

# Speakers' Corner

From the Next Practice Symposium September 19 2013 follows an executive summary of the speeches held by the six keynote speakers and a sneak peak into the two Circle Dialogues which followed the speeches.

You can also watch the interviews with the speakers by following the links under each of them.

[All the interviews](#)



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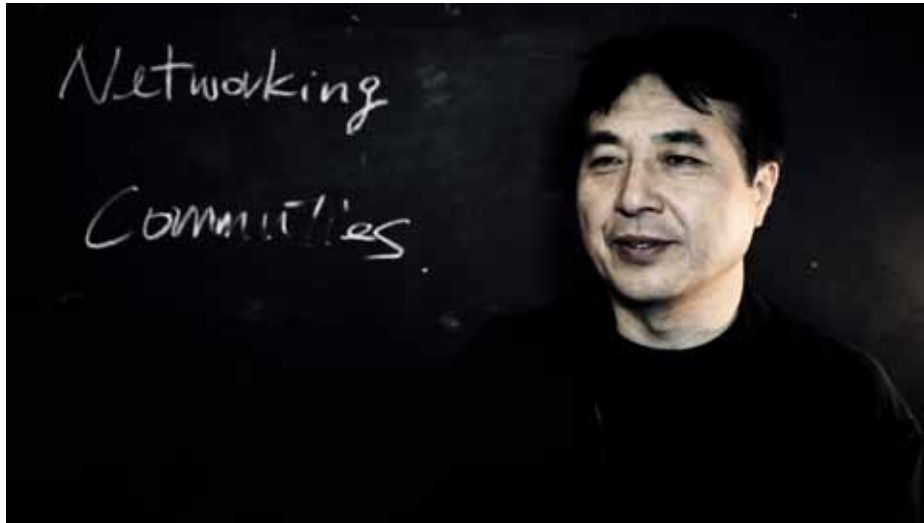
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IIDA Tetsunari is Executive Director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies in Japan and author of the famous book "Energy Democracy". Tetso is cooperating with the Energy Academy on "software", e.g. process models and facilitation of community power.

Watch the interview with Tetso

See slides

### IIDA Tetsunari (Tetso): Community power in Japan

IIDA Tetsunari described the new reality in Japan: Renewable energy is on the rise while nuclear energy is being phased out. Add to this the fact that large-scale power is becoming more distributed and decentralized. A man said in an interview at this year's MIT Energy Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts: "Consumers are realizing they don't need the power industry at all." (Source: Bloomberg, 2013). New things are happening all over the world.

Local networks are the drivers of this development, and ownership has also started to change in Japan. We import "community wind", that is community power processes from Denmark, and it works. The three most important factors when involving stakeholders from the community in the wind power, solar energy and biomass solutions are: Local ownership, local decision-making and local profit sharing.

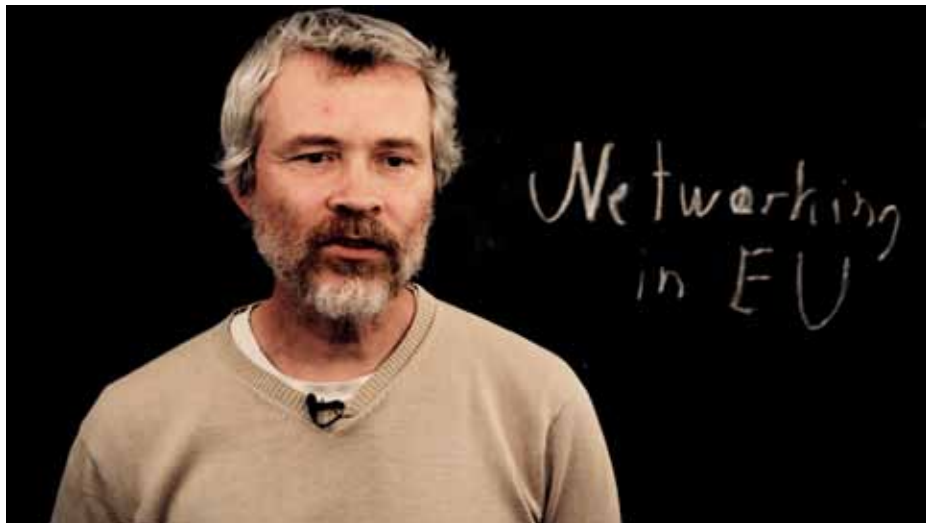
After Fukushima, community power has been on the rise in many areas of Japanese society. At first, the disaster ruined the market for tourism and local food production, but now the local stores are booming again and connecting to international networks. We are at a crossroads between the old and the new paradigm.

