



## The Complexity of the COVID-19 Shutdown

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*Future Sense is a podcast edited from the radio show of the same name, broadcast on BayFM in Byron Bay, Australia, at [www.bayfm.org](http://www.bayfm.org). Hosted by Nyck Jeanes and well-known international futurist, Steve McDonald, Future Sense provides a fresh, deep analysis of global trends and emerging technologies. How can we identify the layers of growth personally, socially and globally? What are the signs missed; the truths being denied? 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.*

**Nyck:** Good morning and welcome to *Future Sense* here on BayFM 99.9. It is Monday, the 6th of April, though we are recording this show on the 5th of April, the day before, as are all the other shows that are talk shows or opinion shows or news shows on this station. Just to let you know that—that there is nobody live in the studio. We are recording this for *Future Sense* in different locations—myself, Nyck Jeanes on one hill and a few kilometres away, Steve McDonald on another hill with about the same aspect, I think. How doing there, Steve? Can you hear me?

**Steve:** Good morning, Nyck. I've got you loud and clear.

**Nyck:** Excellent. So, here we are in paradise, it looks from where I'm sitting, and I'm sure from where you're sitting, and yet, of course, we are in the middle of this pandemic; and more specifically, more interestingly, perhaps, the fallout from that pandemic that we're beginning to see in terms of economics and everything else. But we're going to start today, I think, with a bit of a look at the overall global situation that we are now facing, but particularly through the work of Clare W. Graves, as we usually do on this show.

For those who aren't familiar with Clare W. Graves, he was a psychological researcher and also a colleague to Abraham Maslow back then, who created the *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*. Graves embarked on a major research project back then when he interviewed people across cultures asking questions essentially about what it takes to become a mature human being. Well, we're certainly seeing all sorts of actions here on the planet in terms of maturity—or immaturity, you could argue—but we're going to take a bit of a look, at a bit of a sketch, at the global situation through that lens of what is now known often as *Spiral Dynamics*, but the work of Clare W. Graves.

It's great to hear from you, Steve. Let's launch into it.

**Steve:** Sure, Nyck. Yes, certainly Graves was around at the same time as Maslow, as far as I know. I don't think they ever really worked together, but they certainly were in touch with each other and they knew of each other's different perspectives on human psychology.

**Nyck:** I think Maslow sort of agreed, towards the end of his life, that Graves had a much more complex model.

**Steve:** I believe so, yes, the key difference being that Maslow's model had a pinnacle—an end point—as if there was actually such a thing as a mature human being, but Graves was the opposite and believed that it was an open-ended system, and we're always growing and expanding.

**Nyck:** Yes.

**Steve:** What I am going to do today is I'm going to talk about the different value systems that are at play at the moment, and also the state of play at the point of the outbreak of coronavirus. It's very easy just to be focussed on the virus at the moment and its impact, and forget that there was a whole bunch of stuff going on before it actually arrived, and really, a lot of what we're seeing now is just a continuation of what was already there—you know, apart from the very specific health impact of the virus. Then we'll go on to talk about what we should expect next. We'll have a look at a few different indicators of the future, including some astrology from you, Nyck, and we'll look at these different value systems and ask ourselves, 'okay, what are they likely to do? What are the sorts of motivations they're going to have? What should we watch for?'

Just to kick it off, I just want to mention that in relation to COVID-19, what we've been saying for the past few weeks as we've been commenting on this outbreak, is really still, I think, consistent and applicable, and that is that those who are most at risk are the elderly and people with pre-existing health conditions—they would be anything, including anything that might weaken the immune system—and when we look at places around the world that are having unusually large casualty figures, we ought to just keep in mind that there will be very specific life conditions which are contributing to those figures being different than the average. Also, the same thing applies with workers in the health system, of course, who are most likely overworked, not getting enough rest and not in the best condition themselves, and also having to operate at times without, perhaps, the best protective equipment as well. So all of these factors come into play.

