND WATER, GO BAG,  
LIGHTING, TELEPHONE, ASSEMBLING WARM  
CLOTHING, HOUSEHOLD SAFETY, RADIO, FIRST AID  
KIT, FIRE PREVENTION**

# Participant Feedback

**“I FOUND THE PROGRAM EXCEPTIONAL AND INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT.”**

**“I WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE ORGANIZED LAYOUT, ACTIONS WERE TERRIFIC... EASY TO DO... VERY USER FRIENDLY.”**

**“FAVORITE PART WAS THE MEETINGS... GOT A LOT OF IDEAS AND FELT VERY SUPPORTED BY THE GROUP.”**

**“I AM A SENIOR AND LIVE ALONE. IF AN EMERGENCY HAPPENS I NOW KNOW WHAT TO DO. IT IS VERY COMFORTING!”**

# Social DNA Source Code



**RIGHT SIZE GROUP – 5 to 8 households**

**EASE OF USE – modular topics and action recipes**

**GROUP TO TEAM – team purpose statement, team leader and shared leadership responsibilities**

**GROUP PROCESS PROTOCOL – peer support system, accountability and feedback**

**PERFORMANCE – structured meeting agendas and expectation**

**95% COMPLETION RATE, SUBSTANTIVE  
BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND TEAM  
REPLICATION**

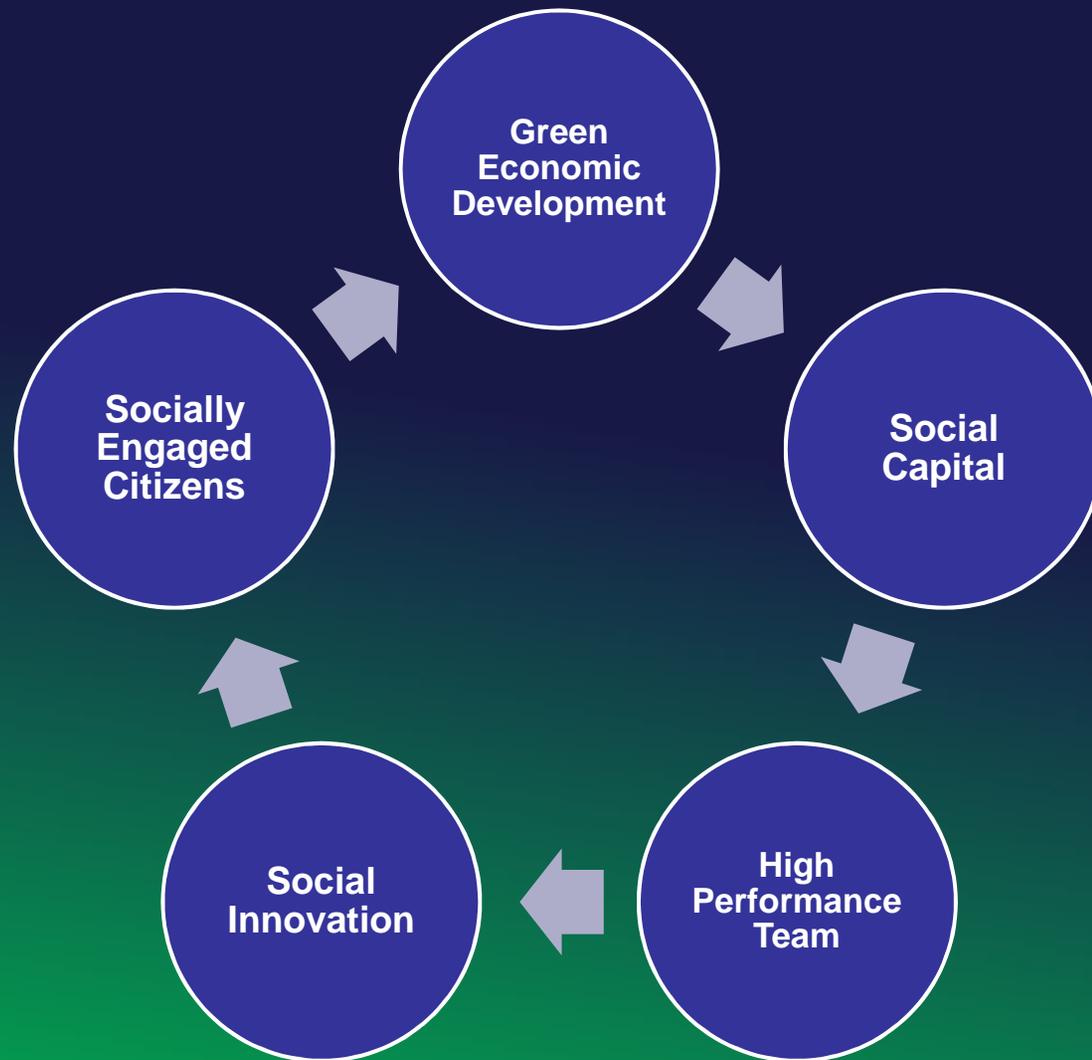
# THE ADJACENT POSSIBLE: THE PATTERN OF INNOVATION IN NATURAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS

