

# WHAT DRAWS CONSUMERS TO UPCYCLED FOOD?

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IN THE FOOD SECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT  
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

2026

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# AGENDA

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- ❑ Danish examples
- ❑ What upcycled food is NOT
- ❑ The why of upcycling
- ❑ 2 communicational narratives
- ❑ 2 communicational strategies

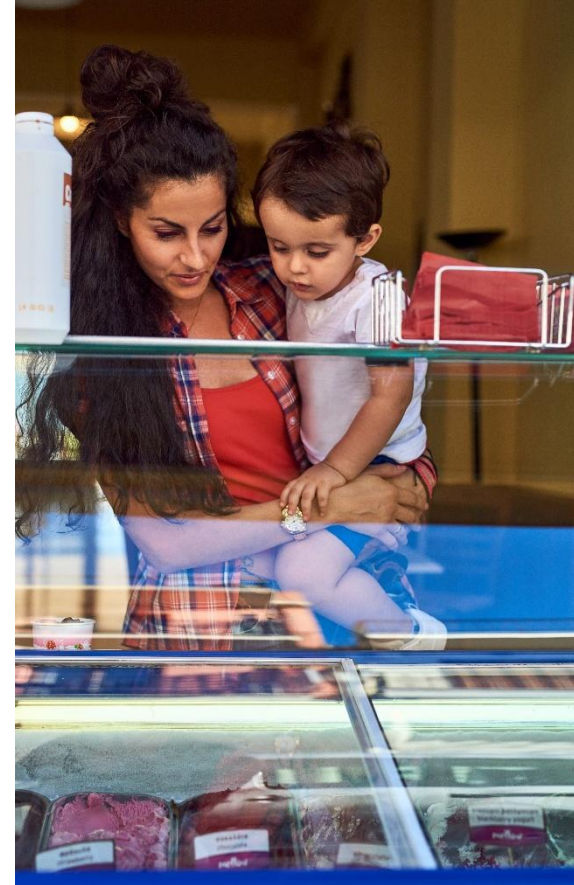


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# MAPP CENTRE

- ❑ Research Centre at Aarhus University – located at Department of Management
- ❑ Research on social science in the food system – e.g. behaviour, marketing, sector transitions
- ❑ Values of interdisciplinarity, relevance, and excellent research quality
- ❑ Find us on linkedin and [mapp.au.dk](http://mapp.au.dk)



