

My Powerpoint Presentations
Meadows Leverage Points
Table.ppt

Table 1. Places to intervene in a system (in increasing order of effectiveness)

12. Constants, parameters, numbers (such as subsidies, taxes, standards)
11. The size of buffers and other stabilizing stocks, relative to their flows
10. The structure of material stocks and flows (such as transport network, population age structures)
9. The length of delays, relative to the rate of system changes
8. The strength of negative feedback loops, relative to the effect they are trying to correct against
7. The gain around driving positive feedback loops
6. The structure of information flow (who does and does not have access to what kinds of information)
5. The rules of the system (such as incentives, punishment, constraints)
4. The power to add, change, evolve, or self-organize system structure
3. The goal of the system
2. The mindset or paradigm that the system—its goals, structure, rules, delays, parameters—arises out of
1. The power to transcend paradigms

“The higher the leverage point, the more the system will resist changing it”

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Resolving dominant agent goals that conflict with the common good changes “The goal of the system.” This scores a 3 on Donella Meadow’s scale of leverage in Table 1.

By contrast, popular solutions like taxes, regulations, and alternative energy subsidies push on leverage point type 12, which has the lowest leverage of them all.

9. Numbers (subsidies, taxes, standards).
8. Material stocks and flows.
7. Regulating negative feedback loops.
6. Driving positive feedback loops.
5. Information flows.
4. The rules of the system (incentives, punishment, constraints).
3. The power of self-organization.
2. The goals of the system.
1. The mindset or paradigm out of which the goals, rules, feedback structure arise.