**“Think of a house that magically expands with each door you open. You begin in a room with four doors, each leading to a new door you haven't visited yet. These four rooms are the adjacent possible. The path of evolution is a consistent exploration of the adjacent possible.”**

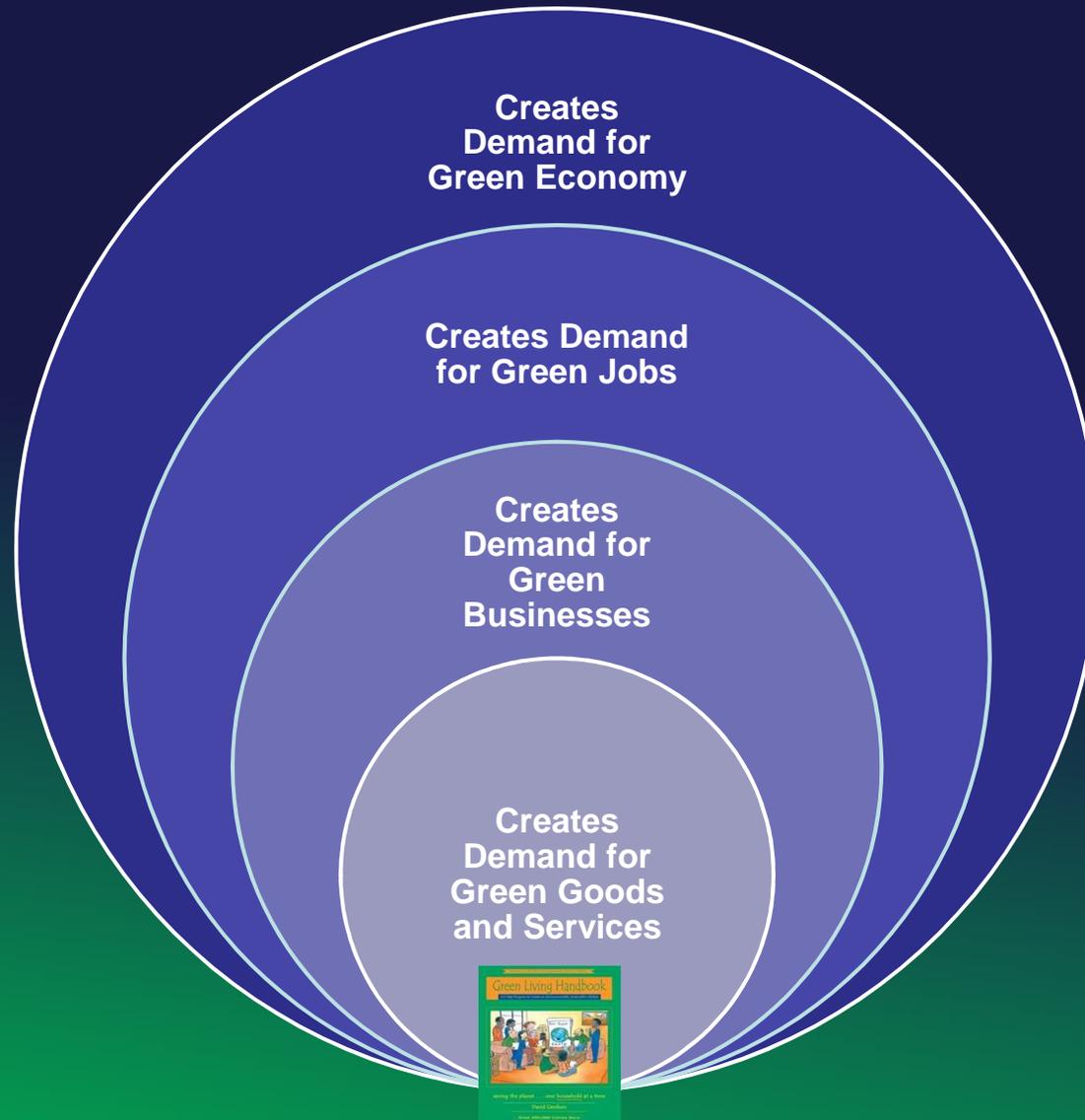
**WHERE GOOD IDEAS COME FROM: THE NATURAL HISTORY  
OF INNOVATION – STEVEN JOHNSON**



