



## An Introduction to Human Value Systems by Clare W. Graves

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*Future Sense is a podcast edited from the radio show of the same name, broadcast on BayFM in Byron Bay, Australia, at [www.bayfm.org](http://www.bayfm.org). Hosted by Nyck Jeanes and well-known international futurist, Steve McDonald, Future Sense provides a fresh, deep analysis of global trends and emerging technologies.*

*How can we identify the layers of growth personally, socially and globally? What are the signs missed, the truths being denied? Science, history, politics, psychology, ancient civilisations, alien contact, the new psychedelic revolution, cryptocurrency and other disruptive and distributed technologies and much more.*

*This is Future Sense.*

**Nyck:** You are now tuned to Future Sense with myself, Nyck Jeanes, and Steve McDonald over there on the other side of the console.

As I said at the top of the show, it would seem from any perspective that anybody—or arguably anybody—would take right now is that our relationships to reality, to the many things that are occurring in our personal lives, right through to the political to the global, are different and very hard to make sense of. You've got the whole issue of fake news, for example, the issue just in the last week or so in the White House press gallery with Trump ejecting the CNN reporter, Jim Acosta, for asking rude questions; and then seemingly a video of the exchange between himself and a White House intern who was charged with removing the microphone with Jim Acosta seems to have been doctored to some degree to make it look like Jim Acosta was accosting the White House intern. That seems to be completely untrue.

So what is truth? What is fake and what is real? That's all very difficult to understand and with our relationship to such things as the terrorist attack, if you call it that, in Melbourne, for example, in our relationship to war and to the military, to Armistice Day, to what we have learned or haven't learned from the battles of the last century ... all these things and the many, many other issues that occur in our personal lives, and right through to what's happening in the levels of governance in our societies, seem to be very, very confusing. So we're going to make a little bit of sense of this for you this morning and go through some of the value systems that inform the way that different people approach different things in their realities.

**Steve:** Yes. We'll go for a bit of a walk today through the human value systems that Clare Graves documented in his research findings and get some idea of how people who are operating from these different value sets interpret the world and how their underlying frameworks at a subconscious level shape the way that they expect to interact with other people even before they do. That might add a little bit of sense-making to what's going on around the place.

I had to laugh this morning when you were showing me that story about the White House media scuffle and they used the term 'actual fake news'—'actual fake news' as opposed to 'fake fake news'.

**Nyck:** I'm confused already. But you also showed me a spoof on that video, which was really funny.

**Steve:** Yes, I think it came off one of those American current affairs shows that don't even bother to be serious anymore.

**Nyck:** Well, and that's the point, isn't it? Why bother being serious when the serious is so laughable?

**Steve:** It is. It's quite telling, I think, that quite a number of the news media in the US have chosen to take a comedy approach to the news. Basically, they're saying, 'it's just got so silly, we can't even report it seriously anymore.'

**Nyck:** The value systems—this is the key, I think. Most people would agree, one way or the other, that many of us disagree on how we perceive reality now, and that it makes it very difficult to come to a coherent point of view about any issue in society.

**Steve:** As we often mention on this show, the whole world is going through significant change at the moment. We're moving out of a time when we were centred in a particular value system which was dominant globally, and even though it wasn't the only value system in existence, it was widely accepted as being the main system that we all used—or at least tried to use—to interact on an international scale, as well as on a personal scale, in Western countries at least.

Complexity has grown through the use of our technology, which has connected us and increased our speed of communications as well as the way that we communicate; and also through the volume of communication that we're exposed to, which is one of the things that's making it seem like life is speeding up. Things just happen so quickly now and we get

to know about things instantly wherever they happen around the world, so there seems to be much more happening, even though in a lot of ways there isn't all that much more happening. It's just that we get to hear about it instantly and can interact with people instantly all over the world, so we seem much busier than we used to be.

**Nyck:** But it's a factor, isn't it, in terms of Clare W. Graves's work, that in this era, there are more layers of consciousness on the planet than ever before?

**Steve:** Yes. According to Graves's understanding of human values, when we emerged a couple of hundred thousand years ago as a new species, *Homo sapiens*, we were certainly coexisting at that time with other hominids who were of similar makeup to us, but who were not actually classified as human. Since then, we've been through a time where *Homo sapiens* became dominant and the other species that were somewhat similar to us and may have been our evolutionary predecessors, died out. Then for a couple of hundred thousand years, all of *Homo sapiens* coexisted according to a single value set.

I was reading an article earlier this morning that said that, interestingly, that particular set of circumstances was really the exception rather than the rule. For most of the time on the planet there's been great diversity in terms of humans or human-like species but for those couple of hundred thousand years, we had pretty much a single value set. Mostly it was fairly simple and centred around the question of how we survived.

In the last 50,000 years or so, we've seen the emergence of another five different value sets. Actually, calling them 'value sets' is an over-simplification, because what we're actually talking about here are layers of consciousness, each one of which has its own underlying framework for interpreting reality. That's a pretty expansive description, which is hard to get your head around, so we simplify it by narrowing it down to values and what each of these different layers of consciousness values in the world. This has a big impact on how we make sense of the world and how we interact with other people. For simplicity's sake, that's an easy way to talk about it.

