



## 16. Emotions of Change

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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.*

**Steve:** Our theme today is about emotional responses to change. We'll talk about the trajectory of change, where it takes us, and how we usually respond to those changes in our life in an emotional sense; and also generally about the information overload that is growing rapidly with the current paradigm shift that's underway.

**Nyck:** And as we've talked about before, too, this feeling that a lot of people have that they simply don't know what the truth is; simply don't know what to trust or who to trust, and of course, that just creates even more fear.

**Steve:** That's right. And that, of course, is tied to the information overload, because there's so much information and it's varying because everybody has the opportunity to publish now on the internet, and so it's hard to figure out what's real, what's not; what's true, what's not.

**Nyck:** Absolutely.

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**Nyck:** You're tuned to Future Sense here with Steve and Nyck, and today we're talking a little bit about the change process, particularly with relevance to some of the big events that have occurred in the last week or so here. And that, of course, includes in particular the New Zealand mosque shootings. Terribly sad, terribly divisive, arguably, and perhaps part of the way that things have been expressed as people become less and less certain, more and more

afraid, and taking it out on other people. One might always say that it's always been that way with human beings, but perhaps not. Perhaps we're in a particular frame, a particular phase of our evolution right now.

So, Steve, let's flesh out some of the change process itself and how it manifests itself.

**Steve:** Sure. Let's firstly summarise the trajectory of change very quickly so we can put this in context. This brief summary is from the work of Clare W. Graves, who found this dynamic in his research into developmental psychology. Particularly he noted that when people went through major change that was typically taking them from one worldview to another worldview and a completely different set of values, there was this trajectory—a profile of change that rolled out. This is a ubiquitous pattern that you'll find pretty much anywhere you care to look, because the change process doesn't just apply to human psychology and our experience. It applies to everything.

I guess one of the more simple examples is the four seasons of the year where we go from summer through autumn and winter and spring and then back to summer again. In the process, there's kind of a relative dying off that—even though we don't see it so much in green places like here in the Byron Shire, but certainly in Europe and other countries—you get that real extreme feeling of everything kind of freezing and dying and leaves falling off the trees and everything sort of goes into static mode, and then with the change in the seasons, everything blossoms again and returns anew. We go through this same process when we encounter major change, because as a general rule, humans like stability.

One of the key reasons for that is because our capacity to cope with life comes as a result of change and when we find stability—in other words, when our coping capacity matches the challenges that life is throwing at us—we feel comfortable and we can relax. It's kind of like summertime where you can kind of set up a hammock under a tree and chill out, and of course, usually when we're in that state, we don't want to be challenged. We don't want to have to change because change inevitably involves feelings of being uncomfortable and basically a search for solutions, which can sometimes be quite difficult.

So the steps that Graves summarised in his simple version of change were from stability into a feeling of stress or turbulence, where suddenly we wake up one morning and things just don't feel right. Usually at that particular stage of the change process, we don't know what the actual issue is; we don't necessarily know what the cause of the change is. We just know that things aren't quite working as well as they used to. The initial human response to that is usually to think back to a time when things did work, and so we go on this regressive search into the past looking for some set of values or some way of living that we can switch to that will immediately fix what's wrong. That's an interesting evolutionary dynamic, because by making this regressive search and going back to old ways, we actually put a greater distance between ourselves and where we need to be in order to cope with greater complexity, which is usually what's causing the change in the first place, as life has become more complex and our old ways of problem-solving are too simple and they don't cut it. By going backwards, we create an evolutionary tension, which is a bit like pulling back an elastic band or a slingshot, and it's that tension in the elastic band that eventually reaches the point where it gives us enough momentum to move forward and make the changes that we need to make.

In the process of that tension building, we descend into a place of chaos or crisis. This is the usual trajectory where things fall apart. So, in the turbulent phase, things were obviously not working so well. Then, as that ramps up, we get to a place where things are really not working very well at all, and our old values that we used to live by are kind of cut loose. We realise that they're not working, so we start to let go of them, but we don't yet have any new values to grab onto, so it's a bit like being adrift without a sail or a motor, and not being able to direct your own progress. In that place of chaos, the pressure that we're subjected to starts to bring about changes in our system. Physical changes can and usually do include changes to our neurochemistry, changes to our neural networking and those sorts of things. Eventually the tension and that change process will give us access to some insights, so we'll get clues about which direction to head in, the kind of changes that we need to make in order to resolve our issues, and eventually we'll have a breakthrough.

This change path is usually called "revolutionary change" because it leads us to a place of feeling stuck and trapped, and with the sudden insights, the breakthroughs, we get to break out and break through our obstacles into the next stage, which is the renewal phase. Because we've seen the light, we've seen where we need to head in the renewal phase, we're re-energised, we've become excited, and we're looking forward to what we know is our eventual destination. Although we might not have a clear picture of what it looks like, we at least know the general direction that we're heading in.

Eventually, with time and integration, we reach a place of new stability. That place of new stability is typically a place of being more capable, having greater coping capacity than the stability we started at. So it's a new stability, it's not the old stability, and in that change process, ultimately we're going through growth and becoming more than we were and expanding our perception and our capacities. At each step in that change process, there are emotions that come along with the experience of change. Before we go through what those emotions are, I think it's important just to go back to this fear of change, because that's a very big factor right now globally.

We have entered into a radical change process, which is a paradigm shift, and it's a move beyond the old Scientific-Industrial mindset and way of living; that way of viewing the world, which was extremely rational. In fact, it's probably the peak of rationality in terms of human evolution in that Scientific-Industrial era, where we were so rational that we actually downplayed anything that couldn't be seen or measured on a scale or a gauge. We went through a very materialistic phase, which, in many respects, meant that any deep spirituality was absent for a lot of people. I think that, in the scientific, materialistic worldview, there's not a lot of room for anything that's not material or doesn't have obvious substance to it.

A lot of the religious and spiritual influence that we had in previous eras didn't go away—the old paradigms take a long time to go away; they're very persistent. They were still around, but they played less of a role in everyday life for a lot of people than they had in previous years. So with the very clear indications we're getting now globally that our old systems are failing to cope—they're no longer solving the problems in the way they used to—there is a general increase in fear across the board. I think it's fair to say that the fear is really about the unknown, and ultimately, if you dig really, really deep, it's a fear of not surviving. It's a fear of 'okay, well maybe I won't make it through this, whatever this change is going to be. I don't

know what the nature of the change is going to be, I don't know where it's going to take us as a species.'