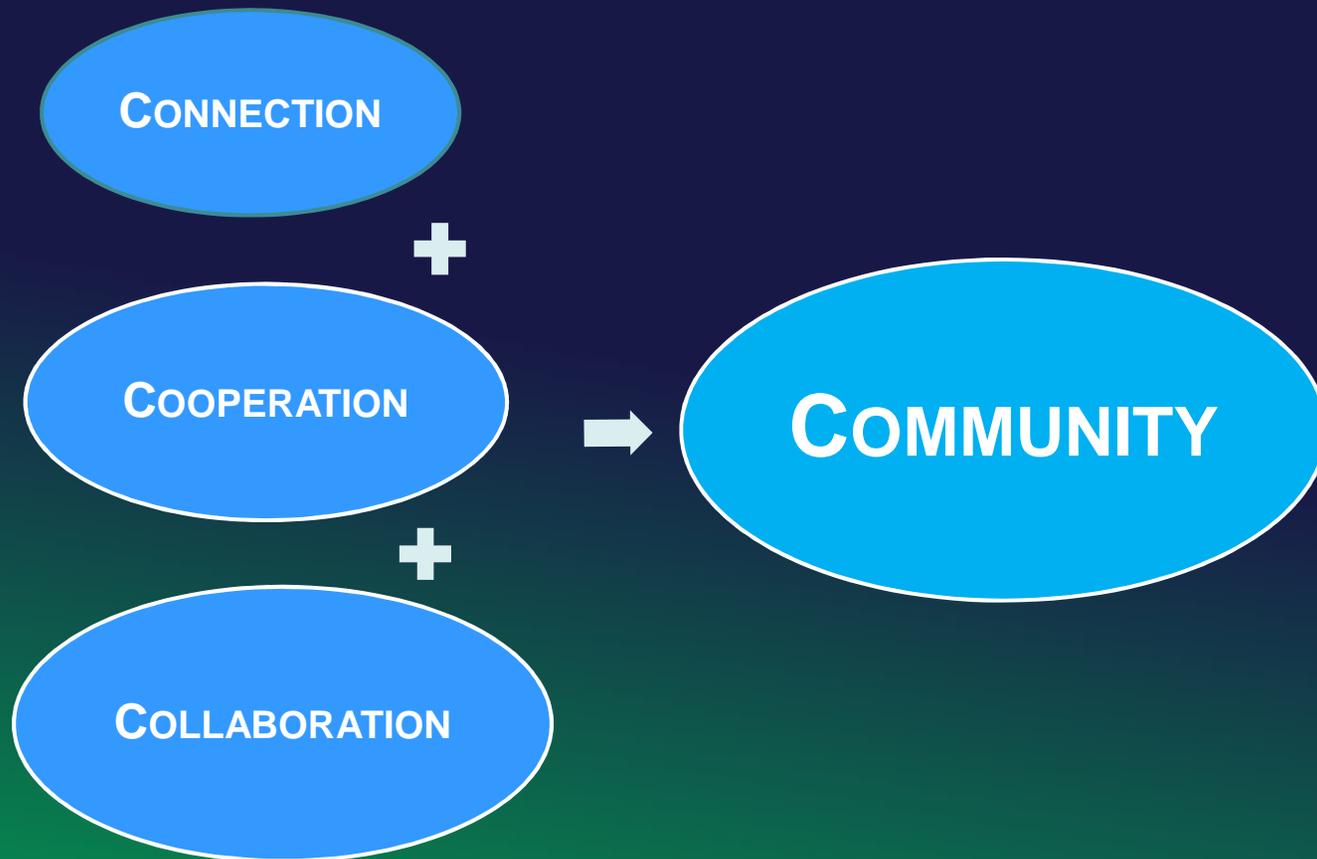
# AN EXPLORATION OF FIVE ROOMS OF THE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT NETWORK ADJACENT POSSIBLE



