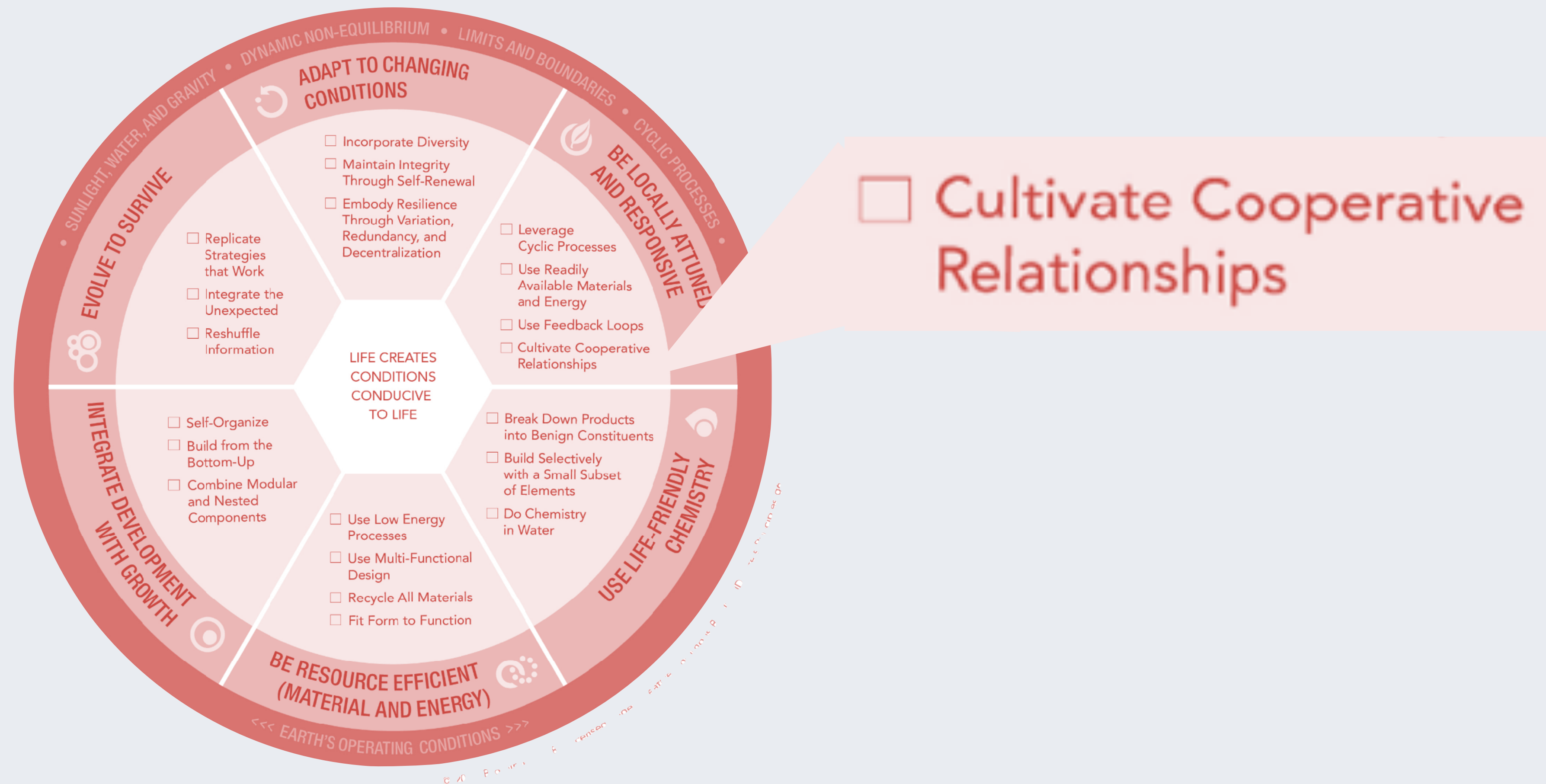


HOW MIGHT WE
FACILITATE GENUINE
CONNECTION
ACROSS DIFFERENCE
AND MAKE
STRANGERS INTO
NOT STRANGERS?

