



88. 2019 in Review

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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 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: You are now tuned to *Future Sense* with myself, Nyck Jeanes, and my co-host, futurist, Steve McDonald. Good morning, Steve.

Steve: Good morning, Nyck. Good morning, everybody.

Nyck: Our last show for 2019. It's been a great pleasure to offer our show to you during this year, and the previous year. I don't even remember exactly when we started, but it goes back a way.

Steve: Did we ever start? I'm not sure.

Nyck: We may never finish.

Steve: Doing it forever. It seems that way, anyway.

Nyck: We're going to have a bit of a review of the year first up this morning. Being the last show of year, of course, we're in the holiday season and just pre-New Year's Eve. We're pretty casual today, so we'd certainly love your feedback on the text line.

Steve: That's correct. We're usually extremely formal, aren't we?

Nyck: No, we're not. I'm so not formal. I look quite formal, I can see that. People probably think I'm quite formal and serious.

Steve: I met somebody who thought that once, actually. I mean, it is the silly season. You've got to give us credit for that.

Nyck: Absolutely.

Steve: We're in between Christmas and New Year here on planet Earth, in case you're from somewhere else.

Nyck: Some people are somewhere else now. I just want to give mentioned to the great Ram Dass who passed away just last week—Richard Alpert—as you said, Dickie; Dickie Alpert.

Steve: That's right. I'm sure he's up there with Timothy Leary, somewhere looking down on us right now.

Nyck: They've rejoined their 1960s experimentation in the Harvard University in the heavens.

Steve: That's right. They're both high in Heaven.

Nyck: I love this simple quote of Ram Dass's. There's many, of course. He said: "The spiritual trip in this moment is not necessarily a cave in the Himalayas, but it's in relation to the technology that's existing, it's in relation to where we're at, it's in relation to issues like pollution, political interest and activism. It's all part of one package now", and he probably said that twenty or thirty years ago.

Steve: He probably did, too. There may be some listeners out there who don't know who Ram Dass is. He's a spiritual teacher who was born Richard Alpert and became famous when he was working at Harvard University and got involved with some very early and rather naive and haphazard experiments with psychoactive mushrooms—psilocybin mushrooms— together with Timothy Leary, who became arguably more famous in terms of the general public's awareness, I think. Timothy went on to get jailed eventually for his activities with psychoactive mushrooms. Ram Dass went in the opposite direction and became a guru.

Nyck: Yes, he went to India and found his guru, Neem Karoli Baba, the guru of quite a lot of, particularly American chant artists, actually. He took on the name Ram Dass and came back to the US and wrote, of course, the famous book, *Be Here Now*, which I think sold about 2,000,000 copies, and was profoundly influential in the 1960s in that first wave of that particular change which we talk about quite often.

Steve: Indeed. A beautiful, beautiful man who really was quite graceful in his later years as he approached transition.

Nyck: He was. I actually met him in New York in about 2002, 2003 at a conference in New York City. He was in his wheelchair. He had a stroke at that point, and he'd written a book called *Fierce Grace* after his stroke because, you know, suddenly he was struck down and he couldn't speak for quite a long time. He regained his speech fairly well over time, but he couldn't speak and he wrote the book *Fierce Grace* because that's what it was. To have such a strong physical thing happen in a spiritualised being in this lifetime, so to speak, meant that he had to face that element of grace—fierce grace. Incredible.

Steve: Absolutely, and I think he was relatively grounded in his teachings, wasn't he? He was very down-to-earth in his attitudes.

Nyck: Very down-to-earth, yes. I had a lovely little chat with him. I'm still trying to find it, because I interviewed him and I think I played it on radio back then at some point when I came back, but I have to find it. It's on a cassette—one of those things.

He also said—because we talk a lot, of course, about uncertainty—the last little tiny quote here, he said, "How do we know who we are? We might be one breath away from enlightenment or death or who knows? The uncertainty is great. It keeps it wide open." And that's a good motto for this show too.

Steve: Yes, we're always talking about that, just remaining curious; never thinking you know it all.

Nyck: But also not letting go of the rigorous approach to information as well as the intuitive and creative response, both of which we like very much.

Steve: Yes, we'll talk a little bit more about that rigorous approach later in the show.

Nyck: Thanks to Dudley for writing in and saying: "Richard Alpert and Timothy Leary may have researched psilocybin, but were mostly known for their research with LSD." Yes, that's also true.