Image: MAPP

# DANISH EXAMPLES



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# EXAMPLES - DENMARK



glean



NOTCH



# INCREASED FAMILIARITY IN DENMARK

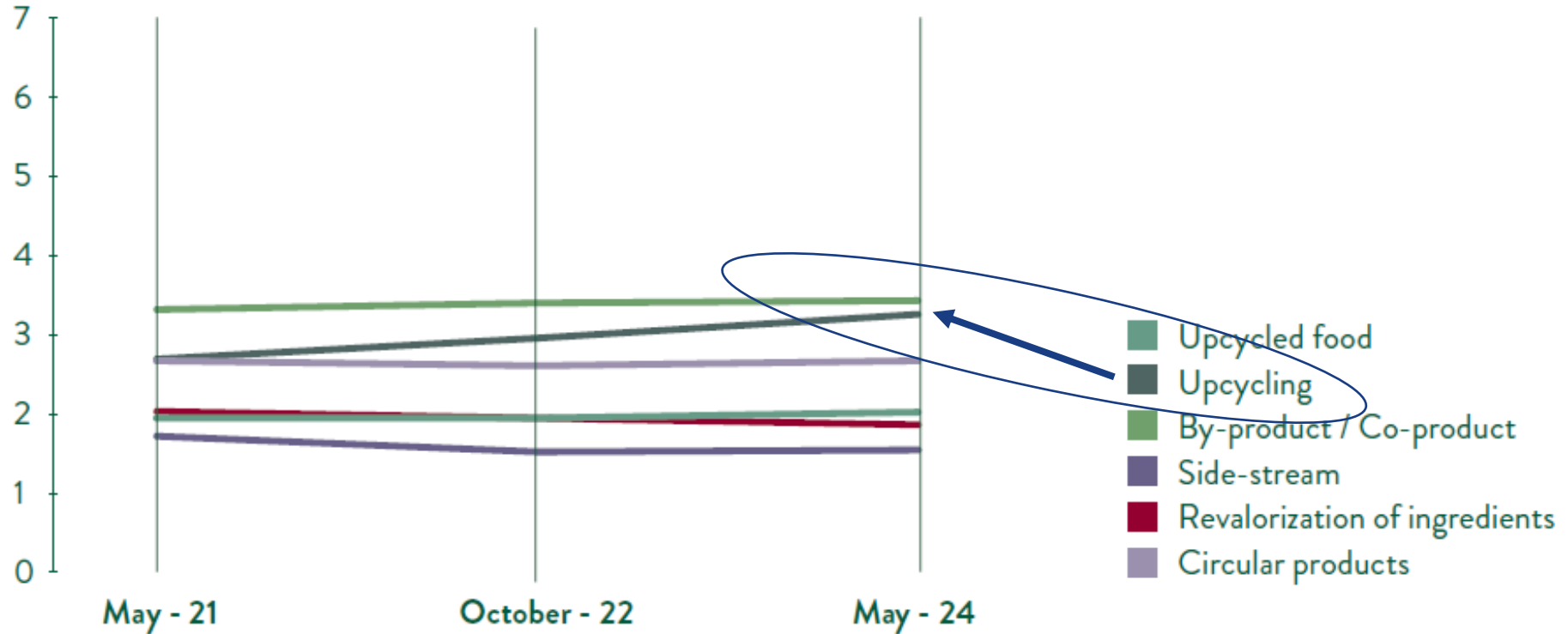


FIGURE 4

Consumers' familiarity with concepts (1=not familiar at all; 7=very familiar)

# WHAT UPCYCLED FOOD IS NOT



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<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2022/11/food-waste-101-the-facts-and-solutions/>

# AVOIDING NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS?

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- ❑ **Concrete** product examples (instead of just the concept)
- ❑ **Climate** communication leads association towards 'innovation and 'environment' – and away from 'waste'