DESIGN BY NATURE

APPLY DESIGN PRINCIPLES FROM NATURE TO TRIGGER FRESH IDEAS AND ITERATE ON EXISTING IDEAS (BIOMIMICRY)



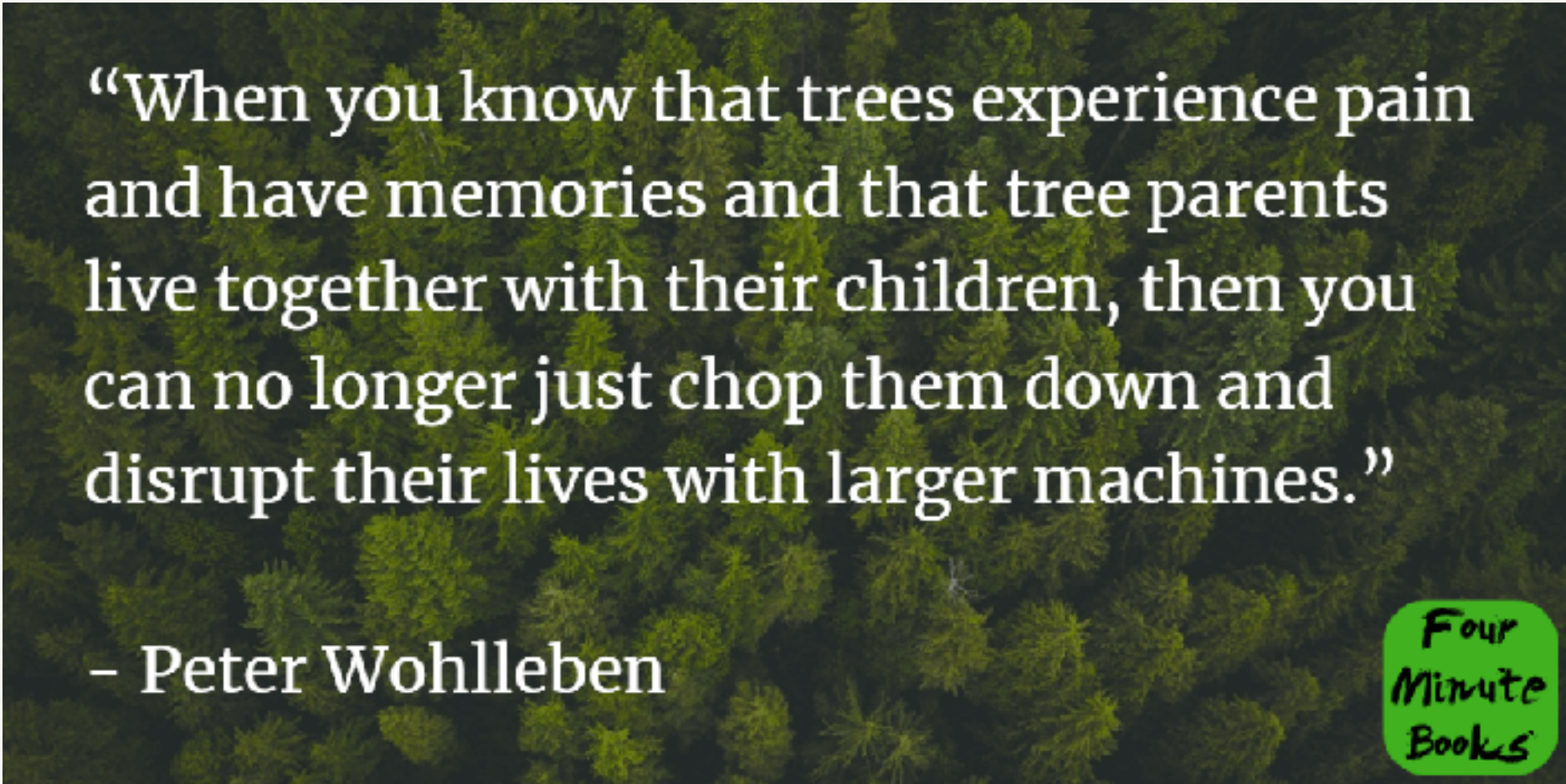
A photograph of a forest. In the center, a large, thick tree trunk rises from the ground. The background is filled with green foliage and sunlight filtering through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect. The foreground shows the base of the tree and some mossy ground.