AT A CROSSROAD	
Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Centralized	Distributed
Supply push	Demand (Social) pull
Hierarchy	Network
Fossil & nuke	Renewable energy & Energy efficiency
Economic growth	Fairness, justice

See slides

At the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies in Japan a meeting will be held in January 2014 in which Soeren Hermansen will also participate.





Gunnar Boye Olesen is the coordinator at INFORSE Europe. The Energy Academy collaborates with INFORSE on public participation, conferences and workshops.

**Watch the interview with Gunnar**

### **Gunnar Boye Olesen: EU partnerships on climate improvements – do they work?**

Soeren Hermansen jokingly introduces Gunnar Boye Olesen as an old hippie and says that Gunnar has been the spokesman of many of the Danish environmental grassroots organisations and that he is capable of embracing and including people in the policy development. Today, Gunnar talks about EU partnerships, which he believes are good if you use them right but they are not the only road to change. EU is not a dragon with one head but with many heads.

The EU's peacebuilding project is about bringing people together so we can learn from each other. This is ideally what the EU is supporting, and there are a lot of programs behind that. Soft power is important in the EU system, and it means that for instance small islands can inspire the system.

How does the EU support local development, rising community power, energy reductions etc.? There are lots of good intentions, but a lot of time is spent on bureaucracy when working with EU projects. Being heard is often difficult for small organisations which are not part of the EU system. Still, we have to be in the forefront and always know what the EU is looking for.

Regarding the future, the EU is at a crossroads: Should the EU go for community power or a more centralized type of business power? People like us should push for community power and local solutions, both for our own sake and to change the minds of the bureaucrats.







Arne Remmen is a Professor at the Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University. The Energy Academy has a contract on cooperation with Aalborg University.

[Watch the interview with Arne and see slides](#)

[Read the The Aalborg Commitments](#)

### Arne Remmen: Smart Sustainable Samsø 2.0

Arne Remmen talked about the silo building culture and mentality which hinders collaboration and makes it difficult to find common ground. Basically, we have the technology and the right ideas in the scientific literature, but we still miss the practice.

Arne introduces the three S's: "Smart, Sustainable, Samsø" and the four C's: Clean, Clever/Creative, Co-operative, Commons. The fundamental components of smart cities are the human, the institutional and the technological factors. Smart communities is about system integration, and we already have a decentralized energy system in Denmark. We will have energy producing buildings in the future, but everything is going in the wrong direction when it comes to transportation and mobility. Smart communities is also about connecting people and creating local participation, and here Samsøe has demonstrated to the world that it is possible. There are new ways of collaborating, also between local NGOs and the universities. Arne lists the challenges as: Smart & Sustainable, Circular Economy & Resource Efficiency, and Partnerships & the new Commons. More explicitly, the "Aalborg Commitments" target ten focus areas:

1. Sustainable governance
2. Local management towards sustainability
3. Natural common goods
4. Responsible consumption and lifestyle choices
5. Planning and design
6. Better mobility, less traffic
7. Local action for health
8. Vibrant and sustainable local economy
9. Social equity and justice
10. Local to global

Today, there is more competition than collaboration in local communities and one doesn't know what the other is doing. The challenge is to find ways towards a more integrated planning approach in all levels of our systems. We need to set up goals and doing that we have to look at the overall system and not view the single parts separately.

In the circular economy it's all about taking, making and disposing. Among others Ellen McArthur has made some very nice overviews, which is not just about recycling but also about how to maintain, repair and reuse things. All this is very much connected to local reduce, local production etc.