We do continue to support the recommended strategies in place and we would urge everybody to listen to instructions in their local area and to follow those instructions in order to avoid unnecessary casualties. I'd just like to specifically say that nothing in this broadcast

should be interpreted in any other way than that—that we are supporting the recommended strategies at the moment. We are, of course, going to talk about the various options and approaches that have been taken by different people around the world, but please just understand that we are very, very supportive of all the conditions in place right now.

**Nyck:** Yes.

**Steve:** In relation to the global response, the main issue, of course, has been the limited capacity of medical facilities to cope with higher numbers of critical care patients, and specifically patients requiring intubation and a ventilator. That seems to be the main point of issue at the moment for all the countries around the world. The across-the-board restrictions apply to entire societies, and particularly the economic impact of those has not really made sense to us right from the very beginning. I'm still holding that perspective and we'll still explore making sense of what's going on from that perspective.

So first of all, let's just look at the value systems that are at play. It's very confusing at the moment, and the reason that it's very confusing is that there are a whole bunch of different motivations and different agendas playing themselves out. There are really six different human value systems operating in a significant way at the moment. There are actually probably more than that—I won't say eight or nine, but the seventh, eighth and ninth are in very small percentages at the moment, so we'll just talk about the ones that are having the main impact.

Particularly, today, we're going to zero in on those in Clare Graves's model that are called Layers 4, 5 and 6—Layer 4 being the Authoritarian mindset, which came from a time of social classes where society was layered into different classes and really grew out of the Agricultural Revolution and started to fade from dominance with the emergence of the fifth layer, which is the modern Scientific-Industrial era. Then of course, we've got Layer 6, which is the emerging paradigm, which is very humanistic, quite Relativistic in its outlook, and very network-centric. So 4, 5 and 6—the Authoritarian, the Scientific-Industrial, and the emerging Humanistic—are the main things that we're going to be talking about. As we do, bear in mind that complexity is the driver of change, and complexity—the level of complexity of our life conditions—is what moves us through these layers, from the lower layers to the higher layers, as we are challenged to cope with more and more complex problems. As far as we know, as long as history's been recording what's been going on, we seem to be on a long, long-term trend of increasing complexity and we don't see any chance of that changing any time soon. That's useful because we can bank on the fact that over the long term, human life is going to be dominated by increasingly complex value systems and increasingly complex ways of making sense of the world.

**Nyck:** I just wanted to add too, from Monica Bourgeau's book, *The Change Code*, which we've talked about here—we've talked to Monica and we've given some books away (Part 1 available at: <https://www.futuresense.it/90-interview-with-monica-bourgeau-part-1/>), and Steve wrote the foreword for that recent book on Clare W. Graves's work, and it's very

applicable to these times. She talks about the word “biopsychosocial”, which was Graves's word. I think it is rather important because it is a mind-body connection, and the mind shaped by neurological structures and networks while also been activated by chemical interactions and one's life conditions, as you said before. So it's a complex itself that is all emerging and complexifying as we go forward, isn't it, the biology, and clearly we've got a biological threat at the moment; psychologically, very clearly, it's impacting all sorts of psychological processes in human beings; and sociocultural, of course, in exactly what behaviours we are now being whipped into abiding by, so to speak.

**Steve:** That's very true, Nyck. It's a whole-of-system approach, or an integral approach, that takes into account all of those things, and thanks for that; it's important to remember that.

Let's start out by talking briefly about Layer 4. As I mentioned, this emerged out of the Agricultural Revolution when we started to come together and live in larger groups. We needed to have a very rational structure in terms of our approach to living together in close proximity—a set of rules to live by—and often in the early days, those rules came from a higher authority such as a God within a religious structure. There are still many, many people, of course, living according to these values around the world, and that's simply because their life conditions are demanding that particular value system in terms of it being the most appropriate for solving their day-to-day problems. Certainly large parts of China, large parts of the USA, are still living by Layer 4 values, and under emergency kind of circumstances like we're seeing with the coronavirus, that can be really useful because people who are living according to Layer 4 values are much more likely to comply with orders from a higher authority—in fact, they look to that.