Image: colourbox

# THE WHY OF UPCYCLING

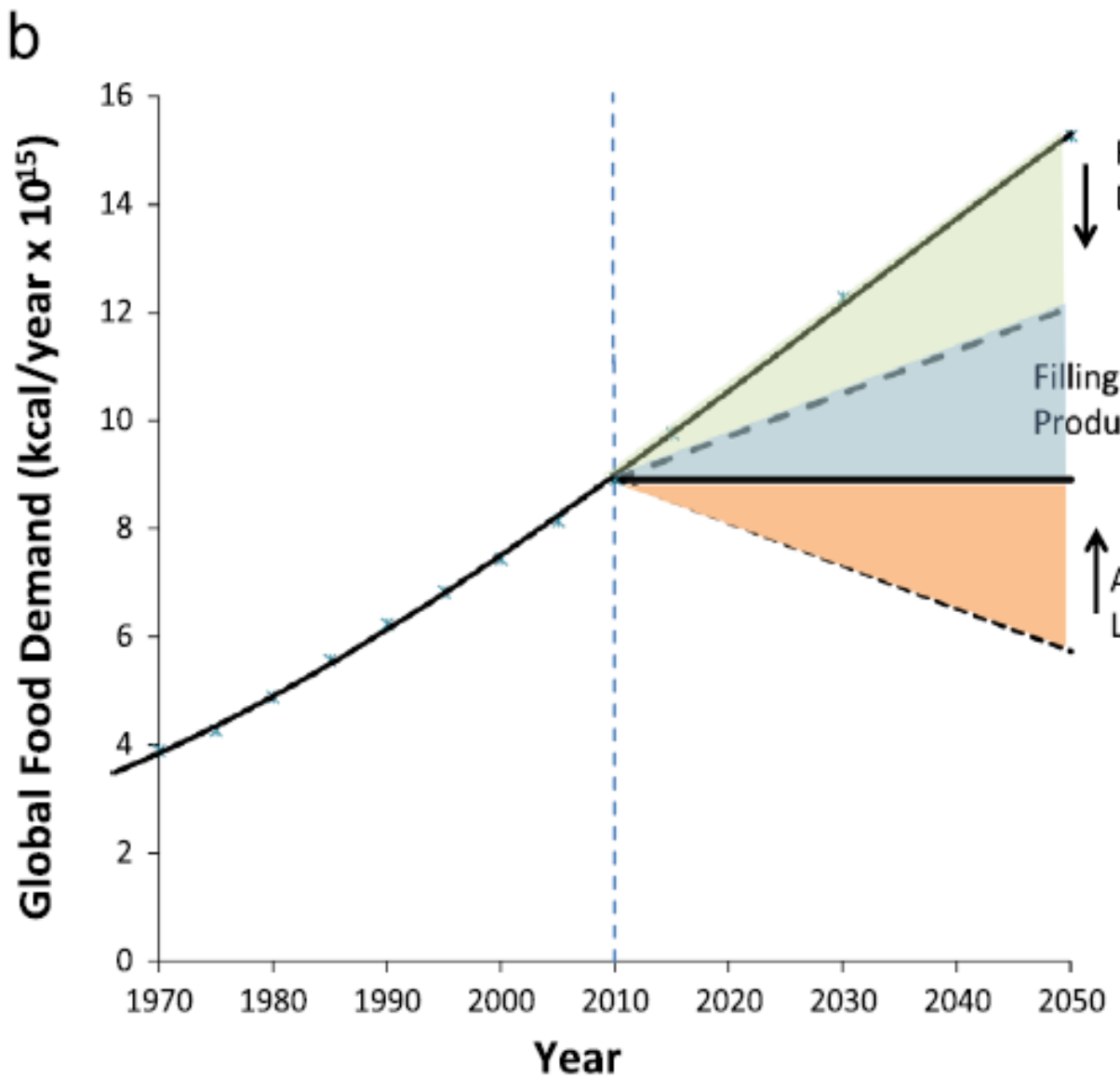


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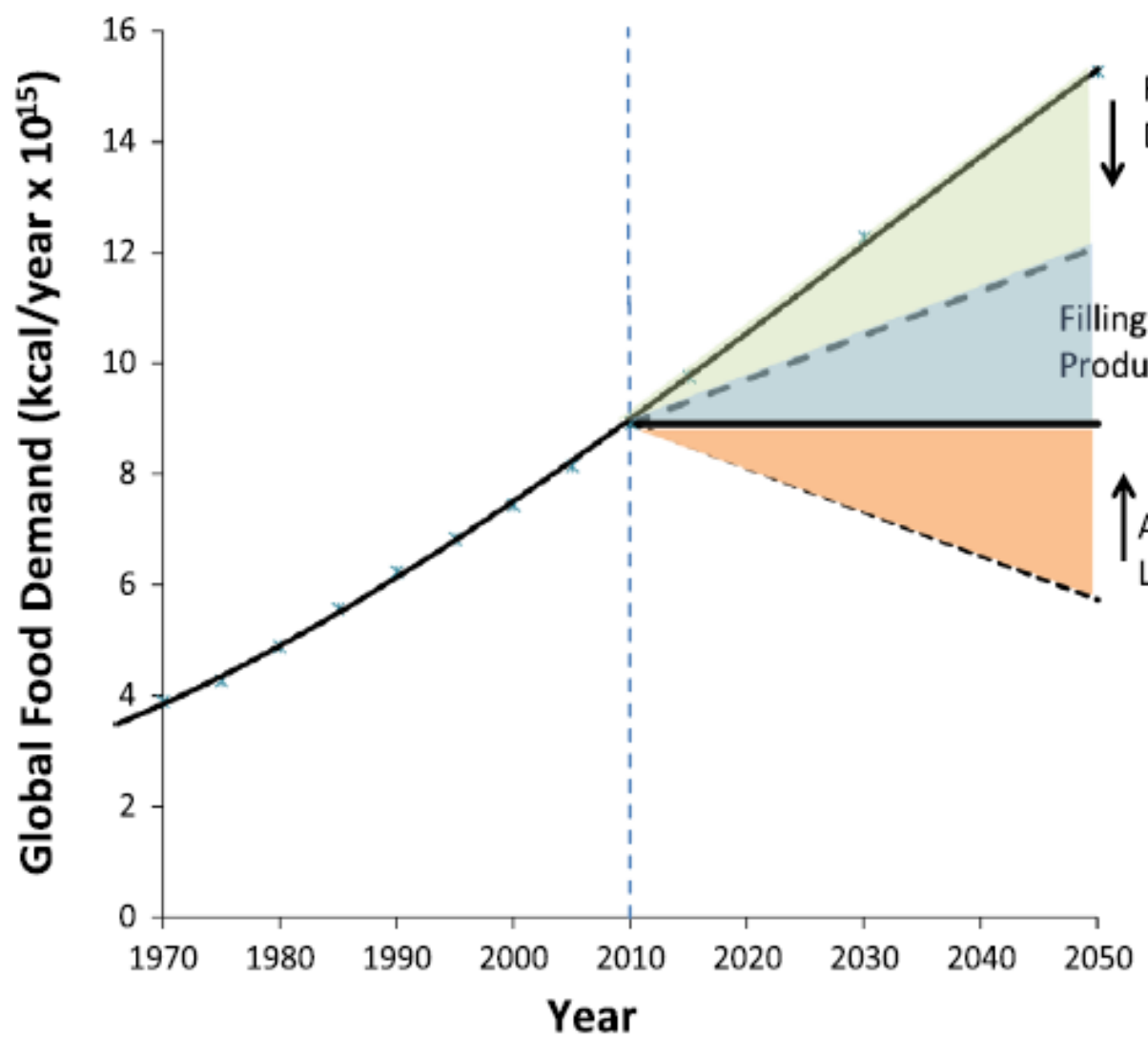
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Keating, B. A., et al.(2014). Food wedges: Framing the global food demand and supply challenge towards 2050. *Global Food Security*, 3(3), 125–132.