**From the first Circle Dialogue:  
About a positive vision, the local, fear, and skills**

Soeren Hermansen, who facilitated the day, got the energy for the first circle dialogue going by summing up: Tetso, you said that nuclear power is declining, renewable energy is growing, and that we have to take community power, get on with it and work for it. Gunnar, you said that the EU is good and here to stay (and pay), there are network opportunities that we should use. And we should create and participate in the right networks. You also said that community ideas are in competition with other and more centralized ideas. Arne, you said that we shall qualify the local, and you asked whether society is ready to use all the local opportunities. The things we need are in place, but we still need to organize it, not least in practice – we have the technology, but we need to organize it.

Now we open for plenum discussions. Please put something on the floor we can use. And don't argue – this is not the place for argument but for dialogue. We don't meet out of greed but out of need.

**25 statements from the first dialogue:**

**#1:** We should be thinking more holistically. It's not only about green growth but also about cultural, social and economic perspectives, we need to include it all.

**#2:** How do societies change? What we are lacking is the positive vision. The sustainability discourse is about what we shouldn't do. We need positive futures on a global scale. Where do we, where do people, get inspired?

**#3:** Our stories are about best practices and about communicating in real time. We can't just do it on Facebook, we need ambassadors for these communities, real time interactions. I will take this back to Pennsylvania. What's happening in Tokyo is being communicated in a personal and a physical way here, not just through a social technology. I like that.

**#4:** I'm working with children and students, and we talk about best and next practice. I tell them the bad story, that the world might get six degrees warmer, and then I tell them the good story about Samsoe. Which story is the most inspiring? The next generation is worried about the climate, an issue we need to take care of is fear. They choose the bad story as the most powerful. This is a challenge for me. It is hard work to change their mindsets, but they are the next generation and should be frontrunners.

**#5:** It is a challenge that "sustainability" is one word but so many things. What is it actually we are discussing? It's hard to take action if we don't agree about the economy, the social sphere, business, civil society, politics etc. It is so easy to get lost. How can we ensure a systematic approach?

**#6:** I live on an island, and I think there is a geographical point here: we can make local and delimited solutions. We should focus on and keep it local, skip some of the larger problems, and keep our awareness on what we can do locally.

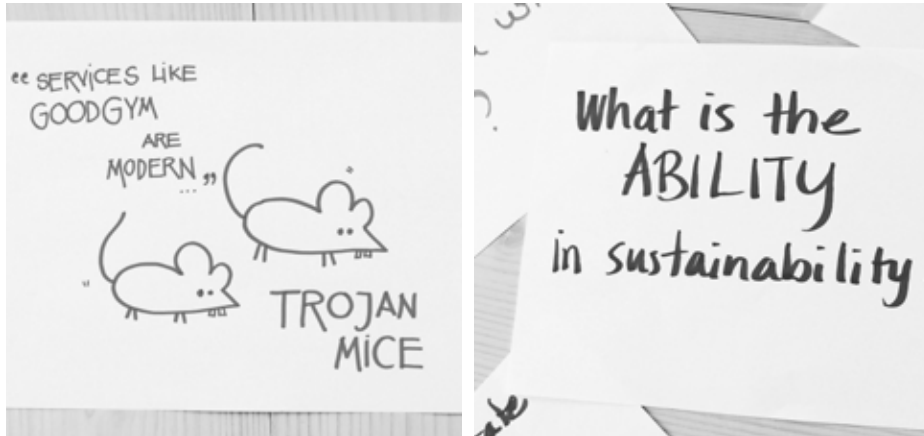
**#7:** I read Tim Jackson's book "Prosperity Without Growth" and I was scared shitless, but there is a way, and it goes through responsibility and creativity. Nothing happens out of fear, it drags us in the wrong direction. We all share this responsibility – each one of us is responsible – and we need the capability to create an attractive tomorrow.

**#8:** During the oil crisis we started to react out of fear, and I think fear can be important if it's a constructive fear. Positive visions of the problems combined with good ideas. Lots of people have joined in positive visions but it still hasn't created the big transition. Maybe we need to combine the positive approach with fear?