The Mycorrhizal network sustains diversity in a forest by transporting nutrients and water. They also use them to communicate. They send distress signals about drought and disease, for example, or insect attacks, and other trees alter their behavior when they receive these messages.

On the internet, nodes are individual computers and the network moves information among them. Hubs are places that connect lots of nodes together and have a lot of information traveling through them, such as Google. The nodes of the Wood Wide Web are all the individual trees in the forest. The oldest trees, which are often also the tallest and largest, are the 'hubs' because they have the most connections running through them.

Mycelia form the connections between all the nodes in the Wood Wide Web. The mycelia wrap around the fine roots of the hub tree and other vegetation, snuggling so close that water, nutrients, and other chemicals can move between the cells of the roots and fungi. A hub tree has more access to sunlight than smaller trees because of its size. Sometimes that results in it producing too much sugar through photosynthesis. When this happens, it sends the sugar out through the mycelium network to be used by its own seedlings and even other species of trees. The fungi take some of the sugar as it passes between trees and use it for themselves.

Water is also shared among the fungi and plants in the network. The water and nutrients increase seedling growth and help other trees survive. At another time, if the hub tree is stressed and needs water or nutrients, the mycelium and other trees can send them back to the hub tree.



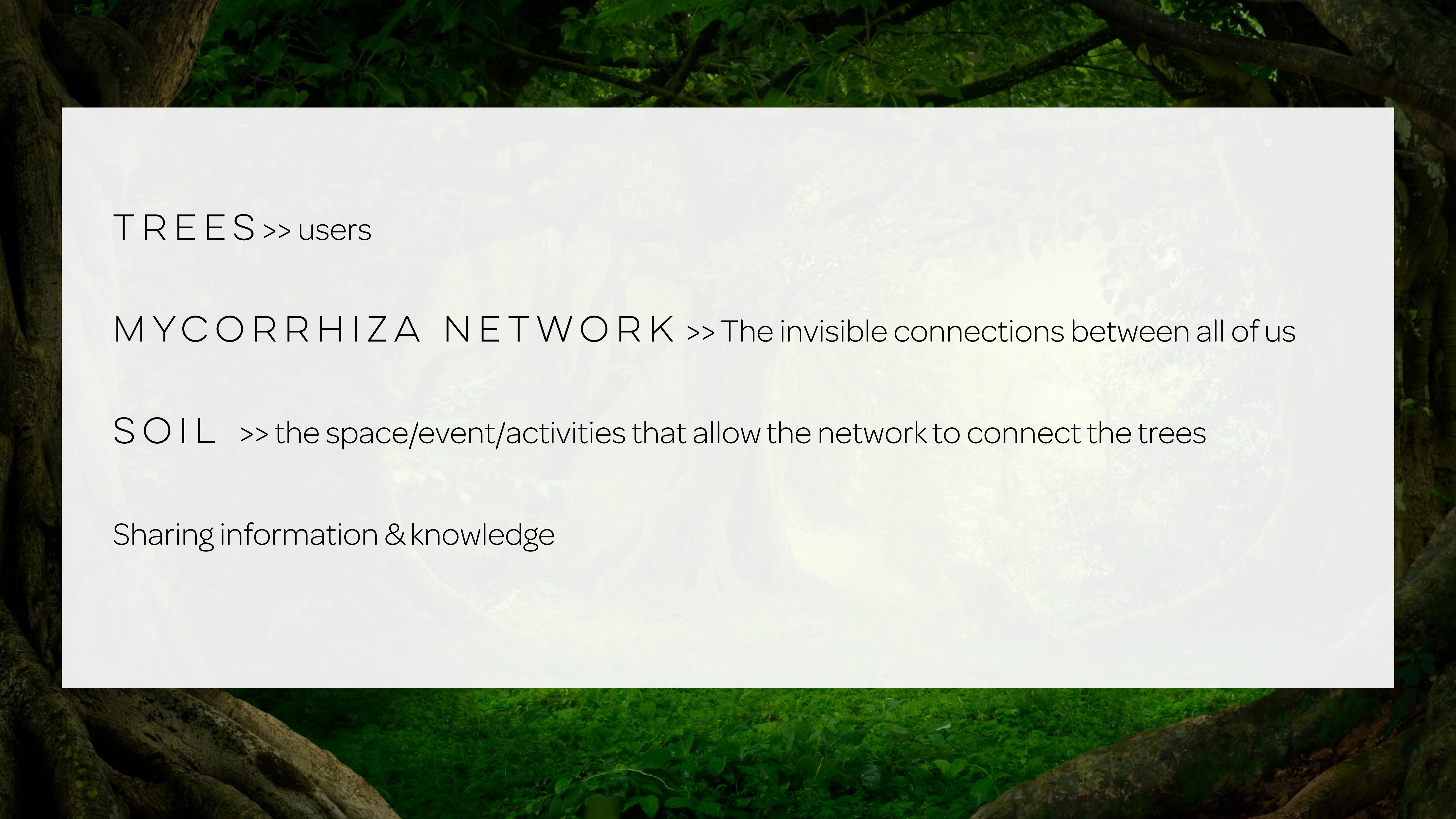
“When you know that trees experience pain and have memories and that tree parents live together with their children, then you can no longer just chop them down and disrupt their lives with larger machines.”

