



Interview with Monica Bourgeau Part 2

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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, hosted by Nyck Jeans and well-known international futurist, Steve McDonald. Future Sense provides a fresh, deep analysis of global trends and emergent 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.

Steve: Monica, we'll continue just having a look through the book and talking about some of the content. One of the really important things that you've covered in the book is self-work. So it's not just about how to understand change and change other people. The work really has to start at home, and I think that's wonderful that you've devoted a chapter to that.

Monica: I just find that is so important because for a lot of people who are change makers and who are trying to make a positive difference in the world, it can be really easy to try to help others at the expense of our own self-care. And so that chapter is really a reminder about the importance of, you know, the whole thing when you get on the airline, they tell you to use your own oxygen before you try to help others. And so I find that that's really, really important.

With myself, being a highly sensitive person, really empathic, if I try to do too much or try to help too much with others, it can be really draining to me. And so really taking the time to do those self-care practices. I'm actually pretty regimented about that because I find that when I am, I'm able to come to situations with my highest energy and my higher self and can really do the best work and make the greatest difference when I'm at that point. So I think that's really important.

And then I think this whole transition period too, you know, more and more people are moving into Green, which is when our empathy really starts to grow and expand. I don't know about Australia, but here in Portland, we have lots of groups for empaths because we have a lot of people that are starting to just really feel things a lot more deeply than they have in the past, and trying to understand that and cope with that and still try to make a difference. So I think it's a good process to learn how to manage those feelings and do that personal growth. Plus, I don't think we can really help others until we spend that time really developing ourselves, and so I think it's an ongoing process and just really important to focus some energy there.

Nyck: At that particular chapter, when you started—I think it's about roughly halfway through the book, maybe a little bit earlier—it came at a moment for me, which is a bit shocking, because it really put me back in: 'Oh, my goodness, I really do not look after myself enough, I do not self-care enough. I'm not doing enough of the work I need to do.' A whole bunch judgment came in, but it was kind of relevant and actually quite true, so it was really good for me to dive into that chapter. And it came at a certain time, of course—very timely in my particular life, as things do—to challenge me in a very positive way. So thanks for that.

Monica: I'm glad.

Steve: Yes, it's such an important issue, and not just for change agents, but for everybody. Because of the conditions that we're facing, the life conditions around the world at the moment, having some kind of integrated practice is really becoming essential. It needs to be not just meditation, but it needs to be, ideally, physical—so a mind-body-spirit kind of practice that hits on all those bases.

I'm finding that grounding is a really, really critical thing. In my own case, if I feel like I'm starting to get a bit out of tune, then it's usually that I need to attend to my grounding. For me, that comes through my Qi Gong and Kung Fu practice. You achieve the same things through other disciplines, of course, like yoga, etc., but the importance is that it needs to involve moving the body and it needs to involve connecting with the earth.

A huge part of this transition into Green - or Layer 6 Postmodern-Relativistic as Graves called it—is about reconnecting with nature, and I think that's something that's really in our face here in Australia at the moment as we're looking at the force of nature and being confronted by the forces of nature and realising that we are actually helpless to stop it in most cases. It's much, much bigger than we are, so that's really forcing us to start to think about our relationship with nature, how we live in and around nature, and how we learn more about managing the nature that we live within as well in terms of reducing fire risk and those sorts of things. But just as a very general theme—both individually and collectively—is to ground yourself, be grounded, reconnect with nature, understand nature, work with nature rather than fighting against it.

One of the things that's really standing out for me at the moment around the climate debate is there seems to be this very simplistic idea that all we need to do is convince our politicians to change their policy and the climate will change, which is the most ridiculous thing, and I think the fire crisis in Australia will help people remember that nature is much bigger than us, it's much more powerful than us, and we need to really focus on adapting to it, living in harmony with it, rather than trying to force our politicians to make a decision which probably isn't going to do anything anyway.