**#9:** Perhaps there are only local perspectives? We should stop worrying so much about whether solutions and problems are global, national, EU-level, or whatever. Even in the UN, the EU etc. individuals are talking together, and these conversations and the decisions made are inherently local. So let's focus and act locally.

**#10:** We are driven by problems, visions and solutions, and the thing is to get all on board. Where are we, where do we want to go and how do we get there? The last thing motivates me, and we must redefine the journey as we go, it's not fixed, and we must enjoy the journey.

**#11:** Smart communities takes smart people, and I am wondering about the concrete experience with re-skilling people. I'm thinking of education and capacity building. If you are to be a smart citizen, do you need different skills from the ones we value and possess today?



**#12:** The younger generation can't fix simple things in the household, like use a hammer or saw etc. We used to learn that in school but we have lost these skills over the past twenty years. Today we just throw things away.

**#13:** Skills and competences are important, and so is global versus local. As human beings we must consider our own roles and instead of passively using stuff we must take responsibility. We must take leadership in our own life and acknowledge that we are the designers.

**#14:** I've been part of telling the story about the Danish state bankruptcy in 1813. Back then they said: we might be poor but we don't have to be stupid. What I got out of this story were the foundational values, which is that citizens need to be educated. Right now there is a movement around the planet asking for citizenship to come back. It is an essential value in society, and how can we bring it back? How do we find the shoes to walk? I think it's about being equal in our own brilliance.

**#15:** We are not so proud of that period. Niels Christian Nielsen challenged the Danish school system and created an army of Trojan horses that started a process of change, and after that we had a prosperous period.

**#16:** The teachers were the Trojan horses. Who are they now?

**#17:** Too many young people go to high school where they don't learn any practical skills. In the past, the idea, e.g. with the folk high schools, was to educate manually working people. Now this idea is turned upside down. Maybe here on Samsøe you can teach the educated people manual skills?

**#18:** Niels Hausgaard (Danish musician, comedian and former member of the Danish Parliament, ed.) said when he lived on Samsøe that if you live in the rural areas, you have to have craft skills, otherwise you should move to the city.

**#19:** Commonness and individuality. As a culture we have forgotten the calling of the individual and the calling of the personal. We need to be more personal, but not egoistic – it is a new discourse.

**#20:** What kind of future do we want? This should also be about what the next generation wants and not only what we think they need.

**#21:** What about getting some exercise for the common good? If someone, maybe someone old and weak, wants to rebuild his or her house or dig up the garden, other people could help. Like the concept GoodGym where you sign up to do weekly chores while getting fit. You get the exercise and people get things done.

**#22:** I have a question: why are we trying to save the world in our spare time? Why not do it every single day in our fields of expertise, where we live etc. We must do it where we are and when we are fresh in the morning, when we are at our best. Who is keeping us?

**#23:** (Halfdan): Every day I read the newsletter the Daily Climate's chapter on solutions. I skip straight to the solutions, I don't want to read about the problems. Germany jumped into saying NO to nuclear power, and now the nuclear energy companies don't make money in Germany anymore. The question is whether Germany will succeed in becoming a hundred percent renewable? We could all make small Samsøes, but it is easier if society makes the solutions on a higher level like in Germany, for instance when it comes to renewable energy.

**#24:** (Soeren): Germany is a big industrial leader, but where do we start? I did a talk in Boston at MIT and I was wondering where they get their own energy from. The ventilation in their buildings is from the last century, and they are teaching the brightest engineers in the world. They should be a best case example. They should be showing the students that they are part of the solution. We need to do what we teach, to walk the walk.

**#25:** If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. It is important to discuss what we have in the toolbox to solve our different problems. Maybe we can go into business communities and talk about open innovation as a kind of new commons.





Halfdan Muurholm is a journalist at the Danish Radio and among other things, he produces documentary films related to climate change.