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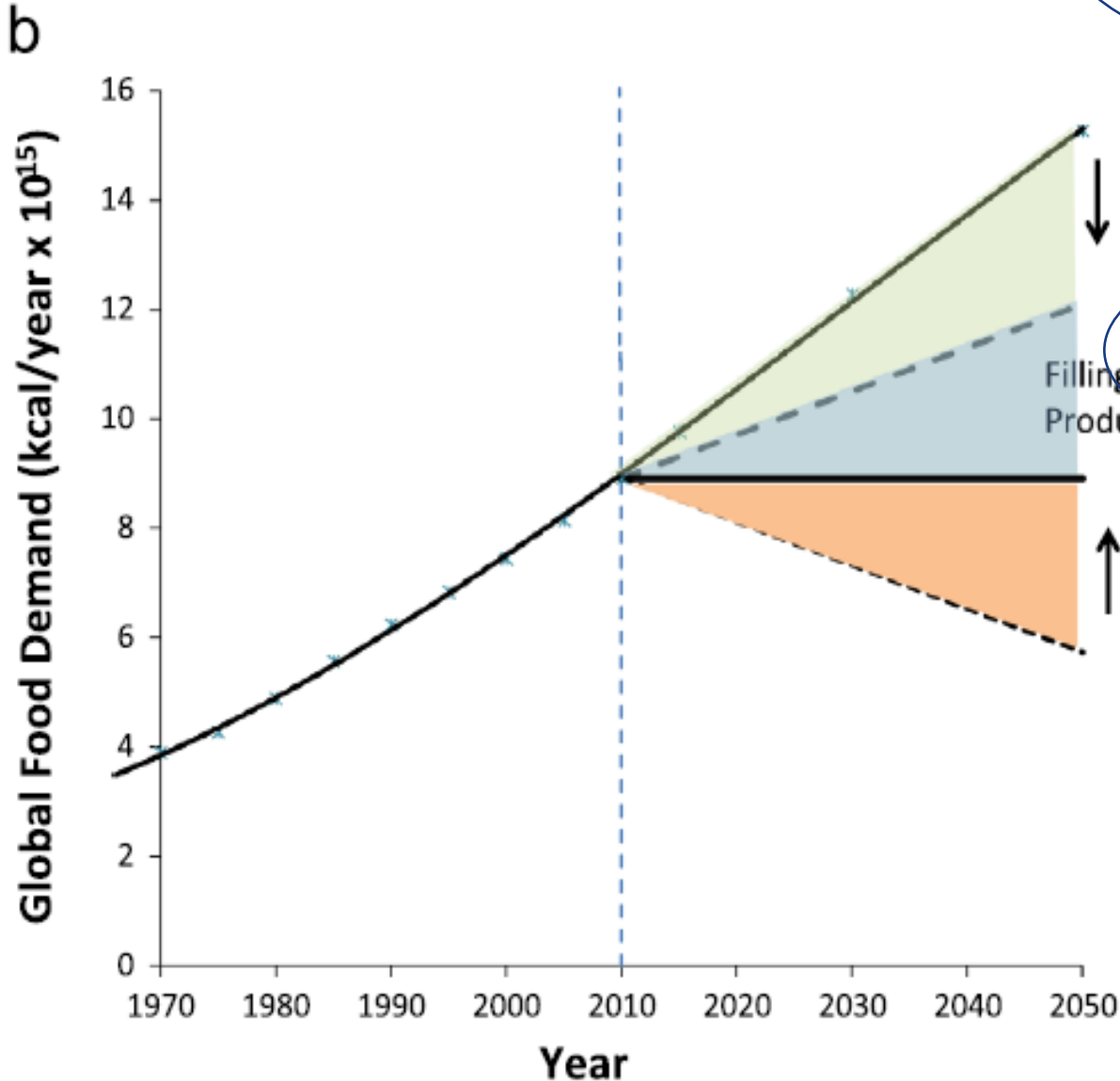
Reducing food loss and waste,  
reducing overconsumption,  
Eating less meat and more plant

Using resources efficiently  
Eating diverse: more  
sidestream-based products  
& fish

Biodiversity for more resilience  
Avoid soil degradation  
Mitigate / adapt to climate change

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# INCREASING NEED



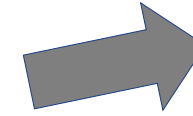
Reducing food loss and waste,  
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# 2 TYPES OF UPCYCLED FOOD

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Upcycled food in an alternative use sense – avoiding food waste through rescuing food from wastage.



# 2 TYPES OF UPCYCLED FOOD

Upcycled food in an alternative use sense – avoiding food waste through rescuing food from wastage.

Upcycled food in a novel use sense – avoiding food waste through broadening the food resources.



# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 2 TYPES

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Upcycled food in an **alternative** use sense – avoiding food waste through rescuing food from wastage.

Upcycled food in a **novel** use sense – avoiding food waste through broadening the food resources.

From a consumer perspective:

**Are consumers familiar?**

- Time-dependent
- Culture-dependent



# 2 COMMUNICATIONAL NARRATIVES



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# THE 'TYPICAL' DRIVERS OF ACCEPTANCE

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**Characteristics that can explain favourable reaction to concept and/or products:**

- younger age, female gender, education
- not 'neophobic', innovation oriented
- environmental concern, frugality-orientation
  
- ingredient-product match
- familiarity with product
- communication on benefit and added cost

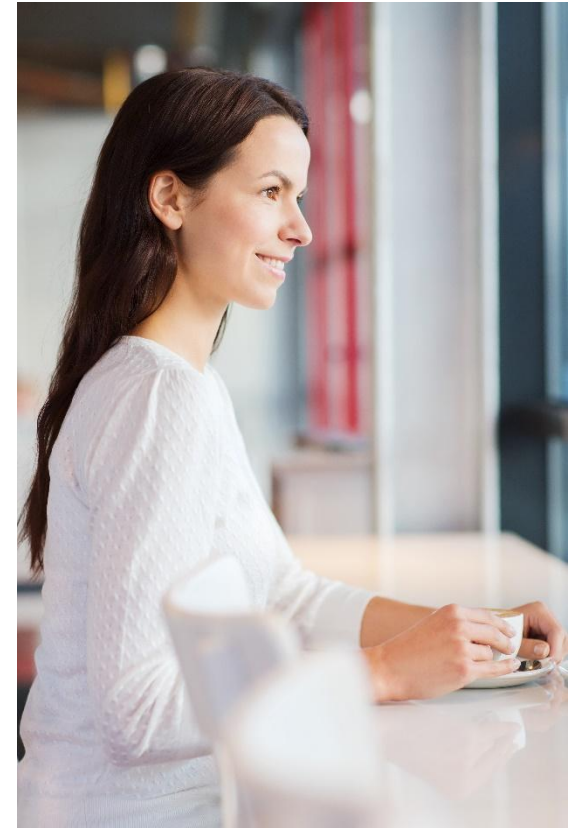


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# COMMUNICATING BENEFITS? THE OPTIONS

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## 1 - **Climate** and Environment



## 2 - **Frugality** and Tradition



# COMMUNICATING BENEFITS

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## 1 - Climate and Environment

Upcycling food is an approach aimed to reduce the negative environmental impact and fight climate change. It is about smart and efficient natural resource use to have a positive impact on the environment.

Upcycled foods use ingredients that otherwise would not have gone to human consumption. This reduces food waste.

The pictures on the right represent why upcycled foods are produced. What do you think about this idea?



## 2 - Frugality and Tradition

Upcycling food is an ancient tradition based on the philosophy of using all of what you have. It's about doing more with less, and elevating all food to its highest and best use.

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# COMMUNICATING BENEFITS

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**Frugality and Tradition**  
framing is perceived relatively  
MORE favourable

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# 2 COMMUNICATIONAL STRATEGIES



