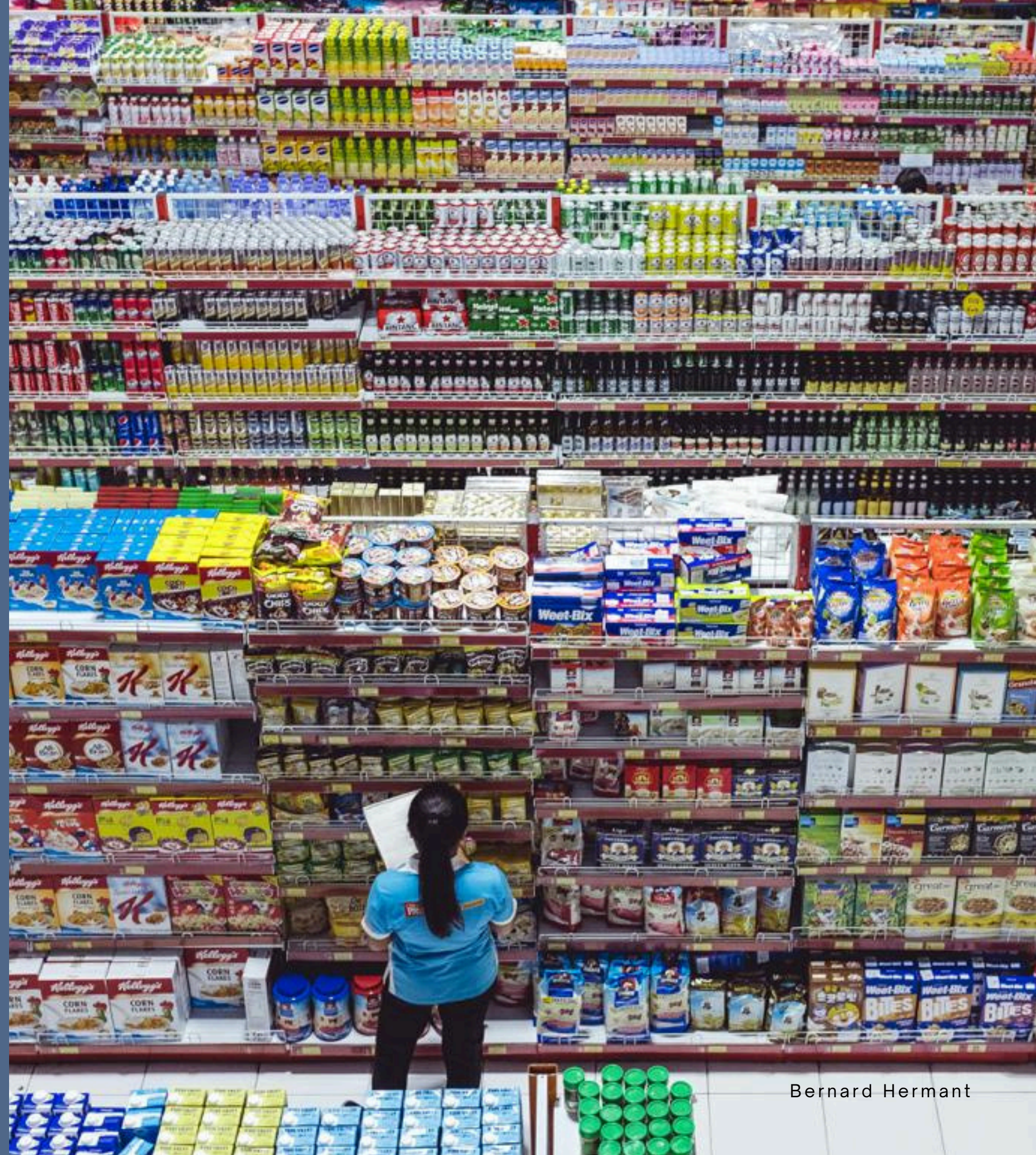


LYSSA ADKINS

#future-fit leaders ARE COLLAPSE AWARE

#future-fit leadership

LYSSAADKINS.COM



Bernard Hermant

Suburban Life and Natural Surroundings

I live in a suburb in the United States. Individual houses with driveways and a plot of land around each, separating one from the next. It's a small neighborhood, with just three cul-de-sacs and a glorious canopy of mature trees. It's one of the few neighborhoods where the developer did not clear cut all the trees to make construction more efficient.