With their current value shift that's happening globally, there's been a kind of a backslide—what's called the “regressive search”—from the dominant paradigm back to Layer 4 values as people try and find something that works better because things don't seem to be working all that well at the moment across many, many different systems. So many people within mainstream society are also reaching back to Layer 4 at the moment, and we're seeing that in terms of the amount of compliance that's going on with the instructions from a higher authority.

**Nyck:** One of the things I note about Layer 4 from Monica's book also, is that Layer 4 is the one with the lowest values for creating innovations, achieving new concepts and independence. So that's interesting, that there's a regression back there in places that actually does or potentially actually curtails new thought and new innovations coming forward to a degree.

**Steve:** That's true, and you've got to think about the whole evolutionary progression in terms of Layer 4 coming out of Layer 3 because Layer 3 was just wild, wild, wild.

**Nyck:** The Wild West.

**Steve:** It was the Wild West, literally—I mean, that's where the expression comes from—and so you needed something that would shut down a whole lot of that wild behaviour in order to allow people to live together in a workable way in large populations. That's why, in an evolutionary sense, it is that way. And I think the fact that we are in this regression—I mean, the whole idea of the regression, it's not really an idea, it's a natural phenomenon. The reason that evolution made it show up this way is that by going backwards, it's like pulling the elastic band on a slingshot and creating tension for the movement in the opposite direction. So we can expect that this time of heavy compliance and heavy Layer 4 authoritarianism will create a whole bunch of stored energy that's going to be released as soon as we see an opportunity to do that, and so people will come out the other side of this lockdown, hungrier for change.

From a basic Taoist yin-yang philosophical perspective, opposites give birth to each other, so isolation creates a desire for community; we can expect that, and for that reason, this period is really feeding into the overall values shift from Layer 5 to Layer 6, which is taking us from an individual Layer 5 to a community-oriented Layer 6, so you can see how it's all feeding the evolutionary progression in a very, very nice way.

**Nyck:** That's fantastic. It's basically an accelerator, what you're talking about. It's a catalyst for a faster change, which is clearly what we're all longing for anyway and what is imperative on the planet in so many different ways. This virus has somehow become the catalyst for that very thing.

**Steve:** It's fascinating, isn't it?

So let's talk about Layer 5, which is the what we know as the Modern paradigm that we've grown up with, most of us. It's the Scientific-Industrial mindset and at the moment we are at a stage in the evolutionary progression where, on a global scale, we're exiting Layer 5. When Graves' did his research, he identified these layers and he saw that they had nodal expressions, which were where they were full on, and they had entering and exiting expressions. So when somebody was just moving into one of the layers, they would be behaving in a certain way, and when they were starting to exit it—when it had run its course—they would also be behaving a certain way. On a global scale, we're really exiting Layer 5 at the moment. Again, this is a vast generalisation because different countries in different places are at different layers according to their local life conditions, but we're just talking generally here.

When we're exiting Layer 5, the primary driver is still success, but we have moved closer to the tipping point into the next system. What I'm noticing now is that Layer 5 has really been characterised by busyness, right? You can say that as busy-ness or you can say it as business because it's all been about business.

**Nyck:** It's the same word; means the same thing.

**Steve:** Exactly, and have a look at what's happened—business has stopped. It's not business as usual at all; we're having a little quiet moment here. It's quite possibly the first global scale expression of a Layer 6 problem-solving strategy being necessary, which is a really interesting indicator that we're progressing beyond Layer 5. Very, very interesting. And of course, it's been necessary to avoid crashing our Layer 5 systems: our medical system, our—well, our economic system was going to crash anyway but this is kind of like a ... it's almost a controlled crash, really. That's what it looks like.

**Nyck:** That's what we were talking about last week. This is the kind of offset to rescue us for three to five years, I think we said. It's likely that there's going to be more to come. In fact, we certainly predict that as we go forward. This is not the end game here.

**Steve:** Exactly.

One of the things about Layer 6 is it really needs time to stop and think. That's what Layer 6 is all about in a lot of respects. It's about getting out of that rat race that we've been in and giving ourselves time, having a sea change, a tree change. You can think of what's going on right now—it's kind of like a bit of fertiliser for Layer 6. It's time for exploration and to ask ourselves who we are and who we're being.