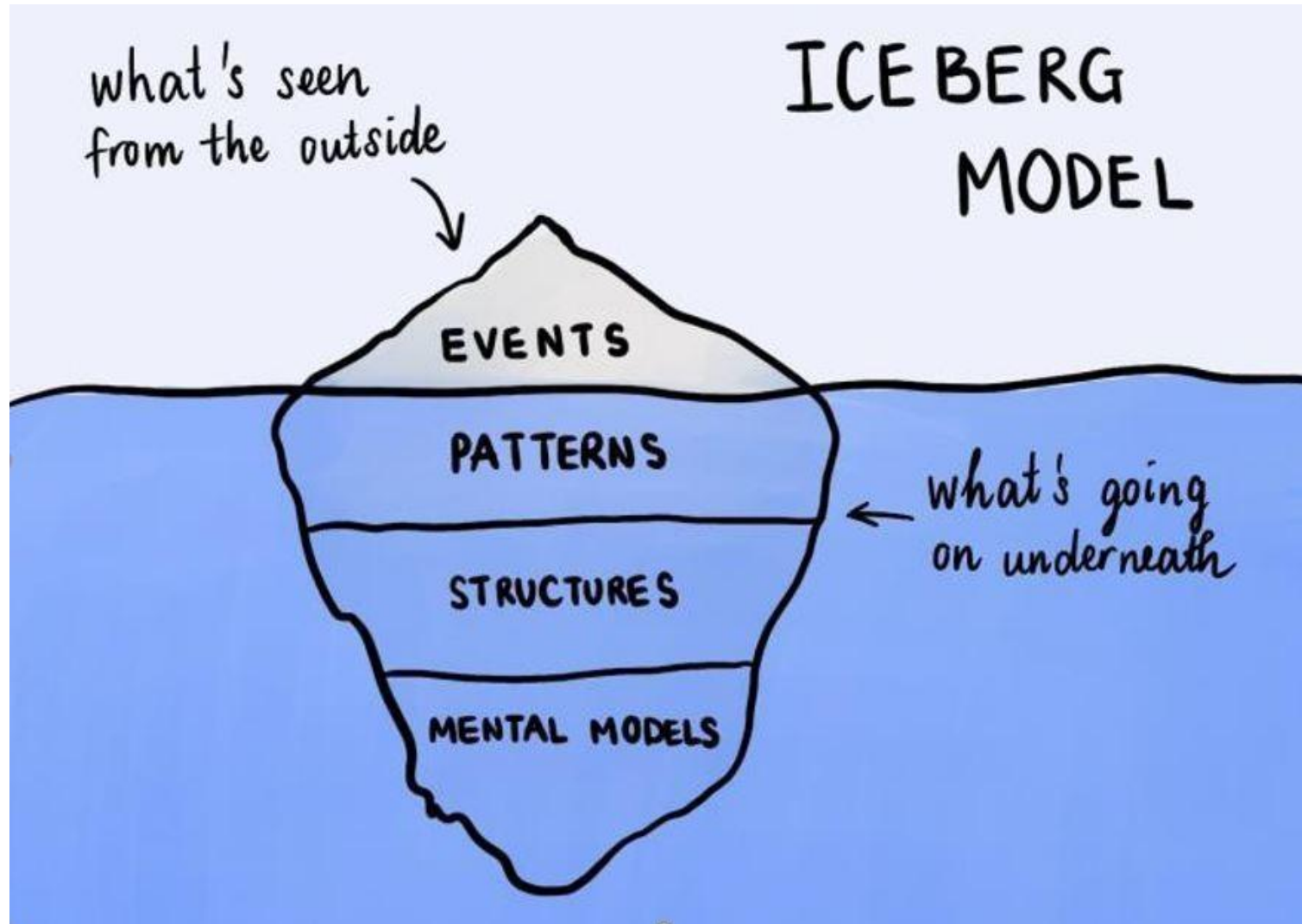
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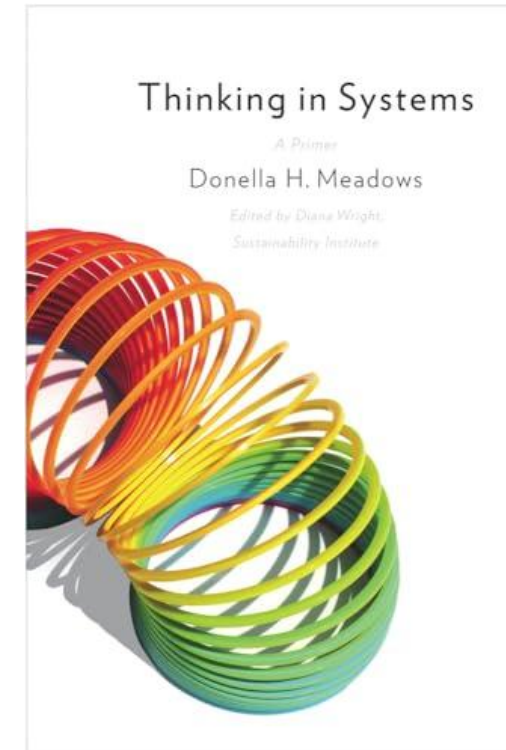
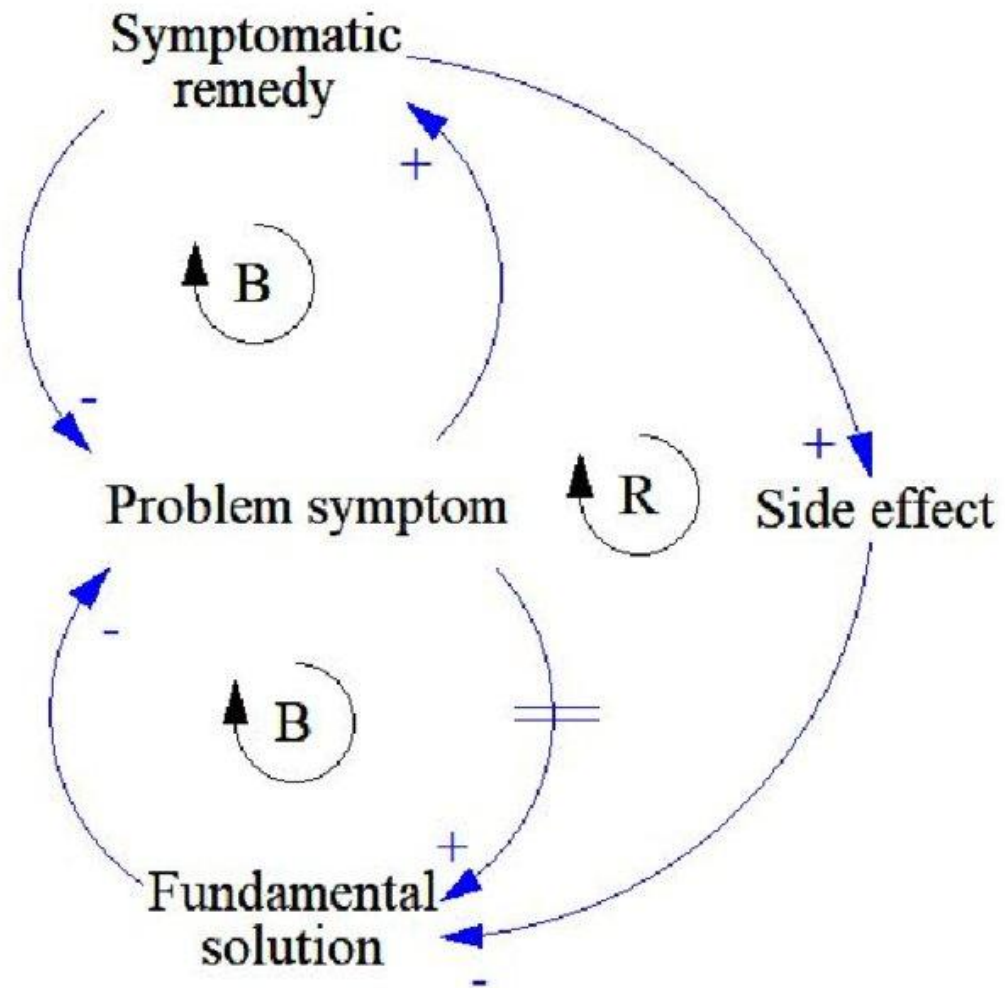
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# ROLE OF MINDSET CHANGE IN SYSTEMS

