



Loneliness and our Need to Reconnect

Recorded on 25th November, 2019, in Byron Bay, Australia.

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 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? Political 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: There's a bit going on in the news now. Having just spoken about the pendulum dynamic between 'me' and 'we'—and of course, the extreme of one leads to the other—as we reach the end of this me-oriented era, it's creating an incredible amount of loneliness. This is a factor of the social systems in the way that we've designed them during the me-oriented era, and also the kind of technology that we've designed. Ironically, any of these systems, when they first emerge as a new way of being human, solve the most immediate problems that we're facing, but then over time, they eventually create new problems as a result of the pendulum swinging too far in one direction. So the social systems and the technology that we've created during the Scientific-Industrial era has created a world of separation of individuality, and hence is leading to loneliness, which is one of the transition factors. And it's in the news.

Nyck: It's in the news; it's everywhere in the news actually, at the moment. There's quite a lot of articles from the ABC about this, and particularly the *Australia Talks* study, which has been done recently. Did you fill it out?

Steve: I didn't fill it out.

Nyck: I did fill it out, and our listeners might have come across that. As I said to you off air before, as an ABC survey, clearly it's probably weighted towards ABC listeners because that's who's going to listen and that's who's going to do it. So it's probably not indicative, totally, of Australia's situation, but it does articulate a lot of this social isolation we're talking about here: loneliness and mental health issues, generally speaking, in the Australian population.

Steve: That's right, and for people who might be listening internationally and aren't familiar with our ABC here, it's actually a government funded news agency which enjoys an interesting amount of independence and has historically—although that's coming under more and more pressure these days—tended to be rather edgy and particularly leaning towards that communal perspective, which has caused it to be criticised over time as being left wing and those sorts of things, politically. But what we are seeing is that I think it's attracting a progressive audience at the moment, and so this survey is probably a good sample of that progressive element of the Australian society.

Nyck: Of the 54,000 Australians surveyed by the ABC, or who answered the survey, 44 per cent of 18 to 24 year-olds rated their mental health as 'average' or 'poor'. That's a pretty extraordinary statistic, isn't it?

Steve: It is, and again, it's a result of growing up in a world that's very, very complex. The complexity is calling for a more capable operating system, so the natural adaptation of human consciousness is causing these young people to move quite quickly through the value systems; quicker than you and I would have when we were growing up, Nyck, simply because—it's kind of like water finds its own level. So wherever the complexity level is in society we'll naturally adapt to meet that.

When we were younger than we are now and growing up, society was less complex and we didn't need to move through the value systems as quickly or through as many value systems. But kids these days are, so they're moving quite quickly and that there is a really interesting discussion. There's quite a rabbit hole that you could go down there, because what it means is that for older generations now, we spent more time growing through these earlier value systems—so more time in our wild teenage kind of behaviour; more time in the stable Layer 4 where we found a cause and were being more disciplined to pursue our aims in life and those sorts of things. Kids these days are moving more quickly through these.

Nyck: That's a really interesting way of looking at it. So what you're saying there, too, is as they grow up, assuming that that young people find a way through the mental health issues, they will have a lot more capacity available to them as they grow older because they've already dealt with some of these issues, and that capacity will enable them to find a way to integrate all that we're talking about here into the new paradigm as it emerges.

Steve: Yes, and it's hard for older generations to look at this due to the fact that they see the kids missing out on some of the discipline. They recognise discipline as a good thing because we had to spend more time growing through that fourth value system—it was still stronger and more prevalent in society than it is now—and when older generations look at the young kids, they see that they're not needing to be disciplined and they see that as something that's missing from their education; in their growth and adaptation. But it's simply

because they're having to move through to more capable value sets which operate in different ways.

Nyck: I guess social media has an impact here because it is very hard to see a disciplinarian structure within social media. It's exactly the opposite, really. That's the idea of it. It hasn't turned out to be exactly that, but as we move forward ...

Steve: It's a platform for the expression of these and more evolved values, however it's a platform that's been designed by the previous value system so it's inherently disconnecting because it gives you the impression that you're connecting with other people but you're actually not. You're communicating with them remotely, but there's an absolute absence of connection and that absence of connection is, of course, key to the feeling of loneliness and the mental health issues surrounding that.