Probably one of the biggest areas where that fear of change is showing up is around climate change. We saw, of course, the big school strike last week, which happened around the world. It's important also to remember that fear is a very healthy signalling mechanism that has developed as part of our evolution. Like all emotions, it's an information system, a signalling system, which is pointing our attention to something. It can be very, very healthy when somebody responds in an appropriate way to fear, because it's bringing our attention to something that we need to pay attention to that's perhaps threatening our physical safety, and it's useful in that respect. But when we allow it to dominate, we can get taken away from the present moment into a place of 'what ifs', and our imagination can get carried away. We can overreact and actually slow down our own change process by resisting the change instead of opening up to it.

**Nyck:** Yes. There's an article in *The Conversation* from Saturday just gone, after the Friday marches around the world—the strike. It's by Blanche Verlie and it's called *The Fear of Climate Change is Transforming Young Identities* [<https://theconversation.com/the-terror-of-climate-change-is-transforming-young-peoples-identity-113355>]. It proposes a similar thing to what you're talking about, that this fear, this "existential whiplash" is going on, and it is now also leaking into the adults and to other people, too.

**Steve:** You know, I would actually suggest that it was the other way around. The adults felt the fear first and it leaked into the kids.

**Nyck:** True, but I think just the very fact that this article is actually looking at the emotions itself is pretty interesting.

**Steve:** It is, and this is an indicator of the shift that we're going through, this shift from the materialistic Scientific-Industrial way, to what is a very humanistic emerging paradigm, the Postmodern paradigm. It's redirecting our focus onto the human experience and particularly onto our own inner experience, our emotions. We're becoming more sensitive to our own emotions, and to other people's emotions as part of this shift.

**Nyck:** Yes, indeed. I mean, this article also talks ultimately about cultural transformation, and that's really what's going on, isn't it? Culture itself is seriously troubled—we've got a lot of holes in it, so to speak—and the only way forward, really, irrespective of what you believe, is to some degree an actual transformation in the totality of earth culture at this time. That seems to be where we're moving now.

**Steve:** Absolutely. The bottom line is that the old value set, the old world view and way of coping, is failing. It's failing because our world is becoming more complex and largely due to the massive connection we have now through our web-based media.

**Nyck:** Also this article talks about how, for young people, climate change challenges the beliefs that, for example, "humans are, or can be, separate from the non-human world". So, that connectivity is coming back, and I think certainly in the previous couple of hundred years, as you said earlier, we've lost a lot of contact with that spiritual aspect of Gaia, of our place in the in the system, in the ecological system here.

**Steve:** That's right, and our way of living changed radically. If you think back before the Scientific-Industrial era, we were living in an agricultural world where agriculture was the main kind of industrious work, and we were very much more connected to plants and in the natural world. The Modern Scientific-Industrial brought us into larger concentrations in cities, gave us concrete, and it became very easy for us to shut ourselves away from the natural world.

**Nyck:** It also says that climate change challenges the beliefs that "individual humans have significant control over the world and their lives", and thirdly, "if you work hard, you will have a bright future". So that almost dystopian feeling is arising—we're certainly seeing it in young people now—that actually it's irrelevant. You can't work hard and do what you're supposed to do, and what you're told to do, because there is no future. That's what it looks like; that's what it feels like to them.

Next: "your elected representatives care about you". So this is very healthy, isn't it? All these questions now that are coming about from young people. I had one of them here on the Friday show talking about this for the climate change strike here in Byron, talking from that very perspective; very articulate, but with a kind of hopelessness and despair that's arising in people.

**Steve:** Yes, and essentially, it's what I was referring to before. It's getting lost in the 'what ifs' and not actually looking out the window and seeing that, 'okay, wow, well, things aren't so bad, really. Sure, there are things that we need to pay more attention to and things that we need to change, but we haven't quite gone to hell in a handbasket just yet.'

I think it's really important to remember that part of our response to the challenge of change is remembering that this is a natural evolutionary dynamic. It's a natural thing, so nothing's wrong. This is what happens when people encounter change and this is a natural trajectory that we take. We can navigate that landscape much more effectively if we understand what to expect.

So here, we have a map, basically, and we know what to expect. We can remain present to what is in the moment, and present to what's going on for ourselves rather than getting carried away with horror stories—and that's essentially what a lot of this is about, these

horror stories that say 'okay, that happened somewhere else, or it might happen.' In the case of the climate change story, what's been put out there, this idea that the world is going to fry and we won't be surviving, has never happened in the history of humanity. So it's an extreme story that's being put around, which really, despite the common discussion in the public arena, really doesn't have much of a solid scientific substance to it. The science is very uncertain in my opinion, and what we need to do in order to cope better is to actually come back to being present, being here now, and noticing what is actually going on and not getting carried away with someone else's imagined scenario.

**Nyck:** I think one of the one of the big issues, too, besides fear, is guilt, because there is this rising feeling in many people that we're guilty for doing what we're doing on the planet. And of course, no doubt you could argue there's a truth to that.

**Steve:** There is some truth to that, but again, it's a matter of that being overblown. People who are popping into this new value set have a much greater connection to nature, and their attention is being directed to nature and the planet, so they're really noticing very strongly the impact that we've had in the previous era, and there's strong rejection of that. That's a very healthy thing, because those things do need to change.

**Nyck:** Yes, indeed.

I've got a couple of texts here. Ben has written—and I'm not sure we can make sense of this entirely but I'll read it though: "Hey Guys, been trying to work out the underlying process of Graves's evolutionary mapping in the most basic but broadest form. This is what I've come up with. Mind and matter changes our life conditions, life conditions lead to experience, experience generates information/data, information/data shapes thinking, thinking provokes emotions and actions, emotions and actions affect mind and matter, mind and matter changes our life conditions, repeat. Is this how the complexity line interacts with consciousness and environment?"