Steve: Mmmmm, that's, I'm sure, quite true. Absolutely. One of the things they became infamous for was giving out psilocybin mushrooms to students at Harvard, and it's all true.

Nyck: Yes, well, there you go.

2019 is nearly over, as we said. 2020 is coming up. The old saying that everybody's familiar with: "hindsight is 20/20 vision", which essentially means once you're somewhere, you look back and you can see what's true and real from the past. That's useful. So, 2019?

Steve: 2019. I think first and foremost, the most important thing is we had about 23,000 people listen to our podcast in 2019, which is absolutely wonderful.

Nyck: Fantastic.

Steve: And although the radio show has been going for a little over two years now, we really only got serious about podcasting at the start of this year—and thanks very much to Ross Hill for tipping us over the edge there, and for all of his technical expertise in using the Internet and all those other things.

Nyck: Oh, yes, the Internet. He's fantastic with that.

Steve: He is very good at that, a digital native.

And also, I looked at our stats this morning and in the last 30 days, we've had 3,465 listeners, which is wonderful. So clearly, we're accelerating.

Nyck: Do you think people are knocking on a window or on our door going, 'please, please tell me, what's happening?'

Steve: We're speeding up, so that's fantastic. 23,000 listeners in the last 12 months and 3,465 of those in the last 30 days, so it looks like we're in for a big 2020.

Nyck: And of course, many of those are overseas, so those of you listening to the podcast on various platforms, hello to you out there and thanks for listening and thanks for continuing to spread the word and for sending the podcast to those people who you feel may benefit and may be able to hear and listen to what we bring you. Thank you.

Steve: Yes, thank you very much.

In review, I think it's fair to say that our premise that we, as a species, have entered into a transformational change process that is shifting our consciousness and absolutely changing our underlying subconscious frameworks for making sense of reality, which impacts everything that we think and do and feel, I think that premise of ours has been reinforced by the evidence this year—of everything changing in certain ways. So we're quite confident that we're on to something, definitely. What we're seeing is not just one shift, but multiple simultaneous changes across the entire suite of value systems, really, as documented by Clare Graves.

Of course, the dominant paradigm globally is this shift from the Scientific-Industrial way of being human—the Scientific-Industrial era—to what's next, and that is still in formation. It's been called various names by various people. Graves called it the Relativistic way of being human, because rather than having a stationary viewpoint, as we did in the Scientific-Industrial era, and looking at many, many different options in investigating things using the scientific method and critical thinking, in this emerging era, we are capable of changing our viewpoint and so we can take multiple new perspectives or almost unlimited perspectives, really, on things, which has its advantages and disadvantages. Some people have called it 'the wisdom of the moccasins' because it reflects our capacity to put ourselves in other people's shoes and literally feel and have a very, very good understanding of the experience someone else is having from a different perspective.

Nyck: And that's a major movement, isn't it? That movement back towards compassion, and empathy more so, in a genuinely felt way. As you said, 'the wisdom of the moccasins', and of course it brings its own challenges, too, at the same time.

Steve: It does indeed, and no doubt we'll be talking about some of those as we look back at the year. I guess the important thing to remember is that in the big scheme of things, when you have a map like the one that Clare Graves has left us through his rigorous research, you can see that we're actually making progress, although it doesn't look like that necessarily from a personal perspective when you look at the outside world and look at how it's changing; and things are, without a doubt, falling apart. If we look at and try and track our progress on this rollercoaster of change—where we move from stability into turbulence and then take a downward slide into chaos as everything falls apart, go through a transformation at that point and a breakthrough, a breakout, and then rise back up through a process of refreshing, regeneration, integration, back to a new stability at a more complex and whole level—overall, in that journey, we're still really on the downward slide into chaos and all the evidence suggests to us that there's more extreme chaos yet to come. It's very difficult to put

a timeframe on this overall shift of the dominant paradigm but my personal best guess is that we're moving towards a tipping point somewhere around 2032 or thereabouts, where we'll feel like we can look back and feel like we've been through the worst of it. At the end of the day, I can't know—no-one can really know—but this is our best guess at the moment.

Nyck: Yes. For you out there listening, of course, how are you experiencing that, too? I think that's really important because it's not as if everybody's experiencing the same thing at the same time, nor in the same way, which is very important.

