# Words versus Actions, Part 1

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[*Future Sense*](https://www.futuresense.it/) *is a podcast edited from the radio show of the same name, broadcast on BayFM in Byron Bay, Australia, at 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:** And good morning to my co-host, Steve McDonald, on this lovely day.

**Steve:** Good morning, Nyck.

**Nyck:** How are you doing this morning?

**Steve:** Not too bad. I've been pretty busy over the last week or so.

**Nyck:** You have. You've been all over the place doing all sorts of wonderful things. Action rather than words, which is always good to see.

**Steve:** I certainly had a weekend of action. We had our Chief Instructor visiting from Malta, Eli Montaigue, who runs the World Taiji Boxing Association.

**Nyck:** Taiji boxing?

**Steve:** Yes, Chinese boxing; kung fu, in other words. Me and a few friends were doing a quite small, intimate workshop with Eli up on the Gold Coast, which was wonderful, learning some new stuff and applying some old stuff.

**Nyck:** So don't mess with us, folks out there. You think you're safe because we're on air here, but no, we can reach through with the power of the taiji boxing kick, right through the airwaves. It's almost the way the fake news works these days. You can just sort of throw stuff out there over the airwaves. It's like a kick in the face, often.

**Steve:** Like a Jedi mind trick, really.

**Nyck:** Like a Jedi mind trick. We have an extra guest in the studio this morning, speaking of Jedis. Jedi Ross Hill. Thanks for joining us, Ross. Ross has been here quite often as a guest on the show when he's up here from Melbourne, and nice of you to join us this morning. He's one of our AADII team for those who might know what AADII actually is. The Agency for the Advanced Development of Integrative Intelligence. It's a mouthful.

What are we talking about today Mr McDonald?

**Steve:** We're talking today about the difference between words and actions and how we can use that difference to make sense of some of the crazy things that are going on in our world right now ... and next week.

**Nyck:** And the week after that. Now, we don't often quote the Bible here, but it sort of goes to our theme for today. You probably would have heard of the expression: "By their fruits, ye shall know them." And Mark Twain said: "Action speaks louder than words, but not nearly as often", and that's pretty true, too, especially in this day and age where a lot of things are spoken but it would seem that not much is actually happening in many areas of life on Earth.

**Steve:** So it seems, anyway. Words have really become a problem, haven't they, lately? With fake news, which is all the news, actually, and the resulting confusion that comes from that; and interference in due processes, like in politics, for example. It's all over the news, isn't it: interference in politics, and even official interference in politics; it's become official. Once upon a time, it was secret and done behind the scenes, but these days it's just done way out there in the open where you can just interfere in whatever is going on by having all of these wonderful side-tracks and investigations and claims that don't seem to have any worth, but must be investigated anyway for months and months and months and then reported on.

**Ross:** Then you've got all the comments that come from all the bots on social media as well. So are you talking to a person or bot? Does it matter?

**Steve:** That's right. It's like a self-feeding machine, isn't it? Just produces stuff and then eats it and produces more.

**Ross:** It's good to look at; very enjoyable to read.

**Steve:** It certainly can be entertaining.

**Nyck:** If you knew you were talking to a bot, though, would you still talk to a bot? That's a question because, is it just the need for communication; the need for connection that people are having, irrespective of where that information may come from, perhaps?

**Ross:** I talk to Siri all the time, but in a very utilitarian way. I'm not looking for connection with Siri, just looking to set an alarm or a timer most of the time. But it's quite fascinating because if you look at Twitter now, especially the bigger, more political, more controversial tweets, and you just scroll down to the bottom, it always has that little button that says ‘show hidden replies’, and it's basically the series of replies and comments that Twitter themselves have deemed to be less accurate, less reliable, and they start filtering them out. So they're still there. You can have a look. It's a little bit like your junk mail in your inbox. There's sometimes some good stuff in there.

**Nyck:** You find some gold in there, do you? I've never looked at that, myself.

**Ross:** Mostly rubbish.

**Nyck:** Mostly dross, little bit of gold.

**Ross:** But it's slowly getting filtered, and so there is this interesting dynamic with the social networks. When they started it was all based on your social graph. If I see a comment on an article from a friend, then that's probably more relevant to me than a comment that is not strictly from a friend, but as more and more people have joined these networks, the graph has widened and widened. Who knows what we're looking at now? It gets a bit messy and loose.