This morning, I'll unpack some of those different value sets and just talk in very simple terms about how they interpret the world, how they see the world, and hopefully that will be useful information for understanding why there's so much diversity of opinion, diversity of behaviour, and confusion about what the hell's going on in the world. This is happening because we're hearing from so many different people who speak from these different layers of consciousness, who say 'the world is like this' or 'the world is like that', and 'we need to do this', 'we need to do that'. It's all becoming very confusing in the context of this incredible instant and ubiquitous communication that we have available to us right now.

It's that very complexity, of course, which is contributing to the fact that we need to shift our dominant value system now to a more complex understanding, more complex set of values that's more expansive and inclusive so that we can bring stability again. Right now, though, we're entering into a period of tremendous upheaval and disruption, because the old value set is breaking down as it's no longer able to hold us in the way that it used to.

**Nyck:** And of course, that complexity leads to the volatility of life on Earth now and the uncertainty and ambiguity and the paradox that we all experience in one way or the other. I would suggest that, as you're saying, as we receive information about any given event, any given issue that's occurring on the planet, we align ourselves to what feels comfortable, I guess, what we believe to be the truth, what we've believed before, what makes us feel safer and more secure in where we are, and yet that doesn't really serve the ongoing need to transform and to evolve beyond where we are into something greater within this complex environment of life on Earth at this time.

**Steve:** Yes, it's a tricky situation. Clare Graves called it "a momentous leap in consciousness" that we're moving towards and facing soon, and which some people, of course, have already gone through, which is why he was able to document it in his research back in the 1950s and early 60s. He found some people that had already made this big leap in consciousness, which had been driven by a certain level of complexity in their life conditions. Our mainstream society, of course, is moving towards that big leap in consciousness and we're going to see a critical mass of people making that big shift over the next few decades. It's hard to put an exact time span on it, but certainly 'the next few decades' is a reasonable description of the timeframe, and in preparation for that, we ought to expect considerable disruption because it's that 'slingshot effect' that we often talk about—that tension—like pulling back the elastic band on a slingshot, which is actually required to power the change. Without that potential energy being built up, then the change won't occur.

**Nyck:** It occurs to me straight away that what people tend to do—and I'm relating this to the Byron Shire and Northern Rivers of NSW, here, which we would call a very 'Layer 6' region—that people, in their personal lives, really don't know exactly how to approach life easily now. People tend to go back to simplicity, which is not a bad thing. In fact it's probably a good thing to go back to a simple life in some ways as long as your general life conditions enable you to be able to encompass a bigger picture. But on a psychological level, it would seem very difficult to manage this complexity within ourselves.

I'm just wondering, as brief aside before we launch into each layer and to look at the value systems of each one, what people can actually do. What would you suggest that people do? Steve's got a smile on his face, I like that!

**Steve:** Well, this is the great challenge. Because of the diversity of value sets, you can't just come out and say, 'here's what you should do'.

**Nyck:** All meditate, everybody breathe now, everybody take a holiday.

**Steve:** We have to start speaking specifically to the different value sets and say, 'if this is a good description of where you're at in life, if these are the challenges that you're facing, then here's what might be useful for you.' But we can't come out and give a blanket piece of advice, and that's one of the difficulties that our leaders are facing in the world at the moment: a) they don't understand the context; the situation that they're dealing with; and b) you can't offer any single solution to such a diverse set of people.

**Nyck:** That's a very good blanket piece of advice you've got there! So let's look at some of the systems that have existed on the planet—and still exist, in fact, on the planet—and the value systems which they represent, and see where perhaps you identify with these yourself. As we are always saying, remember that no one is situated just in one layer of consciousness. We tend to span two or three layers of consciousness within our being.

**Steve:** I might just give a general lead-in description, then we'll come back and look at the detail of each of the value systems.

One of the first things to understand is that what we're calling 'value sets' or 'value systems' are really a surface-level representation of a much deeper difference in each individual layer of consciousness. That difference is a framework for making sense of reality. So, it comes down to the sensory input that we're receiving and then how our total system—not just our psychology, but our sensory input apparatus, the makeup of our whole central nervous system, our body chemistry, our networks, a whole bunch of things—how that whole system is operating to help us put together a picture and an understanding of what's happening around us in the world, and then guide us in some way to take action that's going to support our wellbeing. That wellbeing is, of course, a large spectrum of topics that ranges from survival at one end through to things like luxurious enjoyment, perhaps, at the other end, and everything in between.

How do we, as a being, take all of the input that we have and then process it, both at a subconscious and a conscious level, and come up with some guidance system and a set of skills that allows us to be who we want to be in the world and fulfil whatever our path is in this life? It's a massive, vast topic, and the only way that you can really address a massive topic like that is to kind of chunk it down into little bits and make it as simple as possible without actually dumbing it down too much to the point that it's no longer valuable. So that's what we're going to do.

Each one of these sequential value sets that we'll talk about—and again, these value sets are drawn from the research of Dr. Clare W. Graves, who is one of our main sources on this show, Future Sense—each one is a layer that arises sequentially.

