

March 2022



Juan Rovalo

Biomimicry Professional

"Humans are known to be able to make great changes really fast. The foundation of those changes have always been the fact of our ability to communicate and to reach agreements by communication"

Advice from Juan Rovalo

Juan Rovalo comes from a family of designers. Rovalo's father is an architect, and his mother was an art historian. However, despite his family's dedication to art and design, Rovalo's early interest was actually in living things, rather than the inanimate world of art and architecture. At a young age, Rovalo was often disinterested in his family's excursions to architectural destinations, where they could revel in the designs of artists. Rovalo says that, at the time, he would have much rather travelled to the rivers, mountains, or forests of Mexico, where he grew up, than to the colonial sites of the 16th century. However, Rovalo does recall one trip on which the wonder of design became apparent to him. His family was visiting an old mission in Oaxaca. Rovalo remembers his father, unmoving, staring at the

face of the building for what felt like forever. When Rovalo asked his father why he hadn't moved, he answered that he was waiting for the sun to set lower in the sky. At the perfect moment, the sun would illuminate the shrine inside the church. Rovalo recalls that this is one of his first memories of humans designing with nature in mind. Those 16th century architects had planned the construction of the church in consideration of the sun's path, and harnessed its power. Later, Rovalo went on to study biology at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Even with his early interests in biology, he found that working in basic biological research was too narrow for some of his ideas. After a few years, Rovalo began his career in design and biology when he founded a consulting firm with a few friends. Rovalo was able to offer an ecological perspective to the design strategies of the group. It was also around this time that Rovalo was first introduced to The Biomimicry Institute. Eventually, he would go on to earn his certification as a biomimicry professional, and a Masters in Biomimicry from Arizona State University. Later, Rovalo founded his second consulting firm, In Site. With In Site, Rovalo provided many clients with ecologically-minded strategies for site-planning and sustainable design in key destinations around the world. Rovalo travelled to Bhutan,

Morocco, Mexico, and South Africa as the founder of In Site. Now, Rovalo works as an ecologist and integrated design specialist for Biohabitats, where he works to restore ecosystems and habitats with strategies based in ecological science.

In his 20 years of working at the intersection of ecology and design, Rovalo says that he has learned from many people. Indigenous people, for example, are often experts in strategies for climate-conscious design and land-management. Rovalo believes that one great key to mitigating climate change and mass-extinction is to look beyond our own little bubble, and learn from other people. Especially in this age of information and knowledge sharing, Rovalo argues that we have no excuse when it comes to executing strategies and plans to prevent climate destruction.

According to Rovalo, one of the biggest challenges facing the next generation of scientists and biomimics is not a lack of knowledge of how to save the planet, but rather a collective understanding of the value and worth of preventing mass extinction and climate change. Rovalo understands that the resources for change are already around us, in nature and our ecosystems, we just have to harness them in the right directions.

Find us on Social Media:

