



## 70. Evolving Our Approach to Change, Part 1

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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 to you. Welcome to *Future Sense* on BayFM 99.9 with myself, Nyck Jeanes, and my co-host over the other side there, Steve McDonald. Good morning, Steve.

**Steve:** All the way over the other side here. Good morning. How are you?

**Nyck:** He's actually speaking to us from another dimension in another galaxy. He's ascended, one could say, or maybe not. I don't know.

**Steve:** I just have an adjustable chair.

**Nyck:** Well, we need to have adjustable brains in this time on the planet because clearly things aren't very easy to apprehend with the amount of uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity that exists. I guess that also applies to the way that we approach how we do things on this planet and how we approach the many challenges that we do have here.

**Steve:** Exactly. Today, we're going to have a look at gratitude as a strange attractor, so from a sort of advanced physics perspective, how gratitude can help us create things; and we'll look at what's happening in the world at the current time, as we always do, and make sense of what's up, and look at some of the natural patterns and flows and why things are the way they are right now.

**Nyck:** As part of that—and not exactly in opposition to—but the role of criticism and critique for change in the world. It's a thorny subject; for me, it's hard to actually think about

that. It seems like to be critical is a good thing. It's a natural bias in some senses; some research suggests that we need to be critical in order to survive, that it's important to drive us.

**Steve:** Certainly it's a natural dynamic, and particularly at this time, as we're exiting the Scientific-Industrial era, it makes a lot of sense that there is a lot of criticism and pushback against the old paradigm going on, so it's absolutely to be expected right now. But the last thing we want to do is be critical of criticism and we'll find out why.

**Nyck:** Yeah, I don't know. I think I wouldn't mind being critical of a criticism because maybe I'm just too nice a guy and I'm not critical enough—it's a possibility—but you will have some opinions out there, I am sure; we are sure. You can always text in on our text line and make any contribution that you would like. We are in the position here to be editors—we can be critical of your criticism—so we may or we may not refer to your texts, but we will be grateful for you, for receiving them.

**Steve:** Indeed. Always.

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**Nyck:** You're here on *Future Sense* with Nyck Jeanes and Steve McDonald. Thanks for joining us, and joining us all around the world, possibly, because we are broadcast everywhere. You can hear us streaming on [www.BayFM.org](http://www.BayFM.org) and of course, our edited podcasts go out a couple of days after, via our website. You can tune in there, [www.future sense.it](http://www.future sense.it) or @futuresenseshow Twitter account. You can certainly find us, it's not too difficult, and please do. Please listen back. If you've just joined us recently, in recent weeks, you can go back to earlier editions and get a full spectrum.

This morning we're talking a bit about gratitude and a little bit about criticism, two kind of completely opposite approaches of the human being and the way that we are with each other. I was just thinking about this and I'm thinking, I wonder how much an animal has gratitude, and certainly I've never seen animal criticise, but we don't really know, do we?

**Steve:** I don't know about that. If you've ever owned a cat ...

**Nyck:** True. You're a cat fan. I'm not a big fan, I have to say, but yeah, we're different there. I like dogs.

**Steve:** Cats are well known for rejecting their dinner.

**Nyck:** Yes, that's true.

**Steve:** So this is leading towards hacking the change process, essentially—understanding how change unfolds in a more complete way, and moving towards what is a Second Tier consciousness approach to working with change. I guess one of the key differences in the Second Tier approach is that it no longer fights against things in the change process, whereas in the First Tier, as we've evolved right through to even this emerging paradigm—this Relativistic Postmodern paradigm—it is still in the First Tier zone and it still tends to want to fight, even though it's not fighting physically at this point. We're evolving beyond physical violence, but there's still a lot of emotional violence and a lot of flat opposition to the way things have been.

**Nyck:** And understandably so, of course.

**Steve:** Of course, it's absolutely natural. This is not a criticism at all. It's just simply pointing to what is and when we're at that stage, when we're moving out of the Scientific-Industrial era as we are right now, and we're becoming more emotionally sensitive, more drawn to connect deeply with other humans and more likely to adopt a more peaceful approach to life and everything in general ...