**Steve:** That's right. We might even begin listening to people who are not like us!

**Nyck:** Goodness gracious me.

Speaking about language, even the word 'friend', of course—since the rise of social media, and particularly Facebook, initially—that word ‘friend’ is a loaded terminology in itself: an innocent word that we all have used. Hopefully we all have some friends, but now ‘friend’ means something else. 'Friend' means a certain sort of acknowledgment, a certain sort of alignment, perhaps, with your thoughts; with the things that you're interested in; and when you're not, perhaps you'll be 'defriended' which is a new word.

**Ross:** And if you're not a 'friend', you can be a 'follower'.

**Steve:** That's true.

**Ross:** So if you're on Twitter and you want to hear from the leader of the US, you have to be a follower of Donald Trump. You can't just be a listener or a reader or an observer.

**Nyck:** Are you a follower of Donald Trump in that particular instance?

**Ross:** I'm not, but I do check in occasionally to see what he's saying.

**Nyck:** It's not something many people would want to own up to very easily, would they? 'I'm a follower of Donald Trump.’ Many people tend to want to add: ‘on social media, just for information. I'm not really a follower.'

**Steve:** Somebody could cut that up and edit what you just said just then and make all sorts of mischief.

**Nyck:** Yes, and they can do with video now. Deep fake.

**Steve:** Exactly, yes. My goodness, no wonder we're in trouble and you can sort of see where it's come from.

If we look back to the Scientific-Industrial era of the last few hundred years, being an individually-themed way of being human and driven by the desire for personal success, it had this tendency to want to bend or break the rules in order to make that success more likely. Ethics became whatever is necessary, and really, more technically correct, whatever you could get away with. So if you could do something and get away with it, then that would be ethically okay.

The idea of strategy and deception came out of that same mindset. Spin-doctoring became quite the art and there were professional spin doctors—there still are out there, particularly in the corporate world—whose job it was to spin the truth into something different in order to create an appearance that doesn't actually reflect what's behind the veil. Kind of like the Wizard of Oz, I guess. Of course, people started to learn about these processes because initially it worked famously, but then people realised that, 'okay, actually there are these spin doctors and even political parties employ spin doctors to make them look like something that they're not with the idea of getting more votes, of course, and being more popular’, and there was a loss of trust that came from that. People became skeptical, suspicious; didn't know who they could trust, what they could trust. Then, as the pushback came from that loss of trust, the standard result or the standard response from the Scientific-Industrial mindset—this Layer 5 mindset—was to do the same thing, but do it harder; go harder. That's just the thing, if it's not working, you have to do it longer and harder, right?

**Nyck:** Or more extravagantly; go even crazier.

**Steve:** Yes, you're just not doing it hard enough, so spin it a bit more and let's see how it goes. That's brought us to where we are now with things like cyber warfare. It became quite obvious that this was such an effective thing for causing trouble, then it became an instrument of war. Deceiving and confusing your opponent's population was a wonderful way to wage war without actually having to spend money on dropping bombs.

Then, of course, the whole 'fake news' thing. It's very hard to tell now where the fake news is coming from and I'm pretty sure that people just make up fake news just for the fun of it as well, without any strategy behind it, just for the amusement.

**Ross:** Yes, memes go far.

**Steve:** They do.

**Nyck:** I've mentioned a few times, certainly on this show and other shows, the case of Edward Bernays, who was an Austrian-American pioneer in the field of public relations and propaganda—in fact, many people consider that he invented our modern public relations, and marketing and propaganda world. His mother was Anna Freud, the sister of Sigmund Freud. He migrated to the US and basically created PR. His best-known campaigns include a 1929 effort to promote female smoking by branding cigarettes as feminist "torches of freedom"; and his work for the United Fruit Company, connected with the CIA, orchestrated the overthrow of the democratically-elected Guatemalan government. So even back in the 50s, we were having manipulation via propaganda and public relations and how to oversell; to sell people. His books were called *Crystalizing Public Opinion* and *Propaganda*. *Propaganda* was an interesting book because he described the masses as irrational and subject to herd instinct, and outlined how skilled practitioners could use crowd psychology and psychoanalysis to control them in desirable ways—and we're talking here about the 1920s.

**Steve:** Yes, and I think that fruit company you mentioned is where the term ‘Banana Republic’ came from, of course, isn't it?

**Nyck:** Are you making that up?

**Steve:** No, I think it's true. The Americans were using the fruit company to overthrow countries and governments in South America, and then of course, what you got was the result of the fruit company, which became like a Banana Republic.

**Nyck:** Right, there you go.

**Steve:** They grow a lot of bananas in South America. Now I heard that that guy, Bernays, invented a sauce called bearnaise sauce, but I think that's fake news. I don't think that's true.