We start off when we're born, coming into the world with a very basic survival framework which allows us to know how to eat and how to sleep and when those things are appropriate. Then, as we experience the world and we take in information, and as we grow biologically, we develop new layers that appear over the top of the existing layer. It's a

nested arrangement, and each new layer brings an expansion of our capacity to sense things and to process information, to make sense of that information in a way that's going to be useful for us as we grow through each particular phase of our life. Depending on the complexity of the challenges that we're facing in life, we will grow through an appropriate number of stages. So we try and balance out our capacity to cope with the challenges life throws at us and to be in a place of stability.

When the complexity of life conditions changes—as it is right at the moment, right across the whole world—then the amazingly adaptable systems that we have come into this world with allow us to sense, at a subconscious level, that the complexity is changing. Then that triggers a transformational change inside of us, whereby we can grow, we can expand our sensory perception, and we can expand our capacities to cope. It's a miracle, really.

**Nyck:** It is a miracle. It's actually exciting. It's a wonderful way to view things, I think. It's also the case that on the microcosmic level this actually occurs in every individual life from birth through childhood and into adolescence and so forth, doesn't it?

**Steve:** It does, and you could even break it down to a further microcosmic level and look at cells and how each individual cell would also be going through that same adaptive process, which is really a quality of consciousness.

**Nyck:** We are stars, we are made of stars and we are moving back towards the stars.

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**Nyck:** Now, we're talking about values because all these issues in one sense could be teased out, and it can be shown how our different value systems clash and how it's very difficult for us to understand and to take action even with those values. Steve's going to start to expand a little bit about those different value systems and why we might have difficulty talking to each other with regards to all sorts of issues, personal to political.

**Steve:** Let's start at the very beginning, when we come into the world. Depending on what your understanding of spirituality and reality is, you might have differing opinions on how that process happens, but I think we can probably all agree that we come into this world from another dimension. That dimension may simply be existing inside the mother's womb, which is a water-filled environment where we have a very different experience of being alive. We come out of that, in some senses, through a process of shock. A shocking change happens when we get exposed to this very different environment where we're out in the open air and we no longer have the warmth and comfort of the womb; there's some guy slapping us on the butt, probably, and we have to start breathing and all that kind of thing. It's a radical change.

Then we're faced with this question, 'How do I survive in this strange world? What do I have to do?' There seem to be coded patterns that we're brought into the world with that guide

the way that we experiment with how to survive in the world, and one of those patterns that plays out in this value set that Clare Graves found in his research is like a swinging pendulum that takes us from trying to be an individual in the world and changing the world to fit with how we need it to be, to the other side of the pendulum swing, which is trying to be part of a community in the world and trying to adapt ourselves to fit with what that community and the world requires of us. So those are very masculine and feminine themes.

The individuating 'change the world' theme is a masculine theme, and the communal 'how do I change myself to adapt?' theme is a very feminine theme. Whether we're a man or a woman, we still swing like a pendulum between those two extremes. What we find is that when we're swinging in one direction, it will succeed for a while and we'll be able to solve our challenges of life. But inevitably, like any pendulum, it reaches the limit of its swing and there are forces which are propelling it back in the other direction, and so we get propelled back. That dynamic shows up in life as problems start to arise because of individuation and individual approaches to life—one problem being loneliness and isolation, of course—and that's part of the impetus for us to move back in the other direction and go to the other side of the pendulum swing. So we seem to be coded with this pattern, and the pattern plays out according to the various value sets that we live by.

The first value set is a basic survival value set, which, at a species level, looks like Hunter-Gatherer existence. At an individual level, it looks like us being an infant. Life is mostly automatic responses to stimuli, just as a baby simply responds to being hungry, to being hot, cold and those sorts of things. We don't have a lot of good evidence, particularly in Clare Graves's work. He hasn't gone to great lengths of documenting this basic survival level and that's for a number of reasons. Firstly, because those people who are in that simple response-to-stimulus kind of existence aren't likely to document it, and it's hard to actually interview them and get data on that.

**Nyck:** And there are not many people, arguably, left in that situation.

**Steve:** No, that's right.

**Nyck:** Yet in some ways, it's also true that some people, I guess on the streets, perhaps, are on that level, or have been pushed back by life circumstances to that level of existence again.

**Steve:** That's true, and as far as we know from Clare Graves's work and his understanding, it seems that this equates to existence when we were hunter-gatherers, a long time ago. Because this is a very pre-rational, responsive, automatic way of living, it doesn't involve any complex operation of the rational mind, and it's only through that complex operation of the rational mind that we've come to the point of wanting to create explanations through language and through documenting or writing about our experience. So we haven't been able to put a lot of detail around that, but I think everybody will get the general idea of

being simply responsive in a rather automatic way to what happens to us in life and living very much in the moment.

Graves speculated that what arose out of that hunter-gatherer existence at a species level was an issue of feeling unsafe in a very strange world where weird things happen: giant flashes of light come out of the sky and make trees catch on fire, wild animals chase you, and those sorts of things. Sooner or later, we started to figure that if we gather together in larger groups—this is the pendulum swinging back to that communal side of the swing—there's a safety in numbers. So we worked out, probably through experimentation, that if we gather together in larger groups, then it made life easier.