My house is surrounded by these towering giants soaring into the sky and embracing all the houses in the neighborhood in their laps of roots and dirt.

My house has a plot of forest behind it, a little triangular shaped tract of trees that protect a meandering stream that flows to the Chesapeake Bay and on to the Atlantic Ocean. We bought the house for this wetlands-protected stand of forest, and it is our daily solace and source of greatest peace. Visitors often call it an idyllic setting.

Within a couple miles of my house are two huge grocery stores, a 10-screen movie theater, and more upscale shops and restaurants than you can visit in a year. Four diamond jewelry stores within a mile of each other, along with four Starbucks within a mile of each other. It is the height of convenience, if a bit excessive. Food, doctors, entertainment, dining. Nothing takes us more than five minutes to get to by car. And whatever we need that we can't get or that we're too lazy or busy to drive to, we can get on Amazon within two days. Idyllic, convenient, and so very comfortable...as long as it all works.

#future-fit leadership

The Height of CONVENIENCE

During the early days of the COVID pandemic, people were making a run on toilet paper. No toilet paper on the shelves was mildly disturbing to me. Really disturbing was the grocery shelves empty of rice and beans. Once they became available again, I stocked up. I'll sheepishly admit that I have a plastic bin full of rice and beans in my garage — still — that we are trying to eat our way through. The shelves empty of rice and beans was a wake up call for me. In an instant, I saw that the complex, multinational, multi-corporate supply chains I rely on for basic survival are not as strong and stable as I was led to believe by the experience of seeing the grocery store full every single day of my life. Not only were they not strong and stable, they were actually quite brittle. Easy to break. Easy to interrupt. In the face of this shocking realization, my primal urge for survival kicked in. Hence the bin of rice and beans, and the stand-up freezer, and the one I'm most embarrassed to reveal, the portable gas powered generator we have never taken out of the box.

LYSSAADKINS.COM



Facing FRAGILITY

It's a stark notion to grapple with: the systems I took for granted to be unfailingly there for my daily survival are brittle and likely to fail given stressors like a pandemic. Or stressors like climate catastrophes that set off mass migration, food shortages, and violence. Or global financial collapse because the house of cards we have built our financial system on has finally met a headwind too strong to continue to stand. Many paths could lead to societal collapse, and it seems we are heading down several of them at once.

Who do you want to be AS A LEADER?

Margaret Wheatley, a leadership author and prominent thinker, asks the question, 'Who do you want to be as a leader in collapse?' It's an important question.

Not because collapse is a foregone conclusion or couldn't be lessened at least a bit, but because it sets up a powerful thought experiment: Imagine yourself still leading, still being useful, still meeting challenges with creativity even when everything you relied on is collapsing and everyone else is freaking out in the worst ways.

Who do you want to be as a leader then? If you're up for it, let 'who do you want to be as a leader in collapse' marinate in your thoughts for a while.

Who do you want to be as a leader then? If you're up for it, let 'who do you want to be as a leader in collapse' marinate in your thoughts for a while.

See if your answer reveals a needed change in what you're doing or how you're being. Or, perhaps your activities and beliefs remain the same, but the motivation beneath them evolves.

As useful as this thought experiment can be, intellectual contemplation alone isn't sufficient. We must engage our emotional toolkit as well.