I think this is something that mainstream society, and particularly our health systems, haven't quite recognised yet, is that our technology is actually causing these mental health issues because of its disconnective nature. Interestingly, when I was in Zurich last year giving a talk, there was a presentation there by a Swiss organisation called *The Reconnect Foundation*—I'll tweet their website after the show (www.reconnect-foundation.org) and they have clearly recognised this absence of connection as being the root cause of mental illness. One of their slogans is "reconnecting to self, others and nature", particularly to address depression.

Nyck: Yes. Just on what we're talking about here—social isolation and loneliness—there is a report from the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*, which is an Australian government institution. This is only from September this year so it's very current, and it talks about social media here: "The relationship between social media and loneliness is complex and depends on the individual and their life circumstances" (<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/social-isolation-and-loneliness>) That's important; simple, but important. "Users of social media experiencing loneliness have reported increased use of social media to communicate with family and friends, while at the same time reporting fewer online friends and being less likely to consider these as real friends than users who are not experiencing loneliness. Others have argued that online socialising can increase levels of loneliness as these relationships are generally fragile and shallow. The number of online friends appears less important than the quality and strength of the relationships."

Steve: I think that's very good, and hopefully people who are working in mental health across society are starting to wake up to this factor and include it in their considerations.

Nyck: Yes.

Steve: Regarding that article that you were just quoting, an article referring to it points out that "loneliness is a killer", and I'm going to quote from that article here: "An influential meta-analysis which collated and analyzed the results of nearly 150 studies, underlines the impact on health of loneliness or more specifically, lack of social integration and social support. It found loneliness increases the risk of death more than such things as poor diet, obesity, alcohol consumption and lack of exercise and that it is as harmful as heavy smoking" (<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-11-loneliness-social-cancer-bit-alarming.html>).

Nyck: It's fascinating, too. We're talking about it right now but I think this is actually arising in the general consciousness—in the zeitgeist—this notion of loneliness and disconnection. That's probably even a better word to use in terms of the way we're talking, isn't it? That sense and that feeling that we're looking for connection. Social media is a reason to try and fulfill that, but has certainly left a lot of people almost worse off than better off. So there's all those forces going on.

Steve: It has, and it's just another aspect of the evolutionary tension. We talk about this elastic band idea of like pulling an elastic band back on a slingshot to give ourselves momentum in the opposite direction. This individuality that's causing us to feel lonely is part of that tension, which is going to drive us to move back towards recreating community again.

Nyck: Yes.

By the way, folks, if any of the things we talk about today disturb you in some way, you should know the numbers to call. I'll just give you the *Lifeline* [Australia] number: 131114. There are many others numbers like *Kids Helpline*, *Men's Line Australia*, *Suicide Callback Service*, *Beyond Blue* and *Headspace*. All of those numbers are quite easy to find, but *Lifeline* is a good first port of call, as we know these things can be triggering to talk about at times.

Steve: That's right, and if you'd like to give Nyck a call, his number is ... oh no, I'd better not give that out. You're far better calling those other people anyway. They know what they're doing.

Nyck: Thank you. Lovely. I'll see you afterwards.

We have one other quick text in here, which is kind of interesting, too, from when we were talking about a Council of Elders earlier (Editor's note: this relates to a discussion in the first part of the radio show from the same date, entitled *Yin-Yang Dynamics in Value Systems*): "From my own divorce hell and others I know of, it's clear a community council of wise elders is needed. Such a shame we don't have one already. So much needless suffering because of this lack, perhaps Future Sense can help Byron create one and lead the way." Aha! So here's my phone number ... no.

Steve: We would love to do that, actually.

Nyck: We would love to do that, seriously.

Steve: We're waiting for a call.

Nyck: We're waiting for a call, and yes, stay tuned to this very channel for information about these very things, hopefully in the not too distant future.

Steve: Or we may just start a grassroots movement.

Nyck: We might, indeed.

Steve: Maybe we already have.