**Nyck:** More able to, as we say often, walk in someone else's moccasins; walk in the shoes of another person—to have more empathy towards.

**Steve:** Exactly. To really be able to feel, in an embodied sense, what it's like to be in someone else's shoes, even though you're not them and you're not in the same circumstances as them, but we can sense that as a part of our expanding sensory perception. We still have this built-in rejection factor, though.

All the way through from when we first became human and then started to change into what was next, every time we go through a major transformation, we have a strong tendency to reject what's come before, and that's part of our process of gathering energy to be able to make the transition to what's next. So it's an essential part of change in the First Tier and it's playing out on a large scale right now with all the protests that we're seeing and civil unrest happening all around the world, which is really pushback against the old ways.

**Nyck:** I heard this morning that in Lebanon with the protests there, that they've actually formed a human chain across the whole country at the moment.

**Steve:** Wow.

**Nyck:** So with that sort of protest, and I think also what's going on in Hong Kong, we're seeing perhaps a slightly different approach. They're trying very hard not to be excessively violent, not to be aggressive, and yet, of course, the pushback is going to bring up, in some people, that understandable (to some degree) desire to fight, too. So there is that because, of course, people in the protests are not all the same; they're not coming from the same place inside themselves. As much as some people may think that, the truth is that we're all different and one person's response is going to be not someone else's.

**Steve:** That's very true. It depends upon our driving values, where we're at on that spiralling journey of change. What you say is exactly right—we live in a very complex world, and much of what we talk about on this show is a generalisation. We need to generalise just to be able to point out these different value sets and what they look like, and also to capture the overall global dynamics. So what's happening globally is a sum of everybody's values and all of the behaviours that go with that, and at the moment, we're moving from a place where the world has been dominated by Scientific-Industrial values, which have been very individually-oriented and driven by personal success and impacted by the kind of social systems that have been constructed from that Scientific-Industrial worldview, and we're very much into the change process now, although there's more tension to come before we reach a global tipping point and start to see those Relativistic-Postmodern values dominate globally. We're not there yet. One of the key signs of that tipping point is going to be the widespread adoption of systems which are designed according to these new values socially.

**Nyck:** But as we move towards that, there is a lot of emotional response and reaction to the changes and the instability on the planet in all sorts of directions—it might be in your personal life or certainly in global terms or in our societies—so there's a lot of confusion, a lot of denial. And those are also indicators, aren't they, of almost coming towards the bottoming out into the true crisis before change can really occur?

**Steve:** Yes, absolutely. One of the things I did years ago when I was working as a Change Consultant in Melbourne was realising that the emerging paradigm was reorienting us onto the human experience in an anthropocentric way, and it was also expanding our emotional capacity. I looked at the work of Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross who did a body of research with terminally-ill patients, and she mapped the emotional path through that change process from the first shock of realising that they were going to die, which, you know, can be equated to any major change in life—although that is perhaps the most extreme change that we have to face as humans—and then how they navigated that terrain of eventually coming to a place of acceptance and being okay with that outcome. It maps absolutely onto Clare Graves's map of our change process and how we change from a values point of view. The two fit together quite well, so we might take a short break and come back and I'll just talk us through how that maps, and the emotions of change.

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**Nyck:** You're here on *BayFM*, on *Future Sense* this morning. Thanks for joining us, as I said, all around the world. You can text in at any time. We do have a text today, a bit obscure, but actually, oddly, because it is sort of on the mark, we will be talking about, I guess, words: "Why is misspelling the word 'cool' a smart thing?" I don't know what that questions about; I don't know if it's a smart thing or not.

Certainly the way we use words is important; that's certainly part of what we're talking about today when it comes to our languaging. I like to point to the fact that in English, at least, the word 'spell' is exactly that—words are spells; they are powerful. So the words that you use at all times—for yourself, to yourself, in yourself, and certainly to others, and certainly with regard to the world, has an effect. We'll talk a little bit to that, too, because there is science that speaks to the neurophysiology of how we use language and how we use things like gratitude, for example, with ourselves and with each other.

**Steve:** If I say 'which [witch] words are spelled', is that a statement or a question?

If you know the answer, text in.

**Nyck:** Please do.

All right, so we're going to look at the change process.

