

Paulo kept the majority of his text, audio and video archive plus work-in-progress in a monster laptop with a 1 TB hard drive. However, he also left an extensive collection of hand-written notes and drawings relating to permaculture designs, future projects and his teaching. One notebook was entitled 'The Book of Kin' and contained stream-of-consciousness writing that summarised his thoughts and feelings directly at the time of writing. The following three transcriptions help to illuminate his personal values and approach to permaculture and life.

Book of Kin

The natural order of living

It is not only important which plants we grow, and how we relate and connect to them, but also the overall patterns we use, and the communities and configurations we plant in. This we should learn from observing plants growing uninterrupted in wild ecosystems, outside the interference of Man. Here we can see nature's cycles and patterns that we must work with, not against.

Thus Bill Mollison makes sense to me when he says "... the forests are the greatest educational resource we have. We could lose all the universities in the world and survive OK, but if we lose the forests, then it's all over."

The perpetual ground cover, soil-building processes, self-fertilising, polycultures of nature show us how to achieve very different results from the bare soil and straight-row monoculture of conventional agriculture.

Good natural order in terms of energy and system resilience and productivity, looks highly untidy to the aesthetic eyes of technocentric thinkers who prefer neat and tame nature in orderly rows. These poor plants can best be described as orphans, at worst prisoner or slaves, forced out of complex dances of life, into regimented lines, and surrounded in bare soil, often full of chemicals. We cannot expect to have any meaningful connection with plants if we force them to go against their nature in this way. There is no love in monoculture. I think this is the key difference between agriculture and gardening – love.

I strive to be a gardener.

Head and heart – the fusion

When we are the intellect and the heart together, we can achieve deeper understanding than when we compartmentalise and separate parts of our being. Anastasia describes feelings as being a compressed source of information, allowing Man to access universal intelligence much faster than he [*sic*] is able to do with just the intellect alone.

Those who would counter this say that man is now so corrupted by a disconnected and artificial environment that his instinct and feelings must be irreparably broken – but I suggest that they are clogged up with the crap of the system, and once unclogged will work again just fine – a process that can and must happen over a person's individual lifetime, as well as over generations.

If my children are born and raised in a space of love I create surrounded by plants that feed them and love them as much (or even a little bit as much) as I, the man who planted them, then those children will learn so much faster and much more than I, who was raised in front of a TV, surrounded by plastic soldiers and violent comic books. But somehow I found my way through that, to what I feel to be the truth.

To a large part my parents are responsible for this, for raising me, in a safe and stable family, with much love, and dragging me out on walks in the countryside as much as they could. This is a different world from the industrial hell my paternal grandparents grew up in in London. So, each generation of my family has tried to make things better for the next, and I shall continue this work.

Integrating our world with the plant world

There is more to be attained from growing plants than the physical fruits of one's labour. Actually, it should not feel like labour at all, but more like the following of a natural impulse that one is glad to fulfil. Over time, and with practice, this will be more and more the case, and once well established and maturing, the system, or rather the Garden will do the labour. The other fruits to be gained are from the process.

For a man, woman or child to regularly enter into contact with plants, through the creation and development of a garden, a dedication of our vital energy and attention is required. This powerful energy is usually all consumed by the system; in school, at work, in the car, the office, the concrete buildings, and more and more in front of the computer screen.

The redirection of our energy and attention into the garden, opens up a communion with nature and the universe *through* plants. This is a process that can and will re-humanise us, teaching and informing us and acting as a conduit to natural intelligence. This is an essential life line to those in the modern world.

If you pay attention to plants, they will tell you what to do, what they need. If you consciously love them and take care of them as part of your family, your life, they will develop a connection to you, and responsivity that exists nowhere else. You will get to know each other on many levels. Even to go a little way down this road is valuable. No matter how little time you have, it is worth it.