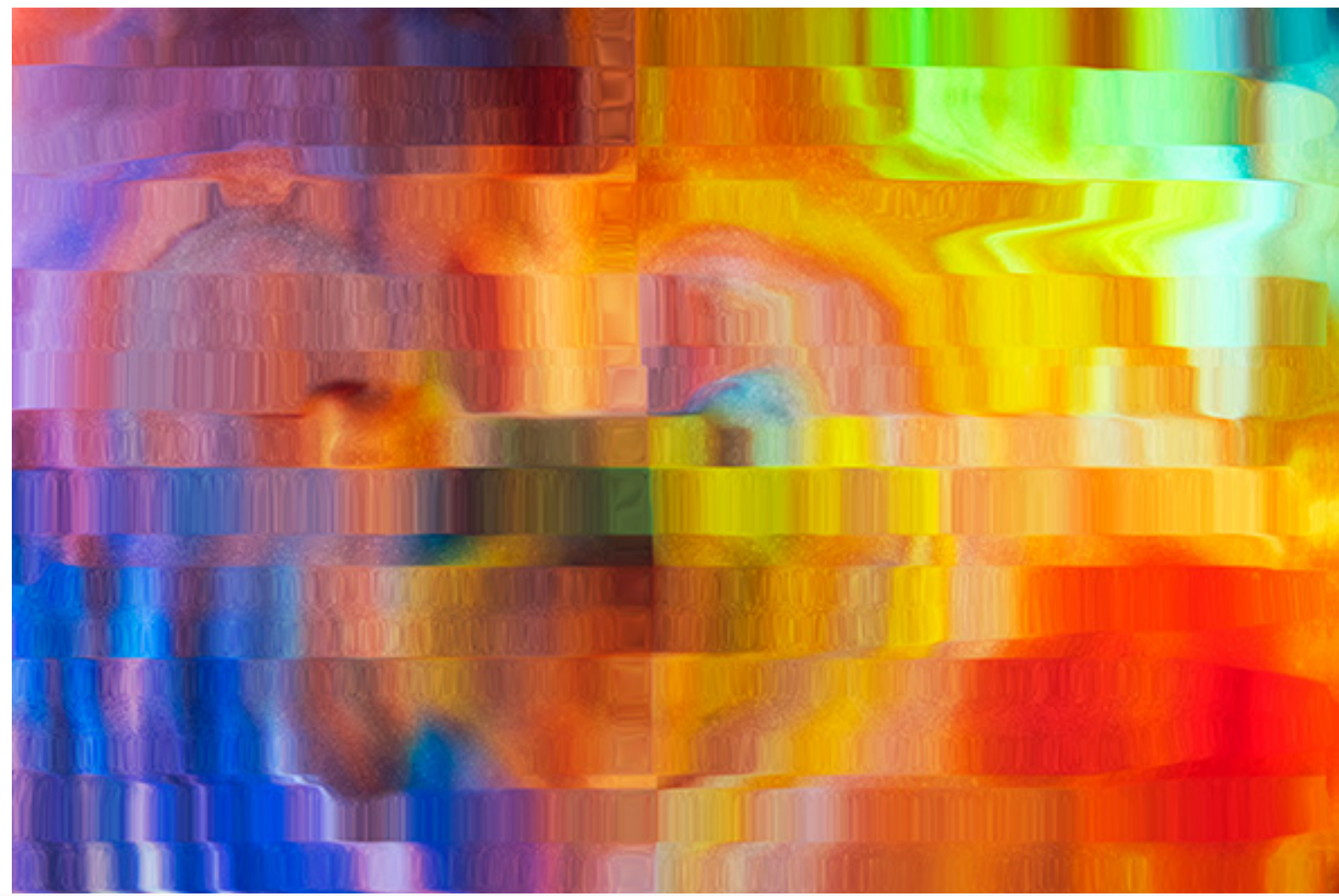




Hello friends:

Have you ever gazed out at a familiar vista after a heavy snowfall, the white blanket not yet spoiled by tire tracks or footprints? Did you experience a sensation of something being a bit "off" – recognizable yet unrecognizable at the same time?

That feeling or sensation has a name: it's called "liminal space." The word "liminal" derives from the Latin "limen" meaning "threshold." The slight discomfort you feel is because you are caught in a moment of transition, waiting for something to happen next: e.g. the newspaper delivery person will stomp a path through the fresh-fallen snow. That liminal space is where we have left something behind, yet we have not fully crossed the threshold to somewhere else. It's a space of ambiguity, complexity and disruption.