If we look at Layer 5 itself, it's really worthwhile just taking a quick look at its characteristics and understanding it because it will help us predict what's going to happen next from those organisations and individuals who are still operating from Layer 5. It's an individually themed system and it's all about changing the external world to suit us. It grew out of frustration with the old Layer 4 system, which was generally slow moving and self-sacrificing. So Layer 5 became the opposite; it became fast moving, it became very explorational—it got us to the moon and back—it's very, very driven by personal success through applying strategy, working hard and being determined to achieve goals, it's very experimental—it's not locked into one way of doing things; it is highly adaptive as a result of that, and most importantly, it will exploit any and all opportunities to get success.

**Nyck:** Well, I note, for example, in the US that different states are bidding for some medical supplies which are in short supply and the highest bidder wins. That's a really great example of Layer 5 still in operation there. Can you imagine when lives are actually at stake, that the biggest, the highest bidder wins?

**Steve:** It's quite fascinating, isn't it? There it is in full flight. And it's all about efficiency, too. It doesn't want to spend any more money than it has to in order to be successful, because often money is the measure of success and it doesn't want to lose it. In terms of the global picture, it's well past its peak now. We can look back into the 80s perhaps, and see where it really was in full flight.

**Nyck:** Greed is good.

**Steve:** Yes, and what happens with every value system, not just this one, is as it passes its peak, it goes into a deconstruction phase where any attempts at problem solving using the strategies of that layer will actually become counterproductive and accelerate the demise of the paradigm. We're in that aspect of the shift at the moment. We're seeing that Layer 5 strategies, in order to try and solve this problem, really aren't effective. You just gave a good example of one, actually, right? I mean, when people's lives are at stake, the highest bid wins. It might not be the best way to solve the problem.

**Nyck:** Absolutely.

**Steve:** And it's become very, very public now. We're seeing it in the mainstream media, this counterproductive aspect of the strategies and how things are falling apart.

Corporate capture is a really key issue here, and it's kind of like both the prize and the downfall of Layer 5. The idea was to get control of all of this stuff so we can just use it to our own advantage, and now that we've got it all from a corporate perspective, we control everything—we control politics, we control whatever you want to control. It's also become the downfall because everybody's turning around and going, 'hmm, this isn't actually working for most of us.' Everybody, of course, has heard of the 99% and the 1% split, and so we're facing that issue, so layer 5's greatest advantage has become its disadvantage in this deconstruction phase.

Before this outbreak happened, there were a whole bunch of things going on and it's very easy to lose sight of those and just think about the actual virus itself, but we've been through a time where corporate capture became the number one issue that we're facing, in controlling our democratic systems and serving the 1%, as I mentioned.

**Nyck:** I think the notion of short-term rewards, too. It's a very short-term theme overall, isn't it, Layer 5? And we've seen the results of that in terms of the infrastructure collapsing or shaking radically underneath the pressure of the coronavirus.

**Steve:** Yes. The individual systems are short-term. The communal systems tend to think long-term.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, it's important to remember that our hospital systems were on the edge in many different countries. Certainly here in Australia, there was a general shortage of beds and staff and facilities. This is because of the efficiency mindset of the Layer 5 paradigm. Our global economic system was overdue to crash again—well overdue—and it's really nearing its end of life altogether. Central banks and governments were running out

of levers to pull to try and keep it on track. The European Union, of course, has been in a rolling economic crisis for many years. That's been threatening the survival of the union itself, and we've seen the UK leave the union. So it's really important to remember that it wasn't the virus that created these problems and that they are still ticking away in the background and adding to the mix.

Additionally, we've seen the fragmentation of political alliances, both within parties—within governments—and between nations. We've seen rising civil unrest around the world due to opposition to government policies, and this is also a symptom of the value shift where different value systems are clashing, particularly 4 and 5, and lower, like 3 as well. We've also seen the tension created by the regression to Layer 4 within societies. There were trade wars underway and still are, most notably between the US and China. There were currency wars underway, with different countries dominating to become the main global currency over the US dollar. There were cyber wars underway via the Internet, and right now the leading edge of the art of war is about fighting a plausibly deniable war—one that impacts your opponent, but leaves everyone questioning what's actually going on without any declaration of war. So it's important to keep that in mind, also.