Steve: Yes, that is very important. We talk about this conga line analogy of humanity, bopping its way along—and for the young listeners, the conga is a dance; you can look that one up on the Internet—where everybody lines up and bops to the music; and some people are up the front of the line and some people are in the middle and some people are down the back of the line. Consequently, people are moving through this point of transformation at different times. Whether you're at the front of the line or the back of the line, it's not a reflection of how well you did at school, or what religion you come from, or anything else. It's really just a matter of your life conditions and the complexity of your life conditions. We are an adaptive species where our consciousness is highly adaptive to the complexity of our life conditions. What that means in practical terms is the difficulty of the challenges that we face in life, really. The more complex the challenges are, then the more complex we become as we adapt to meet those challenges and overcome them.

Nyck: Just to flesh that part out again, for those who haven't listened to this podcast that much, the notion of life conditions refers to current life conditions that someone might be in, or society may be in, that functions well, that solves most of the problems that are part of that cultural, social, political structure. But then as time goes on, life conditions change and do not satisfy the needs of the challenges that are coming forward in that time so something has to change, and that pressure starts to build in an individual or in a society for a different approach.

Steve: Yes, it's an all-encompassing term, too. So it includes not just physical life conditions, but also your psychological state at present, which is a combination of your history and everything you've been through in the past that has made you who you are right in this moment.

Nyck: And of course, in this era of technology, it also includes the interconnectivity which has emerged so fast and so fully across the planet and for a very large number of people on the planet at the same time. So that's a very major part of life conditions changing, too.

Steve: It is indeed, absolutely. In general terms, we have these multiple shifts going on pretty much right across the spiral. We can look around the world today and see that there are still people in certain countries and certain places where their life conditions are relatively simple. They're very much connected to the land and still living in traditional tribal ways and have been for thousands of years—amazing continuity and amazing resilience and strength in those base level, albeit simple value systems. They're extremely capable and extremely long-lived.

Nyck: And still very valuable. That's the thing, isn't it?

Steve: Absolutely. Even though there's a spectrum of complexity from simple to more complex, each value system is perfectly adapted to live in a certain set of life conditions. If you took somebody out of a more complex set of life conditions, like, for example, a city dweller who might be living in the Scientific-Industrial or the Relativistic way, and you put them into a set of life conditions that's suited to tribal living, then they may not last long, unless they have assistance from skilled people.

Nyck: That's the whole premise of shows like *Survivor*, isn't it?

Steve: Exactly, so it's not about relative value, it's about relative capacity to cope with certain life conditions.

Nyck: And of course, as we go forward, each of those value systems, as I said before, do have a value and will have a value in their right place, so to speak—in their place as we move forward into the future, especially this idea of resilience on a local level, of connectivity and collectivism in that sense, that we support each other and we form a bit more of a tribal space. And yet we also can't get carried away with that because it's just one part of the picture, but for many people it's a very valuable part.

Steve: It is, and the dominant paradigm is moving from an individually-oriented set of values in the Scientific Era, back to a communal set of values, and so one of the things that's happening a lot right now is people are looking back to historic communal value systems such as Layer 2, Traditional-Tribal and Layer 4, Agricultural-Authoritarian, to remember how to live in community. That's part of the transition process, this regressive value search, trying to figure out, okay, how did we do this last time? Maybe initially we'll try on the old values to see if they're working again. No, they're not. In fact, that's part of the natural evolutionary progression, and by trying on those older values, we speed up our change process because we've got to have change. We realise that, okay, that's not adequate. We actually have to develop a new, more complex set of values.

Nyck: I think it's interesting when you talk about that, and I think I've mentioned it before back here, particularly in the 90s, there was a whole movement—the feral movement—and people grew dreads, and of course, there's many people in this region still dressing and showing that part of themselves.

Steve: Some of my best friends have dreadlocks.

Nyck: Me, too, but up in the hills here, there were teepees everywhere, people would take roadkill off the roads to eat—you know, a snake that's been run over—and they lived like that for quite a long time, quite a few people. Then most of them, in fact all of them as far as I know—almost all of them—moved back to the townships. Most of them have now got families, they've cut their hair. That regressive, so to speak, surge back to the tribal, was very valuable but it wasn't enough; it wasn't complex enough, I guess, and they needed to come back into society with some of those things that they'd found in that space, which are valuable—very valuable.