**Steve:** Yes, let's look at the change terrain. In Clare Graves's research, he mapped out on a graph how we go through change. It's a paradoxical pattern that he came up with. Before we head in the direction of personal growth, we, first of all, head in the opposite direction, so it's a paradoxical pattern which is characteristic of all complex systems. Any kind of complex system, particularly complex adaptive systems, always seem to head in the opposite direction first in order to store and gather energy for the change, and that certainly showed up in the process of human change, and particularly the transformation of human values—changing our fundamental way of making sense of reality and giving birth to a new worldview with new values. So if you think of positive change as going in an up direction and negative change going in a down direction, we sort of flip downwards first before we go up. It maps out kind of like a rollercoaster, and if you look at any complex system change—some of these examples are the performance of the stock market, and also climate change—you'll see in the graphs these jagged-edge changes where the direction is reversed. It seems to be a process of like pulling back the elastic band on a slingshot, when we're storing tension in that elastic band in order to propel us in the other direction.

What Dr. Kübler-Ross found is that when people first face change—and of course, she was researching major transformational change, in other words the news that, okay, you're going to die soon—the first result is usually we go into shock. I guess it's an emotional overwhelm; we feel like we can't cope with actually absorbing that information, and we can go into a

place, I guess, of feeling numb and shocked. We get that physiological shock response in the body where blood is drawn away from our extremities and pumped towards the vital organs, which is a basic survival response, and we go through shock.

**Nyck:** And I guess that, in this day and age, especially with our communication devices—with the globe being so connected—that many people who engage with world issues probably feel shock on a daily basis.

**Steve:** That's certainly a probability, yes. If people are tuned into the mainstream media, which tends to be focused on shocking things—I mean, this has been our definition of news, hasn't it? The more shocking it is then the more newsworthy it is in the mainstream media—and I think that's one reason why a lot of people are moving away from consuming mainstream media.

**Nyck:** Yes, and seeking other explanations or alternative ways of seeing the change process, because it is too shocking and it can be very confusing, and of course, there is a great deal of manipulation now—and always was, probably—with things like what we now know as fake news, but propaganda generally. So, you can be shocked by something, but then very confused by what amount of truth is actually inherent in whatever you're seeing there now, so it becomes even more difficult to actually understand how to respond, I think.

**Steve:** That's very true, and the nature of the Scientific-Industrial mind has been an exploitative one as well, so people have learnt that if you shock people, they become liable for manipulation in certain ways. That's certainly been used as a tool, and we've spoken about propaganda and the invention of propaganda on the show before.

So that's certainly true, and I was definitely an early adopter in that respect. I stopped watching mainstream TV back in 2003, actually, and I don't regret that at all.

**Nyck:** I don't think I've watched much of mainstream TV for probably at least that long myself. I haven't had the proper television for a while.

**Steve:** Thankfully, we live in a world now where we can be mindful about what we choose to consume and we have choices, particularly through the Internet, in terms of what we can tune into and what kind of news services we subscribe to.

**Nyck:** I think it's very interesting to notice as you consume—the word 'consume' I will replace—as you engage with what's going on on the planet in whatever way you do, to notice what I've been noticing, which is what empowers you and what disempowers you. I think this is one question we could throw out there today, too, because clearly there's a lot of it that is there in order to disempower you, probably. Perhaps it's a conspiracy, perhaps

it's not, but certainly it would seem that that's something that is part of the zeitgeist of these times with regards to media, in particular.

**Steve:** It is, and I think a lot of it has to do with our sensitivity as well. What I see from studying Graves's work for years and years and years, and talking to people about it and experiencing it myself, I've got no doubt that our sensitivity increases as we evolve and we become more open, we become more susceptible to tuning into things. At the, let's say the less complex layers on the spiral, we are quite literally less sensitive in many different ways, and so in a way, we're more tolerant to these raw, shocking things. They don't impact us as deeply as they would if we have opened ourselves up.

**Nyck:** Or if we're not tolerant, we certainly respond in a more simplistic way, you could say—just a sort of knee-jerk reaction to things—and that's enough. It satisfies us and gives us some sort of sense of ego control, I would suggest, when you see a story and you go, 'well, it's that! They're the baddies, they've done wrong and I know what's right here.'