The second value set that arose, which we do have some detail around, is what Graves called the Tribal or Subsistence level set of values. We see this emerging in young children once we start to have the capacity to understand the family structure, when we start to be able to communicate more effectively with the other members of our family and operate in a family way. Even though this is something that we go through as small children, we have to remember that all of these value sets are nested inside each other, so at various times, even as adults, sometimes our life conditions can stimulate us in certain ways, and we will flip back or spiral back down to some of these earlier value sets and behave according to them. So it's not something that you don't see in adult behaviour; you certainly do see it from time to time.

This second level tribal-family value set means that we mostly interpret the world with reference to our close personal relationships within a relatively small group of immediate contacts. We're looking to those people who we have close family-like relationships with, and we're looking at the way that they're responding. We're noticing whether they're happy, whether they're sad, whether they're alarmed, whether they're comfortable and relaxed, and then that guides our own way of interacting and responding to the world. If we see that our whole family is excited about something, then we're probably going to get excited, too, so there's a transference of interpretation and behaviour that happens at that fairly simple value set.

The interesting thing is that we tend to be very suspicious and untrustworthy of anybody who doesn't belong to that immediate family group that we identify with. It might not be a literal blood family group, but it will be an immediate group of people around us who we know well and we trust; who we use as guides for the way that we are personally responding to and behaving in the world.

In extreme cases, if we look at some traditional tribal civilisations, you'll find that people outside that immediate, tribal reference group are not even regarded as human. So they're not extended basic human rights because we don't identify with them at all. It's tempting in progressive New Age society to romanticise some of these tribal civilisations, but the reality is, if you actually had the opportunity to go visit, you would find that some of their behaviours are actually quite alarming in the way that they are sometimes unable to treat people outside their tribal reference group in accordance with basic human rights.



**Nyck:** You see this still, of course, in many Western democracies—particularly in the US, but I'm sure here too—in small communities which remain solidly within themselves, within their own family and small town belief systems. People outside of that who look different, seem different, think differently are completely alien to them.

**Steve:** That's right, and you'll even find it in some religious cults as well, where you develop that really strong family kind of bonding process, and anybody who doesn't belong to your particular cult is regarded with great suspicion as being an outsider and an alien also. So this is a very simplistic value set. It relies on a very simplistic process of really vibing off the people that you trust around you in that close family or tribal unit and using their responses to life to guide your own response to life. In that way, the tribe or the family can be fairly easily influenced by an occurrence or some sort of challenge that's thrown up because they'll often vibe off each other to come up with a collective response and collective behaviours. As these values played out, we developed accepted customs, taboos, and then we laid down a bed of accepted practices. So it's not all just about instantly vibing off the people around us. As it becomes more established, there are set customs that evolve and provide more solidity and process to that tribal existence.

As we all know, for those of us who are around 12 years or older, sooner or later the family way starts to feel a bit smothering. Again, this is a factor of this pendulum swing that happens. So with each one of these value sets, we're either swinging towards individuality or towards community.

The first Hunter-Gatherer survival thing is an individual value set. The second, Family-Tribal, is obviously a communal value set. That pendulum eventually swings too far and we start to feel like it's too much; that we we're too smothered by being in a group and we want to be individual again. Often for kids, this shows up as being sick of having to follow the family rules and feeling like we can't actually be who we need to be. We lack freedom and that usually makes us angry. We want to bust out of that arrangement and to go do our own thing. This is the pendulum swinging back towards the individual side.

On a larger scale, this plays out in society as people busting out of the tribal boundaries and projecting their power into other areas and over other people. Clare Graves called this third value set, Egocentric. It equates to a martial way of living where we really rely on our personal power. A big part of this value set is us finding out what power we have, and the only way we can do that is to express the power to see what impact we can have on the world and on other people.

In this third value set, we interpret the world with reference to power and the relative power of the people that we're interacting with: who's the most powerful here and therefore who can have the most influence?; who can be in charge?; who can control the world and make the world according to the way they want it to be?; where do we sit in that power hierarchy? Of course, the only way that we can really find out where we sit in the power hierarchy is to express our power—to go and be powerful—to have power over others and see where that gets us. Can we get to the top of the stack?

In the diagrams in a lot of the books that have been written about Graves's work, this value set is portrayed in a very hierarchical way. Everybody is represented by a star and the biggest, brightest star is at the top of the stack. There are a whole lot of other little stars in a row below, just waiting for that big star to fall off the top so they can get up there, or they're figuring out where they can try to undercut that big star and knock it off so they can get up to the top of the stack. That's the kind of social dynamic that we see playing out. Very simplistic. It's very much in the moment also.

These first three value sets that we've mentioned so far all occupy what is called the 'pre-rational zone' in the human value spectrum. So they're operating in a place that's not dominated by the rational mind, that's mostly responsive to the present moment and what's being felt in the present moment—our compulsions, our urges, our instincts, our needs and wants—all of these things are acted on as they arise. We don't have that cause-and-effect kind of reasoning that emerges with the dominance of the rational mind.