**Steve:** I think it's essentially correct, Ben, and while it sounds linear the way that Nyck's read that out and the way that you've written it, it's actually cyclic and it works in both directions. So sometimes it's that we change ourselves in response to life conditions. That happens in the communally-oriented paradigms—the even-numbered layers in Graves's model: Tribal (2), Agricultural-Absolutistic (4) and the current emerging Humanistic network-centric (6). In those communally-oriented layers or paradigms, what happens is that we have like a radar that scans our external world, our life conditions, and then we look to change ourselves internally in order to fit with what they're calling for. In the individually-oriented systems, the odd-numbered ones, which are: Hunter-Gatherer (1), the Egocentric-Warlike (3), the Modern Scientific-Industrial (5), it's the opposite way around. In those layers, we are looking at what we need, what we want, and then attempting to change the world, change our life

conditions, to fit with what we need or want. It alternates like a kind of a pendulum that swings backwards and forwards as we go through the layers.

**Nyck:** Yes, indeed. We will take a little break and come back and flesh this out more, particularly with relationship to some of the big issues that have been occurring on the planet just in the last week or so.

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**Nyck:** We're talking about the emotions that are attached to the drive, that flush through us all in regards to change, and particularly when we start to fear change. We're going to be talking a little bit about Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, who you're probably familiar with—she taught many, many people about death and dying—because she has an interesting piece about the roller coaster of change itself (<https://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/kubler-ross.html>). What struck me about this is the high expectations or the really big expectations that people will have about change—which is a fear-driven shock, mourning, fight-flight disorientation, and so on—and then the realistic expectations, which are a much more healthy response to change that comes forward. I find that really interesting straightaway.

**Steve:** It is interesting, Nyck, and, you know, the expectations don't necessarily need to be fear-driven, although they certainly are in the in the present day with a lot of the current affairs that we're seeing. They can be the opposite of that. People can have very positive expectations, and the shock comes if they don't show up; if they're expecting something amazing in the end and something amazing doesn't show up, then they can go into to shock around that as well. With all of this stuff, it can work in both directions.

It's interesting to talk about Dr Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and what led her to do her work. She's most famous for having done a tremendous amount of research around the stages of grief, particularly working with terminally ill people and looking at the psychological stages that they went through as they came to terms with the fact that they were dying, from the initial shock of finding out about it through to the acceptance in most cases. She was born in Zurich. She's a Swiss-American psychiatrist—or she was; she passed away in 2004—and of course, death is probably the biggest change that we face as humans, and it's something that sits in the background for all of us throughout our lives. As a young person growing up in Zurich, Switzerland, she was, of course, exposed to World War II, and she became involved in refugee relief work in Zurich and later visited one of the German concentration camps—death camps—and obviously was exposed to that. Clearly, that had a huge impact on her, and I can tell from her interests and her general approach to her work that she was an early adopter of the Layer 6 worldviews.

**Nyck:** Which we're now entering as a species.

**Steve:** At a global level, yes. It's a worldview that's been around for quite a long time. The earliest historical evidence goes back to at least the mid-eighteen hundreds, and quite possibly prior to that there were people popping out of the Layer 5, Materialistic worldview into this Humanistic worldview.

The strong focus, of course, is on the human experience and emotions. As we grow through these different layers of consciousness, each time we grow to a new layer, there's an expansion that occurs, and that expansion can expand our perception, our senses and also our capacity to feel and process this new information that we're exposed to. So we can grow to greater depths of being able to relate to other people and love other people and those sorts of things. There's strong evidence for that.

Kübler-Ross became interested in the process of death and particularly the psychological changes that occurred around that, and she said that she thought she'd probably taught about 125,000 students through death and dying courses during her life, which is an incredible effort. One of the things that we benefit from is her mapping of the emotional states that we go through as we go through change, particularly dramatic change; major change; transformational change. Often it can start with the shock of realisation that something's changing.

Again, there's a broad spectrum of what we can feel at these different parts of the change process. Sometimes if the change is subtle, as I said earlier in the show, you just wake up and feel like something's different and you're not quite sure what it is. But when it's a sudden, radical change, it can be shocking and we can get immediately flung into fight-or-flight response, or deep mourning; disorientation, which is typical of sudden major change—certainly with the events in Christchurch in the last couple of days, a lot of people will be experiencing that—those sorts of things; things that were radically unexpected and completely out of the ordinary. Then, as time passes and we start to respond to that change process and we make changes, which often is this regressive search, looking for ways where it was better in the past and questioning if we can resurrect those things, which can lead to a sense of nostalgia, of longing for the past.

Often people, as things progress, will start to feel anger and certainly turmoil. Sometimes it can go to rage about the loss that's occurred, whether it's a physical loss or just a loss of comfort, a loss of being able to cope. Then, depending on their opportunities to express those really strong emotions and how they're able to manage their own emotions—and that really is a skill set that we learn as we go through life and get more experience. In our earlier stages of life, particularly as we're growing through those pre-rational stages of consciousness where we haven't got a really strong rational capacity to moderate what we're feeling and to make sense of it rationally, sometimes we can we can really get tossed around and go through a lot of turmoil. If we don't express those strong emotions when they're arising, then we can fall into depression; and sometimes we can also feel guilt about what's happened and feel like somehow we have some responsibility for what occurred. I've seen a few cases of that over the years, and it's interesting how the mind can take us to those different places. From an outsider's perspective, with the cases that I've seen, I've looked at them and the thought: 'really, it's fairly radical to think that you're actually responsible for that, because really you were just a witness and you weren't involved in the way that it



happened', and yet we can we can still go to those places of feeling guilty: 'I didn't do something I should have done' is a typical guilt response.

**Nyck:** Yes.

**Steve:** And so, feelings of loss; and when we reach the bottoming out of the roller coaster, as this change trajectory is sometimes called, there's a feeling of needing to let go of what was. Whether that's simply a life condition—a particular time that we remember as being comfortable where we could cope with all of the challenges that were thrown at us—and letting go of that feeling of being comforted.

Also, in radical change, sometimes it can be a matter of letting go of physical things—people who may have been lost to us and those sorts of things. Often in that deep, chaotic place, we can also become somewhat detached, and I think this is what we were talking about before in terms of the large-scale change that is going on at the moment and getting lost in these thought bubbles of 'what if': 'What if this happens? What if what occurred over there happens here where I live? How will I cope? Maybe I won't cope. Maybe I won't survive' in some cases.