**Nyck:** It's delicious and it really makes a very ordinary egg taste something extraordinary, which is about how it is with slathering on the stuff over something that doesn't actually have any content. Just make it look really good, taste good, smell good, feel good.

**Steve:** You've got to spin it; whip it up.

**Nyck:** Whip it up, spin it, pay for it, and then you buy it. It's pretty much how it works.

**Steve:** And it makes your food taste like something else. It covers up the original flavour.

**Nyck:** Oh dear.

You were talking there about the different layers, and for those people who don't listen to this show regularly, maybe just a very brief summary of how we base much of our information—not all—on the work of Clare W. Graves.

**Steve:** We do indeed. It might not seem like it sometimes, but we are operating from an understanding of consciousness here; a very, very deep philosophical understanding.

**Nyck:** Having a good time at the same time, which is rather good. And folks, by the way, you can text in on our text line at any time. I have received a text here. I quoted Mark Twain before and here's a good one: "Mark Twain also said 'Politicians and diapers must be changed often and for the same reason”.' Unfortunately, though, they're not changing fast enough, you could argue in some of our countries at the moment … or the changing too fast, one of the two.

**Ross:** In Australia, we've had a PM for quite a while now. The same PM!

**Nyck:** Yes, almost a year or so. It's fantastic. Actually, I don't think the PM's so fantastic, but it’s rather good that we have some sort of stability; or is it? Is that a false stability? Probably. We're all shaking our heads here because we don't really know what we're talking about here; we don't know what the truth is. We're not claiming that, are we?

**Steve:** No, but what we can do is, rather than listen to the words, we can actually look at what people are doing. This seems to be a very useful tool at this time in history. We've had some remarkable examples of extremely well-crafted spin in fairly recent history from political leaders, and when you look at the actual tally of what they did, it tells a very, very different story.

I think President Obama is a good example there because he portrayed this amazing hopeful character when he was running , and of course got elected as a result of his popularity. Then, they really waited until he was retired before they started tallying up how many bombs had been dropped under his name.

**Ross:** It was quite incredible.

**Steve:** And the drone programme that he used to do every Tuesday, and those sorts of things. It is pretty incredible.

**Ross:** He did, on average, drop a bomb every 20 seconds through his eight years, which is huge.

**Steve:** Yes, it's quite an achievement.

**Ross:** Deportations were also huge and he expanded the way that people could be caught and deported for migration issues. But a lot of it didn't really come out until Trump was elected and people started looking at the numbers and being like: 'This is horrific, look at all of these things that are happening', and in many cases—this was in the first few months of his leadership—Trump hadn't had a chance to do anything yet. That was just a hangover of what was already in play. So it's quite interesting that sometimes we do need a change in who is on stage before we look at what was actually happening, right?

**Nyck:** Usually too, on the other side of the equation, I also think about the much-vaunted claim, particularly in America but it's also true here, of the right side—the more conventional side of politics—that talks about small government; that they believe in cutting back on administration and having a small government. But actually, the statistics will show that the Republicans in America—and I think it's also true, correct me if I'm wrong, with the coalition here in power—that often the government actually gets bigger, particularly with the Republicans, because of more regulation. Even though they claim less *regulatio*: 'we're against regulation of this, that and the other'—and they will remove regulation on things like environmental protocols; that's an obvious example—overall, the government actually doesn't get smaller under the conservative side of politics. Again, it's a complete furphy.

**Steve:** Yes, and of course, Hans Rosling, who I think has passed away now, he made a living out of tallying up the data and presenting the facts. Often his graphs would tell a very different story than what public opinion—popular opinion—would have told you.

**Ross:** He did a really good job of also surfacing some of the really embedded cultural and societal beliefs that we have. He'd often survey people, and the students in his classes, and say, 'what's the answer to this common knowledge problem?' Then he would do the same thing with chimps. The chimps should be accurate 50 percent of the time because he'd give them two options and they pick one or the other, but because the chimps were 50 percent accurate, they were actually more accurate than the students on a lot of these common knowledge questions, which is fascinating. So it just goes to show how biased we can be, but it's quite hard to see the bias in action in ourselves.

**Steve:** And just for those listeners who might be confused, the chimps were just randomly choosing a button. They weren't actually considering the questions.

**Ross:** They just wanted a banana.

**Nyck:** It's like placebo. There's a piece that I saw posted recently about how doctors give medicines that they know actually don't work for the particular case, but because of the placebo effect, well, sometimes they do. You've got to wonder.

**Ross:** Yes, in a study of 136 Australian GPs, 77 percent admitted to giving active medications such as antidepressants as a placebo, and 40 percent said they used them at least once a month.

