WHAT IS DRAGON DREAMING

From John Croft Updated 16th June 2012

## THE SHORTEST DEFINITION

Dragon Dreaming – is love in action

## THE ONE LINE DEFINITION

Dragon Dreaming – a way of making 100% of your dreams come true.

## THAT I USE IN WORKSHOPS

Dragon Dreaming – a living systems approach to building successful organisations and projects for the Great Turning.

## CREATED AT A WORKSHOP

Dragon Dreaming – an integral design philosophy that takes sustainability into account in every aspect of our lives.

## AN ENHANCED VERSION FROM WORKSHOPS

Dragon Dreaming – a living systems approach, drawing upon insights and inspiration from history, science and Aboriginal cultures and diverse spiritual traditions, that assists in the creation of outrageously successful organisations and projects, for the Great Turning of the world away from a cancerous culture of limitless growth towards a culture that sustains the unfolding of life on Earth.

## DRAWING ON THE WORK OF THE GAIA FOUNDATION

Dragon Dreaming – an easily applied technique pioneered by the Gaia Foundation of Western Australia in order to fulfil its objectives by integrating

* ***personal growth*** - commitment to your own healing and empowerment
* ***community building*** - strengthening the communities of which you are a part
* ***service to the Earth*** - enhancing the wellbeing and flourishing of all life

and which for over 25 years, has been used to varying degrees in over 700 successful projects, and is now spreading rapidly across all continents.

## FROM WEBPAGE

Dragon Dreaming is a holistic method for the implementation of creative, collaborative, sustainable projects.

The dream of a peaceful world and the awareness of the global challenges in our society are diving us. Within, personal growth of every single person, community building and an active responsibility for our earth are same weighted in the focus.

Dragon Dreaming is for dreamers and pragmatists, for warriors and discouraged, for optimists and idealists, for philosophers and nature lovers, for spiritual people and seekers.

Dragon Dreaming wants to create awareness for the connection with all life - wants to live cooperation, responsibility, interconnection - for transformation towards a peaceful, safe and sound world.

## FOR BUREAUCRATIC ORGANISATIONS

Dragon Dreaming – an approach to consensual participatory strategic planning for projects and organisations in the field of Ecologically Sustainable Community Economic Development. It enables rapid feedback that builds collective wisdom, and fosters adaptive capacity enabling individuals, groups, enterprises, communities, and government bodies to adjust creatively and positively to situations of rapid and potentially chaotic change.

## A NEW VERSION FROM THE RIO EARTH SUMMIT 2012

Dragon Dreaming is a world wide, open-source interactive networking phenomenon, which provides technology and philosophy that assists

* activists and other individuals
* informal community projects and groups
* non-government organisations and associations
* government and business enterprises

with advice, information, training and support to organise their actions, activities, events, celebrations, tactics, strategies, objectives, goals, missions, visions, dreams, ethics, ideologies and philosophies of life consistent with the principle goals of

* ***personal growth*** – a commitment to the healing and empowerment of all concerned
* ***community building*** – a strengthening of the diverse communities involved
* ***service to the Earth*** – an enhancement of the wellbeing and flourishing of all life

## A DESCRIPTIVE VERSION

Dragon Dreaming – a way of allowing us to become aware of the limitations of our personal comfort zones, and of the cultural win-lose games of which we are a part, that prevent us from achieving the goals we seek for a rewarding and fulfilling life for all, both humans and the more than human world in which we live. It allows us to transcend these limits through a deep engagement of ourselves with the environments in which we live, integrating theory and practice in an effective way that connects our dreams and visions, our plans, and our actions with deep celebration. Drawing on indigenous wisdom, it enables us to build pathways to the sustaining future that we all desire.

To make your dreams come true you must have a dream and then build a project around your dream. Our research shows that ninety percent of projects get stuck in the dreaming stage. This is usually because people do not share their dreams. So the first task in making your dream come true is to share your dream in such a way that you build a dream team around your dream to make it come true. If you can do this the second stage is to create a plan. But with conventional hierarchical planning, 90% of projects fail to work according to plan. Conventional planning just creates two groups of people, neither of whom are really committed, and who can blame the other when things go wrong. This is because the planners in control blame the people who have to do the project, and the doers blame the people who plan for being out of touch with reality. To make your dreams come true you need to integrate the planning and the doing, creating a project that both groups are committed to and support each other. And then our research has shown that 90% of projects fail to last longer than 3 years. This usually happens when those involved get burn-out, need to move on, or their interests change. This is because people leave out the 4th step, which is to celebrate. Celebration is the way to avoid burnout – and it connects the doing stage back to the dream.