Steve: So glad you've lived to tell the tale Nyck.

Nyck: I didn't go out there.

Steve: How would we know about those things? Eating roadkill, really?

Nyck: Well, I did do that on the beach once, years ago at three o'clock in the morning under the influence of something or other. Bumped into a guy, Kim Kindersley—many, many of you may know him, he lives in Bali, heir to the Guinness Fortune, or was. He was there with some beautiful Indigenous princes—that's what he said she was—and they were cooking a snake that they'd found on the road so they invited me in through the penumbra of their fire on the beach at Belongil when you could still have a fire on the beach legally, and I sat there, the three of us tripping out on stars and this snake that we were eating. Those were the days.

Steve: Goodness me. Those were the days.

Nyck: Simple days.

Steve: Hopefully Nyck will write a book and record all of these stories at some point.

So, 2019. We are, it's pretty obvious, heading towards further chaos and we can see the collapse of the old systems fairly clearly now thanks to our wonderful all-encompassing

media, which seems to capture everything and then make a whole bunch of stuff up just to add to the interest and the complexity; and where else have we seen that most obviously, but in some of the global politics during 2019? Some of the crazy, crazy things that have been happening and the incapacity of our political systems to cope with the radical strategies which are being employed to try and retain power in essentially a failing system has been rather amazing.

Nyck: And really it's fairly obvious if you look just at our own country and the different systems—you look at the education system, you look at the health system, you certainly look at our political system, you look at our religious foundations, you look at health—all of these areas are structurally shaky. All of them do not satisfy the needs anymore, and all of them to one degree or other, either by politics or those in administration who run these sectors of our society, are desperately trying to hang onto power, as you said, in one way or the other. That can mean, in this late Orange state—the previous value system (late Layer 5)—that basically anything goes. In a way, that's how fake news for example, has arisen, particularly in the last year or so, to be so dominant, and not just on the Right. I think there's people who think that fake news is only on the Right of politics, but that's clearly not so. There's also plenty of misinformation and fake news on the Left as well.

Steve: And the idea of making stuff up has really been consistent right through the Scientific-Industrial era because at the previous transition, we went from relying on someone else's list of how to live and dutifully following that list—often it was a religious list—to the realisation that we could actually find the truth ourselves through a process of critical thinking and enquiry using the scientific method. Part of that process has been us reconstructing our reality after having followed someone else's idea of what reality is in the previous paradigm. So the idea of making it up has, in a sense, been part and parcel of the Scientific-Industrial era. It's only that it's run to an extreme now, and it's getting so extreme that it looks ridiculous, it's no longer working, and we can see it falling apart in front of our eyes.

Nyck: Indeed. We'll take a little bit of a break here on *Future Sense*. You are tuned to BayFM, 99.9 or on your podcast platform, wherever that may be.

Nyck: We're doing a bit of a catch up on 2019 now, here on *Future Sense*. What's happened this year?

Steve: We are indeed, and a few of the general themes that have been showing up more and more during the year. One of them is this general theme of moving from an individually-oriented system in the Scientific-Industrial era, to a new version of living communally as

humans—the “me to we” we sometimes call it in abbreviation. One of the key aspects of that is that throughout the First Tier of consciousness—and I'm talking now about the first six layers of consciousness in Clare Graves's model, which run from the basic Hunter-Gatherer Survival [Layer 1] through Tribal [Layer 2], to Egocentric or Warlike [Layer 3], Agricultural Era thinking [Layer 4], to the Scientific-Industrial Era [Layer 5], and now the emerging Relativistic or Postmodern era [Layer 6]—as we move through from one value system to another, there is this inbuilt rejection factor that emerges. We come to a realisation that the dominant system isn't working anymore and we have to basically get rid of living life that way and come up with a new way to live. That involves a transition either from communal to individual or vice versa and we're going through the individual to communal transition right now. So we're seeing a lot of rejection of all things old paradigm: industrialised civilisation, the scientific method—how we measure the validity of science has changed and that's been very, very apparent this year—and the main shift is it's gone away from thinking critically about evidence and keeping an open mind, to being absolutely certain that we know how things are and measuring science by consensus. So the more people that agree about a certain thing, then the more validity we give it, and that's been a major, major shift in the way that we think about the world around us and grow our understanding of the way things are.