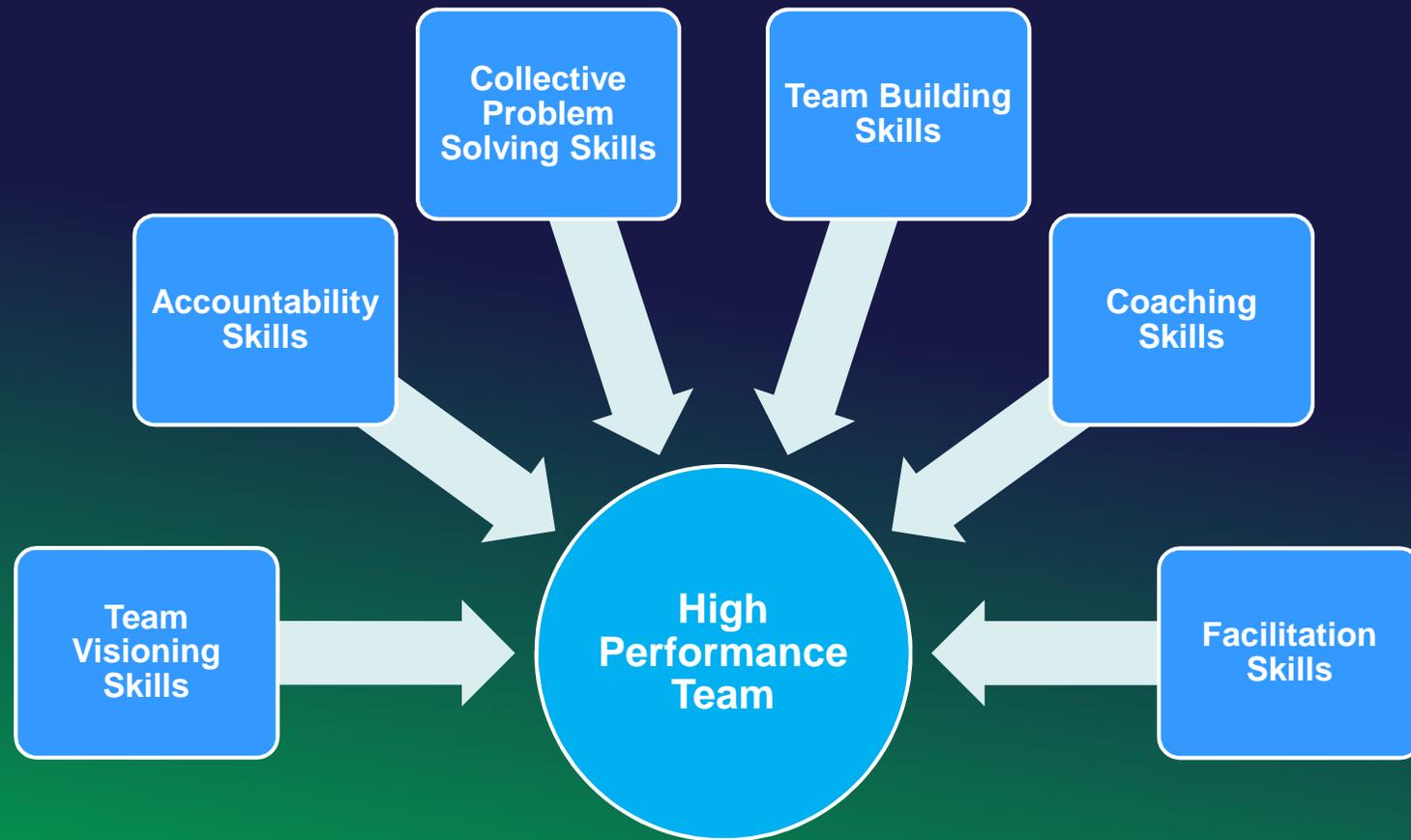
# GREEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