But you can see from these statistics only one in a thousand dreams normally come true. This is a huge waste of dreaming, and most people know this so they give up on their dreams. They compromise, settle for second best or finish up surviving instead of truly living. They accept that they are wrong, or not good enough, accepting the disempowering judgements of others.

Dragon dreaming recognises that these four steps – Dreaming, Planning, Doing and Celebrating – represents four kinds of skill sets, usually 4 different kinds of personalities that you need for your projects to come true. But there is a problem. If you are a “Doer” who likes getting things done, your biggest frustration is to have to work with dreamers all day. And if you are a Planner, you find the Celebrators are chaotic and disorganised, wanting immediate gratification, while the Celebrators find the Planners are anally retentive perfectionists, who are just boring. But you will probably need all four kinds of people to make your dream come true, and so if you have a balanced project team you will probably have a lot of conflict. Dragon Dreaming has discovered the best way to deal with this conflict is to make your project playful. Get your team to play the game and when the game is finished your project is up and running and is outrageously successful. With Dragon Dreaming you can make 100% of your dreams come true.

## A VERSION FROM 2006

Community organisations of all kinds are using obsolete and destructive methods for planning and carrying out their activities, that not only fail to resolve the problems with which they are working, but these methods in fact become part of the problem. Discouragement, ineffectiveness and apathy are the results. Currently less than one in a thousand of our dreams come true. Today, we are facing a collective systematic contradiction, where the systems we use to resolve problems, only make matters worse, and things cannot improve until these systems are abandoned. But abandoning our failing systems does not mean that we just let anything happen. *Dragon Dreaming*, based upon Living Systems Theory and Deep Ecology, provides organisation members with new ways of deepening their identification with the living Earth, and provides communities with a renewal of energy to work for our maximising their creativity and common purpose. All organisations and their members are caught at the edge of a chasm between who we are and who we might become. How do we build a bridge to unite the two? We need to release the power of our creative vitality. But how is this to happen? How do we maximise our creative potentials on a scale never attempted before? “Dragon Dreaming” shows us a way.

In this workshop we draw upon the long experience of the West Australian Gaia Foundation, together with deep understanding of indigenous Australian Aboriginal and other wisdom. Participants will discover a simple, easily applied method of navigating around our community and personal nightmares in a way that allows us to create outrageously successful projects that transform our everyday lives and fill them with new meaning.

By opening our sensory and extra-sensory perception, re-inhabiting our body, and feeling our heart, we come to value our intuition. From our entire being we can then hear the Dream of the Earth itself calling us forth to explore the strength and ingenuity that it wants to flow through us, achieving effective sustainable projects that heal our communities, ourselves and the Earth.

People don’t plan to fail they only fail in their planning. But daily experience teaches us that 90% of our plans fail to work as we intended. How then do we make our dreams come true? How do we avoid the nightmares? By developing the understanding of who we really are in the web of life, “Dragon Dreaming” shows how a holistic Karabirrdt (Spider’s Web in the Nyungar Aboriginal language of Australia) that can be applied to “playing” any project we wish to undertake. Our experiential practices help us to cultivate a place of refuge in difficult moments of our life, so that we can act effectively out of a clear mind, a fresh spirit and a peaceful heart.

Where our fears reside, there hides the Dragon, the true source of our personal and collective power. We cannot slay the Dragon but we can face it without flinching, harnessing its energy to our great purposes. Going forth to re-engage in and with a dysfunctional world takes great strength. We cannot do it alone, without celebration and acknowledging who we are, and purposes of our own unique contributions. How do we build celebration into all aspects of living? Only then do our personal, community and organisational lives become truly sustainable, contributing to the Great Turning from a cancerous society of never-ending growth, to a world that is truly life sustaining.

No-one likes being a sleep-walker. These workshops are for all people who are “awake” who wish to lead a meaningful life and make a difference in their world. No matter whether you are involved in your community or environment or not, whether you are already engaged in personal or collective projects, or are only tentatively dreaming about an idea to which you would like to dedicate some of your time and effort, this workshop is for you. In order to maximise its value we limit numbers (space is generally limited) , so please book early.