Nyck: That's very much an aspect of Relativistic thinking, isn't it? That that notion of the collective, the consensus-driven truth, that if so many people think that this is the way it is, then it must be the way it is. But this, of course, is not actually completely logical at all.

Steve: Well, you're right, it's not logical at all. It's a pre-rational mechanism and its absolute root cause is that the major driver of the Relativistic value set is “deep human connection”. Whereas in the Scientific-Industrial Era, our major driver was individual success: 'how do we be the best that we can be and achieve the most that we can within the confines of the Scientific-Industrial society?', we are moving to 'how can we be deeply connected? How can we be accepted? How can we conform to everything that our peers are conforming to?' and this is why it's shifted our way of measuring the validity of information. Also, we're seeing this major polarisation between those who are moving into this new way of being human and those who are still holding on to the older value systems.

Nyck: And of course, with that, that natural tendency as we move through the value systems to reject the former systems is itself coming into play now, isn't it? Because as we move forward through this period—and we've talked about this quite a lot—it's not about throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Every single value system and every person, society, collective that is situated primarily in one value system or another, has a value within the structure of their own value system, and all of those systems need to be acknowledged for their value within those constraints, so to speak.

In Australia, of course, we're seeing an incredible amount of polarisation occur, and there's a lovely piece here from Tim Costello, the brother of the former Treasurer, of course, of Peter

Costello, and Tim, someone I quite like—as you said off air, he's got a big heart, this man—he's a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Public Christianity; he's a reverend. This piece is called *A Toxic Mix of Religion, Politics, Nationalism and Immorality Now Infecting Australia* [Editor's Note: this article is currently available online, titled *Can Christian Faith be Independent of Politics?*; <https://www.smh.com.au/national/can-christian-faith-be-independent-of-politics-20191227-p53n3y.html>]. He says: "There are no stronger sources of group identity than religion and nationalism. Combined together, they can form a deeply divisive 'us-versus-them' agenda." Overseas, he points to "Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist agenda", to "Turkish President Recep Erdogan's authoritarian advancement of Sunni Islam, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's warnings of a civilisational threat to Christendom from Muslim immigration" and of course, "Australia is a more secular nation than most. Nevertheless, we are feeling the rising tide of tribalism", of this tribalistic attitude. "And the same question must be asked of faithful communities here: in an overly politicised world is faith only a subset of politics? Can faith have any independence?" Well, that's another question. There's more in that piece, but he's pointing to this intensive polarisation going on in all of our spheres of activity.

Steve: It is, and with our current Prime Minister being an established member of a Pentecostal church here, there's also this suggestion of a blurring of the lines between Church and State here, which is something else that's being watched. But it's a nice article by Mr Costello. Thankfully he retired from politics before Abbott came into power, otherwise, it could have been a lot sillier.

Nyck: In this article, in reference to what you just said there, he said that "recently secular Australian journalists have begun to ring me to ask about passages of the Bible. This has never happened to me before in public life. No doubt it is because our Prime Minister is proudly an evangelical Christian; which in effect means that he takes the Bible seriously. The burning question is, does faith shape one's politics or does politics capture and determine one's faith?" Certainly the first part of that question is interesting to me: "Does faith shape one's politics?" Is faith shaping our Prime Minister and other members of the government, in particular their political agenda at the moment?

Steve: One of the things that made the media recently was that normally, of course, every year there are various Christmas messages broadcast on television, and typically here in Australia, you would see a message from Her Majesty, the Queen from the UK and perhaps one from the Pope, but this year we had an extra one from the Hillsong Church, which is a Pentecostal church here in Australia, and that raised a lot of eyebrows. Apparently it was broadcast in between the other two.

Nyck: Oh, you're kidding. That's powerful. And, you know, there is still this piece going out there, not very much publicity, that Scott Morrison, ScoMo, not only visited Hawaii in the middle of the bushfire season and then scurried back home with his tail between his legs, sort of, but that he also managed a trip over to New York for, or just after, the opening of

the Hillsong Church premises in New York City with his friend Brian Houston who is the head of Hillsong. There's no confirmation about that but it does point to, even just the question of whether he's actually doing that at a time—leaving Australia and going over there for that—and Hillsong becoming such a dominant and prominent part of the public debate here is kind of interesting, I think.