Watch the interview with Halfdan and see slides

### Halfdan Muurholm: Global media landscape – a reality check

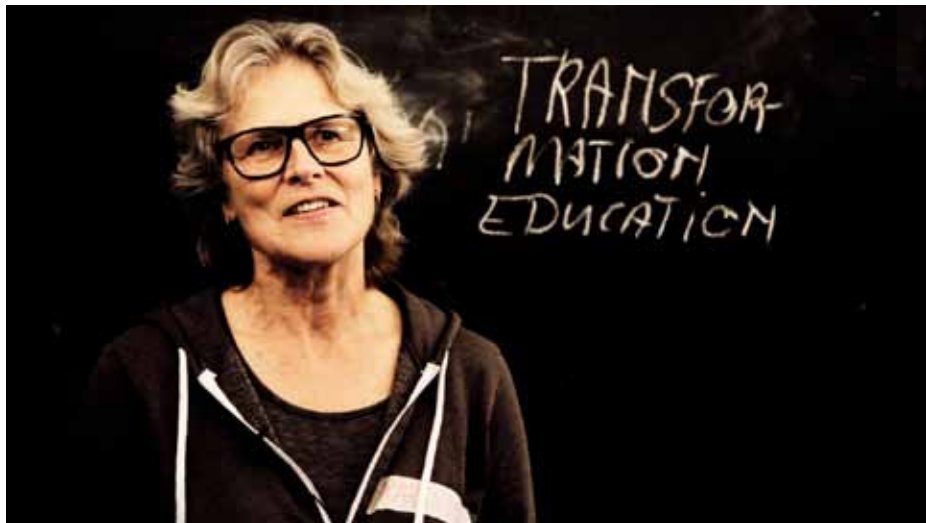
The Energy Academy is a major inspiration to me, and I've always been interested in sustainability and renewable energy. I have made TV programs about sustainability with varied success, but I think the DR (Denmark's Radio, the public service channel, ed.) where I work has a responsibility to communicate what the scientists have found out. Unfortunately, a lot of my colleagues do not share my point of view. Solar panels simply are not sexy seen from the TV producer's perspective. Climate stuff doesn't attract a lot of viewers, that is the challenge.

Another problem is what I call "the Lomborg Syndrome": journalists learn that they have to show two sides to every story, so when you have an article or a news item about climate change you always invite someone with Bjørn Lomborg's climate sceptical point of view to "balance" the story. Maybe for that reason there are still people who are very skeptical and don't "believe" – as 97 percent of all scientists do – that climate change is manmade. At COP15 there were a lot of news stories everywhere in the world, but recent US studies have shown that since then hardly anything about the climate has been on BBC, CNN etc. Al-Jazeera covers it a lot, Obama used Hurricane Sandy as part of his election campaign, but when it comes to a flooded Germany we don't even hear

about it. These things are not news anymore, and it's not an agenda that is dominating the world the way it should be in my opinion. Perhaps people share the same feeling I do: I used to be very emotionally engaged, but I'm not anymore – I'm still engaged, though.

I made a program with Soeren Hermansen that didn't attract a lot of viewers in Denmark but was sold to China. I also followed Soeren to Japan, but I couldn't sell the story when I returned. The next documentary I'm going to make is in five parts and it will be about extreme weather. I'll put some climate stuff in there as well. It's all about framing and about the content lurking behind the content. We shouldn't focus on what we really want to tell but instead wrap it up. The "real" stories are found in fiction now, that's where they can deal with it. Think of the Danish television series "The Killing" where they actually made real news headlines about pig farms. I don't make fiction, but I try to learn from fiction and practice the "content behind the content".





Karen Blincoe is the founder and director of ICIS and former director of Schumacher College in the UK.

**Watch the interview with Karen**

### **Karen Blincoe: A lighthouse in the sustainability wilderness**

Schumacher College has been at the forefront of the sustainability agenda and has spread the message since 1991. Karen talked about the unique recipe that has made the college a success as well as the ripple effects this small place in the South of England has managed to create.

