



Women's Wild Hearth Design

By Klaudia van Gool Dec 2016

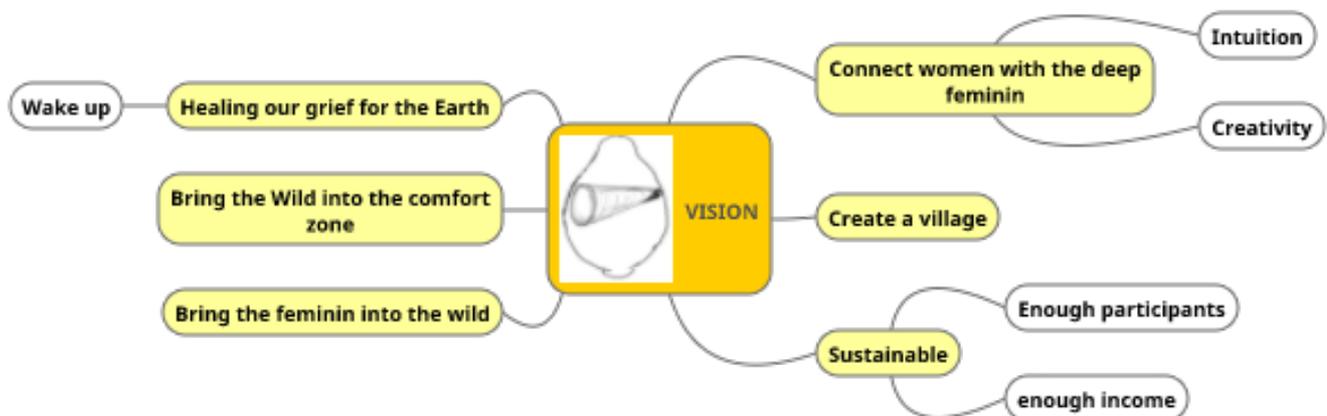
Introduction

A design for a camp for women, to enable them to connect with Nature, themselves and each other. To be held July 2016.

I facilitated the design process for the facilitation team using the Design web as a framework for this design. The Design web 'anchor points' are in **bold** throughout this document.

Permaculture **Principles** are noted in *blue italics*. **Ideas** were noted as we designed and these were integrated as we went along.

Vision:



We shared our vision for the event, summarised in this mind map.

The image is of a nurturing camp on the edge of wilderness, where we would create a safe space for women to explore the edge of their comfort zones, both inner and outer. Where we would create a village of mutual support and sharing. We wanted to create a space to bring out our intuition through deep nature connection and creativity. We also wanted the camp to be sustainable for us financially.



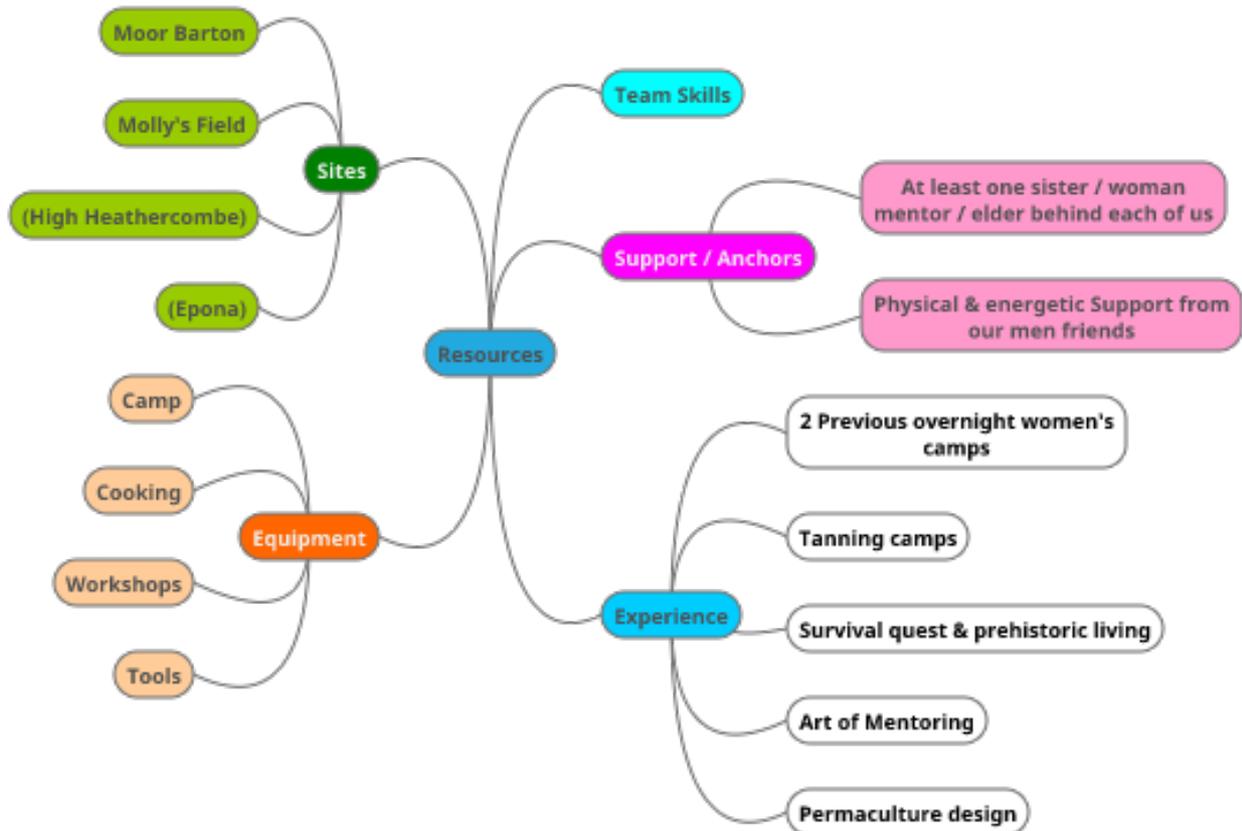
A survey of our **Resources / helps** showed that between us we have all the necessary skills and most of the equipment to set up a well-resourced camp. We have a skilled team of women. Inviting *succession*, we also have an apprentice facilitator.