Nyck: We have got a couple of calls coming in. Thanks for that. Mohani, who is one of our Italian show presenters at times, said, "Look, it's okay to go to a service like Lifeline, of course, but what they do in Italy is reach out and talk to a friend before they do that as a preventative measure." That's what they do in Italy and that's a good point, because obviously a lot of what we're talking about is certainly, at least aspects of it, culturally situated.

Steve: Absolutely, yes. There are regions on the planet that tend to have what seems to be a natural bias, at this time in history anyway, towards either communal or individual value systems, and certainly in the Italian community there is a very, very strong communal dynamic there. This is another way at this time in history, that we can look to what's actually happening around us in different communities in different places and get answers to the problems that we're facing.

Nyck: It's a two-sided thing, even this, I'm thinking now, because in a strong family-oriented society or culture, that's a very great resource. But also there's probably often a tendency then to isolate from other members of society in other countries; other minorities and other expressions of culture. So it's a two-sided thing.

Steve: It is, and it's interesting just to reflect on that official message that you read out, which I guess is part of the radio station's standard procedure at the moment, and how individually-oriented it is. It's really come out of the Scientific-Industrial mind where, if you've got a problem, you go and see a specialist. The solution is not community, the solution is an individual thing. Our health care and medicine in general—and really, right across society—if you look at every profession in the Scientific-Industrial era, it's been about narrowing the focus and specialising and deepening the knowledge within a narrow area, and that is a very individuating dynamic. So, if you've got a problem, then you go and see one of these specialists who knows everything there is to know about that narrow little area.

Nyck: Although I would contest that slightly in terms of things like *Lifeline*, because most of those people are volunteers—or they are all volunteers—and they are trained in the basic structure of how to talk to people, but really what people are seeking is connection when they call up; they're seeking community right there and that's what they're offered, somewhat.

Steve: That's right. I'm not criticising the services and I know that they provide an excellent service, but I'm just looking at the overall design of the social solution here. Rather than actually connecting with the people around you, it's: 'go and talk to a specialist', which is an old school angle, really.

Nyck: In this *Australia Talks* project that we've mentioned by the ABC—the survey that you may have done; 54,000 people around Australia did it—they do talk about the groups they found who do feel lonely. The most striking finding from the *Australia Talks* national survey is simply how pervasive loneliness is in Australia today. Indeed, only half—54 per cent—of participants reported 'rarely' or 'never' feeling lonely, so 46 per cent said 'often' or 'sometimes'. The survey also finds loneliness is a particular challenge for certain sections of the community, and four of those stand out. The first one's an obvious one: young people, who we've already looked at today.

Steve: Yes, and it's not just our social media technology which is driving this, either. It's older technologies like radio, for example, and television, which have you sitting in a room listening to an electrical device for entertainment rather than interacting with other people.

Nyck: An interesting statistic on radio that I read recently is that most people now listen to radio by themselves, usually in the car. You may have other people in the car too, but often it's by yourself, whereas in the 'olden days', the old days of the wireless, people would sit around the wireless and it would be an event: to tune into the seven o'clock news or eight o'clock radio play or whatever it might be. It was a communal activity, even though you were focused on the media.

Steve: Yes, I do remember earlier this year coming across a news article from back in the days when wireless was just coming out. Somebody had written an article about it and how this technology is going to ruin the kids.

Nyck: Prescient.

Steve: It made me laugh.

Nyck: So young people are obviously the first batch of people who are identified in this survey as been particularly subject to feelings of loneliness. Among people aged 18 to 24, only a third 'rarely' or 'never' feel lonely, more than a quarter said that they felt lonely 'frequently' or 'always'—that's a quarter!—and this contrasts sharply with the situation for older people, as I already mentioned earlier in the show today. That image that a lonely person is typically someone of advanced years suggests that we do need to update our data. That's not withstanding, of course, the *Royal Commission into Aged Care*, which is another bloody thing too, just to mention that there.

Steve: Yes.