Sustainability is a complex issue, and the Schumacher College was one of the first lighthouses (established in 1991) in the southern part of England and is placed together with Dartington Trust Hall and the first transition town Totness. Schumacher College was inspired by an Indian philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, who said: "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life be in harmony with all existence." The college is also inspired by N. F. S. Grundtvig, the founder of the Danish folk high school movement, who said: "People who are learning to live have a different urgency than those who live to learn." Schumacher College was built on a philosophy of promoting a spirit of freedom, poetry and disciplined creativity, cooperation and discovery in individuals, in science, and in the civil society as a whole. Teachers gave pupils personal guidance in emotional, intellectual and spiritual matters. As the director I felt at home because education in the Schumacher

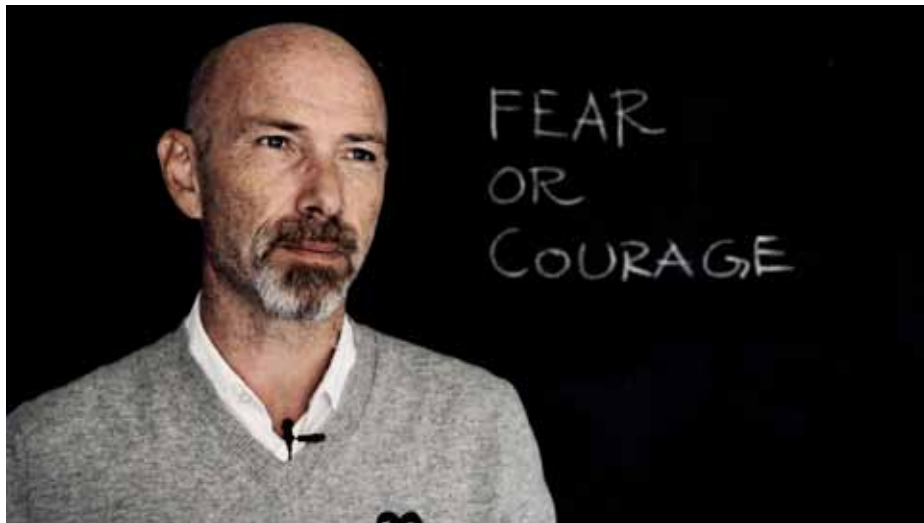
sense has to do with all aspects of society, and I knew about this way of teaching.

Transformative learning for sustainable living became Schumacher's payoff, and people would come for short or longer courses from all over the world. The college became an experiment where great people with great minds come to share stuff. It is a magical place, it's small and there is no luxury, only simple living. You cook together, eat together, walk together, work in the garden together and so on. It is a holistic experience that transforms people who come there, including me. The college staff and the students are said to be radical, transformative, elitist, unique, special, spiritual, activist, introverted, self-opinionated, universal and pioneering. Facilitators are really important – an intense place needs someone to facilitate.

To sum up the lessons learned: You have to have the right place, an anchor, good teachers, and a content that inspires people if you want to be a lighthouse in the sustainability wilderness. Don't get too arrogant and think that only you have found the holy grail. Don't be an island on an island!







Erik Algreen-Petersen is the director in Artful Punch

Watch the interview with Erik

### Erik Algreen-Petersen: The Artful Punch Method

Artful Punch is about finding the courage to break the barriers and make the choices needed, paving the way for a fulfilled work life. It is about supporting each other in the release of all our competences and resources, so that "the whole can become greater than the sum of its parts."

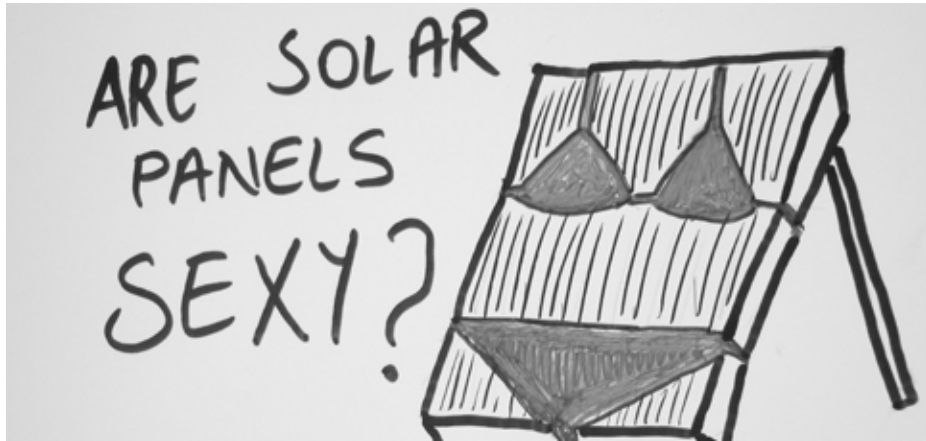
My perspective is about our work life, about creating the fully satisfied work life that is available to all of us. Let me tell you a story from the poet Khalil Gibran: a prophet comes to a village and is asked to talk about work. He says: "And what is it to work with love? It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, as if your beloved were to wear that cloth". If you cannot go to work like that, you can sit outside and take handouts, your work is worth nothing. This fulfillment is available to all of us, but a lot of the time we don't have the courage to do it, and that is what the artful punch is about: it's about fear and courage. Many of our decisions are fear-based, we make decisions in order to stabilize things, nothing more. But we all want something better – otherwise we wouldn't be here.

In 2001, I was the CEO of a film company, and it was a rollercoaster ride. I started out believing that I'd be better as a creative director, but I became the CEO, because they said that I would be really good. I bought into that, and all was great, but I didn't know how to be a CEO. I looked

to others, but it didn't work. After four and a half years the chairman asked me to have lunch with him, and he told me that they didn't need my services anymore. I got furious: it was my business card, my family, my life. My son asked me: dad, can they give you the sack more than one time? I realized that I was free, and I went to work the next day and pulled out all the projects that I've been really passionate about – projects that I hadn't had the courage to make, it was ten to twelve projects. I chose four of them and spent all my time on them during the next four months I had left as a CEO. I succeeded with all of them. And if I can do this, we all can.

When something is very important for us and we don't do it, what is it that is holding us back? The fear of failure is bigger when it's something that we really want. And now it's your turn to think about a project that you really want to do!





**From the second Circle Dialogue:  
About tv programs, the dragon, having fun, and education**

After the speakers Halfdan Muurholm and Karen Blincoe the participants again had the opportunity to engage in a Circle Dialogue:

**21 statements from the second dialogue:**

**#1:** We might have a problem selling the word “climate”, but “green” is much easier. Halfdan, can you sell the same programs under the name of “green”?

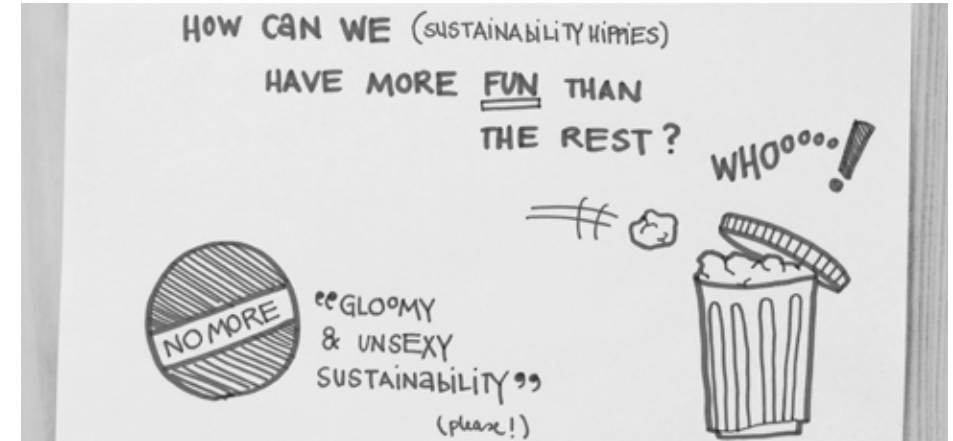
**#2:** (Halfdan): I’ve tried to sell green projects as well. There is one program now, “Bonderøven” (The Farmer, ed.) that everybody loves, but it’s not really about sustainability, it’s more about him and his old-fashioned way of living. We have huge problems with selling solar panels and other green climate stuff to the viewers.

**#3:** You said it’s not about money but about character – character-driven storytelling is a powerful tool. I can relate to a character, not to a solar panel.

**#4:** (Halfdan): There’s not a big urge to really put this on the agenda, and people are not afraid of climate change. I don’t see cultural or educated people caring about the climate either.