We had several beautiful sites available and the support of the owners.

Anchors

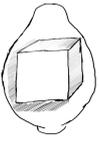
This turned out to be one of the most powerful elements in this design. A concept I learned about through the Art of Mentoring & 8 Shields. It is about engaging in a relationship with someone who is slightly 'ahead' of you in a particular area of life and willing to support you through dialogue, posing learning questions and generally being supportive. We created a ring of support behind us, making us and the participants feel deeply held and connected to something larger. A *mutually beneficial relationship*, there should be an exchange for the time and support of the anchor.

Resources / Helps



and Team Skills in detail





Some **limiting factors / limits** included the initial venue, funding / the budget, setting ourselves a minimum amount we felt we'd need to earn, getting enough participants, some lack of confidence.

The site resolved itself and we were offered the site we held our camp on, which turned out just perfect in size and seclusion and access to differ natural habitats.

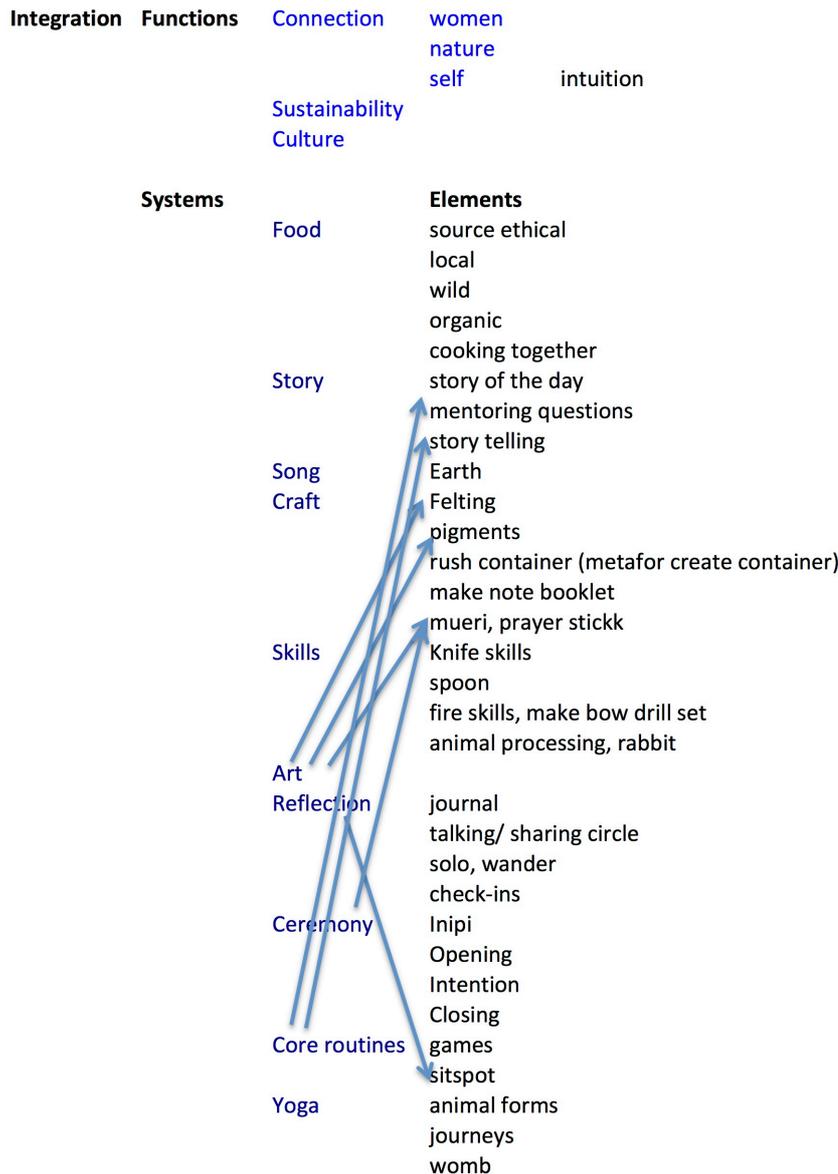
The limit of getting enough participants /linked to the function of sustainability, was resolved by offering some places to our friends and family for cost plus donation, in a gift economy way and in exchange getting some help. Also accepting slightly less than aimed for in payment for this first camp in exchange for invaluable experience, good photos, and feedback.