At the same time as all of this has been happening, we've seen the simultaneous emergence of the new paradigm, which is the good news—the rise of the new world. There has been increasing concern for the state of the natural world. We've seen groups like *Extinction Rebellion* popping up and causing disruption to try and bring attention to the natural world and the way that we treat it and interact with it. There's been paradigm-breaking advances across many fields of endeavour, including psychedelic medicines as an example in health care. There has been growth of open source, decentralised technologies, including blockchain, but many other examples as well. There is a rekindling of local communities—farmers markets are popping up everywhere around the world—all part of a general trend of both relocalisation and also reconnecting with nature in our immediate set of life conditions where we're living.

And right now there's been an outbreak of peace and quiet.

**Nyck:** Absolutely. That's also an element of Layer 6, isn't it? That inner peace that people search for, to bring harmony to things and also to not just connect with nature, but even see it as sacred again in that return to indigenous wisdom, for example.

**Steve:** Absolutely. So what we're going through now, particularly the peace and quiet aspect, is really feeding Layer 6; feeding its emergence. It's fertiliser, as I said.

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**Nyck:** You're tuned to BayFM 99.9 here on *Future Sense* with Nyck Jeanes and Steve McDonald, and of course, the podcast is edited within 24 hours of this broadcast on Monday mornings in Byron Bay, Australia. You can find the podcast at [www.future sense.it](http://www.future sense.it) or through your normal podcast platforms. There's usually two segments of about 30 to 40 minutes



each in that podcast. We do take out the great music that we play and also the station IDs and so forth.

Just before the break, Steve was talking about Layer 6 in particular, and the emergence of Layer 6 during this time—it's already been happening, but the acceleration of that—particularly that notion of us having to be inside, having to be socially isolated, and thus having to sort of work on, at best, the notion of inner peace or just relaxation; of not having to do and not having to be busy—business—as much as we have before.

So on that note, I thought we'd start this segment with a short email that I received from a friend of mine—an Italian friend who lives here normally—Valentina. Many of you may know her, who live in this region. She just wrote about her time in Italy, as she's back there now. She says this: "To give a bit of contrast to what people may imagine about Italy from the news only, I'm sharing the reality I'm immersed in since the first day I arrived on the 3rd of March, early spring in Bologna. Life is exploding everywhere in nature to oppose the many deaths from COVID-19. There are so many wild animals apparently walking around the empty cities and towns. There's no pollution. The air is fresh and clean. Traffic is non-existent. It's a new experience also for the animals. It's like we have finally been put in our cages, our homes, and they are free to roam out of their forests into the cities. Wherever there's death, there's also life. And where there's fear, there's people who choose to go in or to retreat and raise their own consciousness and the frequency of their vibration. I feel", she says, "that if people spend most of their time feeling, meditating and at least working on their consciousness, rather than incessantly filming themselves, watching videos and sending silly stuff on WhatsApp, or binging on TV, the planet would have a lot more chance to get out of this global crisis in some new, unexpected way." I thought that was a great comment, and fascinating the notion—we've heard that from a number of places around the world which have been shut down—of animals coming back, blue skies, less pollution and so forth. So she's having the same experience, Valentina in Italy. And again, it's focus on 'well, if you're inside, how about working on your consciousness, or however you conceive that to be—your dreams, your passions, your purpose, your simplicity in life?'

**Steve:** That's great, Nyck, and it's all very nourishing for the emergence of Layer 6. Speaking of which, you just took part in a global meditation, I think.

**Nyck:** I did. As we said, we're recording this show on the Sunday, the 5th—yesterday for you guys who are listening out there on the Monday—and there was a global meditation at 12.45pm today for about twenty minutes or more around the world. I think it was linked up by a number of different organisations, meditation groups and lightworkers, if you will, and likely that there are many, many millions of people focussed on that. There were different focuses, as I understand it, from different groups, but the timing was specific to the Jupiter-Pluto conjunction, which we are just seeing right now, and we'll come to that in a little while, too—some of the astrology of the moment. But the focus in what I was tuned to was focussing on choosing a timeline. This is a bit out there, but when you think of it, it's quite simple. We are on a timeline—on a past-present-future line. That's how it appears to us in this three-dimensional reality, and really, we choose what line we're on, in a sense, mutually.