Particularly around the climate issue, that's a big feeling at the moment, I think, for a lot of people. What can happen is we can actually become detached from reality and lost in these scenarios, and as I alluded to earlier, it's important to know that there are really useful strategies that we can employ in such times. One of them is simply the practice of being present, and this is where having some kind of regular contemplative practice can be really, really useful during times of change; and it is a radical change process that the whole world is entering into at the moment, so really this applies to everybody. I strongly recommend, if you don't have a regular daily contemplative practice, that it's very, very worthwhile and it will multiply your coping capacity simply by being able to sit, quieten the mind and be present to what's going on right now.

Also, while we're on the coping mechanisms, part of this shift that we're going through from Layer 5 to Layer 6, so from this Materialistic Scientific-Industrial worldview to the much more deeply Humanistic, emotionally-focused way of being human that is emerging—and of course, as a way of being human, it's been around for quite a while, so many listening out there have been through this transformation, but it's still not the dominant mainstream paradigm globally—one of the processes that the change is taking us through is to a greater awareness of our body and a greater connection with our body. In a way you could say that it is really part and parcel of this reconnection with nature, and the disconnection with nature that has happened during the scientific-industrial world. We've invented these new ways of living, which sometimes puts us in a concrete box in a high rise building, for example, and to an extent, there's a potential there of us being disconnected with nature, simply because our feet aren't on the ground. We're living in a local environment where nature has been radically transformed into paved roads and concrete footpaths and concrete buildings and very few trees and no animals, except for dogs.

So it's a normal part of the shift right now, if you're feeling this, to have your attention being directed to nature—to the natural world, to ecology, particularly to the impact that we've had on the natural world through the Scientific-Industrial era, the toll that that's taken, and the impact that it's having on our own lives and our health. We are being directed by the evolutionary process to pay more attention to that, to change the way that we're living, to start to live with greater awareness of nature, to start to have more concern for the impact that we're having on nature.

**Nyck:** How does technology fit into this equation? You're speaking now about the reconnection with nature, which is awesome and fantastic and a good thing always to remind ourselves of and to remind our listeners of—and most of you out there no doubt have those sort of practices, especially in a region like this—but I'm now thinking also, as you were speaking about the place of advanced technology—A.I. and the like, as we move forward—which on the surface of it would seem to be disconnected still from the earth and the natural world, even though, of course, whatever substances that are being used to produce something come from the natural world. So how do you make rationale of those two parts of human experience? This return to connection to nature and this extremely accelerated technological revolution that we're in the middle of?

**Steve:** I think it's important to remember that the reason that we're going through this evolutionary shift at the moment is quite tied to the development of technology, because it's our technology which came out of the Scientific-Industrial era that has allowed us to be more aware of what's going on in the world; to connect with people in faraway places and get to know them, have discussions with them, and of course, to have access to pretty much almost everything that's been ever written. All the knowledge in the world is arguably almost completely accessible on the internet. So these technologies have actually brought us to where we are. If it wasn't for the technologies, we wouldn't have this expanded awareness of our impact on the world, our impact on nature, and we wouldn't be feeling so strongly the need to change what we're doing. Technology has been a part of it.

When we go through a paradigm shift, there is always a strong rejection of the previous way of living, and the risk with that is that you throw the baby out with the bathwater. This is very common. It regularly happens and we get radical extremes of opinion that occur during the change process because of these things that we were just talking about: the shock, the disorientation, the anger of losing what was. Those sorts of things can lead people to extremes and usually does, actually.

If you look back to the previous paradigm shift from the Agricultural era to the Modern Scientific-Industrial, it was full of large-scale violence wars. The American Civil War was a direct conflict between the new paradigm and the old paradigm at that time, and there are many, many other examples. Radical things occurred—I'm thinking of the Spanish Inquisition by the Catholic Church—all sorts of crazy things, and these are routinely a part of humans adjusting to change. We're reaching a point in our evolution where our understanding and our depth of perspective on nature itself and the natural cycles of change that apply to us, is giving us the potential to navigate the process much more smoothly, and we will see in the

future that we're able to go through radical change in a much smoother way, because we understand the terrain where we only recently have developed maps of this terrain, and we can predict what's going to happen to us to a fair extent, because it always follows this pathway that we're discussing.

**Nyck:** It's interesting that you're talking about opinion. I think I mentioned a book I have at the moment—I haven't finished reading it, but I'm dabbling into it—called *The Tyranny of Opinion*. It's also about the tyranny of outrage and the tyranny of offence that we've now dropped back into; to those safer places of old that seemed to work. I can be offended by, outraged by something I don't like; I can have a very strong opinion about it and defend my opinion to the death. But meanwhile, everything's moving so fast and changing so fast that somehow those opinions and outrage and offense often seem somehow—to me anyway—sort of out of place in their expression.

**Steve:** They are, exactly, and this is a product of the regressive value search. When we go through the shock of change and we realise that, 'oh, my God, things aren't the way they used to be', the first response is usually to go back in our mind to a previous era when things were great. As I always say, we hear it all the time from the politicians: 'Let's make America (or where-ever) great again.' If we look at those old values though, they are less expansive and more limiting than the one that we're just coming out of.

There's an evolutionary reason behind us going back to those things because it increases the tension and actually speeds up the change process, which ultimately is better for everybody. But what it's doing right now—if we take our current example of this movement beyond the Modern Scientific-Industrial to Postmodern-Humanistic—we're looking back to the Agricultural-Absolutistic era where everything was black and white. We lived in a society that was class-based, so extremely divided, and we saw fundamentalist viewpoints where people lived in a bubble of their own social class. They thought in a way that was very black and white, they abided by a strict set of rules for living life—which were not always, but were often religious rules—and strongly rejected anything other than what they knew: their one single way of living properly or truthfully. We're seeing the re-emergence of that right now because of this progressive search process, and that's why we're seeing extreme left-wing and right-wing expressions and people speaking as if they're living in an isolated bubble and they're rejecting everything that's not exactly like them.