– Peter Wohlleben

Four
Minute
Books

But trees might be among our lushest metaphors and sensemaking frameworks for knowledge precisely because the richness of what they say is more than metaphorical — they speak a sophisticated silent language, communicating complex information via smell, taste, and electrical impulses. This fascinating secret world of signals is what German forester **Peter Wohlleben** explores in *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate* (public library).

Beneath the mystery lay a fascinating frontier of scientific research, which would eventually reveal that this tree was not unique in its assisted living. Neighboring trees, scientists found, help each other through their root systems — either directly, by intertwining their roots, or indirectly, by growing fungal networks around the roots that serve as a sort of extended nervous system connecting separate trees. If this weren't remarkable enough, these arboreal mutualities are even more complex — trees appear able to distinguish their own roots from those of other species and even of their own relatives.



T R E E S >> users

M Y C O R R H I Z A N E T W O R K >> The invisible connections between all of us

S O I L >> the space/event/activities that allow the network to connect the trees

Sharing information & knowledge

We think of the trees as individuals, but they rely on each other to thrive. They are connected. We are like the trees - we are connected and dependent on each other - we just don't know it! We act as if we are not and that gets in our way.

Like trees, we are both individuals and interdependent
We need a social network to take care of each other and warn each other of danger.

Trees are planted in concrete in the city - making it hard to communicate with other trees. Just like us in the city - planted alone in concrete buildings.

Trees in cities can't warn each other of disease, that's why so many diseases spread in the city (guessing). We need to work to manually create those connections between concrete that don't happen naturally.

We need to re-learn the language of connection and practice it.

BLANK SPOTS

PROBE FOR OVERLOOKED OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE SOLUTION SPACE

Ideas have been generated around people in recovery

Ideas have been generated around elderly

Ideas have been generated around people that need community

Ideas have been generated about learning skills

Ideas have been generated about pop up events

Ideas have been generated around activities that build connection

Ideas have been generated around conversation & diversity

Ideas have been generated around connection

Ideas have been generated around donating to local organizations

Ideas have been generated around experiments

SMALL GROUP PARTNER LARGE GROUP

COMMUNITY ISSUE

PERSONAL

Thinking
Together

Write a
Story

Speed
Dating

Friend
Bingo

Interview

Question
Cards

Diorama
/Craft

WHY: PEOPLE DON'T TALK TO EACH OTHER ANYMORE, ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE THEIR BUBBLE, BELONGING IS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY AND FRIENDSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT FOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.

WHAT: INVITE PEOPLE TO ENGAGE WITH EACH OTHER IN A MEANINGFUL AND ENTERTAINING WAY WITHOUT TECHNOLOGY OR ALCOHOL

HOW: POP UP FRIENDWORKING EVENTS - 3 ACTIVITIES OVER COFFEE TO FACILITATE CONVERSATION AND CONNECTION IN THE COMMUNITY