We choose it individually—seven billion souls making choices every second—and it's kind of like moving the *Titanic* away from the iceberg. That's an old analogy but it's quite a good one. It takes a long time to shift a planet from one direction to another, so that notion of giving it a bit of a nudge towards a more—well, more toward what we're talking about—more Layer 6, to more communal, to value systems which are appropriate now for a new world to emerge. So that was the focus of the meditation. You may have joined in, and of course, you can do this at any time. Please do.

**Steve:** And I heard somebody say they were looking to try and get a million people meditating at the same time. It looked like they were in a number of different groups who were doing that and just the time was synchronised, right?

**Nyck:** Yes, it was out there. I received it from 20 to 30 different places over the last couple of weeks or so. So I'm sure that there would have been far more than one million people doing it around the world. Far more.

**Steve:** Very interesting. I did tune in for a short while just to check it out. Very interesting indeed.

What else is going on? Well, last week we spoke about—was that last week or the week before?—we spoke about the general response as kind of like an on/off switch rather than a volume knob, being like an all-or-nothing approach from pretty much most countries around the world. It's interesting that Sweden has come to my attention this week as being the odd one out in some respects, in that they are not locking down as much as other countries. I'm wondering—and I'm not sure of this, I've just seen two media mainstream media reports so I haven't got enough information to really make a call yet—but I'm wondering if this could be a glimmer of a Second Tier approach to solving the problem. This is very, very interesting.

What they've done is that the Swedish prime minister, I understand, has really handed over to the best medical expert in the country to basically set the rules and decide how Sweden responds.

**Nyck:** Which we should say is not exactly what most of our other countries are doing. While there are certainly Chief Medical Officers and others having input into that—leaders of the health department and so forth—it would seem that the politicians are making the calls.

**Steve:** Absolutely, which is still a very Layer 5 kind of mainstream approach—just keeping it under the control of the politicians.

So this is really interesting. I've got a couple of articles here that have been sent to me, and I thank you to those people. In fact, it was Conrad from Melbourne, I think sent me both of these, so thanks Conrad. Appreciate that. I might just quickly have a bit of a skim through

them. One of them is from a website called [www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz) and the headline is *Coronavirus: To Swedes, it's the rest of the world engaging in a reckless experiment* (<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/120805778/coronavirus-to-swedes-its-the-rest-of-the-world-engaging-in-a-reckless-experiment>). This is an opinion piece; it's not too long. It says: "There is ... no lockdown [in Sweden]. Shopping centres remain open, as are most schools and firms. Many work from home, many don't – all are at liberty to choose. When I called a friend in Stockholm to ask about the Swedish experiment, he was on his way to a book launch."

**Nyck:** Goodness!

**Steve:** "He's still taking his sons to football matches and is proud that Sweden is keeping calm and carrying on. To him there is no Swedish experiment: it's the rest of Europe that is experimenting – by locking down economies in response to a virus which may prove to be no more deadly than flu."

**Nyck:** In the same article, it says that the Swedes "have a fresh argument: that their country might be the only one in Europe to come out of the coronavirus crisis with the economy semi-intact." And that's the big thing there, because they haven't closed down the economy anywhere near the same way as almost every other country in the world.

**Steve:** No, it's a very interesting, measured response, and of course, this is what we've been saying right from the very beginning—that the general response seems to have been over the top and perhaps not purely focused on the virus itself, but with other mixed agendas in there as well.

Back to the article. It says: "it's not that Sweden is in denial. It has had ..." at the time of this article was published, which was April 3rd, it had "... 5466 confirmed cases, 282 deaths. Coronavirus has been found in a third of Stockholm's (many) elderly care homes. But the debate there is still where the British debate was three weeks ago when the Prime Minister was resisting lockdown. This changed for Britain when Imperial College London published its study suggesting that avoiding lockdown could mean [extremely high casualty figures]."