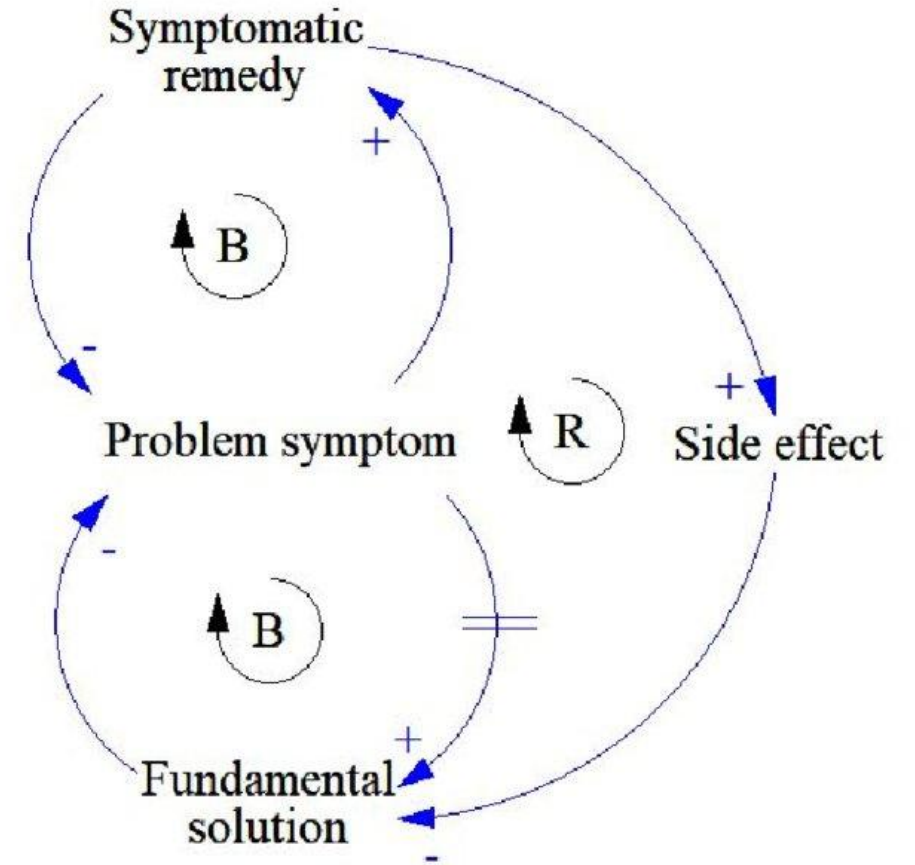




Meadows, 2008

# 2 COMMUNICATIONAL STRATEGIES

1) **Short-term** and **close** to the **current** product: Target-group specific, careful communication about the benefits

