ORGANIZE LIKE NATURE

This game is a tool for biomimics, working in teams of 4-6 people, to design a product, process, or system that follows Nature's life's principles and organizing strategies. Whether you are part of a company, institution, family, etc., you can use *Organize Like Nature* to "gamestorm"* a particular organizational challenge by honing in on a desired function, observing nature's strategies, abstracting those strategies to make them relevant to your own challenge, and collecting feedback.

GAME PIECES

- 18 Function Cards of Nature's Organization
- Strategy Cards of Nature's Design Principle
- 1 Game Board

TOOLS NOT INCLUDED

- Paper and pen for each player
- Optional white board to share findings collectively

* D. Gray, S. Brown, and J. Macanufo, (2010). *Gamestorm: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers* . Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc.

"QUIET YOUR CLEVERNESS" & PLAY!

CHOOSE A FUNCTION

Lay out the game board so that all players can see it. Choose a Function Card that's of particular interest to your organization and "play" it by putting it in the game board's center.

OBSERVE NATURE'S STRATEGIES

Spread the Strategy Cards around so that the organisms are facing up. Take turns selecting which strategy cards apply to the selected function. Once the group feels all applicable strategies have been found, turn over the cards on the board and take turns reading the abstractions out loud.

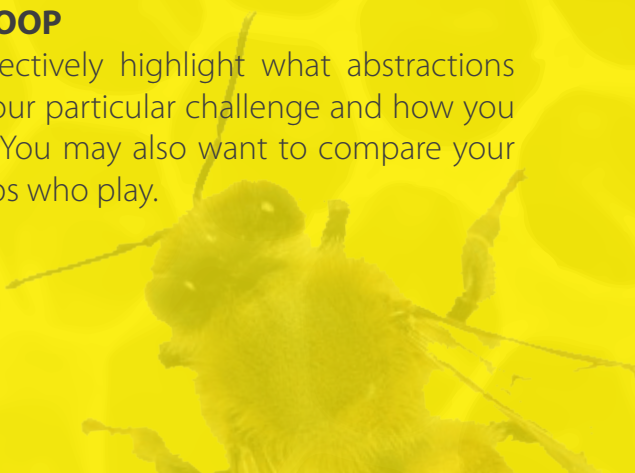
BRING IT HOME

Either as a group or individually, apply the abstractions to your own organization's challenge. Allow players to share their abstractions. Designate a scribe to collect the group's findings on a white board (optional). Continue playing using various functions.

CREATE A FEEDBACK LOOP

After a few rounds, collectively highlight what abstractions seem most relevant to your particular challenge and how you might implement them. You may also want to compare your findings with other groups who play.

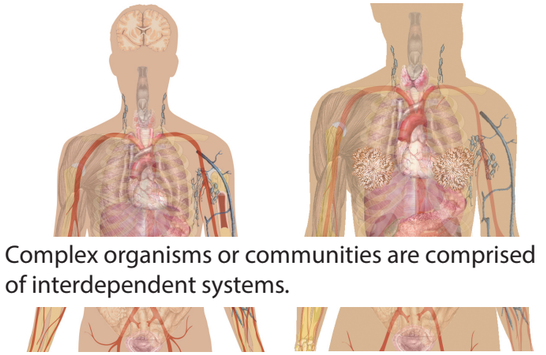
*Quote excerpt from Janine Benyus



Beehives collectively decide to “swarm.”

Bull snakes mimic rattlesnakes.

Generalistic species like the Raccoon, that thrive in a wide range of environmental conditions, benefit from novel disturbances.



Complex organisms or communities are comprised of interdependent systems.

Killdeer disguise their eggs.

Diverse plant communities stabilize an ecosystem.

Pine trees like Bishop, have seritonous cones.

Coyotes and badgers sometimes hunt cooperatively.

Female elephants build enduring social ties.

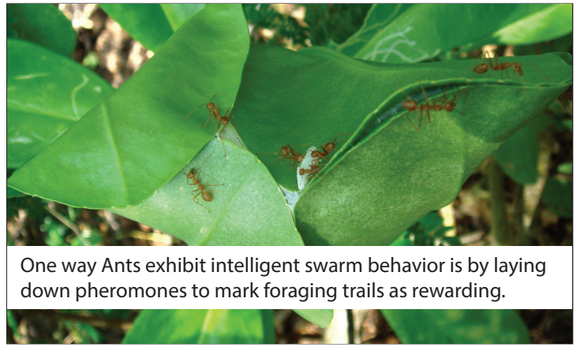
Bees have specialized roles/tasks within the colony which are assigned based upon strengths, weaknesses, experience and individual tolerance for stressors. Roles include; guarding, food gathering, reproducing, cleaning and building.

Specialist species like the Scrub Jay, that only thrive in a narrow range of environmental conditions, often struggle with novel disturbances.

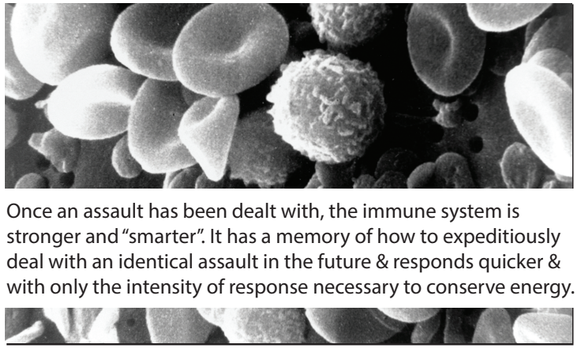
Red-billed Oxpeckers feed on parasites found on the Impala, forming a mutually beneficial relationship.

Native American communities gather as a “Council” to allow individual voices to be heard, collectively discuss issues of concern, and make decisions for the benefit of the community.

Bees store resources for future use.



One way Ants exhibit intelligent swarm behavior is by laying down pheromones to mark foraging trails as rewarding.



Once an assault has been dealt with, the immune system is stronger and “smarter”. It has a memory of how to expeditiously deal with an identical assault in the future & responds quicker & with only the intensity of response necessary to conserve energy.

Testing for favorable conditions and awaiting the outcome before extending more energy and resources in a particular direction minimizes and evaluates risk.

Mimicking qualities that might deter competitors or adversaries helps ensure the survival of the individual.

Develop skills or expertise in fields that are broadly applicable. Apply skills meant for a different environment to a new setting following disturbance.

Define the roles that need to be filled for the organization to function. These roles can inform hiring and structuring of the organization.

Making resources for growth and development less vulnerable to loss by concealing them from risk, increases the likelihood those resources will be successful.

Diversity allows resources to be used efficiently, without depleting or over-taking the resources base. Cooperative relationships flourish in diverse communities.

Adapt to reoccurring disturbance. Incorporate cyclical processes into workplans.

In the right conditions, partnering with organizations different from your own, but with similar requirements can increase the odds of success.

Build organizational and physical structures that allow for social connections and knowledge transfer.

Specialized roles limit the amount of knowledge and skills each individual needs to acquire and retain.

Only specialize when conditions are appropriate and recognize the risks associated with limiting an organization to highly specific roles over a long period of time.

Form long-term mutually beneficial relationships with strong organizations.

Use the "Council Way", a democratic process, to make decisions that are fair to the individual and contribute to the whole.

Collecting and saving resources for use during periods when resources are scarce, ensures that the organization has the ability to survive during adverse conditions.

Share knowledge that guides others to viable resources.

Make mistakes and learn from those mistakes.