Nyck: We've had here a history, Monica, as you'd be fairly familiar with, of 200+ years of subjugation of the Indigenous peoples. But more than that, too, is the attempt to tame the

land, so to speak, in the European fashion—the way we've used agriculture, the way we've used water, the way we've abused soil and so on and so on. I think all of those chickens are coming home to roost right now, and we're faced, as Steve is saying, with the fact that we are fairly small in the face of these kind of forces, and we need to get a little bit of hubris about who we are as human beings with regard to nature on this planet at this time.

Steve: Just while we're on that topic, too, the other thing that standing out is the reduced confidence in government. And we've spoken on the show many times about a turning point that happened in late 2015—which Martin Armstrong's computer algorithm pointed out—which marked a downturn in confidence in government. Since then, we've seen a fairly strong decline in the capacity of our governments to meet community needs, and that is quite likely to continue. It's part of a decentralisation trend where the power and the capacity to make change is really being dispersed to communities. Of course, you've spoken about building resilient communities in the book, Monica.

Monica: Yeah, I definitely view that as a major solution, is building our own communities, and that's also going to help with the isolation and the feelings of loneliness and all of those sorts of things that we're experiencing in our society as well right now, is creating that sense of community. Plus, as you've referenced many times, that's really going to help us create local food systems and all of the things that we're going to need to be able to do in the future. And I was going to say I agree completely with what you were talking about, of the importance of grounding and reconnecting with nature right now too, because with all of the polarisation that we are seeing, more people and more situations than ever are really going to push our buttons. So really, the best way to deal with that is to keep ourselves really grounded, because otherwise we're always going to be thrown off or getting in arguments with people and all of those sorts of things. So when we really focus on our own grounding and staying centred, we don't get thrown off our path as easily either.

Steve: Absolutely. If we look to Indigenous healing traditions, we'll usually find that the earth is seen as a gigantic sponge that can soak up anything that we need to shed from a healing point of view, and I think that's really important. I'm talking about an energetic process here, that reconnecting with the earth and grounding ourselves also can heal us quite significantly. Many healers use that technique when they're healing other people, to disperse any excess or unwanted energy into the earth.

Monica: Yes, just so important.

Steve: It is.

Nyck: I want to just go back briefly, because one things I'm ... not stuck on, but I'm interested in ... is clarifying as much as possible the movement between layers. You say at a certain point in the book, around about page 67, about this movement between layers, which as we know, in Clare W. Graves's work, is based on the existing life conditions. And you say here: "the best layer for a person or society is the one that is most aligned with existing life conditions. When a layer stops functioning in the current life conditions, a move to the next layer is beneficial. You can't simply will yourself to the next layer or force other people to change"—very key point. "On the other hand, it is beneficial to create positive life conditions in a community to support the healthy development of individuals and society as a whole." So we're talking a bit about that, about that self-care and reigniting the resilient local community. So can you expand a bit more on that change that we're on? Because I think a lot of people are definitely challenged by how that looks. 'What does it look like? I know there's something different that must be done, but I've got one foot in one place and one foot in the other.'

Monica: Well, that was definitely an epiphany for me as well in writing the book, is that you can't make people change and you also can't make yourself change, because as we know from studying Graves's model, moving between the layers is really the result of changing life conditions. I actually get that question a lot when I do speak about *The Change Code*: 'How do I move myself to the next layer?' or how do they move other people to the next layers? And it's really not as easy as all of that. People really have to experience the changing life conditions and that can be hard, especially if you're wanting to create change, is to move people along a little bit more quickly or even move yourself along a little bit more quickly. That was a learning point for me, is that you really can't do that; you can't make people change. In fact, that was something Dr. Beck says—that Clare W. Grave's used to say all the time—that you can't make people change. And so I think that can be hard to grasp sometimes.

Nyck: Well, I think in this polarised world, that's exactly what we need to challenge in many people—and people need to challenge in themselves—is this immediate sort of default to that negative way of looking at each other.