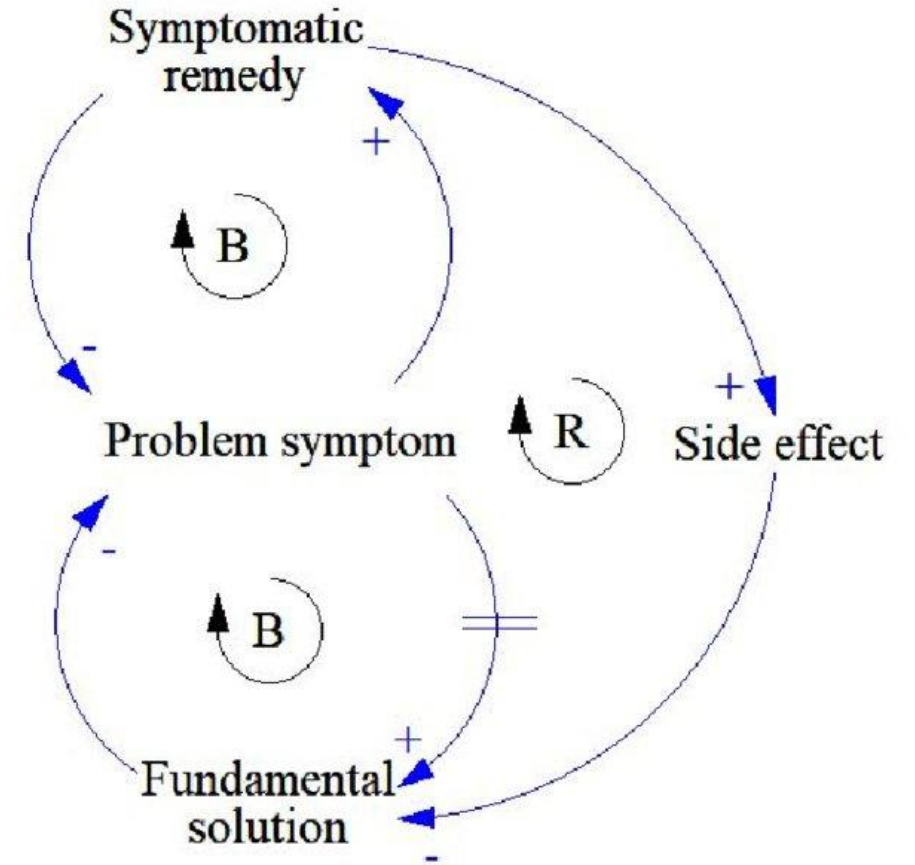


# 2 COMMUNICATIONAL STRATEGIES

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1) **Short-term** and **close** to the **current** product: Target-group specific, careful communication about the benefits

2) **Long-term** and in **general** communication and in public-private collaborations: Challenge conventional thinking - addressing the systemic issue to build support for **future** products



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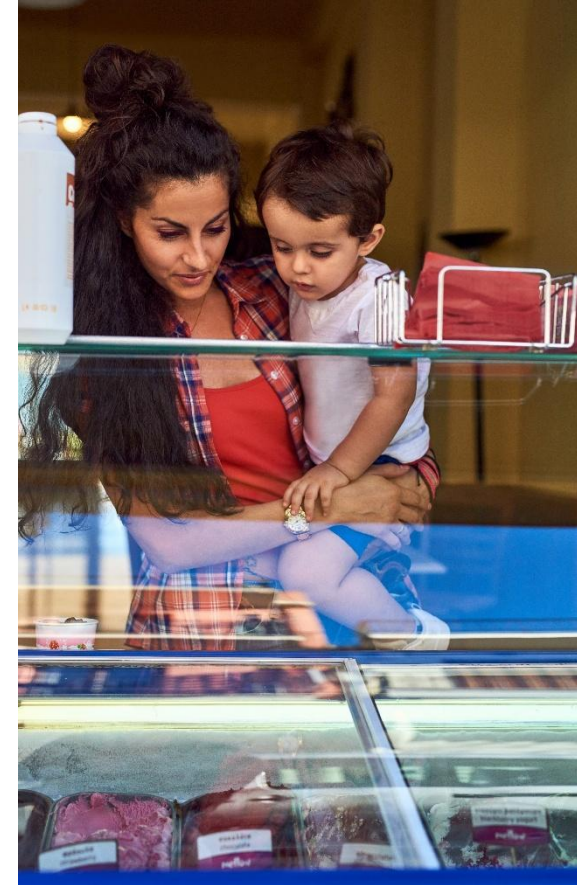


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