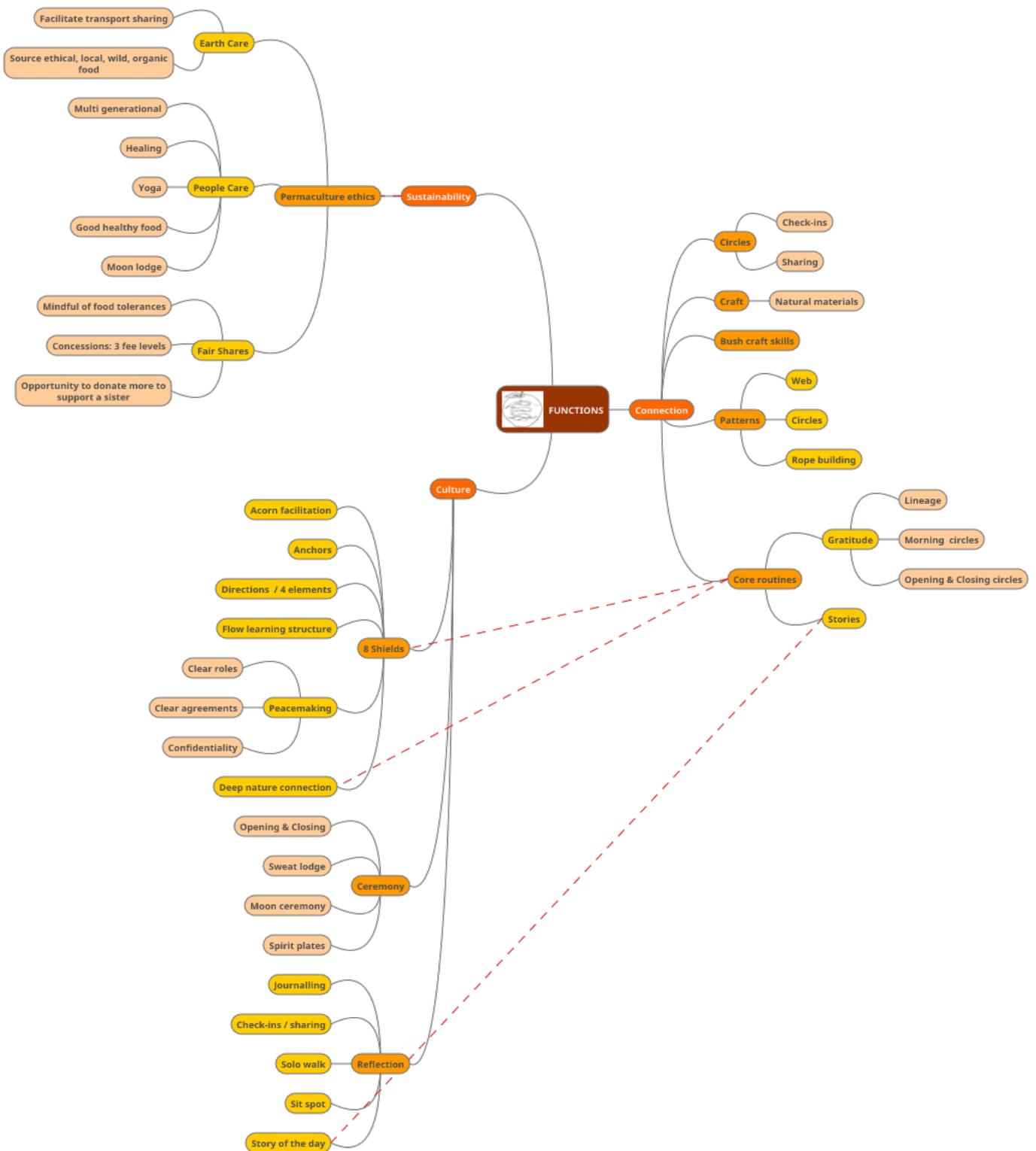
Integration: We identified the following key functions for this camp with associated systems, subsystems & elements:



- Connection
- Culture
- Sustainability

The following mind map shows the systems and elements to achieve these 3 functions, some of which are served by *multiple elements*: some of these are shown by the connection lines.