You were talking about the different groups who have reported feeling lonely. The first was young people and the second, inner-city dwellers, which is interesting. It may be, I mean, gosh, that the whole structure of our society and the way that we've structured cities and those sorts of things—it's all come from this individually-oriented mindset. *One Nation* voters is an interesting one, and for those of you who are listening to the podcast somewhere else in the world, *One Nation* is a political party here in Australia that typically expresses very, very simplistic values; mostly individually-oriented values, which I would associate with Layer 3—that red teenage-like rebellious, 'I'll do whatever I want to do and I'll say what I want to say' kind of messages.

Nyck: But based in a conservative, if you will, right-wing politics way, and yet a bit different to that, too.

Steve: It's regressive and it's very much about going back to the way things used to be. I drove past a billboard—I think I even mentioned it on air—with Pauline Hanson, the leader of the party on it. It had a photo of her face and a slogan that said, 'I say what you'd like to say but are too scared to say it', that kind of thing. So I'm not surprised that loneliness is reported by those folks because it is generally an individually-oriented perspective of wanting to satisfy yourself.

Nyck: And probably that statement on that billboard, for her and for those people who follow her, is actually very accurate.

Steve: Well, it is, of course. Of course it's accurate.

Nyck: So it resonates.

Steve: And then the fourth category that they mentioned in this article was people on low incomes. I guess that is related to the fact that it costs money to do things in modern society, and again, this is the way that we've structured our social systems. If you don't have the money, then it's hard to get out and socialise, perhaps.

Nyck: It does look to some solutions and we are going to look at a few of those in the last half hour or so.

Just to finish the article regarding that, though: "For us [the surveyed people], a large part of the answer lies in efforts to rebuild group-based social connections", which is exactly what we've been talking about here in terms of the emerging Green or sixth layer: "those social connections that are eroded by the tyrannies of modern life", which is the previous and dominant paradigm right now, the Orange layer [Layer 5]. "This is a world where all types of community—families, neighbourhoods, churches, political parties, trade unions and even stable work groups—are constantly under threat. So let's get talking", as they say in this article. That's interesting: those older types of communities are breaking down.

Steve: Yes, it speaks to the general need for us to rebuild local community and rebuild it in a way that makes it very resilient to all of the changes that are going to be coming over the next decade or two. It's not just about loneliness and the physical interaction of community, but it's about also sharing local resources; it's about being resource-full and locally resilient, so that when these systems that have been developed, designed and constructed by the old paradigm progress further into failure—and they're already failing to some extent—then we can fall back on our local community and local resources in hard times. There's a lot of evidence mounting now that we are going to face many, many different challenges, including things like potential food shortages, energy supply disruptions, and those sorts of things over the next 10 to 15 years.

Nyck: I think there's been a report just the last couple of days about the corn harvest in the US this year.

Steve: That's right, and we've been talking about that on previous shows from the extreme weather over last winter in North America; the extreme cold and extreme wet, which

shortened the cropping season there and also delayed planting in the present summer, which is just finishing now and ended up being a short summer, so there's been a shorter growing season. Now, already, even though it's officially not quite summertime yet, they're getting record snowfalls and disruptions to agriculture in North America once again, and similar things have been happening in Europe and Russia to a different extent. This is likely to continue, looking at the long term patterns, and as we get one difficult cropping season after another, then it's going to eventually mount into quite significant food shortages, we expect. And it's not just us; there are scientists who are studying this who are saying the same thing.

Nyck: Yes, the corn situation: "The most delayed US corn harvest on record is resulting in chaos for traditional commodity trade routes." That's interesting there, even just that bit. "Corn usually is harvested in the Midwest before it is sent south to be exported, but because farmers in the east hurt by a springtime deluge are holding back on supplies in hopes of higher prices, the commodities price has been pushed higher than the futures market in the east, while it remains lower than the futures market in the west." If you understand economics, there you go. "It's a phenomenon known as basis arbitrage." So all of these systems are under stress or breaking or compromised here and there. Sometimes they work and sometimes they fall apart, clearly (<https://finanz.dk/delayed-u-s-corn-harvest-has-resulted-in-chaos-for-trade-routes/>).

