

Guidelines for Working Regeneratively





Introduction

The Regenerative Leadership research group within the Centre of Expertise Mission Zero has collectively created the guidelines below to co-create a way of working together that is regenerative for our colleagues and our team. By sharing these guidelines, we hope to inspire others to also reflect about the way they are working and how they would like to work moving forward.

Because these guidelines are part of ongoing research, we welcome questions, ideas and stories about how they have worked for you. If you would like to share something with us or would like our help in implementing some of the guidelines in your team, please reach out to Aniek Draaisma (A.J.Draaisma@hhs.nl) or Ju Laclau Massaglia (J.LaclauMassaglia@hhs.nl).



1. Tend to your own soil first

Caring for your own well-being is essential to sustain regenerative work. By regularly pausing, resting and grounding ourselves, we can remain present and effective.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Take short breaks after meetings to give yourself time and space to reflect, write down some action points or simply breathe.
- Create personal rituals to mark the start and end of your workday. This could be as simple as closing your laptop at the end of the work day and going for a walk outside to disconnect from work and reconnect with yourself.
- Practice checking in with your body. Are you tense or tired? Do you need movement or stillness?





2. Start before you are ready

Trust emergence by starting small, observing, adapting, playing and allowing things to unfold with lightness and humour.

Regenerative work grows organically. Ideas don't need to be perfect to be worth trying out.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Begin drafts, pilots, or meetings with a spirit of curiosity rather than fixed plans. Be open and let them unfold organically.
- Celebrate first steps, even when they're messy, and allow yourself to enjoy the process of growing ideas, even when they're imperfect.
- Allow space for not knowing in yourself and others without it being a negative thing. Not knowing is the first step towards learning.



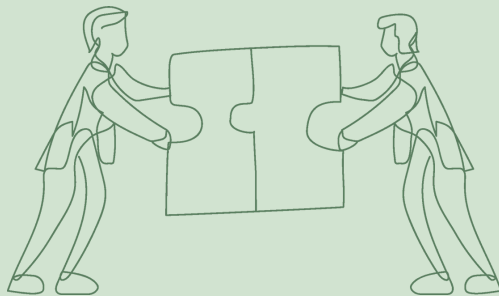
3. Water relationships daily

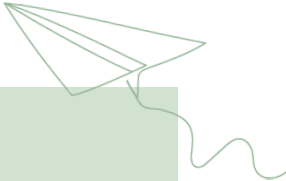
Relationships are the roots of regenerative work, so nourish them with attention and trust. By being interdependent and together, we can strengthen our individual and group resilience.

Regenerative teams trust each other, share vulnerabilities and hold space for the full human experience.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Make room to ask how people are really doing in and outside of work. This will allow you to know how they are feeling and what mindset they bring into the collaboration.
- Consider being honest when something from your personal life is affecting your energy. In the same way that you can hold space for other people's concerns, trust that they will care and hold space for yours.
- Express appreciation when someone's presence or actions have helped you. It is good for you to reflect on this nice experience and for them to hear the positive impact they've had on you.



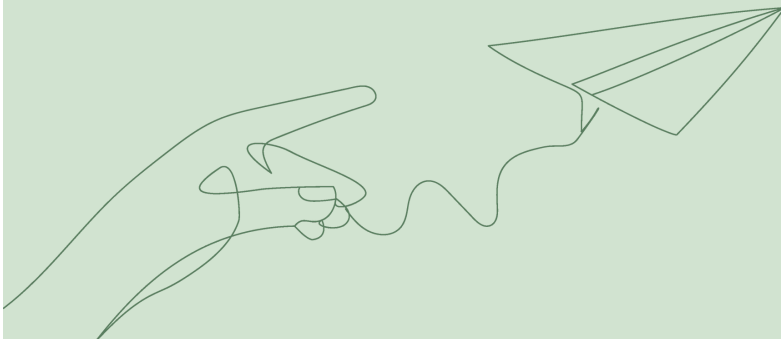


4. Compost the status quo

Question inherited ways of working and be open to doing things differently. Moving towards more regenerative ways of working often involves letting go of urgency, efficiency for efficiency's sake and institutional habits that deplete rather than nourish. Sometimes this asks you to actively unlearn what you know and do, to try something new.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- When looking at your or your team's way of working, ask: Is this way of working actually serving us or is it just familiar? Are we making these choices out of love or fear?
- Choose one recurring task to redesign with care and slowness. By implementing regenerative principles on an aspect of your work, you can start making impact.
- Advocate for what matters. This can mean pushing back gently against artificial deadlines when possible or working towards quality instead of quantity.





5. Grow from diversity

Diversity allows us to include diverse voices, backgrounds, perspectives and ways of knowing. Like in ecosystems, diversity can help teams thrive and become more resilient. This includes honouring different emotions, cultures and experiences.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Use inclusive language and welcome various forms of knowledge, including non-academic ones. By looking at how other communities or cultures know, you can broaden your own knowledge and find new ways of doing things.
- When inviting reflection, ask: Which voices are missing here? How can we find out what these voices would add to this conversation? How can we bring them to the table?
- Value silence, passivity, emotion, reflection and body language as valid and important contributions.

If possible, try to make space for them as well.