**#5:** Do we have a global issue here? Perhaps we should forget Denmark and make a difference in China instead?

**#6:** (Halfdan): In my next programs we will start out in Denmark – we have to start at home, go out and then return home.



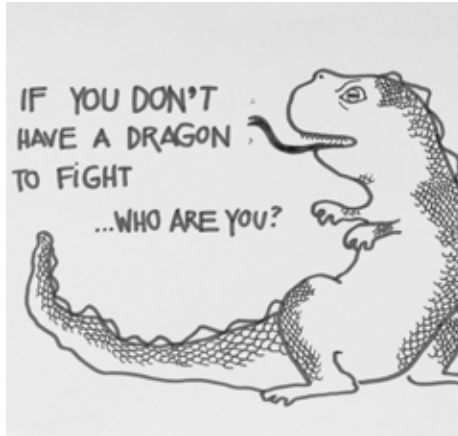
**#7:** Could we approach this in another way: when people have seen the programs, they should think “this is smart!”

**#8:** (Tetso): COP15 was a turning point in going from “climate” to “green”, and we have the “Lomborg Syndrome”. It was a top-down meeting, and it was depressing for the industry. We are talking about the green revolution while we are still occupied with growth, but we need a win-win economy and a lot more bottom-up thinking and acting. Communities have to accept that they are local entities. Amazing things are happening in society, developments which are more than energy.

**#9:** (Soeren): I wrote this book about the commons together with Tor Noerretranders, who was more radical when he was younger. He was against nuclear power in Denmark, and when Denmark said no, I would have expected them to be celebrating, but they were depressed. When they didn’t have the dragon to fight, the air went out of the balloon. So how can we move on from here? We’ve had “climate sickness” but we still have to face what’s up and what’s down.

**#10:** We should make it sexy and we should make it easy to check at home whether something is true or not. We could turn the perspective upside down and make new starting points for discussions.

**#11:** What’s the prevailing story and what makes the paradigm shift? When the book “The Inconvenient Truth” came out, Al Gore had been around for many years, climate change, too. What is the pressure point where something shifts? The challenge in going up against the machine is that you become part of it. How could we have more fun?



**#12:** I observed my grandchild and he's got two words for truth. He says: Grandmother, is it true or real true? I remember the stories about right and wrong from my childhood, and everybody loves them, so we shouldn't be afraid of the yes or the no, the right or the wrong, let's be open about that.

**#13:** Let's not only focus on solutions and what you can change if you have five minutes. Let's raise the bar and talk about social experiments in human evolution, there are many exciting experiments on this planet. There are many wonderful things you could make TV about.

**#14:** Why don't we keep on working in the direction we like? Grundtvig talked about the good meeting which should be 50 percent science and 50 percent storytelling. Is this a necessity of educational places?

**#15:** (Karen): We spent a lot of time trying to understand what the unique thing about Schumacher College was. You come in and you go out changed. No luxury, everybody had the same conditions. You were there together, and everybody was interested in the same thing from different perspectives: how do we make this world a more sustainable place to live? People came in soaking up what everybody has to say, and no matter if you were doing the dishes, the discussions were relevant to the people there. We had amazing conversations. The morning sessions were also really important and we had meditation, breakfast, poem reading and exercise, and you were allowed to share your innermost feelings.

**#16:** So people were aiming for exploration and not for specific results.

**#17:** Sounds like the program at the Danish folk high schools, and perhaps it

is a bit outdated today, so how can we refresh the concept and do it in a different manner?

**#18:** Form new social contexts. We must have an idea of the drivers because there's no interaction without drivers, and I think this is a dilemma.

**#19:** We must be transforming all things, mental and social processes, and we must also look to the physical world. The challenge is that today's built environment is not sustainable, and we need new buildings and new environments.

**#20:** What would Google do? How can we scale it up? Not just one school or two schools. If this is to have any impact at all we need a lot of schools, and we have to create a movement that could be so strong.

**#21:** Who are the students? It's us! We must also educate the business people and create a new place of education not only for the youngsters but also for the business people.