**Nyck:** In response to the shootings in New Zealand, the wonderful Stan Grant has also written yesterday, a piece entitled *Christchurch shootings remind us that in the war of identity, the casualties aren't strangers - they're our neighbours* [<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-17/christchurch-shooting-war-of-identity-victims-neighbours/10908508>]. He puts to us straight away that these people who've been murdered in this way could be anybody—could be our neighbours. It could happen anywhere. But what he does come down to is this notion of the war of identity. I'll just quote this, to see what you feel about it: "We are all potentially prey to the war of our time: the war of identity", and I say this because when you're talking

about Layer 4, that Authoritarian period of our evolution, clearly we had an identity there that was very fixed and solid and safe and secure, and it was given to us—given from above by the church, or given by the king, or whatever. But now, of course, we construct our own identities and our response to identities through the mediums of technology in particular.

He says: "The war of identity. It is identity forged out of resentment and a thirst for vengeance. It is identity that draws its narrative from the old festering hatreds of history"—also true—"It is identity that pits us against each other; that divides us into our tribes. It is a 21st-century law of the jungle: something deeply primal that leads us to tear each other limb from limb." That's pretty extreme there, Stan. "Look around our world, we are putting up new walls; we are militarising our borders; we fear the stranger and retreat into old certainties and closed communities." It's pretty strong, but quite an accurate description of where many of us now are.

**Steve:** It is quite accurate, and 'the law of the jungle' remarks relate to Layer 3, which is literally living according to the law of the jungle: the world is a jungle; you've got to fight to survive. It's a pretty rational place where we respond immediately to our urges and instincts and don't go through a rational moderation process. We don't rationally think about cause-and-effect; we just feel overwhelmed by our emotions, our instincts, our urges in the moment and usually act on them. This, of course, is very dangerous in many cases, and most likely applies to what happened in Christchurch: an example of somebody who was clearly overwhelmed by emotions, urges and instincts in the moment, and acted on them without stopping to think of the implications.

It's important to remember that when we're in these less complex value sets, particularly Layer 3 that I'm talking about, we experience a shutting down of the rational mind. In an evolutionary sense, when we were originally growing through that layer, it was prior to the complete development of the frontal lobes of the brain which brought that rational moderation capacity. It's a similar situation we find ourselves in when we get shocked into fight-or-flight where the brain shuts down. Most people will have had some experience of this where they are suddenly shocked or suddenly very, very afraid for some reason, and they can't think straight. They're just acting on instincts in the moment, and that is the nature of being human in that particular layer of consciousness.

**Nyck:** It's also the case, as you're alluding to, with regard to the tribal instinct that we have in Layer 6 that we're moving into, but the problem is that often we slip back to early iterations of that.

I love this piece from Professor Chua from the same article, too. She says that: "tribal instinct is not just an instinct to belong. It is also an instinct to exclude." I thought that was really important because there's so many people now who talk about tribes—their group, their tribe, their family—which is wonderful, but inherently when you say that, you can be excluding someone else; you can be putting someone else 'over there', in that other tribe out there that's not right.

**Steve:** It's usually the case. Often, in this transition from 5 to 6—into the Postmodern Humanistic—because we're moving from an era of very, very strong individual orientation where it was all about me and my personal success—usually to the detriment of people who weren't successful of course—we are looking to remember what it's like to live in community. Again, it's normal when we're going through the change process to think back to older iterations, and so it's actually quite useful, quite valuable: the look back to older ways of being in community, and that's what occurs. We think back to, say, the traditional-tribal way of living, or perhaps the old agricultural village setting where everybody knew everybody and it was a tight-knit community, and these things can be extremely useful. So, it's not that they're bad, but like anything, if you take it to an extreme, then people can start to think that we're not just learning from these old ways, we actually have to go back and be like that, and that is an extreme but not uncommon thought that people have when they're going through this transition as well: 'we should be like those people there.'

**Nyck:** Romanticising the past era.

**Steve:** Romanticising, yes, and because the person usually hasn't literally lived in that particular setting, they don't really know what it was like.

I can say from personal experience, if you go and visit countries where people are still living in that traditional tribal set of life conditions, it's a pretty harsh place to be, and quite seriously, people who don't belong to the tribe, sometimes, in extreme cases, aren't even extended the full rights of being human. You can get into tribal warfare and payback killings and those sorts of things, and even within the tribal societies, there are things that go on which we would regard as extreme, like scarification and ritual initiation and those sorts of things. The reality is often lost, but let's not forget that it can be, and is, extremely useful and educational to refer back to these old ways of being communal, because they will help us inform ourselves on how to be communal in a new way, but in a new way that is more capable and has greater richness than the older iterations of communal living in the past.

**Nyck:** As you're speaking, I'm thinking about the 90s here when a lot of people, who are still around and friends of mine, went completely feral for a while and went up into the hills and got their tee pees and even took a bit of road kill off the highways to eat, but then as years went by, those same people, of course, are now living in town somewhere with a couple of kids, and often their hair's short. They came through that phase because something didn't work, actually. I'm sure it was a great experience, and people may argue that, but something obviously didn't work otherwise they'd still be there.

**Steve:** Clearly, and it always comes down to the complexity of our life conditions, and the world seems to be constantly getting more complex, so these older ways, while they offer us wonderful information—we can learn from looking back and seeing how we lived then—

they're really not a good match for the level of complexity that we face today. They're not going to help us solve our complex problems.

**Nyck:** Indeed.

Thanks for your texts. We won't get to answer all of those texts, because some of them are quite long and detailed, but we do appreciate your listening and your engagement with some of the ideas around Clare W. Graves. It's not for everybody, that's also true, but it's a fascinating model which is certainly fleshed out and deepened in one's own being; certainly helps with information overload.

I segued nicely there, because it's very true that today we are in a situation, living in a world where there is just so much information. As much as anything else, it's hard to figure out what one should be looking at, reading, digesting, and then what is actually true, real and trustworthy, and the like. It's a complex world and all of you out there, all of us, I think, to some degree, are fraught with this information overload that we are experiencing.

**Steve:** It's a big challenge and it's one of the key drivers of the evolutionary tension, of course, that's pushing us along. The best thing we can do to cope is, of course, work on ourselves.