Steve: That's right, and we're going through a whole-of-system change at the moment so it's not just human consciousness that's shifting. The change in human consciousness is simply an adaptive aspect of a much, much larger change, which in fact involves our whole solar system if you really want to step back and look at it from that perspective. It's the stresses; the evolutionary tension is showing up in different ways around the world, particularly as we've just mentioned in North America. It's been cold winters and a lot of water from the snowmelt at the end of winter and excess rainfall. Here in Australia, we're experiencing the opposite with drought, and that looks like it will actually get worse here, so it's not uniform around the world. It's showing up in different ways.

Nyck: Yes, that uncertainty across the board everywhere is, I think, really important. We can't easily—we probably can't at all—make a *carte blanche* generalisation about directions that we should go in on the planet, this way or that, to deal with some of these problems because they're going to express themselves in different ways, at different times, in different places.

Steve: And that speaks to the need to rebuild local communities and create local resistance based on your local conditions.

Nyck: Indeed.

Nyck: You're tuned to *Future Sense* here. Our podcasts can be found from most podcast platforms like iTunes and others, but also through our website www.future sense.it. It's just a one page website at the moment. It's going to be a bit more extensive fairly soon, but that's a portal to everything. Those edited podcasts come in two parts of about half an hour each with just the content; missing our sponsorship announcements and unfortunately, the music, which is generally quite good, I think.

We're talking about mental health, loneliness and so forth here on the planet.

Steve: That's right, and loneliness being a transition factor very much related to this value shift that's going on from an old individually-oriented paradigm into a new communally-oriented paradigm.

One of the really important aspects of that is captured in the research of Clare W. Graves, and I just want to read something from his research at the moment. It's about the central driver that is associated with this new value system that's emerging: the new Humanistic-Relativistic, network-centric value system that's emerging in an evolutionary dynamic to replace the old Scientific-Industrial, military, corporate way of being human. Clare Graves writes: "The need to belong, to affiliate oneself rather than go it alone, becomes central during this transition. This affiliative need, which is our third form of belonging need, now organizes our existence. As it does the adjustment of the organism to the environment process becomes dominant again and gives rise to a new theme for existence: Sacrifice some now so others can have too." So there, Graves is talking about the fact that we're moving from personal success being our central driver for everything in life, which has been the case with the old paradigm, to affiliation—in other words, deep human connection—now becoming our central driver, and because that need is becoming stronger, then you can see why loneliness is becoming such an important issue, even to the point of being life-threatening for people, because it is the central need that's developing in this new value system.

Nyck: Along those lines, I was thinking earlier today that because this is happening—because this richness is deepening, this complexity of our emotional response to life on Earth now—it's actually enabling the skills we need to navigate that very territory somehow because we actually have to now. Potentially most of us, or many of us, are able to actually do that, but there will be those who find it very difficult, of course.

Quite a lot of texts have come in. Thanks for this one: "Hi, guys. The beach is the best place to relieve loneliness. It's where the energies of the sky, the sea and the land meet. Beautiful place." I absolutely agree with that.

Someone else has written in, talking about us creating a bit of a Sunday a month to start helping to heal the problems between men and women in particular: "much cheaper than

lawyers". That's an idea, and we are actually moving towards something like that as we go forward.

Steve: We are, yes, and maybe it's a good time just to talk briefly about this.

We don't talk about this much on the show, but Nyck is working with me in an organisation that we created called the *Aadii Mesh Foundation*, and the active part of that is the Agency for Advanced Development of Integrative Intelligence (www.aadii.org). This is a non-profit organisation that we've created. It's a registered charity here in Australia, and basically this organisation has been created to support the global paradigm shift as best we can.