**Nyck:** That's a lot, and it does call into question all sorts of things.

**Ross:** Sometimes they're giving things like antibiotics or vitamins but thirty nine percent of doctors said they actually gave inactive placebos like sugar pills. It's an interesting space, though, because placebos can work. That's what the science says.

**Steve:** That's right. I went to a therapist here in the Byron region a few years ago who was actually selling placebo pills on the counter.

**Nyck:** Buy a placebo pill! The thing is, of course, in many cases, it'll be much less damaging taking a placebo pill than taking some pharmaceuticals, so perhaps you're better off attempting a placebo and having a belief in it.

**Steve:** That's right. Guaranteed to work some of the time.

**Ross:** Some of the time. It's interesting to look at what they're prescribing placebos for: 39 percent of the time, placebos were being given out for viral infections, 21 percent for sleep difficulty and insomnia, and 17 percent for pain-related conditions. So who knows? Maybe that's where the placebos work quite well.

**Nyck:** Yes.

We'll take a break here. You're tuned to Future Sense. We're dallying around the topic this morning about actions and words. Actions speak, in other words. Where are the actions? Where the words? Why is there a disjunct between the two at this time, particularly in the layer of consciousness—in the paradigms—we seem to be emerging into and coming from? And how are we going to address understanding the truth? Does the truth actually even matter anymore? That's also a question that you might want to address too. Text in.

**Nyck:** And we're talking about actions and words. Actions speaking louder than words, or do they?

**Steve:** That's right, and the problems that we have with words these days with fake news everywhere. Which words do you believe?

**Nyck:** Indeed, so which words do you believe? Seriously, I mean, we're folks, like so many people in this area, who would consider ourselves trying to be, at least ‘on the button’, so to speak; trying to keep up with what's going in the world. But even relatively intelligent people like perhaps we are here, still find it rather difficult to find: What is the truth? What are words actually saying? And what's the intention behind what is given to us, particularly by politics, business leaders and the like?

**Ross:** The big one now, too, is who are we actually listening to? Since the Internet came out, it's a lot easier to go straight to the source. Instead of saying, 'did you hear that thing that Nyck Jeanes was saying the other day?', I can just go to Nyck Jeanes directly. So it is easier in some ways to go to the source, but it's also easier for people to spin opinions about different sources, and sometimes the opinions and the memes that spin out of it are far more interesting and compelling and entertaining than what the original person said.

**Nyck:** And I guess it even drowns out what the original person says in some cases; that noise that occurs.

**Steve:** You're quite right, and often the attention gets directed to the media outlet rather than the actual source of the information. Sometimes the original source is not even quoted in many media articles, very true.

In answer to your question, Nyck, what I do is look at the language as a pointer to the layer of consciousness that the source is speaking through. That can be very telling but it's that's not widely accessible to most people to be able to do that yet. It will be in the future, though, and it will be the antidote.

**Nyck:** And that's the thing. It's a hard thing. We talk about this all the time here, and this is why we bring the work of Clare W. Graves to you listeners out there. For those of you who want to or can hear it, that notion that we can figure out, so to speak, the place, the paradigm, the layer of consciousness that someone is speaking from—and that doesn't make them wrong; that makes them just where they're actually at—and that their contribution is valuable within its own value system as much as any other value system; as much as any other opinion. That's hard for us to take because there is this sense of conformity that's upon us now, of trying to be in line with the views, particularly with the contentious issues such as the environment, climate change generally, the poisoning of our earth's systems and many other issues; and the trust that you might put in politicians these days, or not; religious leaders, business leaders and the like. We're trying to find, I would say, a new place to align ourselves so that we actually have some strength to make some changes.

**Steve:** That's true, and that conformity that you spoke about is something that's coming out of this emerging paradigm, the sixth layer in Graves's model, which is called various names by various commentators. Postmodernism is one name, but that's been around for a while, and I think it's captured a very early stage of this new paradigm that was far short of its maturity—and it still is to some extent, of course, because it's still emerging.

It's a communal theme, so we call it a ‘we-us-our’ theme. It's driven by the desire for deep human connection and group acceptance, so being part of a social group and being an accepted part, a respected part, is extremely important. It's as important as being successful was in the old paradigm.

Those of you who are old enough can think back a few decades to how important it was to be successful within society: you were measured by your success. These days that has flipped to being measured by your group acceptance and your deep connection with your social group. All of the communal, the feminine we-us-our themes throughout history, have revolved around some kind of conformity, just with varying themes. The theme for this one is deep human connection. What that means is that when we're in and living from and looking through a paradigm like that, then there's this sense that everybody has to get with the programme. If you're not with the programme, then you're not one of us.