The faster we can move our own development process, the better we'll be able to cope. We have to grow through these layers in sequence, so it really comes down to where you are personally and what is the next step for you in your own growth. If you're in the transition from 5 to 6, where you're leaving behind what has been the conventional world for the last few hundred years and moving into this more expanded, postmodern, humanistic, network-centric way of being human, then the next step is to move from a rational process of looking at all your options and assessing which is the best option—which is really becoming pretty much impossible; if you want to go on the internet and look at options, there's too many options and you'd spend the rest of life reading them—the next way of coping beyond Layer 5 is to then form a trusted network of peers. Then you've got a network of brains who are able to look at and digest much more information than you could as an individual, and so you'd benefit from the group mind. That is the next way of coping, and we know from the map that we have from the research that has been done, not just by Graves, but by a whole bunch of developmental psychology researchers, that the next iteration after Layer 6 is actually moving beyond the rational-minded approach to what is known as the trans-rational, where we grow through a process of learning to tap into interdimensional information in what I call a quantum process of knowing, of direct access to insights.

**Nyck:** Would you say that the reconnection with nature that we're talking about in Layer 6 is a ground for that next step into Layer 7: that interdimensional trans-rational approach?

**Steve:** Absolutely. Nice pun there too, I must say: 'a ground'. Yes, absolutely.

In the long-term perspective of human evolution, one of the key roles of 6 is to lay that solid ground for what Graves called "the momentous leap". You can't leap off quicksand, right? So you have to have solid ground. Hence the natural direction to reconnect with nature and to be grounded, quite literally, to get your bare feet on the ground and connect with the earth's frequency, if we want to talk from a physics perspective. There's great value in that, particularly in a time where we see people getting carried away with fanciful ideas of what might happen, which are essentially not grounded. If you dig into these ideas—whether it be prejudiced, racial ideas about the nature of the 'other', or whether it be ideas about where the Earth's climate is going to be in 100 years' time—if you dig deeply into them, you'll find that many of the foundations are not absolutely grounded at all. They've come down to someone's suppositions about 'what might happen if'.

I'm seeing the media being flooded at the moment with these stories about 'what if'. I've come across a number of stories in the last couple of months about 'what if the climate keeps on trending towards warming for the next hundred years, and then the colour of the oceans is going to change?' That was one scientific study I saw, which is really, actually, quite ridiculous because they're starting with a false foundation: an assumption about a trend which, if you really dig in to the science, is not confirmed; it's just fear-driven. If you dig into it and look at the mechanisms, you can understand why it's fear-driven, because some people have looked at the science they've seen, 'oh, it's getting hot in a whole bunch of places; maybe this is going to continue, and if it is going to continue, then we need to act now to try and change it.' That's a reasonable deduction and process, but it still comes down to someone's 'if': 'if this happens, then we need to do this.' It's like somebody saying, 'gee, we live in a pretty flat land here. Maybe we should build a big tall tower so we can climb up it if it floods.' That may happen; it is a possibility, but it's based on someone's supposition and not necessarily on any solid information.

**Nyck:** This process is really endemic in our thinking now, isn't it? This idea, driven as you're saying, by these feelings of fear and guilt also, and depression and feelings of loss and all these things, that in a way is a self-fulfilling prophecy, I guess. We continually generate these 'what ifs'—the worst case scenarios—and tend to then hook in through our emotional bodies, into the responses to that, and either find ourselves getting very angry and perhaps even sometimes aggressive in response to that, or finding oneself completely mute and unable to actually act.

**Steve:** Yes. It's useful for me to draw on my experience in the military and also in martial arts, because those are two sets of life conditions which are radical in their tendency to change very, very quickly from one extreme to another, so to be flexible and to be able to cope, you can't run off with a scenario and act on it, otherwise you will fail.

Let's take a competition between mixed martial artists, for example. If you're most worried about being hit in the head, and so you put your arms over your head, guess what? You're going to get hit in the stomach or in the legs, right? That's a fairly simple example, but the same concept applies to large-scale challenges to humanity. If we get carried away with the idea that one thing is going to happen, and we put all of our effort into preparing for that, if

we're wrong, then we're going to get caught out very, very badly. In fact, we're going to be worse off than if we did nothing because we might actually have to prepare for the exact opposite. So, the best thing we can do is to essentially stay in the middle ground, but stay super-aware of the signals and the signs in both directions—in every direction; in as many directions as we can cover—to monitor the change process, stay aware, be ready to act, but don't actually get carried away in one direction until we're fully 100% certain that that's actually what we need to prepare for.

**Nyck:** We were talking about Elisabeth Kübler-Ross a little bit earlier and her roller coaster of change, and I guess you're talking about that other aspect of change whereby it actually is a positive thing. She can stimulate high level engagement with, and presence with, the process of change and therefore be creative in doing so.

**Steve:** Yes. What we're moving to is the second phase of the change process where we've gone through the shock and the emotions that arise as a result of radical change, and descended into this area of chaos where everything becomes loose, so our coping systems come apart to some extent. This means, in the short term, that we're less able to cope, but yet the looseness creates the opportunity for things to be rebuilt in different structures, particularly things like our neural networks, our neurochemistry, those sorts of things, so we can develop more complex and capable coping mechanisms. Then, once we have the breakthrough, once we get those insights—and it's worth mentioning very briefly that altered states are a very important part of that insight process; they always have been for humanity, and it's why during times of change, people always turn to some kind of psychoactive substance: 'I've had a really hard week, I don't know what's going on, I need to go have a beer', for example. How many times have we heard that over the years? And what's really going on there is there's a subconscious knowing that an altered perspective on the world is going to create an opportunity for insights and perhaps ease our mind from being overly stressed.

**Nyck:** Someone else wrote in a little way back here on our text line and said: "Dutch courage", which of course is alcohol, "is unfortunately the only way some people can change their mindset to approach the fear of rejection." So I guess he's saying the same sort of thing there.

**Steve:** That's true, and it depends on our personal understanding of how to use altered states as to how that process can pan out. Sometimes, of course, we can get lost in them if we have never been taught how to constructively use tools for altered states of consciousness, and actually slow our change process down as well.