And again in text outline form:

FUNCTIONS

1. Connection

- Circles
 - Check-ins
 - Sharing
- Craft
 - Natural materials
- Bush craft skills
- Patterns

- Web
 - Circles
 - Rope building
 - Core routines
 - Gratitude
 - Lineage
 - Morning circles
 - Opening & Closing circles
 - Stories
 - Sit spot
2. Sustainability
- Permaculture ethics
 - Earth Care
 - Facilitate transport sharing
 - Source ethical, local, wild, organic food
 - People Care
 - Multi generational
 - Healing
 - Yoga
 - Good healthy food
 - Moon lodge
 - Fair Shares
 - Mindful of food tolerances
 - Concessions: 3 fee levels
 - Opportunity to donate more to support a sister
3. Culture
- 8 Shields
 - Acorn facilitation
 - Anchors
 - Directions / 4 elements
 - Flow learning structure
 - Peacemaking
 - Clear roles
 - Clear agreements
 - Confidentiality
 - Deep nature connection
 - Ceremony
 - Opening & Closing
 - Sweat lodge
 - Moon ceremony
 - Spirit plates
 - Reflection
 - Journaling
 - Check-ins / sharing
 - Solo walk
 - Sit spot
 - Story of the day

These systems effectively gave us the flow of the whole camp and the day, following *pattern to detail*, using 'flow learning' from 8 Shields.

They also helped us to organise ourselves as an Acorn, each taking two directions of the 8 Shields and the roles and responsibilities that came with the directions:

Pattern

We explored our strengths & comfort with the directions and choose accordingly:

N & NW: Klaudia, holding the overview, heritage, ancestors / elders, grief.

SW & E: Nikki, holding spaces and care taking of physical needs, food and welcoming.

S & NE: Jessie, keeping track of practical details, time and organising materials, gratitude, inspiration and some trickster energy.

SE & W: Ellie, holding playfulness and games, song harvesting and story catching.



Momentum

We set up 4 groups according the directions to support the 'village' with practical tasks.

We modelled a village culture that was easily picked up and adopted.

We ensured strong follow up after the camp to maintain the deep connections that were made.



Action

We held our planning meetings in accordance with the culture we wanted, having check-ins and gratitude. We allocated tasks according to our areas of responsibility. We planned set-up and take-down and had an overnight on site before the event to get to know the site, try things out and plan detail from the general pattern. We developed a big kit list and allocated responsibilities for each item.

We held a ceremony to step into our places and step back out after the event and called in the support we needed.

We brought conventional and herbal first aid kits, using *biological resources*, and made insect repellent with essential oils. We made a herbal balm with the participants. We used natural materials to make craft objects.

Produce no waste: We dug a pit to make a compost toilet, separated our waste into organic for chickens or compost, recycled and minimal landfill.

We used any resources we had already between us, reusing buckets, tents and many tools and equipment.

We had a timetable of events, allocated between us as facilitators with a support facilitator where needed. We each held responsibility of one of the practical areas, being a guide for the support groups.

Appreciation and gratitude were key elements in our design. We held morning team meetings during camp, for check in and any issues that needed clearing so we could be fully present to the participants. Gratitude was shared during camp morning circles, opening and closing circles and sweat lodge ceremony.





Pause

We built in a morning sit spot for nature connection and stillness. We had Yoga nidra relaxation meditations most days.

After the camp we took some time out before gathering again as a team for reflections.

For me a personal learning was to take a breath of pause before launching into check-ins, leading to a commitment at the end of the camp to take more regular breath pauses during my day.



Reflection

We had team meetings each morning checking in about any issues and making adjustments where needed. Our morning circles gave us feedback from the participants and where possible we did one-to-one check-ins with them.

We collected written and verbal feedback from the participants, ourselves as facilitators and from our site hosts.

We met to discuss the feedback and any issues that had arisen and made amendments to our plans for next year's camp, having agreed that we wanted to do it again and build on the experience.

Some of us also shared reflections with our anchors and mentors.

Conclusion & overall reflection on the design process

It was really helpful to use the design process for developing our camp and guiding our process. In addition we used the 8 Shields Acorn model for organising ourselves and the participants, as well as the flow model to create a natural process of experience for participants. The camp was deeply satisfying for us as facilitators and for the participants. We achieved our vision beyond expectations.

Gratitude to Bill Mollison for permaculture and the design process (Looby MacNamara for the Design web), Jon Young for the Acorn model, Stalking Wolf lineage for deep nature connection, Woptura lineage and Sal Gencarelle for ceremonial teachings and advanced connection practices.