Monica: Absolutely. When I was looking at the problems of polarisation and how Graves's work applied to that, I spent a lot of time thinking about, 'OK, what can we practically do?', because we can't make people change, we can't make ourselves change. The solution that I came up with, that I talk about in the book, is the whole creating community piece that we talked about a little bit. But also things that we can do are creating systems for that next layer that help people have a place to go when they start to make that transition, because there are a lot of people moving between the Orange and Green layers right now and helping to set up those new systems so that they have a place to go. So I really view that as a major role for agents of change—for those people that are out there who are pathfinders and visionaries—is to help create those new systems that we need right now to honour the earth and honour the planet and have a place for people to go.

Steve: Absolutely. I'd like to also add that the depth of Graves's material is considerable and the more we understand his research, the more we can actually read where people are at when we encounter people, and if we wonder whether they need to change, or we can see that they need to change and maybe they don't realise it themselves.

A couple of things that we can start to read with education on Graves's model, and with development of our own sensory perception, are whether somebody is 'open', 'arrested' or 'closed' in Graves's language. So someone who's open to change is kind of like an open system where information is free to flow in and out of the system and there's no obstacle. Someone who's arrested—that's a temporary state according to Graves's, where we start to build barriers around ourselves and where we're maybe not open to any information, so we might offer somebody information about changing life conditions and they just don't seem to hear it. That's a signal that they're either arrested or perhaps even closed. Graves suggested that closed was a permanent state where somebody is going to continue to try and use the same solutions to solve their problems, probably for the rest of their life, because they've lost that capacity to be open and to absorb new information and integrate it.

So I think that's a really important starting point for understanding how to work with other people, and perhaps a system with the change process. The other aspect is understanding, by knowing the different layers, Graves documented how very, very subtle changes occur when somebody just starts to exit a layer or a value system. He describes the nodal state of the value system, all the characteristics that are clearly outlined in the book, and then just subtly how those will start to change, and if you can pick up on those signals, then you can really know not just that somebody is open to and probably going through a change process, but you know where they're headed and you know what's next. And then the general understanding is that you can work around about half a step ahead of where they are, to feed them with material that's going to look attractive and that they're going to want to integrate and that can help them move more quickly along that change path also.

So back to the book, and you talk about finding common ground and reclaiming social media. Now, that's a really interesting topic. Tell us about that.

Monica: Social media is an interesting thing. I think that we have to think about the purpose of social media, because it is just about brief social encounters. It's really like standing next to someone in the line at the grocery store, and so it's kind of hard to have a really in-depth political conversation with someone in that context. To try to have those really in-depth conversations on social media creates a lot of confusion and frustration, and sometimes they don't always go well. I think that it's important to think about with regard to polarisation in social media and to consider that maybe that wasn't its intended use. So looking for ways to use social media in a more positive way rather than creating arguments online and that sort of thing, is, I think, really helpful.

Steve: You know, one of the biggest challenges that we face is this rejection of other value systems, and that's just built into human nature right up to and including Layer 6. It's only when we transition into this Momentous Leap across to the Second Tier and Level 7 that we drop that rejection process, and that's not a logical activity. It's just a deep change that happens to our whole system, our whole operating system. So unfortunately, it's something that for the moment is going to continue. And of course, social media and the way that the algorithms work often lumps people into little bubbles where they're going to keep encountering people who have the same viewpoint, and then when someone does pop up in that bubble, they get hammered from all directions, which is pretty difficult.

Nyck: I wonder just on that, whether social media in that context that you're talking about now actually hampers the change of value system? It actually seems to slow things down. If you're talking in an echo chamber continually to those who agree with you, there's not much room for movement in that.

Steve: There isn't, but inevitably the bubbles sooner or later burst and people are faced with the outer reality. I think, if anything, it's increasing the evolutionary tension. So anything that builds tension is essentially fuelling the change process, as difficult as it may seem.

Nyck: Yeah, very good.

Was there anything else, Monica, before we finish up?