#future-fit leadership

Preparing for COLLAPSE

Bioethicists have offered a set of maxims for ethical behavior during collapse. Two of these are: work hard to grasp the immensity of the changes ahead and train your body and mind to be psychologically fit for processing strong emotions.

As soon as your mind tiptoes into the territory of collapse, a range of emotional and physical reactions gets triggered—tightness in the gut, sensations in the chest or throat, and a surge of feelings like fear, anger, or despair. Those are some common ones.

Check it out for yourself. Some of those reactions may be happening right now on a small scale just from reading this. The most important thing to know is that these reactions are entirely natural, normal and needed.

LYSSAADKINS.COM



Becoming emotionally ALIGNED

When experiencing strong emotions, most people try to block them or distract the mind by moving on to something else. While these tactics may help short-term, they don't improve your ability to stay present, which opens the door for you to remain skillful and leader-ful during chaos. They also disconnect you from the deep wisdom of your body being "spoken" through the signals of your emotions. To build the skill of presence and hear the intelligence offered by your natural emotional responses, you can:

- Expand your ability to detect the physical and psychological sensations of emotions, preferably in real time
- Learn ways to interrupt the dumping of stress hormones into the body
- Allow yourself to fully feel the emotions themselves
- "Unhook" yourself from the stories in your mind that keep the emotional/physical response recycling
- Listen to the information the emotional response is conveying
- Embrace the wisdom of your emotions instead of being disconnected from them or letting them dominate.

Engaging the Emotional TOOLKIT

All of this is possible and will become your “new normal.” To achieve this requires practice using emotional tools. These tools are straightforward and most find them relaxing. They're easy to do but need regular use to build up your reserves. (That's the practice part.) I've included some of my favorite starter tools at the end of this article.

The planetary-level challenges we face now and into the future are the biggest context we all share. This set of circumstances shapes everything, including business, as a primary driver of constant and turbulent change. Being collapse-aware while we lead now — before collapse — reorients the center point on which our minds revolve. We see “resources” differently. We make fewer unconscious assumptions that things will go on as they always have. We challenge the belief that success and progress are synonymous with continuous growth. We start to operate with a long-time perspective which includes the wellbeing of future generations. Our imaginations get kindled as we think, ‘Maybe there is another way...’

RESOURCES

If you've never heard the terms collapse or collapse-aware, you are not alone. I've spoken with several people who I consider to be progressive leaders who go 'huh?' when I use these terms. Here are some helpful educational links:

- [The Week](#). Group experience conducted through 3 videos, co-created by Frederic Laloux, author of *Reinventing Organizations*. One week. Together. To make sense of the defining crisis of our time. One week. Together. To get ready for the defining adventure of our time. Search LinkedIn for people hosting The Week. It's free and hosted by many people.
- Breaking Down: Collapse podcast. The first 8 episodes are "collapse 101." It's two friends: one is an expert on collapse, the other is a skeptic. Listen to a warm and lively conversation between longtime buddies as you receive a tutorial on collapse. [Apple Podcasts](#) [Spotify](#).
- Margaret Wheatley: [Who do we Choose to Be? Facing Reality](#), [Claiming Leadership](#), [Restoring Sanity](#).