**Nyck:** I guess you see this quite often in things like gangs in modern society that group together. A leader is that big star and has the little stars beneath them, and there's often a contestation for that top spot. But there's that immediate need, 'let's just do this if we want this now', irrespective of the effect that they may have.

**Steve:** Gangs are a good example. It's also a good opportunity to reflect on the fact that these values sets are nested inside each other. If you look at a gang which might be dominated by this power-oriented, Martial-Egocentric values set—the third value set—you still see the family dynamic there. The gang is tight. It's got that family feeling and it's also underpinned by the survival issue at the very basis of it: 'We've gathered together in this gang because we need to survive. We're tight like a family and we're strong, and we have power over you because we're the best and strongest gang in the area, okay? So you better do it. Give us what we want and do what we say.'

And of course, even though this is one of the more basic value sets in the human spectrum, you still see this value set dominating large groups of society in various places in the world where 'power is right'. Even some of the so-called most civilised nations in the world sometimes spiral back down to this 'might is right' kind of thinking. We even see it in some of Donald Trump's tweets. It's like: 'my button is bigger than your button, so you better watch out or I'll push it and fire my missile at yours, and my missiles are bigger than yours, so you ought to be worried.'

**Nyck:** And I guess also in boardrooms, the same sort of thing recurs.

**Steve:** Yes, and the emergence or the wheeling out of this value set is often a response to a challenge or pressure. As Clare Graves wrote, it all comes back to life conditions and how you're perceiving your life conditions. If you're starting to feel pressured, then often you'll sink down the value stack to some of these more primal survival-oriented values. The more

pressure you're under and the more threat you're under, then the more likely you are to wheel out this third value set and say, 'well, I don't care what your logic is, if you don't stop harassing me, I'm going to punch you', which is just reverting to a simple power struggle.

Another important aspect of these value sets and their existence, is that in a healthy society, you have ways of exercising these values that don't impose unnecessarily on other people's freedoms. One of the ways that we do that in Western society is through sport. You can get out on the sporting field, you can exercise your power in terms of your physical strength and physical ability, and have power over others within a rule set. These opportunities, such as sport, provide us with ways of exercising and expressing these lower order, simplistic values in ways that allow us to maintain a healthy society instead of doing it in unhealthy ways where people get unnecessarily injured.

**Nyck:** OK, now we're up to Layer 4.

**Steve:** So, with the completion of 3, we're moving out of this pre-rational zone, as we were saying earlier on, where life has primarily been very much in the moment and where we've been very responsive to our urges, instincts and needs in the moment rather than going through a rational process of thinking about cause-and-effect.

In a developmental sense, the difference between Layer 3 and Layer 4 is the development of the frontal lobes in the brain, which brings the dominance of the rational mind—that capacity to moderate our urges and instincts and the ability to start to comprehend cause-and-effect and work with it.

**Nyck:** Think of the mid-teens years, I guess.

**Steve:** Yes. I think it's probably slightly different for every individual and also depends on life conditions as well, but as a general rule, I think it is generally understood that by around the age of 25, our frontal lobes have fully developed.

So, bear in mind now that as we grow through these layers, what's actually happening is that our capacity to feel and to sense and to know is expanding every time. Every time we're moving from one layer to the next, it's underpinned by an expansion of our sensory capacity—our capacity to pick up information from our surroundings and from other people—to processing information in more complex ways and building a more complex picture of the world around us, as well as the ways we have to interact with it.

As the first rational value set in this next zone, the fourth layer's emergence is accompanied by a growing awareness of the impact of our behaviour on others. When we're living in the rather wild and power-oriented way of the third layer, we're obviously having an impact on the people around us who we're putting power over and possibly even being physically violent to in some settings. Then our personal expansion means that we start to get a sense

of the impact of what we're doing. So this is the emergence of the cause-and-effect understanding.

**Nyck:** It's the beginning of empathy, then, I guess.

**Steve:** It is, and it's not just a rational cause-and-effect understanding. It's also a feeling; the capacity to feel the impact of what we're doing on other people. That involves some kind of energetic transformation.

Clare Graves didn't write about the energetic make up—and I'm talking now about subtle energy fields in the body—but what I've been doing is cross-referencing his work to other bodies of knowledge. It seems to correlate with a kind of heart-opening that occurs as the fourth layer is emerging, where we get the capacity to relate one-on-one with another person—with a second person—in a heart-centred way. If you look at all the stories in mythology that have been built around this fourth layer of values—which equates to the agricultural, kings and queens, empire kind of world—then there's an image of the noble person, the noble man, this person who has evolved to the point where they can have compassion towards others. This is something new in human existence and it's been at the centre of our mythology.

So at the fourth layer, we start to interpret the world in a logical, rational way, and in combination with our expanded sensory capacity as well as our expanded capacity to feel and relate to each other, we start to look for a logical set of rules to live by. At that point, we tend to grab onto whatever seems to be the most appropriate or most available set of rules.