Steve: I'm not sure about that, but I think it is relatively safe to report that when he went over to meet Donald Trump, he attempted to get the leader of the Hillsong Church there in the presence of Trump as well.

Nyck: Well, he hasn't confirmed or denied. He's just done that scurrilous ScoMo kind of way of evading a direct answer to questions that are clearly uncomfortable.

Steve: Yes, there you go.

So other general themes that we've seen this year are the theme of decentralisation—a gradual movement away from the centralisation of power, which, of course, is very alarming to those who are part of our centralised power structures. We see that continuing. That is a very, very natural aspect of this movement from individual to communal values: a decentralisation of power. I guess at the most simple level, an example of that is that in an individually-oriented value system, you might find an individual at the top of a hierarchy, whereas historically, when we've been living according to communal values, at the top of our hierarchy there's been a group of people, so a small community in power such as a family or a council or those sorts of things. That's an example of how that might play out in power structures.

Along with the decentralisation, we're seeing a relocalisation of everything. People are looking back to local community, our technology is helping us cope better with local resources than we have been able to do in the past, and we can see that continuing into the future with things like 3D-printing, for example, which will bring a lot of manufacturing back to the local village.

Nyck: I've seen some wonderful buildings that have been 3D-printed from hempcrete, for example, which is fantastic for making stuff.

Steve: Absolutely, and this idea of rebuilding a community, of course, at all levels. It's fair to say when we look back at the Scientific-Industrial Era, that it's done a great job of pulling communities apart from the most foundational level of the nuclear family which has pretty much disintegrated, and right across the board, community has been pulled apart, simply because of the individual orientation of life. That was necessary when we were transitioning out of the previous communal value system because each of these value systems, when it first emerges, it solves our immediate problems, and over time, because of its own biases and particular focuses, it eventually creates problems that can only be solved by the

pendulum swinging back the other way, and it's swinging back right now from the individual back to communal.

So a very interesting year. As I mentioned before, lots of evidence of a collapse in confidence in our governments in particular, and 2020 is shaping up to be a very challenging year in that respect.

Nyck: There's also a lot of revelation or questioning or doubt and cynicism about these structures—our political structures—and as you're talking, I'm thinking of a piece I heard, I think, from the *ABC* the other day about the lobby industry in Australia. There are something like 1,700 people who have what's called an "orange pass", which means they can go around Parliament House in Canberra without any escort; they can just go where they like. These are all lobbyists of one type or the other, and the whole structure of lobbying—this centralisation of power—is very embedded, but it's also being revealed, as we're talking about. Just the fact that this sort of reporting is coming out and showing us that that much power exists in these corporations—the banking industry, the mining industry, etc., etc., all the obvious things—and that they actually do have that much power, both with money and just being actually able to be in Parliament House and to be walking around freely to talk to anybody—we're starting to see this; we're starting to see how these power structures are actually working.

Steve: That's right. We've been talking a lot this year about the concept of "corporate capture", where large organisations which our politicians rely on for funding so they can get into power in the first place, have really captured our political system to a large extent. We had an extreme example of that a few years back when Kevin Rudd [the then Prime Minister] was basically torpedoed by a very intensive and very expensive lobbying process that was put in place by the mining industry here in Australia and mainly delivered through advertising, which destroyed public confidence in Kevin Rudd.

Nyck: You're tuned to BayFM and you're tuned to *Future Sense* here with Nyck Jeanes and Steve McDonald. Hello out there. How are you doing? Thanks for joining us, and thanks for your notes on the text line. I'll just go to this one: "Hey Nyck and Steve, it's been a great year of listening to *Future Sense*. Thank you for sharing your wisdom and making these turbulent times a lot smoother. All the best for 2020. Much love from George." Thanks George from down there in Melbourne.

Steve: Thanks George.

So just wrapping up 2019 in review, a couple more things before we move on to our next topic—and our next topic, by the way, will be some things to watch for in 2020 and beyond. Of course, it's been a big year for the climate change debate and extreme weather. We've

seen a lot of media coverage and a lot of people suffering from extreme weather of various types in the last year or so. There seems to have been a definite media bias towards reporting warm weather and warm weather records to the detriment of reporting on cold weather records, and there have been a whole bunch of cold weather records during the year. Probably the biggest impact, from my perspective, has been the disruption of the agricultural industry in North America and in Europe and Russia during the winter time. We're just, of course, moving back into that again and we're already seeing some fairly extreme cold weather and quite heavy snowfalls in Europe and North America this winter, which is only just starting, of course. There's also been a strong shift in the public debate about climate change towards this idea of consensus being the defining factor of the validity of evidence, and as we mentioned before, this reflects this bias against the old paradigm way, which was based around critical thinking, which essentially was thinking for yourself. That emerged out of the Agricultural Era where everybody was thinking and acting according to some higher authority and some higher authority's idea of how life should be and the ethical, moral standards to follow and those sorts of things.