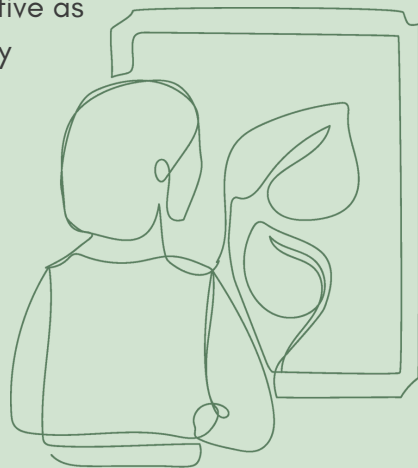


6. Embody the talk

Regenerative values become real only when we live them, not just talk about them. Be the person, colleague and friend that you describe. This is a way to anchor abstract concepts in concrete behaviours and practices that help you become more regenerative.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Allow yourself time to grow and learn. Slow down when rushing doesn't help so that you can match your pace with your values.
- Make time for deep listening. Instead of rushing to reply, give yourself a moment to take in what you have heard and think about a thoughtful answer.
- Check in with yourself and your team regularly. Does this way of working feel as regenerative as your message? Are there any improvement areas that you can still work on?



7. Keep the commons healthy

Protect and nurture the shared space to ensure it supports all those who enter it. This space includes not only the physical space, but also the relational and institutional ones. Your space will thrive the most when everyone contributes to its health and holds each other in care.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Co-create team guidelines that support safety, honesty, lightness and kindness. Then, try to keep these values and guidelines in mind when acting and relating to others.
- Gently call attention when the group falls into draining patterns. Sometimes this can be daunting, so talking about it with a trusted colleague before bringing it to the attention of the whole team might help.
- Share emotional and logistical maintenance tasks. This will encourage everyone to carry a portion of their weight, instead of placing all of it on a few colleagues.



8. Focus with intention

Let inner and shared priorities guide your actions. Often incoming messages and urgent noise can distract us from the long-term, important aspects that regenerative work needs. This also involves giving yourself time to experience your inner state and the world around.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Block time for focused, deep work. This might seem out of reach at times, so starting with short stretches or sharing it with your colleagues as accountability buddies.
- Turn off notifications during team sessions or reflection time. By temporarily removing urgency and setting allocated times to check emails, it becomes easier to focus on what really matters and work towards long-term goals.
- Pause and reflect before replying. Ask yourself: Is this the right moment to reply? The right format? Small steps like not sending emails outside of working hours can help your colleagues focus with intention as well.



9. Process over perfection

Value and honour the way things are done, not just the end result or having finished the task. The way we work leaves a trace. Regenerative work means choosing processes that uplift and facilitate instead of exhausting and controlling.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Accept unfinished or evolving outputs when they carry depth. Sometimes not viewing the initial idea as a finished product can make space to revisit the ideas and improve or complete them later.
- When reflecting by yourself or with your team about a project, focus not only on the outcomes or results achieved, but also on the feelings and experiences you had during the project.
- Make and hold space for joy, humour and beauty in your process.





10. Protect what's fragile

Regenerative change can be slow and subtle. So, nurture and protect what is emergent. It is okay if it still feels undefined. You can revisit intentions later in the process and adapt as you grow.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Make time each month to revisit your values and principles. Are your process and outcomes still in alignment with them? Is there any need to change course to increase this alignment?
- Celebrate small changes. If they feel good, they are worth being excited about and enjoying, even if they are invisible externally.
- Create gentle reminders and mechanisms not to slip back into default degenerative modes. This could involve agreeing with some colleagues to keep each other accountable or to include some time for reflection on this issue in weekly or monthly check-in meetings.

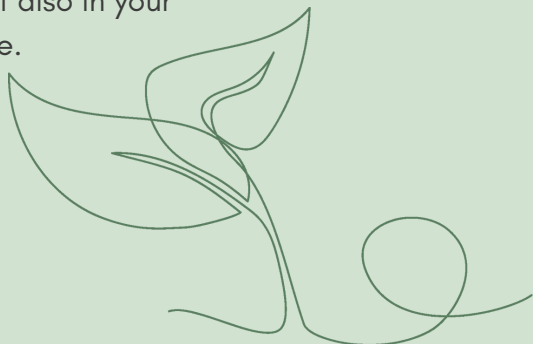


11. Clear space for potential

Letting go is not wasteful. In nature, dead leaves and spent plants have a place in the ecosystem by nourishing new growth. The same goes with outdated roles, ideas and ambitions. Instead of clinging to or discarding them, we can choose to lay them down with care, taking what is still good and allowing what is not to return to the soil.

Some ways to put this into practice are:

- If you are ready to let go of something, like a project, belief or identity, name it and thank it for what it gave you. You would not have gotten to where you are without it. So, recognize its value before letting go of it.
- Create a small letting-go ritual for yourself or your team. This could be as simple as writing down what you are ready to part with and burying it or burning it with care.
- Keep a seasonal reflection journal to notice patterns within yourself. This could involve growth, decay and renewal in your professional life, but also in your personal or relational one.



Colofon

"Guidelines for Working Regeneratively" was created through collaborative sessions and active co-creation of all members of the Regenerative Leadership research group, which belongs to the Centre of Expertise Mission Zero at The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

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This is a living document. We welcome all feedback, thoughts and experiences, and will most likely continue to develop these guidelines through research over time.