## A HISTORICAL VERSION ACKNOWLEDGING CONTRIBUTERS

Dragon Dreaming began in the south west corner of Australia. This land is special, it is the land of the Noongar people, the indigenous inhabitants of the oldest continent on earth, the most ancient part of Gondwanaland. There they built a sustainable culture that lasted more than 70,000 years, surviving the coming of the Europeans. It has inspired Dragon Dreaming from the beginning.

The region is centred on the modern city of Perth, arguably the most isolated city of the planet, located in the bioregion of Wadjuk Noongar land. Dragon Dreaming began there, incubated within the work of the Western Australian Gaia Foundation, which is a loose network of individuals and groups, born of the dreams of its founders, Vivienne Elanta and John Croft.

Since 1986, the Dragon Dreaming methods have grown and matured, with the ongoing work of many other activists; Helene Fisher, Lynda Stella Maris, Mark Fonderie, Paul Jack, Janet Risdic, Jo Vallentine, Scott Ludlam, Rodney Vlais, Robyn Williams, Chris Lee, Phoebe Coyne, Leith and Olwyn Maddock, Paul Pule, Olly Watkins, Sam Nelson, Bryce Martin and many others. Over a 23 year period, it was there involved in more than 611 projects which aimed to meet its objectives.

It originally grew out of the inspiring Deep Ecology work of Joanna Macy and John Seed. It has also been inspired by the Social Artistry and Mystery Schools of Jean Houston, the Buddhist Activism of Thic Nhat Hanh and the Nonviolent Communication work of Marshall Rosenberg, Dom Barter and has drawn strength from many other influences. Since 2004 Dragon Dreaming has been spreading around the world. Gaia Foundations on the Western Australian model have started in Victoria through the work of Dot Green, Glenda Lindsay, Ruth Yeatman and Rodney Vlais. In Tasmania it has been used by the Karuna Community. Groups have also started in South Australia and Queensland.

In 2006 Dragon Dreaming spread to the USA, at San Luiz Obispo, the Bay area of San Francisco, Marin and Mendicino in Northern California, Eugene in Oregon and Vashon Island near Seattle, and in Accord, Ithaca and Syracuse, various talks and workshops were organised.

In the UK, through the work of Stephan Harding, Dragon Dreaming came to Schumacher College, and there became part of the rich background used by Rob Hopkins, Naresh Giangrande and others involved in Transition Town Totnes, and elements of the method have spread to the thousands of transition initiatives around the world. In Central Europe, Dragon Dreaming was used by German, Swiss and Austrian permaculture movements. It has been championed by Julia Kommerell of Sieben Linden and Michael Plesse of Orgoville. It received enormous support from Kosha Joubert, then President of the Global Ecovillage Network of Europe and Africa, and it has now been used in workshops from Ireland to Ankara, Portugal to Kazzan in Russia, Finland to Accra, the Congo and South Africa, and to Orissa in India. Others have made use of it, such as Jayanthy Siva of the Sandhi Institute of Sri Lanka. Ita Gabert has taken Dragon Dreaming to Brazil where it has been very active, and Sven Jung has taken it to New Zealand. Groups modelled on the Australian empty centred model have started in Turkey, Switzerland, Austria, France and Spain. In Austria it is being taken into conventional business by Erich Kolenaty and Katherina Liebenberger, and to youth by Josef Kreitmayer, spreading from there to Eastern Europe by others. As of 2012 there are more than 70 people who have been trained as Trainers, and more than 500 people now use parts of the method in their projects and organisations. Dragon Dreaming materials have been translated into many languages, such as Italian, through the work of Ellen Berman; Portuguese, by Felipe Simas; Turkish, by Ali and Inci Gokman; French, by Nicolas Briet; Russian, by Tatiana Guzman and Andrea Hapke and Spanish, by Antonio Scotti. An Interactive International Platform for Dragon Dreaming Project Design, has been started by Angel Hernandez, Manuela Bosch, Ulrike Rieman, Rahel Schweikert, Florian Mueller and others. Ronnie Wytek and Selke Muekendorf are training to be trainers of trainers, and Catriona Blanke is doing a 2 year Dragon Dreaming apprenticeship. The work continues to spread rapidly worldwide, and has been used at the Copenhagen Climate Summit, the Rio + 20 Summit of the People, and elsewhere.