It's important to understand that these rules are not rules that we've devised. They're someone else's rules because this is an authoritarian value set. So we're looking for a higher authority; we're looking for a ruleset, and often in history, this rule set has been provided by religion. The characteristic, typically, of the ruleset is that the rules aren't yours, they aren't mine, they've come from a higher authority and therefore they can't be questioned. They must be obeyed; they're beyond reproach.

**Nyck:** They were brought down from the mountain, after all, tablets from thousands of years ago. They must be true.

**Steve:** And we are not worthy to change the rules. It's something beyond us.

The rules tell us how to deal with life's challenges and they give us some very basic things: 'do this, don't do that, be good to your mother', that kind of thing. They lay out, in very black and white terms, what's right and what's wrong.

The thinking, according to this fourth value set, tends to be very linear. There's only one path that you can follow and that path is according to the rules that you've been given. The immediate problem which can arise there is that people get given different sets of rules, and

so you can end up with conflict between people who are abiding by this same layer of values but are actually following different rules.

**Nyck:** Thus, the hundreds of thousands of years conflict between the great religions.

**Steve:** Exactly.

You can see how prominent this fourth layer of values still is in modern society. It's quite prominent. There's a very large segment of middle America, for example, which still lives life according to this fourth layer. In fact, our own Prime Minister in Australia has been promoting the same values in the media lately.

**Nyck:** It's interesting, too, that the notion of this layer means that you're really abdicating responsibility for your own actions, essentially, that you're giving it over to a set of rules somewhere. In the Roman Catholic Church, for example, you can do what the hell you like as long as you go to confession and confess to the Lord in the box.

**Steve:** Certainly seems that way, doesn't it? Yes, so our radar, our way of figuring out how to operate in the world is first and foremost by referencing the rule set and then asking ourselves: 'okay, here's a challenge! What do the rules say about how I should behave in relation to this challenge?', or if we're looking at other people: 'are those people abiding by the rules or not?'

This set of values arose largely as a result of the Agricultural Revolution, which allowed us to produce large amounts of food, which meant that we didn't have to spend our days either gathering food or growing subsistence crops. We could start to live together in large towns and cities, quite complex societies grew up very quickly and created very complex living conditions, and the only way that we could cope within those complex living conditions was to have a simple set of rules that everybody could follow.

You can see how they were quite useful at a certain time in history. Just give everybody these simple rules, make sure that they follow them, everything's going to be cool. This allowed for simplicity in terms of figuring out whether people were, so to speak, 'good' or 'bad'. You simply had to see if they were following the rules or not. If they're not following rules, they're bad people. Therefore, they should be punished, or maybe we should kill them.

**Nyck:** Burnt at the stake.

**Steve:** Or kick them out of society in some way. So very black-and-white with no real grey area, and we still, as you inferred, see that kind of thinking in many of our religious structures today, which were built on this fourth layer of values and in some cases haven't evolved

beyond that. Therefore, the rule sets that they offer don't really cater for many of the very complex problems that we face in modern society, but in a certain context, this way of living is very useful and very valuable.

**Nyck:** Now, let's go to Layer 5. That's the dominant layer still on the planet.

**Steve:** It is. Now this fourth layer, again, is a communal value set, so remember that we've got this pendulum swinging backwards and forwards between individual approaches to life and communal approaches to life, and the Authoritarian-Agricultural value set is very much a communal value set. It's also worth reflecting on the fact that it's very much like the Tribal value set of the second layer, but it's a more complex version of it.

**Nyck:** That's the thing, is that as we go up on each side of the pendulum swing, it becomes more complex, but there are resonances with the previous layer as well.

**Steve:** There are harmonics. That's exactly right. So each successive value set allows us to solve more complex challenges in life and live in more complex ways and more complex settings. Like with all of the value sets, what happens is that over time, new problems arise as a result of the complexity of living. We can't solve them from the same level of thinking and people become frustrated.

In this case—particularly in reference to the fourth phase—people become frustrated by the rigidity of life. We see that in the more modern world where there are rigid bureaucratic rule sets that can't be broken, and sometimes the rules don't exactly fit the problem. We have new problems that lie in-between this rule and that rule, and so it doesn't matter which rule we follow, it's not going to solve the problem.

**Nyck:** Let's make more rules. That's what happens. More regulations, more rules.

**Steve:** Sometimes that is what happens. That's the immediate response, but eventually the frustration drives us into a process of change where we go into that slingshot effect, where the tension grows and grows and eventually the tension is so high that it becomes transformative. It's like being in the alchemist's furnace. We start to transform our being in all respects, from our body chemistry to our neural networks, and everything that they impact. Then we get the emergence of the next layer of values, which is going to be individualistic again, because we're swinging back to the other side of the pendulum.

This fifth layer is what we know as the Modern values. Clare Graves called it Multiplistic because it's going from a very linear, singular path and way of thinking in the Authoritarian fourth layer, to a situation in which we can actually look at multiple options and choose which is the best option instead of having to follow a single path and a single set of rules. In

the fourth layer, as we said, the rules for living come from a higher authority, which was often God, and in the fifth layer we start to think that we can make up our own rules. In fact, we have to make up our own rules, because if we don't make up our own rules, the old rules just aren't going to cut it and we're not going to be able to live successfully.