Then as we moved into the Scientific-Industrial Era, we started thinking for ourselves and no longer just going according to the script handed down by higher authority. Of course, the opposite is happening now where we're rejecting the Scientific-Industrial way and we're moving back to trying to find a higher authority that we can trust. One of the characteristics of this emerging paradigm is the collapse of hierarchies. It's very, very strong on collapsing hierarchies because it looks back to the Scientific-Industrial Era where the hierarchies have been dominating and self-serving for those in charge of the hierarchies, and therefore, the general and obvious reaction is, 'OK, we need to get rid of that', and so all hierarchies are being collapsed. In the process, we're also losing what we had in the Agricultural Era, which was this reference to a higher authority that we could trust, which was often a religious figure, as in a God—a supernatural being who laid down the law and the commandments to be followed and those sorts of things. In the absence of a hierarchy this time around, we're having to refer to our peers. It's very much about being in the present moment, being with your peers, being accepted by your peers and maintaining that strong and deep human connection with your peers.

Nyck: So the connection is the number one factor there, whether you know that or not inside yourself, and will drive your relationship to how you receive, I guess, and give information to each other, and how you believe each other, how you support and confer with each other in a way, so that some of the uncomfortable facts might be put to the side because the connection is actually more important than perhaps facts that don't match the current belief system that you might be holding about something.

Steve: Yes, well a lack of connection is much more uncomfortable than a fact. That's the change; that's the shift in human nature that's happening. This is not an aspect that applies just to this transformation and this shift that we're going through. It's always the case that there are pros and cons. The same thing applied when we moved into the Scientific-

Industrial era. There were pros and cons of living life the Scientific-Industrial way and in hindsight, those cons are very, very visible and in our face at the moment.

One of the cons of the current shift is that we're losing the capacity for critical thinking as individuals, to some extent at least, anyway, and we're deferring instead to this beautiful feeling of strong connection with our fellow humans, which is a massive pro because it's actually making the world a more peaceful and more harmonious place as we make that transition. But it's useful to be able to see both sides of the coin if you're able to hold those different perspectives at the same time and see that, okay, there are massive improvements in human behaviour, human thinking, human being from this current shift that's underway, but at the same time, there are some elements of throwing the baby out with the bathwater as well.

Nyck: It's not either/or. I mean, there are positive advancements that have been made in the last hundreds of years, and certainly in the last 100 or so—the number of people who have come out of poverty is an obvious example—but in a report I heard yesterday it stated that in the US, the largest number of gun shootings was this year, 2019, by far. So there is this pressure in society.

Steve: Even so, I saw that same article. What was the total people killed in the article that you saw?

Nyck: 40,000 or something. I can't remember now.

Steve: Really? Because the article I saw said—maybe it was referring to the largest single event, I'm not sure, but it was only in the hundreds.

Nyck: Oh, yes, you're right. I think it averaged out at five per event, so, yes it was, but I remember thinking that an average of five people killed in each event of those mass shootings is quite a lot too.

Steve: How many how many shootings were there?

Nyck: That's a good question, we'll have to look that up. We don't have it in front of us. That's poor research there. Not very rigorous, Nyck! [Editor's note: The article can be found at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-50936575>]

Steve: It's worth looking at because even though it is a great tragedy any time a human being is killed and passes away before their time, we also have to be wary of the media

exaggerating things and putting things in front of us to distract us from other things that are perhaps more important and more critical that they don't want us to look at.

Anyway, what were we talking about? Climate change, and there'll be more change to come, there's no doubt about that. Our advice is to remain curious and also be wary of this bias of just looking in one direction and not noticing what's going on in the other direction.