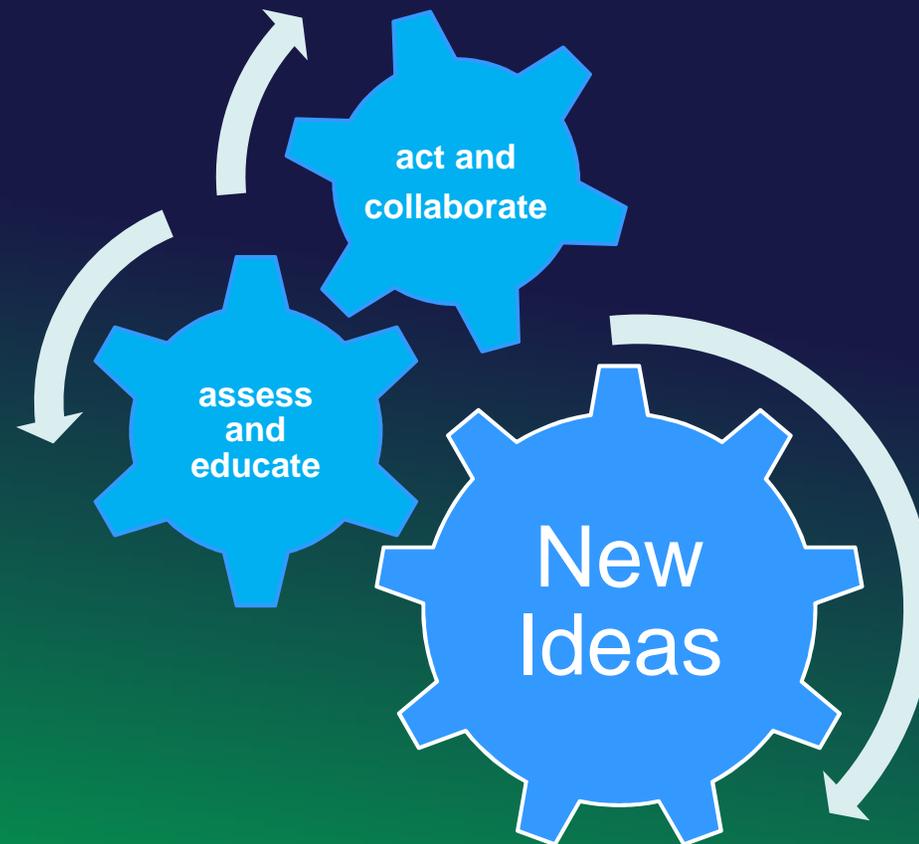
# SOCIAL CAPITAL



# HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM



# SOCIAL INNOVATION



# SOCIALLY ENGAGED CITIZENS

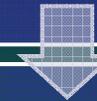
**Block Leader**

**Program Coach**

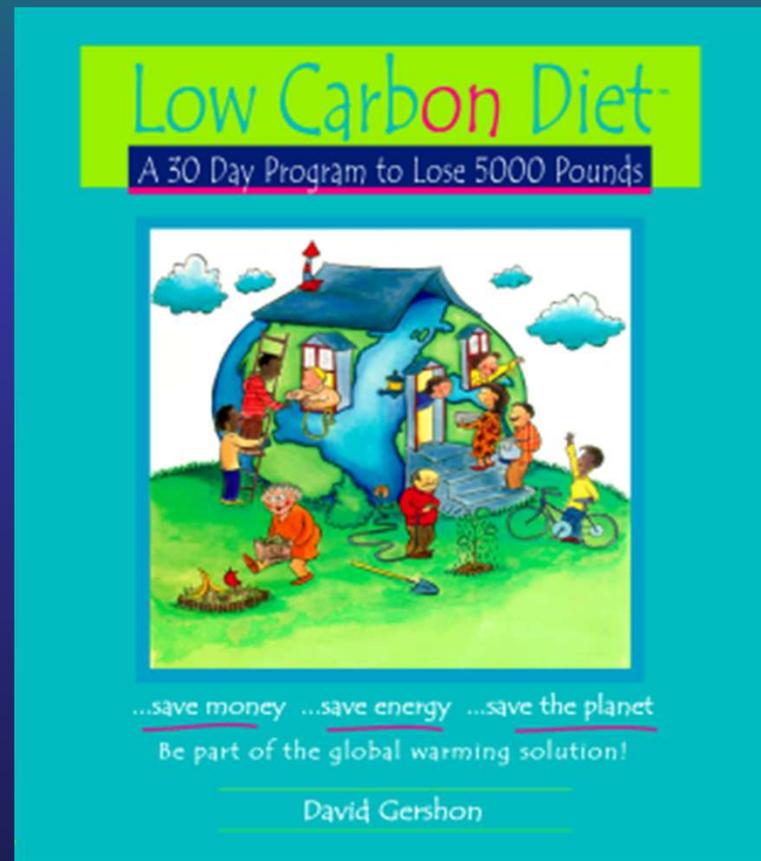
**Political Advocate**

**Social Entrepreneur**

**Civic Leader**



# A Deep Dive: Low Carbon Diet and the Cool Community



# **LOW CARBON DIET FRAMEWORK**

**CALCULATE CO<sub>2</sub> FOOTPRINT**

**CHOOSE FROM 24 ACTIONS TO LOSE 5,000 POUNDS  
OR MORE AND ENGAGE OTHERS**

**USE EcoTEAM FOR MOTIVATION AND SUPPORT**



# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

**MEETING 1  
TEAM BUILDING**

**MEETING 2  
COOL LIFESTYLE PRACTICES**

**MEETING 3  
COOL HOUSEHOLD SYSTEMS**

**MEETING 4  
HELPING OTHERS LOSE UNWANTED  
POUNDS**

# Community Engagement: The Global Warming Café









# RESULTS

**PORTLAND PILOT AVERAGED 22% CO<sub>2</sub> REDUCTION PER HOUSEHOLD AND 41% BLOCK PARTICIPATION**

**1,500 HOUSEHOLDS FROM MCAN AND VT P&L AVERAGING 25% CO<sub>2</sub> REDUCTION**

**HUNDREDS OF GLOBAL WARMING CAFES**

**OVER 300 US COMMUNITIES USING THE PROGRAM**

**TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

**PROGRAM HAS SPREAD TO CHINA, JAPAN, KOREA, CANADA, UNITED KINGDOM AND AUSTRALIA**

# COOL COMMUNITY ORGANIZING MODEL: A WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH



# **TAKING THE COOL COMMUNITY MODEL TO SCALE: WHAT?**

**Sample Population – 100,000**

**2.5 People Per Household – 40,000 households**

**Maximum Participation – 85% or 34,000**

**8 households Per EcoTeam – 4,250 EcoTeams**

**Maximum Goal – 85 partner groups forming up to 50 EcoTeams in 3 years**



# **Taking The Cool Community Model to Scale: How?**

ASSESS IMPACT, MODEL PROCESS, BEHAVIOR AND DESIGN STRATEGY

ASSESS IMPACT, MODEL PROCESS, BEHAVIOR AND DESIGN STRATEGY

**STEP 1: calculate residential carbon footprint**

**STEP 2: envision impact at scale**

**STEP 3: integrate into existing activities**

**STEP 4: master the form**

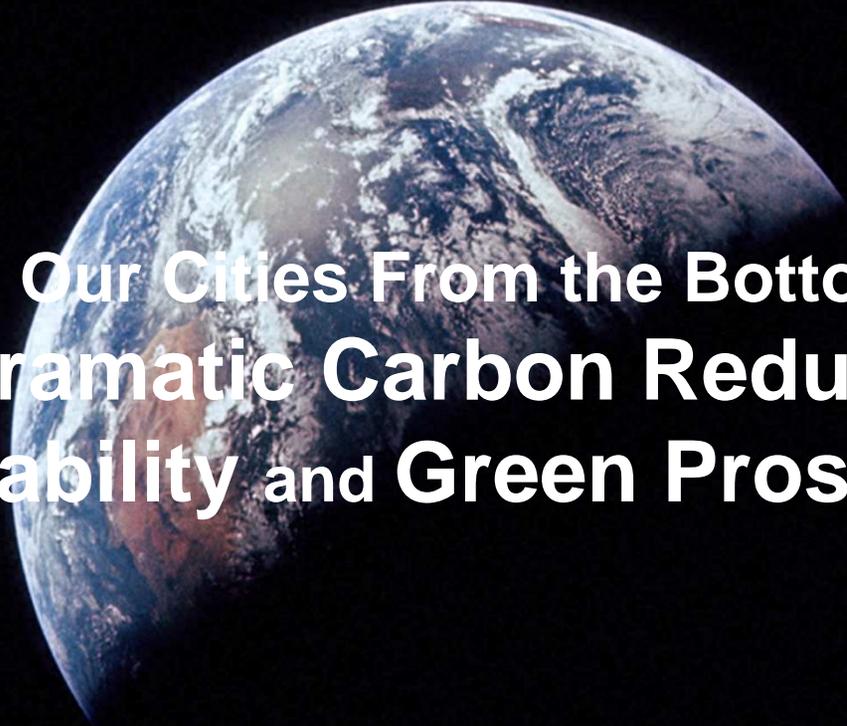
**STEP 5: measure and iterate**



# **COOL CITY CHALLENGE**

## **A PLATFORM FOR SCALING THE COOL COMMUNITY**

**Reinventing Our Cities From the Bottom Up  
to Achieve Dramatic Carbon Reduction,  
Vibrant Livability and Green Prosperity**