Monica: I might just mention that if there are people out there that identify as agents for change, that I actually have a *Change Code* page on Facebook that you can go to. The goal is to connect other agents of change from around the world so that we can really magnify and support each other in a Facebook group, so I'd like to mention that that's there.

Nyck: Yes, so *The Change Code* is the Facebook group, and the website for the book is www.thechange.net. You're also on Instagram and Twitter: Monica Bourgeau.

Steve: So, we're in the last stages of our discussion with you today, so what should we cover in the last few minutes, Monica? From your perspective, what's important that we haven't spoken about yet?

Monica: We can talk about the last chapter. It's really about making a commitment to creating positive change and becoming an agent for change. In the book, I talk about that. It doesn't have to be a big commitment because I know a lot of us already have really busy lives with full-time jobs and maybe families to raise and all of those sorts of things. But I

think it's important to realise that no matter where you are in your path of life, that there is something that you can do. It may just be making a small commitment of being kind to people and just doing your part to make the world a better place, or a medium commitment like starting to volunteer or create more community, those sorts of things. Maybe you're in a place where you can create a really large commitment by, you know, starting and leading a non-profit or helping with the political process, something like that. But I think it's important to realise that we all have the ability to do something.

Another important point to make is that our level of commitment and our effort is also not necessarily directly related to the impact. Sometimes we don't always know. We might just be kind to someone and talk to someone in the line at the grocery store, and that could have really made that person's day and set up this whole chain of positive reactions. So I think it's important to realise that even those small actions, just making a commitment to do something, can actually make a really big impact, and kind of letting go that you need to do all of these big, major things to help make a difference in the world. It really starts with just the little things, consistently.

Steve: That's so true. I saw a post on Instagram just recently talking about people whose first instinct is to smile when their eyes meet someone else's eyes in the street. I thought, 'isn't that a beautiful thing?' I think that's something to aspire to, because how often do we meet eyes with somebody in the street or at a meeting or something like that, and the first response is, 'what does that person want?' or, 'what's going on there?', rather than just to smile at them.

Nyck: And it's always easier to do it when you're with somebody else, to smile. That's an interesting point about that. For me, certainly that's true. I'm a very open, outgoing person generally, but I notice myself being retarded, so to speak, when I'm by myself often, and not been able to meet—I can meet people's eyes easily enough, but to actually smile that way and welcome them—it's almost surprising when someone does that, and yet on the other hand, when I'm with someone else or other people, then it's much easier for me to be more outwardly open. Interesting that. And I guess it just goes to show, you know, we do need each other and we do need to support each other. We do need community, of course.

Steve: So true, and if you've been on the receiving end of that, you know, just meeting someone's eyes accidentally in the street and then getting a smile from them, how wonderful is it? It's such a beautiful thing.

Nyck: Now, since we're talking about the end of the book, Monica, I do like *The Change Code Oath* that you have near the end, just before the acknowledgements, in fact. I'll just read those out because I think for some people, it's, 'Well, how do you get to be an agent of change?' but actually, it's quite straightforward, as you're saying, small things, small moments.

You say: "1. I commit to being an agent for change; 2. I do my inner work first"—we talked about that; "I encourage positive expression of every layer of the change code"—maybe we'll come back to that little bit; "I find common ground and understand the group I am trying to help; I build resilient community, connection and opportunities for communication; I engage others in something bigger than all of us; and I develop new systems to solve more complex problems." Yeah, that sounds quite straightforward to me. I can sign that!

Steve: Good! Get a witness!

Nyck: The 'encouraging positive expression of every layer', I know it's a whole other topic to go into, but maybe just speak to that briefly because I think that's an area which is perhaps quite difficult for a number of people to approach, encouraging the positive expression of every layer of the Change Code, maybe just by an example or two.

Monica: One example that comes to mind is developing some ethics around some of the technology pieces. We have a lot happening right now in that area of technology. You guys cover a lot of those here in the podcast, but maybe developing some standards of ethics or those types of things to help create that positive expression of technology, because even though we're moving away from that Orange layer, that is still really important and it's going to be really necessary for us to solve some of these big challenging problems as to how that technology is finding ways to create those boundaries to help encourage the positive expressions.