The other thing which really didn't make the headlines much at all but is a very, very concerning development from 2019, is this disruption to agriculture that I mentioned, and quite largely due to the weather events—both extreme cold, and heat and drought, and we're seeing the heat and drought here in Australia. The extreme cold is more prominent in the Northern Hemisphere, it seems, but it's clear that if this trend continues, and I personally think it will, we're going to see a drop in food production, which means food shortages and a rise in food prices. That trend ought to continue next year given the current direction that it's heading.

On the list of good news from 2019, there was a wonderful book published just recently called *The Change Code*.

Nyck: Funny you should say that, because I was just looking for a space to bring this piece into the list because I'm about three quarters of the way through it and taking a lot of notes. It's a fantastic book and we'll be talking more about it next year. We'll have some copies that you can get.

Steve: In fact, next week ...

Nyck: We'll give some away.

Steve: We have the author on the show.

Nyck: We have the author on the show. Not live because she's over there.

Steve: Well, she will be live, but she'll be on the phone, live.

Nyck: She will be live. She's very alive and she's listening now, or she will be listening to the podcast, and hello to Monica. Fantastic book. But as you're saying there, a lot of this polarisation—this turning one way and not looking the other way—is an endemic problem right now, but Monica, at a certain point in her book, points to the concept of "wicked problems", which I just want to mention here; I think it's very relevant. "Wicked problems" is a term coined by Design Theorist and Professor, Horst Rittel and wicked problems can be defined as having these characteristics: "they're ongoing chronic issues; they're unavoidable

and unsolvable; no one right solution, all there is is a good-enough-for-now solution (and for many people, that's not good enough); solutions vary depending on your values and perspective (that's important); solutions create new problems to address, they require a mindset shift, they require ongoing collaborations with others; and they are paradoxical. Wicked problems, therefore, are part of a complex system and can't be 'solved', only continually navigated", and that statement itself, I think, would be very uncomfortable for a lot of people right now.

Steve: I think so, but it's absolutely typical of the period that we're in, which is a transition period where we've got half the world that's living according to an old value set and old systems, and half the world that's moving through to something new or is already there, and so you're never going to get a whole consensus on anything at all. We really have to be very good at doing the best we can and not necessarily wanting things to be perfect at this time of major transition.

This book is called *The Change Code, A Practical Guide to Making a Difference in a Polarised World*, written by Monica Bourgeau from Portland, Oregon, with a Foreword by me. I must say that I have no financial interest, and we as a programme here at *Future Sense* have no financial interest in this book. We're just promoting it out of the goodness of our heart.

Nyck: Awesome, because it's damn good, and for us in terms of Clare W. Graves's work (because Clare died in 1986, well before he published his significant and substantial work, and reading this book), I realised, no wonder—not no wonder that he died, but no wonder it wasn't published then—because I don't think a lot of people would have been able to hear what he's actually saying. But now it seems, reading this book as a representation of his work, I can hear in the text of this book a lot of people being able to hear it and listen and open up to these kind of ideas. It's just a model, it's not like a belief system; it's a model which is profoundly useful, and this book, I predict, will get into a lot of people's hands who would not look at these sort of ideas in the past, perhaps, or not really understand them.

Steve: Yes, it's very accessible and Monica has done a wonderful job of writing the book in a very clear way that's very easy to read. It is true that Clare Graves faced a lot of criticism from his peers back in his day when he did speak publicly to groups of psychologists, in particular. What he was saying didn't fit with the consensus at the time and he was heavily criticised, which is, you know, I think ...

Nyck: Always a good sign.

Steve: Well, it's a matter of fact for people who are Pathfinders; who are breaking new ground and revealing new things. By definition, you don't fit with the consensus of the time, and often that's why Pathfinders have been crucified.

Nyck: Indeed. And just lastly on the book, too, the book really is a manual for Agents of Change, and you may identify yourself in some way or another as an Agent of Change—if you listen to this show, I'd suggest that many of you probably do in one way or the other in your sphere of influence in your life—it's a very practical book on that level. I was quite challenged yesterday, reading in the book about self-care. It's a bit of a theme that's been up for me recently: spiritual practice and routine and grounding oneself in those deeper places in the self in order to become a more effective Agent for Change, and finding your own way forward to contribute at this time, because we're really going to need all hands on deck.

Steve: You've got to check this out. You can get it online at <https://thechangecode.net>. There are links there to buy the book.

Alright, well that was 2019. Let's take a break and come back and talk about 2020.

Nyck: Beautiful.

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