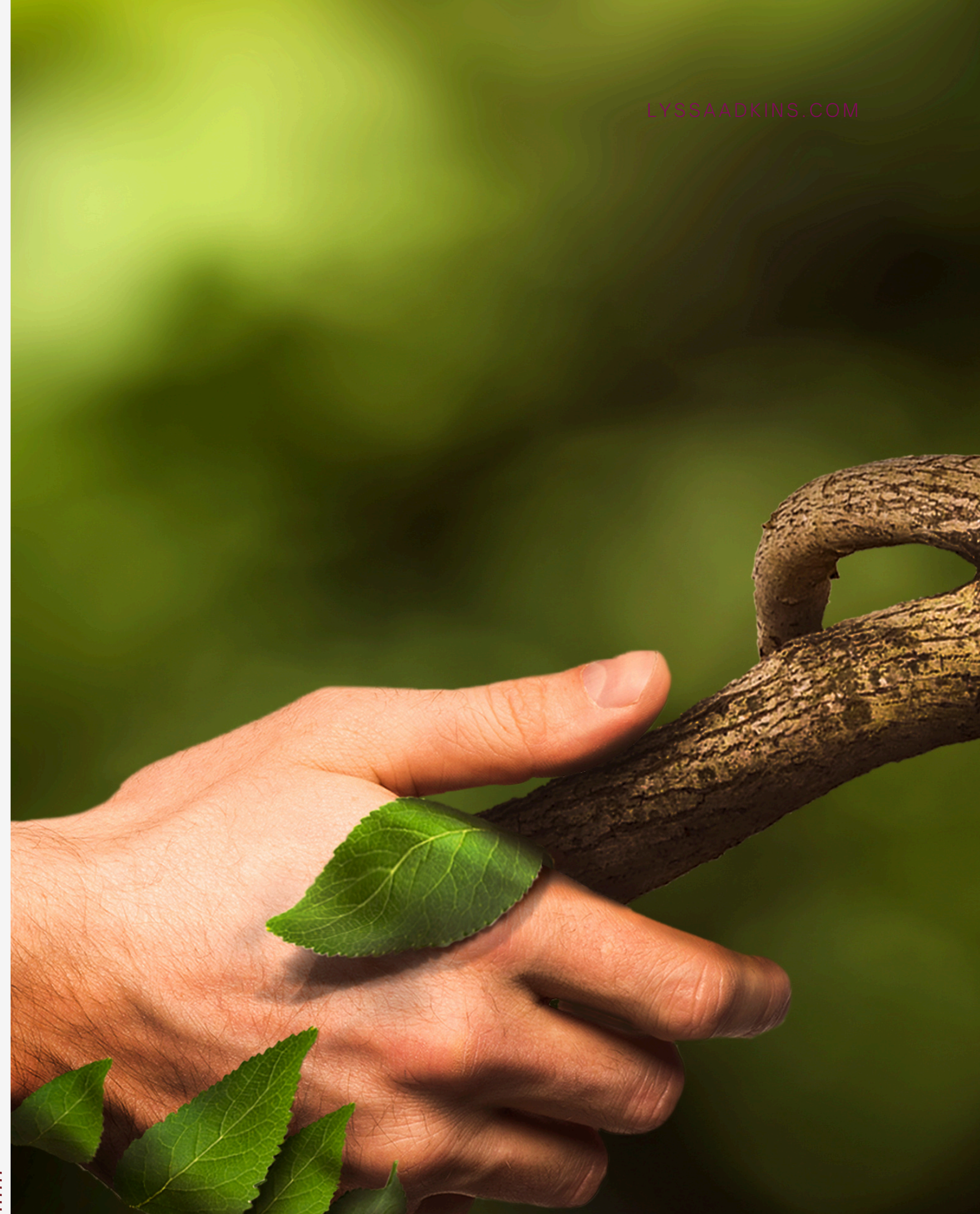
Becoming educated on collapse is the first move, but expanding your emotional toolkit is also needed:

- Box breathing. There are many resources online that introduce you to this ancient breathwork technique.
- RAIN technique for working with strong emotions by Tara Brach: [Meditation Introduction](#)
- 10 minutes to an eternal perspective [visualization](#) by Dr. Roger Walsh
- [Long Time Academy](#) podcast offers a healthy balance of the cognitive and emotional

A Preview of FUTURE-FIT INSIGHTS

To give you a sense of where we are going, let me whet your appetite with the next headline:

**#Future-fit leaders equally
consider humans and nature.**



LYSSA IS A LEADERSHIP COACH & AN EXPERT IN THE FUTURE OF WORK

Explore being coached by Lyssa

lyssaadkins.com



frontdoor@lyssaadkins.com

