

The Ten Atoms

1

New story

We need to foster new narratives about what it means for people to live and flourish in a circular society. Let's talk to each other and create desirable images of an inclusive society where we renounce some of the privileges of today to make new and more intriguing choices. And we must consistently evoke the power of examples and share the stories of people and projects paving the way. That goes for the innovators – and the decision-makers.

2

Proximity to manufacturing

If we are to redesign products to fit into our circular society, we must reestablish a closer connection to manufacturing. We earn access to crucial knowledge about products and their life cycle through a tangible and physical experience of materials, tools, and technologies. This knowledge is critical for building circular business models.

3

Planetary perspective

We'd all go to space, see Earth, and experience the overview effect in a perfect world. It's a cognitive change of consciousness reported by some astronauts during spaceflight. After observing our planet from the universe, they feel obligated to take care of that precious blue dot forever. That is an obligation we must all feel. If not in space, then in our personal connectedness to Earth.

4

Courage

Courage is one of the most consistent characteristics of people who spearhead the circular transition. For more businesses, policymakers, and citizens to dare to be courageous, we must create a safe environment that mitigates risk and enables mutual trust and understanding. So we can navigate in unknown territory, make tough choices, fail – and learn from our failures.

5

Borderless Solutions

In a laboratory where we experiment and find new answers, we hold a huge responsibility to pass on the solutions and share and scale them in new local and global arenas. That also means that we must give more and more people the capacity to solve problems in their context, providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge, regardless of where they're located.

6

Flexible legislation

We must look curiously and openly at existing legislation and regulation that might slow down the development of circular solutions. Let's create 'regulatory sandboxes' to conduct experiments in controlled and supportive regulatory environments.

7

Risk capital

New skills, solutions, and partnerships need fresh capital. Investors, funds, and policymakers can lead by investing in the right solutions and companies and calling for new answers in alliances across businesses and value chains. It's a lot of weight to carry for the individual company leader to spearhead the circular transition. Risk capital can take some of the load off their shoulders.

8

Poetry

We cannot comprehend and join a new way of life led only by our rationality. We must feel and relate to the circular society with our hearts and guts. Let's use the power of creativity and the arts to promote a deeper understanding of circularity, evoke critical thinking, teach empathy and spur a passion for making change.

9

Data

Data on materials, products, and behavior – where they come from, how they're designed, produced, and transported, and how they're used, reused, and recycled – are invaluable for circular innovation. We must improve our ability to collect, organize, visualize and understand data. It's a critical enabler of transparency and collaboration.

10

Collective action

It's tough to be circular in a linear industry. Circularity demands that actors across the state, city, industry, and civil society collaborate to build new solutions and explore new ownership models. It is a systemic challenge that requires systemic solutions. We must acknowledge our interdependence – that we serve multiple stakeholders in our efforts to accelerate the circular transition.