The way that's playing out at the moment across the world is that there's a kind of a groupthink at play. The group comes to a conclusion about a particular topic and says, 'okay, this is what we believe as a peer group, as a social group', and then you differ from that opinion at your own risk. Of course, the most dangerous risk for someone who's operating through that paradigm—having that we-us-our Layer 6 as their operating system—the most dangerous outcome is to be rejected by the group and cast out. That's the biggest threat.

**Nyck:** 'Are you with us or against us?' mentality.

**Steve:** Yes, and of course, what we're seeing play out in social media in particular at the moment is the rejection, but also censorship—whether the owners of the platform, for example, Facebook, have decided what's okay to say and what's not okay to say—and this is really the development process for a new set of ethics in the future, so it's not a nonsensical process. It has a purpose. It's trying to determine what is okay in society now and what's not, just in the same way that in past eras we've had these ethical frameworks that have been extremely useful. But on social media, because of the lack of control, the freedom of speech often descends into persecution as well—personal attacks—very quickly, I might say.

I did a little experiment during the week.

**Nyck:** You drew some flack, did you?

**Steve:** I did. I did something I don't normally do, just to see what would happen. A friend of mine on Facebook made a post about climate change, and I thought, ‘well, just as an experiment I'm going to go in there and offer a different opinion’. I wasn't being dishonest; it was an opinion that I was in line with, and I offered some scientific validation to back it up, but the responses I got were overwhelmingly personal attacks. I then went back and commented and asked somebody who'd personally attacked me, 'did you actually read what I posted? Did you go and look at that video? Or did you read that scientific paper?' and the answer was, 'no, I don't need to read it.'

**Ross:** Obviously, you were just wrong.

**Steve:** Exactly, yes, and it got to the point where my final comment to somebody who was personally attacking me was, 'thanks for the personal attack', and that actually finished the dialog, which I was quite happy about, so I left it there. But I'd made a point of pointing out that people weren't actually having a discussion about climate change here; they were just attacking each other. It was, 'I'm right. No, you're wrong, I'm right.' That's basically what the discussion was and that seems to be becoming more common, particularly on these social media platforms where people can get away with anything, really.

**Nyck:** Or also even without social media. I'm thinking now of the current case of the very right-wing Murdoch commentator, Andrew Bolt, and his comments about Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu* book, which has become quite culturally impactful and probably is helping to transmute some of the old attitudes towards Indigenous Australians. Andrew Bolt has essentially been criticising and attacking the veracity of Pascoe's research, even though Pascoe's research comes, and can be identified quite clearly, from the diaries of various explorers of the time—white men who went out and found these groups of Indigenous people doing things they shouldn't be doing: actually doing agriculture, aquaculture, having various types of building, some of them quite tall, obviously having some sort of sense of community in a way that we might more readily acknowledge and see. Bolt has been attacking all of this as is not true or exaggerated and so forth. But he didn't read the book. Firstly he said, 'I have read the book'—the same sort of thing—and secondly, he distorted the language as much as he possibly could to edge the discourse away from some sort of acknowledgment that Indigenous people actually had power, intelligence; they weren't the ignoble savages that the British called them here. It wasn't *terra nullius* at all. So it's that movement of the discourse by simply distorting and not actually knowing the truth is extraordinary, and it's happening everywhere.

**Steve:** Yes. In Clare Graves's work, he pointed to shadow aspects in the particular layers of consciousness, and it's generally accepted by those who study his work that the shadow aspects relate to the layer that is three steps down in the model. So, for Layer 6, the shadow element is Layer 3—egocentric behaviour—which often plays out as power games, power plays and just trying to establish that I'm more powerful than you in a very raw way. You can see that dynamic playing itself out, that shadow aspect in those sorts of discussions where there's no substance to the knowledge being discussed; there's no actual argument going on except that 'I'm more powerful than you, I know more than you, you don't know much, and that's it.' Pretty basic stuff.

**Nyck:** There's a lot of different elements here, and don't forget the texts folks.

We have another text here. I'll come to that issue before we go further, and another one just popped in, too. We'll come to those shortly. Thanks for texting. We will pretty well cover every text that comes in if we can.

**Steve:** As long as we agree with them.

**Nyck:** Yes, that's why we have Ross here, because Ross is our diviner and cut-and-slice chap who knows how we can distort the truth best.

**Ross:** I don't know what you're talking about.

**Nyck:** There you go, see? Plausible denial, right there.

Let's take a break here on BayFM.

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