

Distill It Down to the Smallest Pattern

My friend is excellent at taking the complex and making it simple. I love having her on the team because she really makes it possible to replicate.

The simpler anything is, the easier it is to repeat. The more complex, the more difficult to pass it on.

In Chapter 11 of their book, ["Missional Moves: 15 Tectonic Shifts that Transform Churches, Communities, and the World"](#) Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder put it this way:

"The simpler and more easily repeatable a fractal is, the harder the system is to break or destroy."

"The more sophisticated and complex a fractal is, the harder it is to replicate, the easier it is to mutate, and the easier it is to destroy."

What's a fractal? Wegner and Magruder define it this way: **"A fractal is the smallest repeatable pattern of any given system."**

It's hard for me to think of anything that I do now naturally that didn't begin with some simple, repeatable actions that were within my grasp to do. Even overwhelming, "stretch me" kind of challenges began with a simple, repeatable step.

There is no movement without reproduction. And there is no reproduction without small repeatable patterns.

In the Chapter on Adaptive Methods in Steve Addison's book, ["Movements that Change the World"](#) Steve writes, "As the Word became flesh, Jesus fully entered into our world. He chose to communicate and minister in ways that matched his context and were easily picked up by his disciples. His message was profound but simple. It was easily transmitted, shaped, and passed on by his disciples."

He states that Adaptive Methods are:

- Sustainable-Able to reproduce without external funding
- Flexible-Can be modified as the context changes
- Transferable-Easily passed on to new disciples
- Simple-Only the essentials are included
- Functional-Effective for the purpose they were intended
- Scaleable-Capable of multiplying without distortion
- Reproducing-Spreads rapidly from person to person, network to network

Consider these:

- In "[Discover Your Mission Now](#)" Dave Ferguson spells out the B.L.E.S.S. acronym to help people repeat 5 simple, repeatable missional practices:

Begin with prayer

Listen

Eat

Serve

Story

- Don Everts and Doug Schaupp in their book "[I Once Was Lost](#)" articulate 5 things you should invite your friends to repeat over and over again in your discipling relationships:

Get them praying.

Get them reading Scripture.

Get them serving.

Get them to share their story.

Get them to live in community.

- Greg Finke, the founder of [Dwelling 114](#), encourages 5 questions as sort of a weekly check-in with those we are living in community with:

Where have you seen God this week?

What has God been teaching you in His Word?

What discussions are you having with those who are far from God?

What good can we do around here?

How can we lift each other up in prayer?

- In our missional communities (lifeGroups) at [the Church](#) we use 4 W's to help us:

Welcome-we share our lives with each other around food and fellowship.

Worship-we experience the presence of God and experiment with different ways of responding.

Word-the Scripture holds a sacred, central place in our gatherings.

Witness-we consider how we might bless our community and engage our friends who are far from God (impact lists).

- We've even produced a [Launch Strategy](#) to guide our steps the next time we start a new site in our pursuit of our vision "[One Church, Regional Impact.](#)"

Notice any similarities?

One of the main reasons why we are not seeing the multiplication of new believers and discipling relationships in the church in America is because we have allowed our ministries to become so complex that only a few can truly participate. We have not done the hard work of distilling down our systems to the smallest repeatable pattern.

In my work with [Auxano](#) we call this effort of intentional integration a "[Duplicatable Process](#)". Anything in ministry you hope to reproduce must be broken down into simple repeatable patterns (fractals). Only then, will there be any movement.

So, spend time considering such things. Watch Jesus. Discuss and discern with your leaders. Engage and employ a strategic outsider like Auxano. Ask God for clarity. Decide and synthesize your language. Live it with joy to the glory of God. And, as you do, invite others to join you and imitate you.

Read more from Jeff [here](#).