# **Cool City Challenge**

## **A Platform for Scaling the Cool Community**

**3 American and 3 Brazilian cities serve  
as “teaching cities”**

**Minimum 25% of citizens reduce carbon  
footprint 25% over 3 years**

**Minimum of 40% retrofit their homes**

# **COOL CITY CHALLENGE**

## **A PLATFORM FOR SCALING THE COOL COMMUNITY**

**Green economic development** around  
heightened demand for green goods and services

Social capital invested in creating **livable** and  
**resilient neighborhoods**

In collaboration with a local university develop a plan  
to become **carbon neutral by 2025**

# **Cool City Challenge**

## **A Platform for Scaling the Cool Community**

**Design as a whole system solution**

**Create research study to assist in dissemination**

**Launch in June 2012 at “Rio + 20”**

**Announce results at 2016 Rio Olympics and  
disseminate worldwide**



**“AGAIN AND AGAIN IN HISTORY SOME PEOPLE  
WAKE UP. THEY HAVE NO GROUND  
IN THE CROWD AND THEY MOVE TO BROADER,  
DEEPER LAWS.**



**THEY CARRY STRANGE CUSTOMS WITH THEM  
AND DEMAND ROOM FOR BOLD AND AUDACIOUS  
ACTION. THE FUTURE SPEAKS RUTHLESSLY  
THROUGH THEM. THEY CHANGE THE  
WORLD.”** RAINER MARIA RILKE



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