So, with all of these things that we're discussing, there's no one right way. We're not saying you should do this or you should do that. What we're saying is that in times of change, these are all these possibilities. There's a general landscape that we predict to a certain extent that



we're going to go through: firstly, this descent into things falling apart, and then we're going to come through a process of insights and reorganisation within ourself and then move into an integration and a future stabilisation. We can anticipate that, so it can be useful to have the map, because when you're going through the worst of it, you can say, 'well, I know this is going to pass. It's not going to last forever. I'm going through this process. I can expect at some point to have an insight and that things are going to take a turn for the better.'

On the upswing of the roller coaster, which I think is what you were alluding to before, once we have the insight, of course, it can be a massive relief. It takes the pressure off. It's like taking the top off the pressure cooker and letting the pressure out, and all of a sudden, even though things haven't fully resolved themselves, we have an idea of which direction we need to head in and we get a sense that things are changing. Typically that comes with excitement; usually there's a re-energising, whereas on the downhill side, we're losing energy and descending into a static place similar to the changing of the seasons into winter, as we said earlier. But now it's springtime, things start to grow again, the grass is greener and that kind of stuff.

Gradually, as we go through that integration process, we're more able to solve our problems. We can refine our new ways; we're learning new ways in the process, so we have a new mindset, we have a new set of values, we're looking for different things in life, we're motivated by different things, and like anything where we get thrust into a new environment, we have to learn how to navigate it. So in the integration process, we're learning how to be human in a different way. When we go through a transformational change, we're literally moving to a new way of being human. We're finding new tools and structures, we're connecting with different people who can teach us or who we can rely on for support in this new way of living, and then slowly, as we consolidate, life becomes more stable and eventually we get to a point of equilibrium where our coping capacity matches the problems that we have to solve.

**Nyck:** Lovely.

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**Nyck:** You're tuned to Future Sense. Thanks for your texts. One person has written and just said: "Know thyself. Socrates." Exactly, and someone else has written: "We need to talk, really talk, and yet so much is blocked. What I see is the primary tension in the world at present. Your talks help facilitate this. And that's great work. Thank you. On guilt, you seemed to dismiss its value, but I'm sure you meant to include that, too. Thanks, brothers."

**Steve:** Yeah, good point. It's important to understand that—and this realisation will come as we grow through Layer 6 and beyond—our emotions are actually an extremely sophisticated signalling system that has developed over tens of thousands of years—hundreds of thousands of years—and we've just been through an era where they'd been downplayed. In

the Materialistic Scientific-Industrial era, emotions and being guided by emotions was really pooh-poohed. It was thought to be a weakness in that era.

Things are transforming now; things are changing and so we need to stop and think about what society will look like in the future. Clearly our values are changing. We're attributing much more value to our human experience, our values and our emotions, and part of what is going to come out of that, and is already coming out of it—and that's why I know about it, because it's already happening—is this realisation that, 'wow, our emotions are an amazingly sophisticated signalling system' and many of us have grown up being taught not to listen to them as if it's a bad thing: 'Don't express your emotions; don't cry; don't do this', and yet we're losing all the value that they offer us. If we can learn to connect with them—and that means connecting deeply with your body, with your physical body, because our physical body is the media through which these signals come; through feelings in the body—then we can learn to become more aware of our emotional signalling system and talk to it, connect with it, make it a two-way communication process, and then employ our emotions much more effectively to guide us in life and give us greater coping capacity.

So thanks for that little nudge about guilt. It's a very good thing. None of our emotions are bad. They've all developed through our evolution for a particular purpose and all we need to do is to learn to pay attention to them and to respond appropriately to them, give them the attention they deserve and act on it.

**Nyck:** Yes. It's interesting what you're saying because, of course, in the last era that we're now starting to move out of—Layer 5—empathy, sympathy even, compassion, were certainly downplayed emotions other than when useful in a political or economic sense, you could argue. So that rediscovery of those abilities to feel—not just yourself, but actually to feel into another—starts to give us the opportunity on a global scale to actually start to come up with real solutions, grounded solutions as we said before, to the real challenges that we have now.

**Steve:** Absolutely, and we can expect a lot of things to change in society. If we look at, for example, Hollywood, which has a massive, massive cultural influence globally, and look at the themes that have been present in movies throughout the modern era and into the present day, it never ceases to amaze and disappoint me that even the most leading edge movies that are coming out about the future, which are trying to feel into the future and feel how society is changing, how humans are changing, and those sorts of things, still have car crashes and gunfights in them. It's like there's this checklist that Hollywood has when they make a movie: 'we're making a movie about this particular thing; it's all in the future, blah, blah, blah. That's really great but make sure you get some gunfights in there, and let's have a couple of car crashes or spaceship crashes', right? Which is so representative of the old era, and it's something that needs to radically change, and will radically change in the due course of things.

**Nyck:** It's interesting hearing you speak of these things because being a military man, being in the army for 15 years or so, and having been taught to kill as you said to me off-air today, you've turned so completely in the opposite direction—not that I imagine you joined the Army to kill.

**Steve:** No. I think, again, Hollywood is responsible for the general understanding of the military—the American military in the way that it's employed—but I am very happy to say that my experience of the Australian military was radically different to what you see on TV. There was a tremendous amount of constructive learning and some wonderful shared experiences that happened for me when I was in the military. I was fortunate not to go to too many conflicts. I only went to one war, and the one war that I did go to was a humanitarian action where we were providing protection for a starving population so that they could be fed.

**Nyck:** Somalia.

**Steve:** Yes, in Somalia, and I'm grateful that I had to go somewhere that was a place which felt to me like a worthy purpose. I would have had great difficulty if I had still been in the army and been sent to places like Iraq and Afghanistan, because I radically disagreed with the purpose behind those deployments, but my own experience was very constructive, and I was fortunate that I never had to use lethal force in the time that I was in the military, but I certainly witnessed that happening. Consequently, I think I'm better equipped than most people to speak about that experience of being human and that urge that we've had in the past to kill each other for various reasons, and the consequences of that for those who survive, which I've lived through myself, including about 20 years of suffering post-traumatic stress disorder, which radically disrupted my life. It meant that I couldn't work for quite a time and that I spent some years being quite disabled as a result of that, and have grown out the other side of it with a very, very deep understanding of what it's like to go through that.