**Steve:** And that's related to our changing values. For example, in the Authoritarian Layer 4 on the spiral, which relates to the Agricultural era and is still very, very prominent in many different societies around the world, being right or being righteous and living a righteous life is one of the core aspects of our values. We tend to latch onto a set of rules—often religious rules, but they don't necessarily need to be religious; any kind of rules that are laid down by a higher authority which are attractive to us—and I guess there's some satisfaction that comes when we can prove to ourselves that we are righteous by pointing to somebody who wasn't following those rules and therefore had some unfortunate experience.

**Nyck:** And of course, you'll feel connected to your particular tribe with that righteousness because there'll be those others that support you and that are part of your organisation—your church, for example—who have the same general set of opinions. So there's a comfortability in that; there's a settling in into that tribal space.

**Steve:** That's right, and there is a great example of this in the news today. I woke up this morning and checked the headlines briefly, as I do, just to see what's going on, and the US President, Donald Trump, was tweeting that they had successfully cornered the leader of ISIS and he had died like a dog.

**Nyck:** Died like a dog. Blew himself up like a coward and like a dog.

**Steve:** Yes, and there was a real sense of that righteousness coming through there. People who are living according to those values also are often nationalistic because nationalism is

another form of authoritarianism and that's the way you would expect people to behave from that set of values—that satisfaction that, 'look, we live a righteous life, our rules are correct, people who don't follow our rules suffer these kinds of consequences.'

**Nyck:** They're dogs, their cowards and dogs. It's unfortunate, I mean, as soon as I read that—and I think we both had the same reaction—I mean, I don't know, this guy, this ISIS leader is probably a pretty evil man in some context—no doubt that's true—and him going is perhaps of benefit to many people out there, that's probably true, too, but for the President of the United States to use that sort of language in that sort of way, somehow brings the whole thing down to the same level that they were responding to, if you will.

**Steve:** Yes, and that's true. The whole narrative of evil people versus good people is a product of a certain set of values.

**Nyck:** 'Are you with us or against us?' as George W. Bush used to say.

**Steve:** This sensitivity issue applies here where, at that fourth layer, we may have gone through an initial heart opening, however, the capacity that gives us in an emotional sense is to connect with a first person, so it really needs to be someone that we're in the presence of, and it's still very easy within that value set to simply write off and shield ourselves to the impact of somebody who we've classed as evil. We put them in a category; they're not here, they're on the other side of the world; it's very, very easy for us to sit back and be smugly satisfied around their death. It would be a very different experience if Trump had been in the presence of that guy when he blew himself up, I can guarantee. The impact would have been far more serious, and this removal from the consequences of things is also, itself, a product of the Scientific-Industrial era, where we've separated ourselves from consequences.

**Nyck:** We see this, certainly, with the drone attacks that are being contested quite a lot by some of those operators. We've seen a number of people come out and say, 'well, this was what I did. I found myself in a bunker somewhere in the US saying, yes, kill these people here, and watching them explode thousands of miles away in one of these countries'. That dispassionate, that disengage, that detachment, is very troubling, and some people are going like, 'this is not good enough. I've just killed family people, no matter who they are and what they are said to have done, and I don't even know what they've done, really. I'm not even sure that they did those things. How do we know? I've just blown them up.'

**Steve:** Exactly, and those confessions, if you want to call them that, are evidence of a transformation of values in those people. Clearly when they went into that work and started doing that work, that wasn't their value set, but through the experience of doing it, it's opened them up to change.



**Nyck:** Indeed. We'll take a break here on *BayFM*. You are tuned to *Future Sense*.

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**Nyck:** You are on *Future Sense* here with Steve McDonald and Nyck Jeanes.

**Steve:** And we're talking about change dynamics today. We're working towards understanding a Second Tier approach of change and just currently talking through the emotional rollercoaster that comes with change; and we're going to get to talking about how that really shifts as we move into Second Tier. That, of course, opens up a whole lot of possibilities for working with change differently.