So through a process of experimentation, we start to look at, 'well, what happens if we break that rule?' This is a really important fact about this Modern rule set—that it starts out by breaking the old rules. Through a process of experimentation, we started to learn that we can actually break the rules, or we can bend them, or we can just pretend that they don't exist. Then we can find better ways of doing things and we can start to solve some of the more complex problems which are arising in the world by having the freedom to do what we think we need to do, which is a very individualistic thing.

You can see how what we know as 'modern-day science' emerged out of this way of thinking. It was a process of experimenting and working out that when we've had a problem we wanted to solve, we'd have to figure out maybe a few possibilities of how we might solve it. We'd have to test each one of them to see which one works the best and then we'd go with that particular solution to be successful. It comes from an individual mindset.

One of the things we are working out around this time—and again, this comes from our expanded capacity, particularly to sense how other people are operating, how other people are thinking, and how other people are perceiving us—is that the perception that other people have of us has an impact on our capacity to be successful. If the people around us think that we're successful, then we're actually likely to be more successful. So we start to experiment with projecting different images to the world, whereas previously it really wasn't a big factor in how we lived life. Suddenly, in this fifth layer, who we are seen to be in the world becomes more important.

**Nyck:** That's fascinating. That describes the whole rise of the entertainment industry, for example, an idea of image and marketing and everything.

**Steve:** And if you look backwards at the odd numbered value sets—you will find this to an extent in the power-oriented third layer, because being powerful also requires you to be seen as powerful—there's an early emergence of that.

**Nyck:** Yeah, who's got the best suit of armour, so to speak, and the sharpest sword?

**Steve:** But here we are two layers ahead. We're operating in more complex ways. We're more perceptive in terms of picking up on other people's thinking and other people's processes, and we're starting to get quite sophisticated in our approach to, let's say, manipulating our image in the eyes of others. As you just said, we have whole industries that have grown up around that concept of creating an image and projecting a particular image which may or may not reflect our actual capacity to perform in the world; our actual capacity

to be what the image suggests that we are. Inevitably, there's going to be a gap between the image that's projected and how people perceive the image, and then how we actually live life and how people perceive the way that we behave and where we are.

Right at the moment, the world is in the final stages of this fifth layer, this Multiplistic set of values. So the pendulum is swinging to an extreme and what we're seeing is that living life according to this set of values is actually creating problems that we can't solve with the same values. This is creating the tension and the pressure, which is going to push that pendulum—and is pushing that pendulum—back in the other direction towards a communal way of living again. I think that many people will be acutely aware of this tension in the world between the old Modern-Multiplistic value set, which is about being individually successful, and the emerging value set, which is drawing us back to the communal side of the pendulum swing.

**Nyck:** Indeed.

Layer 6 now, which is the layer toward which the world is slowly—although much faster than we might think—moving as we speak.

**Steve:** Yes. One thing that's interesting, is that as we move between these value sets, each value set solves the problems from the previous value set, but it creates new ones over time, and those new problems are really what provides the momentum and the tension to drive the movement back in the other direction, whether it be towards individualistic or communal living. There's typically a strong rejection of the previous value set in this first set of six value layers; in what we call the First Tier of consciousness.

You can see that playing out at the moment whereby the way of living, which we just discussed—this fifth layer, the Multiplistic, Scientific-Industrial way—is strongly rejected by those people on the planet who are emerging into the sixth layer. They can see all the problems that it's created. Our expanded sensory perception, our expanded understanding that comes with movement to the more complex value set, reveals the faults of the previous layer of values.

You can see this growing unhappiness with the old Modern Scientific-Industrial way of doing things and particularly its tendency to what's now seen as a false image that it projects: 'It's not real, it's not transparent, it's not genuine'. You hear that kind of language being used. Typically, it doesn't matter which value set you're talking about. When we're moving through Layers 1 to 6, we're going to strongly reject what's come before, and we'll want to try and get rid of it and then transform the world into being the new way. You can see that playing out quite strongly now.

The sort of topics that arise, particularly at a personal level, include loneliness. Any individualistically-oriented value set is going to produce a sense of loneliness to some extent because the community aspect is somewhat absent. That's quite strong at the moment. Even though the technology that's been produced out of the fifth layer of values is connecting us,



it's connecting us in a somewhat hollow way because we're not actually personally connected, we're just connected through a screen.

In addition to this, a sense of powerlessness is being experienced because of the centralisation of power that's happened in the fifth layer of values. We now want to redistribute that power across society, so there's a strong trend towards the decentralisation of power.

Clare Graves called this the Relativistic value set—the sixth value set—because it's no longer centralised and everything is looked at as being relative. We actually develop the capacity at a personal level to step into someone else's shoes. Even though we might not know that person, we can imagine what it's like to be in their shoes and to experience life the way that they're experiencing it. That expanded sensory perception allows us to read others better and to understand them more deeply, and we learn that if we start to gather together with other people 'like us' and people who we can connect more deeply with—often because they also have an expanded capacity to connect—then we can interact with each other to develop better values and values that suit the way that we want to live. We can then obviously co-operate better, we can avoid physical violence and conflict, and create a more complex life that's better for everybody, provided—and this is the rider—provided that they're people like us; in other words, people who share the same values.