The Vietnamese philosopher whose name we always have trouble pronouncing—Thich Nhat Hanh—there's a beautiful quote by him where he talks about exactly this topic. Coming from Vietnam, of course, it's a country with a troubled history in terms all the conflict that went on there, and he says that there is tremendous hope for the world through war veterans to actually transform the way that we live and to move away from conflict, because no-one knows the reality of that as a war veteran does, and I think that's a really powerful thing to remember.

**Nyck:** Absolutely.

In the last 10 minutes or so that we have, we want to give a little bit of some positive examples or ideas about how we can move forward as individuals and as communities now.

**Steve:** Yes, I think so. Let's talk about personal coping strategies and also large-scale coping strategies. We're seeing some of these things already pop up in the media, like people calling for an increase in mental health services in society. I think that is a really important thing because when we go through radical change, we are challenged; our mental health is often challenged.

**Nyck:** Clearly, I think a lot of people, especially in the Western world, are mental health challenged at the moment in one way or the other. We see that in so many ways.

**Steve:** Yes, and so we all have an opportunity to help change society in the coming years. We can do that by expressing our right to vote—who we vote for, and voting in people who are displaying these new value sets. Where they have a deep humanitarian aspect to their nature, they're not going to spread and use strategies of fear to try and push people into voting for them. We are learning to discard that. We're learning to see through what are really hidden agendas. The agenda is personal success for the politician, and they see the pathway to personal success by gaining popular support, by making everybody think: 'the world is really dangerous place; we can't trust these foreigners, they're not like us, and therefore, we need protection. You need to vote for me for that reason.' But people are more than equipped now to see through that kind of stuff. Most people, thank goodness.

**Nyck:** Yes, let's hope so. The prime example of that in Australian politics in recent times is the 'Tampa Affair' with John Howard, who got himself elected in 2001 by doing exactly what you're talking about.

**Steve:** Of course, and that was around the time of 9/11 as well, where there was a lot of fear and uncertainty about the radical change which had occurred with this large-scale violence in a place that normally wasn't exposed to that: New York. You were there for that of course, Nyck.

**Nyck:** I was.

**Steve:** So we need to just be careful that we don't get carried away with these scenarios of 'what if this happens? What if that happens?', because usually they're driven by fear.

I think that fear is a tremendous testing mechanism. If you just stop for a moment and be present and think, 'okay, is this actually driven by fear?', and if it's driven by fear, then most likely it's not useful. Fear, like all emotions, has a purpose. It is useful to help us avoid immediate danger, but when we start building fearful scenarios way into the future that actually have lost their groundedness, then it's not useful because it distracts us from what we should be doing right now, and the things that are really important right now.

So, first and foremost, whatever the topic is, it doesn't matter. Just ask yourself, is this fear-driven? And if it is fear-driven, then just realise that it's probably not fully grounded.

**Nyck:** That's really good. It is paradoxical, too, because I think a lot of people are feeling now that the only way they can generate action and change is to run from those kind of emotions: fear and guilt and so forth. So it's a bit tricky, because, as you're saying—and I totally support you—is that instead of following the fear, so to speak, which is, I think we used to say in the new age world, False Evidence Appearing Real: FEAR. If we're driven by that, then it isn't the grounded direction that we're going in. It might have some value here and there but it's not really the way that we should be looking.

**Steve:** Exactly. We've come from an era where we've been taught to ignore and avoid our emotional signals, and so I think a lot of what is happening is projected fear. People are feeling fear themselves, but they're not acknowledging it. They have fear about change—it's natural to have fear about change—but instead of facing their fear and dealing with it, they're projecting it out and trying to make other people fearful so they feel okay. It's a very common strategy for people who are unable to cope with life: to try and drag other people down to their level so they feel better.

**Nyck:** I was going to just read a brief thing on this from Stan Grant's article that I referred to earlier. He says, at the end of this article: "Our world is a complicated place. Never have we been more connected and yet we are so fearful, mistrusting and suspicious of each other. In a world where there are some who come to power by appealing to humanity's worst instincts, we need those who can speak to what Abraham Lincoln called 'the better angels of our nature'. The shipwrecked minds are setting fire to our world. They are killing our children and stealing our futures."

'Shipwrecked minds' is a phrase that was coined by American political scientist Mark Lilla, which he refers to earlier in the article. Do you think that is a good way of looking at it; that we are appealing to or looking towards the better angels of our nature in doing these things?

**Steve:** It's very difficult in these complex circumstances to give a black and white 'this is what you should do' response. All we can speak to is the strategies which are going to help us realise what we need to do for our own betterment, given our individually unique circumstances. So we can't tell everybody out there: 'what you need to do is this'. But what we can say is that if you have a regular integrated mind-body-spirit practice that allows you to find stillness within yourself and quieten your mind, and feel for deeper signals about what's best for you, then you're going to have better coping strategies. If you take time out to connect with nature and ground yourself and sometimes turn off your technology—technology is a wonderfully useful thing, but like everything, moderation is best; use it for what it's useful for, but don't let it rule your life—reconnect with the earth, have some sort of

regular practice, understand how to use altered states constructively, whether it be from meditation or exercise or martial arts, yoga, those sorts of things, or from whatever's legal in terms of psychoactive substances where you live—this podcast goes around the world, of course.

**Nyck:** Hello Lithuania.

**Steve:** Exactly.

So, these are strategies that are going to help you find your path, your truth, and it's important to remember, too, that different people are going through radically different changes at the moment. Some people are in transition from Layer 4 to Layer 5 right now in places around the world, some from Layer 5 to 6, some from 6 to 7. So everybody's situation is unique, and the best we can do is say: 'here are some strategies that you can employ to help you find the right path for wherever you are. You know, it doesn't matter what part of the map you're on. If you follow these strategies, then you're going to find your way better than you could otherwise'.

On a larger scale, obviously, as we mentioned before, there's lots of things that we can do, like start starting to rediscover our communal ways of living. Because the major trend globally is back to communal living—to Layer 6. Then we need to rebuild community at all scales. We need to rebuild our local communities and we need to return to the village concept, to have that local support and our peer reference groups. We need to build communal mindedness into our large scale living as well. And we need to develop further our concept of global community in this understanding that the whole of humanity is really part of one tribe on this sacred land, which is our planet.

**Nyck:** Beautiful. I think we will even leave it there. That's a beautiful place to finish today.

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