We were just talking about shock being the typical first reaction to sudden, unexpected change, and the next progression from that, once we start to get over the shock, is often to go into a place of denial. I guess this is fundamentally driven by fear of change or whatever we think the change might be bringing, and often there's a tendency to want just avoid the change altogether. Whether or not that's possible—and often it's not—we can still go into this place of avoidance and denial, pretending that it's not going to happen; pretending that we don't have to go through it, don't have to experience it. And I guess there's a lot of that going on at the moment in the world as we progress through this paradigm shift, of people avoiding the topic altogether and just pretending that life is going to keep going on as usual for the next couple of decades, and all of these compounding issues that we're facing at a global level just aren't going to stack up and can come back to bite us.

This speaks to the importance of our immediate life conditions in the change process, and this is fundamentally why most people in the world are not responding to news of some of these big challenges that we can see coming down the track—is that their day-to-day life conditions haven't really changed much. It takes that immediate experience of something being different and something creating an evolutionary tension in us to actually get us to change, and this is also why talking about change, even though there are many, many benefits that can come from that—and maybe we can talk about that in a minute—but the process of just talking about change is often not going to create action with other people around change. And of course, we've been seeing that for as long as people have been on Earth—people wanting change, talking about the need for change, but not getting a response from just talking.

**Nyck:** Yes, as someone says here (I don't have the source but it's very simple): "It's much easier to be a critic than an agent of change", and we do default there. I think also, when you're talking about denial and avoidance, even when we engage with the changes in the world, with the things that need to be done, then because things are so complex I think also a lot of people find themselves fixating on one explanation for things; one set of 'this is how it's going to be; this is what we need to do', and in a sense, avoid or deny contradictory

information because it becomes more complex and more difficult than to find a way to decide what sort of action needs to be taken.

**Steve:** That's right and you're talking to the next step in the process there, which is confusion—so shock, denial, and then typically, confusion—not knowing what to do, feeling overwhelmed, not having the answers, and then grasping at straws to try and make sense and explain to yourself, and come to grips with what's happening and perhaps why it's happened.

**Nyck:** The acronym VUCA, which we've mentioned a couple of times: Vulnerability, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity, which are really the descriptors of the world we now live in, pretty much.

**Steve:** Yes, and this confusion zone is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of the change process, because what's actually happening here is that it is where we're being faced with the evidence that our previous values, our previous ways of living, aren't working and they have worked for so long that obviously we've become comfortable; we've found those things to be our anchor points, and in reality, we can always go back to our values and know that, 'okay, when I've done this in the past, it's always worked'. All of a sudden now it doesn't work and it's like we have anchor points cut away and we drift like a ship that's lost its anchor at sea. That's very confusing and also very frightening because it implies a lack of control.

**Nyck:** And of course, we're seeing that with a lot of our young people with regard to the climate change situation—teenagers who have come out on the streets and all those actions that we've seen in the last few months, are compelled by, I guess, all of these. First, shock, and maybe—probably—a very quick movement through denial and avoidance to a place of 'it's complex, it's confusing and I have to do something', and there's a lot of aggressive energy, you could say; a lot of anger that arises out of the injustice of things in the world. Understandably so, but all part of the process as we move through.

**Steve:** Yes, and you could say that this movement through change is an unconscious movement; it's being buffeted by the currents. Often I talk about the process of change as being kind of like crossing a river. If it's a fast flowing river and you are not familiar with it and you don't know where the currents run, then crossing the river is a damn frightening thing because you know that once you jump into the water, you're committed to whatever the current's going to do to you, and yet you don't know which way the currents are flowing, whether you're going to get sucked under, caught in a whirlpool and stuck, or maybe smashed against a rock. This is really a good analogy for the change process. It's like jumping into a river. Once you jump, you're committed. You can't go back and you've got to go with the flow, and when we don't understand what the currents are, how things are going

to flow, then it's a very frightening thing to do. But it's that plunging in, that immersion in the change process and the loss of our anchor points on the previous bank, which then provide the impetus for us to actually swim. In the same way, this descent down into a place of crisis and chaos, which is often typified by anger—so we've gone through shock, denial or avoidance, confusion and then into typically anger—or if we're unable to get in touch with our anger and express it, then it can become buried and so we go into depression. You were referring to the younger generations where we're seeing a lot of talk in the media at the moment about that depression that's arising from the climate discussion, which comes from a lack of knowing what to do, a lack of an obvious solution and, I guess, a feeling of helplessness, like we can't make a difference at the moment.

