When there is no sun and no moon and you are in the middle of nowhere, it is pitch black—you are effectively blind, you navigate by touch. The smallest imaginable amount of light connects you to your surroundings; marginally more enables you to be productive. In the industrialized world, we take light for granted—we expect light to be available at the flick of a switch. We have light when and where we want it.

This talk will discuss some of the technical and social challenges associated with lighting off the electrical grid. Results will be presented from work with a culturally adaptable, self-assembled, solar powered lighting system designed to be technologically, operationally and financially sustainable at the point of end use.