I've been reflecting on the concept of liminality as we transition our society from one world order to the next. We're at a pivotal point between paradigms where a more sustainable one is on its way, but we aren't yet fully aware of what it looks like. It's akin to an operating system: the old one is frayed and dying – the new one is still in the lab.

The good news for all of us functioning in liminal space is that it is a profound window for societal innovation to hasten the transition to a circular, low carbon, inclusive and fair society. This threshold presents opportunities to imagine new ways of operating the economy and conducting business by testing approaches and designing new models as we shift into the unknown.

Whether just getting started on the sustainability journey or poised for transformational impact, here are tools, tips and resources that can help you navigate the complexity and uncertainty and accelerate the new world order. So, let's get liminal!

News

Sustainable Industry Associations

I recently scanned the websites of 85 Canadian industry associations to gauge their progress helping their members and overall sector become sustainable. I was both encouraged and disappointed. The majority of industries I studied don't appear to be advancing on sustainability; on the other hand, some have leading practices which are scaling in other industries and across the globe. In March, I invited all the associations to attend a Sustainable Industry Association Roundtable in Ottawa to discuss my research; I was pleased that 15 turned out. Notably four of the associations were beginning their sustainability journeys and eager to learn from the others. It's encouraging that increasingly, associations are seeing sustainability as an important part of their mandate.



With these new insights, I updated my [industry association benchmark tool](#). Share it with your industry association and ask them how they rank. To learn more about the sustainable industry leadership continuum (from opposed to comprehensive), check out this [GreenBiz article](#) I wrote on the research.



Social Purpose Innovators

I continue to work with the United Way of the Lower Mainland to help develop its Social Purpose Business Institute. Its mandate is to build the capacity of local businesses to define, cultivate and activate their best-fit social purpose. Last year I conducted research into the [definition](#) and [business case](#) for social purpose. This year, I am helping them convene a Social Purpose Business Innovators Lab. Eight companies are pilot-testing a toolkit to define their social purpose through a year-long peer-based workshop process. Check it out [here](#).



Social Purpose Finance and Admin

The idea of social purpose is catching on in the public sector, too. Following the white paper I wrote for McConnell Foundation and SFU on "[Maximizing the Capacities of Advanced Education Institutions to Build Social Infrastructure for Canadian Communities](#)" last spring, Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada have launched projects on the topic. I am helping McConnell mobilize administration and finance departments on social purpose in campuses across Canada.



To jump-start the effort, we engaged the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) on this capacity-building project. We developed a primer on [social purpose finance and administration](#) (think procurement, human resource management, real estate, investment, food services, book stores, IT, etc.) and contacted nearly every chief finance and administration officer in colleges and universities across Canada with this idea. Further, we've invited them to share their best practices with us and attend our workshop at [CAUBO's Vancouver conference in June](#). Exciting time to be creating a new field of social practice within advanced education.



UN SDG Risk Management Tool

Like many, I am a big fan of the UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, which will put society, the planet and business on a sustainable footing. However, I caution business not to treat the goals as a philanthropic undertaking – but as a set of risks to business if they are not achieved or opportunities to contribute to them. In other words, a tool to inform strategy. [Here is a resource](#) I developed to help business leverage the Global Goals as a strategic priority. Encourage your executive team to try it out.



Climate Change Leadership

Most projections predict society will be unable to limit Earth's temperature rise to below 2 degrees, significantly jeopardizing our way of life. That's why Canadian Business for Social Responsibility (CBSR) and I call for companies to exemplify the qualities of a [Transformational Company](#) and pursue game-changing measures that will transform their own operations and their operating context to hasten the low-carbon economy transition we so desperately need. This [short article](#) profiles the opportunity and this [2-pager](#), which I collaborated on with CBSR, summarizes the essential steps to accelerate the transition. Necessary reading for those in a corporate setting or for those who advise companies on climate leadership.



Join me – and encourage others – to realize new possibilities. Change is in the wind, challenging the tried and true. If we work together, however, there are no limits to where liminal space can lead us.

Thanks for reading, sharing and being part of a force for good.

Coro

Upcoming Event

Advocacy for Good: Public Policy Advocacy for a Sustainable Future

May 9, 2018 at 11:00 am PT / 2:00 pm EDT

More information [here](#). For a 50% discount register at [this link](#).

In this webinar I dig into another Quality of a Transformational Company, with Tom Ewart, Sustainability Manager at The Co-operators. Join us to pick up tips to activate your company in lobbying for good. Learn how to tackle sustainability issues affecting business and society through government engagement.

Newsletter photo by Dene Rossouw – [Fotomoods.com](#)