So there's a lot of paradox which is also thrown up in this value set because of what I just explained. We want to create a better world for everyone, but in order to be able to work together with everyone to do that, those other people need to have the same values as us. Therein lies a great difficulty, which is going to play out in the future of society. There's a wonderful, strong, positive intention there to create a better world for everyone, but not yet a deep understanding and clarity of the way that these different value sets interact. This is something that only comes with a transition to the seventh layer of values, which is the first layer in the Second Tier of consciousness.

**Nyck:** Yes, a really difficult paradox, this one.

**Steve:** It is a very difficult one, and it is, in fact, the tension that's going to arise as a result of that paradox, which is going to fuel this big leap in consciousness that Clare Graves documented in his research. It can often, when we're in this sixth value layer, feel somewhat overwhelming because of our expanded sensory perception and our capacity to feel for people who we might not even know, but who we understand are living in certain life conditions and being treated certain ways. We can quite literally sometimes tap into how they feel, and that can be overwhelming for people.

**Nyck:** So there's a great sense of—even beyond compassion—there is a great empathy that evolves in this layer for others, as you say, who may be on the other side of the world in certain conditions that we're aware of now because of the global communications network that we live within.

**Steve:** Yes, and the good thing about that is that it's opening up the possibility of co-operation at a species level. When we can directly sense and know how other people feel because of their life conditions, we're much less likely to create bad life conditions for other people. In the fifth layer, though, we don't have that sensitivity and so we're not mindful of things that happen beyond our immediate experience of life, so we might be operating a business that creates a harsh set of life conditions for a certain group of people on the other side of the world, but because we're really focused on the success of that business and our more immediate surrounds, and we don't have this expanded capacity to really sense how people on the other side of the world feel, then it's not a big factor in our decision-making process.

It's easy to label those people who are living according to the fifth layer of values as 'bad', but we have to understand that with each layer of values comes an increasing capacity to know, and the capacity to know simply isn't there; it's just not on their radar screen. They're focused on other things; they're motivated to look at other things.

So being at the sixth layer can be a very difficult place to be, particularly in this time of transition, where we're still in a world that's dominated by an old set of values and social systems designed around an old set of values that don't provide us with the opportunities that we are really looking for to make the world a better place.

**Nyck:** Or to solve the problems that exist instead of seeing them in the way that you're talking about. We tend to blame the previous layers, particularly in terms of Layer 6 to Layer 5. All the environmental issues and social damage.

We talked earlier today about mental health in the world at the moment. People are obviously very stressed in very many ways, individually, often feeling very alone and lonely and unable to connect. So we have all these endemic problems across the globe, which are a result of this multiplistic layer of consciousness to a degree. They have created great wonders, you could argue, and solved many of the previous problems and issues on the planet, but they have also created this new set of problems, which we're now facing on a global level.

**Steve:** And it's fair to say that each one of these value sets or layers of consciousness is perfect for a particular set of life conditions, and the measure of those life conditions is their complexity. So for a certain level of complexity, each one of these different layers of consciousness, with its associated values, works particularly well. But as soon as the complexity either becomes simpler or more complex, then those values are not optimal anymore, so we have to shift to a different set of values to fit with the complexity.

In our discussion that we had early this morning, we were talking about this so-called terror incident in Melbourne. It's become apparent from media coverage of the religious Imam who is associated with the community that this man came from, that he was most likely

mentally unwell, and even though he apparently had an interest in ISIS and the war that's going on in the Middle East, from the media reports, there was no direct connection; he wasn't directly aligned to it. It was just an idea that he had in his head. And yet, unfortunately, our Prime Minister, in his public statement, reverted to older, more simplistic value sets, which revolved around power struggles and around religious differences, which is really unfortunate. That kind of approach from a Prime Minister is just more likely to create problems. It's not addressing the core issue here, which actually seems to be mental illness and the fact that we don't have proper support systems in our society to deal with people who are suffering from mental illness.

**Nyck:** Similarly, there's been commentary about this person being on a watch list, loosely speaking. He'd come to the attention of the Police authorities through time and people are asking, 'why wasn't he watched?' But of course, you've got to realise that there's a number of people who, for one reason or other, are troubled in this way and have some sort of allegiance or interest in some of these terrorist groups, for example. But there are probably many of them—hundreds, if not thousands—and it would be impossible to have the resources for the Police or other authorities to actually watch everybody in this way anyway. So it's a ridiculous scenario.

**Steve:** And also, the systems that we have in place at the moment aren't designed to assess and provide assistance to somebody who might be suffering from mental illness. They're looking from a very narrow law enforcement mindset and not actually seeing that actually this person is unwell and needs medical help.

**Nyck:** Absolutely.

That's about it for the show. We have a text here: "Loving the conversation this morning. Makes me feel a tiny bit better and more understanding around my argument with a bouncer last Saturday night. Talk about rigid laws."

**Steve:** Glad we could be of assistance.

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