There are three aspects to it. It's been coming for a long time, but it's really only started to take shape and flower in the last year or so. It's being built off the work that I've done in Change Management over the years. The three different aspects of the Aadii Mesh Foundation and its agency, AADII, are firstly, human consciousness and technologies to accelerate human development—so technologies that help us move more quickly through these value systems to take us more quickly to a place of greater coping capacity on a large scale. The second aspect is an education and communication aspect called *Future Sense*, which you are listening to right now, and we have plans to expand that into a documentary series, working closely with our other team member who is the remarkable filmmaker, Mitch Schulz, currently in Texas but soon to be back here in Australia. Mitch is coming back here in January and we're going to start putting together this documentary series, which really is going to be about the stuff that we talk about on the radio show and podcast, but also going to places around the world where people are doing things according to the new paradigm in leading edge ways: looking at leading edge ways of being human, leading edge technology, those sorts of things. Then the third aspect of our activity through AADII is plans for a digital ecosystem: basically, a web-based platform which will be a place where people can go regardless of where they are around the world, to connect with other people who were actively building the new paradigm. Our plan is to use the latest trust-based, decentralised technology similar to what's being used for block chain—so encrypted, decentralised technology—to create this digital ecosystem. Of course, we need some funding to do that, so that's part of the plan is to get us some funding to help us build that digital ecosystem within the next year or two, we hope. So big things on the drawing board there and, of course, things happening already, and we're not just talking about this. We do have plans afoot.

Nyck: We do have plans afoot.

A couple of other texts. Melody's written in: "Many people are stating that our environmental problems are largely caused by overpopulation. Should we introduce a one or two child policy? What do you think?" It's a bit off topic, but I would say no, probably not, but maybe it's going to have to be necessary for a time. I don't know.

Steve: One of the things about fears related to the future is that when people become fearful about the future, those fears are built on what's happening now. If we went back to 1930 or 1880 or something and had a conversation about how we're going to feed seven billion people on the planet, people would have said you can't do it. They would have looked around at the farming technology and the supply technology back then, and they would have said 'it's impossible, you can't do it; we have to stop the population from getting to seven billion people at all costs', and of course, we're having the same conversations now. What we don't realise is that there are new technologies coming; there are new technologies already here that massively multiply our capacity to produce food, that massively reduce our ecological footprint on the planet. The technology is already here. We don't have to worry about overpopulation anytime soon.

Nyck: And of course, the great futurist, Buckminster Fuller, proved at one point quite a long time ago—I think the 70s, if not earlier—that we could feed the planet then anyway, with the technology of that time.

Steve: Of course, because he was a man way ahead of his time.

Nyck: He was.

Quickly, another text and I know we're running out of time here. This is kind of important: "Hi guys, love the show and more particularly, the paradigms of human evolution. Runs alongside Timothy Leary's eight circuits of the brain. I work at Lifeline as crisis support on the phones. The training models primarily focus on connection through listening and other tools, such as paraphrasing, reframing, summarising. I have found the model of a great tool for the support worker and the caller. As you guys said, connection is the key and that comes from feeling heard."

That's great. Thank you so much for sending that in. It's really important to understand that these are really, really good services and we don't want to sound like we're discouraging people from using them. If you need help, give them a call, please.

"Riding a motorcycle is also good for the soul", says Nicky. Thank you.

Steve: I agree.

Nyck: And that's exactly it. I mean, what you love, what your passion is, what turns you on is what's going to help to heal any sort of mental health issues that you may have, to understand what those things are; and if you haven't got one, maybe to discover some thing that you can find your skills with and find your passion with and do that; do it more often.

Steve: Exactly, and we really are reorienting ourselves as a species on the quality of the human experience. There's no doubt about that. We're focusing back in on, 'okay, we've done all these things, but are we happy?'

Nyck: Exactly.

Nyck: Before we finish up today, you've just been down to Canberra to visit, on invitation, The Governor-General.

Steve: I did, yes. I just wanted to give you a report, thanks for that, before we finish the show today.

Nyck: He was your Commanding Officer when you're in the army.

Steve: That's right. So, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, I visited: Governor-General of Australia.

Nyck: You just called him Dave, didn't you?

Steve: No, I didn't actually. I called him Your Excellency according with protocol. It was all very formal, you see, and what a spectacular setting at Yarralumla Government House where I was invited to see him.