Nyck: Fantastic. I do love the many examples that you do give in the book of small community organisations. I love this one: *Make America Dinner Again*.

Monica: Yes, I love that one! They encourage people from different political parties to get together and have a positive conversation over dinner. You know, who couldn't use more of that?

Nyck: Fantastic.

Steve: And something I thought I'd just mention, too—as we said before that we'd talk a little about the Second Tier application of the model—for most people, given the life conditions that exist on the planet at the moment, applying the model from a Second Tier perspective is going to be an aspirational thing, and I just thought I'd talk very quickly about some of the characteristics of the Second Tier approach, which we can work on within ourselves and develop.

The first one is moving beyond fear as a motivator. I think that's not such an easy thing at the moment, particularly when we're facing the kind of crises that we're facing here in Australia at the moment. But we know science tells us that when we're fearful, it shuts down the rational part of our mind, and so we're not so good at solving complex problems when we're being overcome by fear. It takes quite a lot of practice and personal development to move beyond that, but it's something that we can start to notice a little more—start to notice those fear reactions—and even when they're very, very small, that's probably the easiest time to work with them. And notice, 'what is it that triggered that fear in me and why am I fearing that?' So that's a whole line of development that you can carry with you and work on.

The second thing that's characteristic of the Second Tier approach is not rejecting values that are different to yours. Again, this is quite a challenge depending on where you're at in your own personal development, but as with the fear, you can just notice those little rejection feelings that come up, like when somebody else makes a statement or they're doing something that maybe you don't agree with and feel inside yourself for that reaction that might come with that, and just question. Also, at the same time, hold in your mind the understanding that this person wouldn't be doing what they're doing—which you're having an issue with—unless that was in line with their values. So what you're facing is somebody else who is being true to their own values. It's just that they're not the same values as yours, and in investigating that, sitting with that, meditating on that, is a pathway to developing a Second Tier capacity.

The third thing is the capacity to hold a paradox without getting too confused or having your mind pop; so the possibility that two things which seem to be polar opposites are actually both valid simultaneously. That kind of follows on from the previous thing about understanding somebody operating from a different value set. So, you know, if you live in a black and white world of right or wrong, then your values are right. Anyone who has different values are wrong. But if you can just open yourself to the possibility that, okay, people are 99% mostly good and they operate according to their own values and are true to their own values, and sometimes they're different from mine and they might look like they're wrong from my old perspective. But if you can come to that point of understanding that, okay, there are different value sets, that person is probably being true to themselves, their values are just different than mine, then that is actually part of that process of holding a paradox and learning how to work with paradox.

Monica: That's such a good point. I like the paradox piece, especially realising that two opposite things can be true at the same time. Like in the United States, immigration is a really big issue right now and you can care about immigration, but also care about immigrants at the same time and how they might be treated and the conditions that they face. So being able to kind of merge those two things and come up with new solutions, I think, is going to be really key to the future. As you said, looking at other colours and being able to look for elements of truth, even in someone's opinion that you don't agree with and being able to start to merge those with your perspective as well.

Steve: Thanks so much, Monica. It's been really, really wonderful to talk to you today. We could keep talking, I'm sure, but we're just about out of time with our show here, so we need to wrap it. I'm sure this won't be the last time that we have you on air, so we look forward to having you back again in the future. Thank you so much for this book and all of the work that you've put into it, and we wish you all the very best on our behalf and on behalf of all of our listeners for the promotion of the book, and all of the different events—launch events and social events—that you have coming up to progress that. We'll certainly keep in touch. Thank you.

Nyck: Thank you, Monica. And of course, the book is available through most of the outlets: Amazon and other and selected bookshops around. I don't know if you can get it in the bookshops yet in Australia, but you'll certainly be able to order it online: *The Change Code* by Monica Bourgeau.

Thanks, Monica, very much for joining us.

Monica: Thank you both.

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