If you imagine this change journey being a bit like a rollercoaster ride where you're going down into a big dip, and at the bottom, you're bottoming out, and it's in this place that the tension is maximised, in the same way as a rollercoaster works, as the rollercoaster is going down into that dip, it's also storing energy for the rise up the other side, right? So that's exactly what's happening here, is that evolutionary tension being stored, often expressed as anger, and at the bottom of the dip, it's like the alchemists furnace; it's like the pot on the stove where things reach a critical point. They start to boil, they get transformed, things merge and change, and that is experienced in our body as changes in our neurochemistry and rewiring of networks and those sorts of things.

**Nyck:** And in the alchemical process, it has to be burnt right down to dust, basically to white powder in the proper alchemical transfiguration. I think the term is *calcinatio*, that part that you're talking about—that burning down.

**Steve:** That's right, and that then leads to the tipping point where through these transformations that take place within us, we find through insights, some new framework for making sense of reality, and that then gives us a glimpse of new anchor points. It's not over yet by any means, but we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel, and this is where the breakthroughs occur in the change process and we start to rise up the other side of the rollercoaster ride. Typically, as we're shooting up the other side, we become aware that, 'oh, shit, we've got all this momentum from coming down into the dip and now it's pushing us back up', so that's a wonderful relief; it's a very exciting place to be, but we're not through the change process yet. We have to actually ride through that and have some integration process and support to bed down these new changes within us before we reach the rise on the other side of the rollercoaster trip.

**Nyck:** And of course, there's always the danger at that bottoming out point, of becoming stuck, and we're seeing in the world, particularly the Western world, a great increase in various mental health issues, depression being a very strong one where we see a rise in suicide rates in the First World in many cases, pretty much across the board, and other serious mental health problems. We see the opioid crisis in America and in this country, and

so on and so on, as results of that as well—people actually not using that energy of bottoming out and actually finding that energy stuck in these sort of mental health issues.

**Steve:** Yes, and we're on one hell of a rollercoaster ride as a global community right now. We're navigating a change process that is going to take perhaps decades. My best guesses—I don't pretend to predict the future—but my best guesses for a global tipping point, point to the early 2030s, so we've got quite some years ahead of us.

Of course, different people are going through the change process at different rates and different times globally, depending on their local life conditions, so for many people, they're already experiencing this crisis. For a whole bunch of people, though, things are fine—life's comfortable, life's good, and all these people are a bit crazy that are talking about the problems, you know? So over time, everybody's going to in some way go through a shift over the next decade-plus, and the more we can understand this pattern, the more we can teach people about the terrain that needs to be traversed during the change process, the emotions that we need to experience, and how we go about changing, then the smoother the ride can be for people.

**Nyck:** Indeed.

Thanks for some of your texts coming in: "Hello, good morning, Love the show. Keep up the good chat", from Ben; and also from D. who's written: "Empathetic understanding is the grace of the 21st century that will deliver us from the old demonising blame games of the past. As I tell my daughter, there are no bad people, darling, just sometimes people can do mean things because they are stressed and scared. They are still good, darling. She repeats it back to me and gets it, really gets it, because she has not been programmed otherwise, thankfully, not yet. As Shakespeare said, of course, 'there's nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so'."

**Steve:** Yes, that's really great and often those people who we do label as evil or bad are simply people who don't have the capacity to sense and perceive the impact of their actions on other people. In Graves's model, the third layer, which he called Egocentric, is one of the extreme examples of that, where we act very much upon our own needs and wants and desires in the moment, and literally don't have the capacity to really understand how we're impacting other people, and the emergence of the capacity to start to sense that is what triggers the transformation into the next layer.

**Nyck:** And clearly, when we're looking for world change on some of the big issues—the obvious one being climate change—we have to take into consideration that there are a very large number of people on the planet who simply do not respond in the way that we might respond to these sort of things, and in the way that Steve is talking about, have a completely different perspective and different ways of responding to life.

**Steve:** That's right, yes.

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