**Nyck:** Half a million, I think we quoted last week, and Neil Ferguson backed it down to 20,000.

**Steve:** That's right, so that probably wasn't on the money, that big.

It kind of looks like Sweden's been pretty smart about this, actually. They still see COVID-19 as a manageable issue, basically; a manageable risk. "The face of Sweden's response has been Anders Tegnell, the state epidemiologist, who has held daily press conferences.

Politicians have taken a back seat. His team have published their own assessment of the virus and its likely trajectory, showing it peaking with about 250 needing intensive care in Stockholm. The nation's hospitals, he says, can cope. A 600-bed temporary ward is opening tomorrow," so it's not like they're not doing anything; they're just being very selective about what they're doing. "When it does, a quarter of all intensive care beds will be used."

**Nyck:** I think it's interesting, too, that the Swedish prime minister was asked if he had ceded power to Tegnell, and doesn't seem to be offended. He said that time will tell if we made the right choice. That's an interesting thing, too, that a politician would cede power in that way to a scientist. It's unusual, that's for sure.

**Steve:** It's very unusual and quite paradoxical, actually. That's what sort of suggests to me that there might be a glimmer of Second Tier intelligence at play here, which is very, very interesting. They've been quite measured about putting restrictions on—they've restricted some students, but not others, they recognised that young people are a low risk in terms of this. They've also recognised that people with certain medical conditions are high risk and they've taken extra steps to protect those people and isolate them. I guess we'll have to let this play out and see, but it'll be very interesting to revisit these in the weeks ahead and just see where Sweden is compared to the rest of the world. Of course, they are not isolated from the world economy, so they are going to suffer from the actions of other countries, but let's follow this and see where it goes.

**Nyck:** From the same article, I find it interesting, too, that: "Kerstin Hessius, who runs a government pension fund, has been arguing that money vs lives is a false choice. 'Rising unemployment hits pensions directly.'" She's referring here, of course, to the economic impact in other countries, such as Britain, where "one in five small firms [are] on the verge of going bust, children [are] deprived of education, working mothers edged out of their job", and so forth. But she goes on to say, "Rising unemployment hits pensioners directly ... What's more, the tax base disappears - then we have to start cutting welfare." So essentially what she's saying is that there's a lot of other knock-on effects here, whichever strategy you choose, but clearly, the more you close down, the more dominoes are going to fall one way or the other in society; in the economic structure of a society.

**Steve:** Yes, and that's when you look at this from the perspective of the whole thing being designed to limit the spread of the coronavirus. But as we painted at the start of the show, the picture when this started wasn't particularly good when it comes to the economy. The economy was really on the edge, and so when something like this pops up and you realise that, OK, this actually could kill the economy, then it's very, very tempting to try and grab the steering wheel and at least steer it in a particular direction by focusing on the economic aspects of it, perhaps even to the detriment of some of the health aspects of it. Certainly that's looking like the case from my perspective. It's looking like that this massive shut down effort globally is really as much about where the economy was at and trying to steer it into a

controlled crash, as it is about the health aspects. Maybe even it's more about the economy than the health aspects, to be honest.

**Nyck:** Well, I think that is becoming clear to many people. I think actually for a lot of people who were originally afraid of this virus, and maybe still are to some degree—certainly there are risks—but people are starting to look at the impact of the closures of things, the impact of not being able to see your closest friends, the impact of not going where you normally go, doing what you normally do, and the economic impact, as we're talking about, is obvious. All of that looks like it's not just about the virus when you actually look at the statistics with a bit of a decent eye, really.

**Steve:** Yes, and if you go trawling on the Internet, there are plenty of medical—very, very experienced and senior medical people from around the world—coming out and saying that these measures really don't make sense from a health perspective. More will come to light as time passes, I'm sure, and it'll be very interesting to see more information coming out about this decision-making process and the strategy and where it came from.

**Nyck:** Indeed.

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**Steve:** Thanks Dena.

**Nyck:** We'll take a little break and be back here on *Future Sense*.

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