The reason that I have a connection with him is that he used to be my boss back in the early nineties. He and I were part of an Australian military force sent to Somalia when there was a massive famine on there and a huge international humanitarian response which involved, I think, military from thirty seven-odd countries. It was a huge delegation from a whole bunch of different countries; thirty-something thousand troops. Actually, I think it was less countries, something like twenty-something, but anyway, around about thirty seven thousand troops altogether. He and I shared the experience of visiting and working for the four or five months we were there in a society that was experiencing total collapse. That's a very interesting shared experience to have: to see a society that had at one point developed universities, car factories, Coca-Cola bottling plants, but now basically had descended into being the Wild West with no functional government, no utilities, no power supply, no sanitation, and no law and order.

When I recently toured Australia screening the *From Shock to Awe* documentary series—which is about treating two US military war veterans suffering from PTSD and depression with psychedelic medicines—through a mutual colleague, the Governor-General heard that I

was doing that and he sent a message back through our mutual colleague, inviting me to go visit him and chat about it, which is wonderful. I have been buttering him up over the years—I've seen him at military reunions now and again and every time I see him, I always just give him a quick update on research around psychedelic medicines.

Nyck: And also on Clare W. Graves's work.

Steve: I've been talking to him sporadically about Graves's work as well. He's remembered those things and this is why he invited me for a chat. We had a wonderful talk. It was quite a breakthrough, first of all, because when I walked in to meet him, he told me that he'd been researching dimethyltryptamine (DMT), and I'm pretty sure that's probably the first time the Governor-General of Australia ever said those words! We had a good chat about where things are at, and the clincher in the conversation was the fact that the United States Food and Drug Administration has given 'breakthrough therapy' designation to MDMA and to psilocybin.

So on the basis of that—and you can understand, I've got to say, he's one of the most decent people that I've ever met. He's such a decent man, and intelligent, and also very mindful and respectful of the enormous responsibility he carries in this job as Governor-General, so he wasn't about to do anything rash. But what he has offered to do is to give me written introductions to the Department of Veterans Affairs so I can go and talk to them about progress in psychiatric medicines, which will be an amazing step forward, just to have a conversation with them and perhaps work towards support from the government for research in the future. He also has asked me to go and brief someone in the Department of Defence, so I've got another trip to Canberra coming up sometime in the future.

He also asked me about my work at the moment, so we got a chance to chat about the fact that I've been speaking as a futurist, talking about the paradigm shift that's underway, and I was delighted to hear that it hadn't escaped his attention that the world is changing in radical ways. It's reassuring to know that someone in his position has got their finger on the pulse. Before I said anything, he likened some of the things that are happening in the world at the moment to things that happened during the last transition out of the Agricultural era into the Scientific-Industrial era.

Nyck: Yes, 16th century or so—some time ago.

Steve: That's right, which is awesome. And who knows?

Nyck: And that's a connection with Brendan Nelson, isn't it, who was the former head of the AMA (Australian Medical Association) and a former Liberal Party—I think he was the leader

briefly wasn't he? (Editor's note: the Liberal party tends to the right of politics, somewhat equivalent to the Republican party in the USA).

Nyck: I think he might have been, too. I think he's just finishing up as the leader of the Australian War Memorial at the moment.

Yes, he mentioned that he'd been chatting with Brendan about this—what looks like a paradigm shift going on—so we had a really good short conversation about that. Who knows, that might go somewhere as well.

Nyck: And you've pointed him also to your website and to your talk last year in Switzerland—and folks, you can go to Steve's website: www.eman8.net and on the very front page you'll see the talk that Steve gave in Switzerland last year at the Elevate: Live conference in Zurich on Quantum Consciousness (Editor's Note: this presentation is now also available on the Resources page of the *Future Sense* website: <https://www.futuresense.it/resources/>).

Steve: Yes, and hopefully you'll get time to have a look at that.

Nyck: That's it for us for today. Thank you for joining us here on Future Sense. Check out the podcast at www.futuresense.it or through other platforms such as iTunes. The edited versions are up within a couple of days of the show each week.

Steve: That's right, and don't be lonely. Get out there and socialise in real life.

Nyck: Absolutely. See you soon. Have a beautiful day.

You've been listening to Future Sense, a podcast edited from the radio show of the same name broadcast on BayFM in Byron Bay, Australia, at www.bayfm.org. Future Sense is available on iTunes and SoundCloud.

The future is here now, it's just not evenly distributed.