



59. Growing into Flow

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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.

Steve: I was going to move on just to talk a little bit about flow states and early Second Tier consciousness—by that I mean the seventh Layer in Clare Graves's model, which is often called Integral or Integrative. It is typically likened to being in a flow state where we're combining the opposites—we're combining formlessness to form. One of the first places we emerged in terms of public discussion of flow was within the realm of elite athletes operating in flow states.

Nyck: Oh, yes, 'in the zone', so to speak.

Steve: Yes, in the zone. When I was working, over 10 years ago, as a consultant in Melbourne, I got invited to join a discussion group at the *Victorian Institute of Sport* where the head coaches from the various disciplines would get together once a month and talk about extreme performance. They often centred around this discussion of flow states: how do we get into flow states? What is a flow state? What does it feel like? How do we train and equip people to enter into flow states to obtain that extreme performance? The reason I got invited was really because of my professional background—having worked in extreme professions of having been at war, having been a rescue helicopter pilot operating in extremes, and having experienced flow states many, many times myself—and I used to talk about things like being a rescue helicopter pilot and being in the middle of a rescue and how my way of being, my way of operating, would fall into this flow state where my body would be doing things without

the rational mind engaging, particularly simple things. I might be hovering over a site where a patient is being winched up and the wind is gusting and I have to constantly be moving the controls to keep the helicopter still. I can remember doing that one day and my rational mind noticed that it wasn't actually controlling my body movements—my hands and feet were moving the controls to keep the helicopter still—and so there was some other way that my self was assessing what was going on in the environment around me and responding to it without it being channelled through my rational mind.

Nyck: On a related topic, because you mentioned sport there, our friend Peter mentioned a show to me that's on the *ABC* at the moment about the Australian Rules football team, Collingwood. It's called *From Inside Out*. Apparently it's an incredible thing about their approach—and I haven't seen it, but it sounds similar—that this football club, which is already at the top of this year's AFL competition, are working with their players in a completely different way, to do with love and understanding, to do with emotional and mental opening up, rather than the sort of toughing it out kind of approach.

Steve: Who would have guessed? Football's evolving. My god!

Nyck: But it's fantastic because, yeah, we're seeing these examples popping up everywhere.

Steve: Absolutely, it's beautiful. It's such an encouraging sign to see this happening, this enriching of life.

Just getting back to the flow state, when we're in a flow state, life is not necessarily less surprising, but it tends to be less chaotic. When we're in the flow, then miracles can happen—the unexpected—and of course, that manifests in sport as extreme performance sometimes. By being in a flow state, what I really mean is I'm talking about this dynamic interplay of yin and yang, yin and yang, yin and yang, and it's dynamic action—it's constant switching from one to the other, or evolution of, transition from, one to the other. Of course, when that transition happens, the one that has been dominant or active surrenders, the other one grows, and then, just as it is peaking, it gives birth to the seed of the other—and that's reflected in the tai chi symbol as those little dots of the opposites nested inside the peak of the other.

There's no need to understand everything in order to get into a flow state. In fact, you have to surrender the understanding process. Infinity, which is the quantum field, which is where the miracles, the magic emerged from, cannot be understood with the rational mind, simply because it is infinite, right? The rational mind cannot grasp infinity—it just cannot do it. The truth is and always will remain a mystery to the rational mind, and we need to accept that and move beyond it in order to get into these flow states. So it's

really about tapping into that mystery and embracing it, allowing it to enrich our life, and it comes through being non-rational, basically. It's what the Taoists call 'action through nonaction'.

Nyck: And I suspect most of the people listening to a show like this, and this station, living in this region—and you might be somewhere else out there, hello if you are—probably have connections to or experiences of that kind of state in one sort or the other. If you do, again, please text in because I think these kind of capacities, as we're speaking about, are emerging in all sorts of places.

Steve: Absolutely. It would be great if some people want to text in their own experience of that; of moving beyond the rational mind and discovering that magic, that mystery, flowing into their life as a result.

As we were talking about before, in the lead up to this big transition into Second Tier, we are still operating in place of either/or having dominance from either the left-brain or the right-brain. That gives rise to rejection and resistance when we're operating from one side of the brain and its opposite arises, and it's not what we're experiencing so we resist it, reject it. Inevitably, when we do that, we often find that something unexpected will manifest for us in life, so there's a clue in that to our own creative process, how we actually manifest things in our life. Because of this weird, paradoxical flow within that dualistic energy system, the yin and the yang, when we're focused on one thing, it will automatically rise as the other, right? Consequently, life is often full of these unexpected and maybe unwanted experiences that we're manifesting ourselves.

Nyck: So true.

A couple of texts have come in. "There's a subscription and streaming channel called Gaia (yes, very familiar with Gaia) worth a mention and a look if you haven't already, because it covers the same content that we do", and to some degree that's true. Yes, indeed. But this is an interesting text here: "All the chakras can be used, but they can get overstimulated or overused. Only through the heart chakra you can direct as much energy as this world can give us. The heart chakra cannot get overloaded as the other chakras do. It is not how you use the energy to show how big you can be or how you can move through the different energies, it's the capacity to direct the energy through the heart. All complications are just a product of energy misplacement, really, a product on either left or right hand hemispheres of the brain activity. Thanks, guys." So that question, the focus about how the heart cannot be overloaded.

Steve: I don't think that's a question, I think that's a statement. If we look at research around our heart field, to the energetic field, particularly through the work of the *HeartMath Institute*, then what they are finding is that our energetic field is centred on

the heart and it's shaped like a torus. For those of you who don't know what a torus looks like, it's like a doughnut without the icing.

Nyck: Still got a hole, though.

Steve: Yes. In the centre of the torus is the portal to the quantum field, and so it is a portal to infinite energy. I'm just backing up what that listener is saying.

Nyck: Yes, that's a good statement, and we don't disagree with that, that's for sure. The focus on the heart chakra, the ability, as you said, to channel—to direct the energy through the heart chakra—is a capacity which I think is growing, and it also needs practise, so to speak.

Steve: Yes, and this is a developmental thing, so for many, many people—in fact, I'd say for most people on the planet—this is not their experience of day-to-day life. It is a process of growth and that growth involves sequentially activating the chakras, and in that process of growth, we can have very, very different experiences to this. This experience of having a feeling of infinite capacity and a portal to the quantum field through our heart chakra is a place that we arrive at through a long developmental process.

Nyck: Thanks for your texts. We got a lot of texts in here; we may not get to them all. Just quickly, though, Dudley texted when Steve was talking about flying the helicopter and basically not thinking in that space and yet absolutely facilitating what was necessary in the moment of response to the situation, and Dudley says: "Yes, I experienced this when doing a learning to touch-type game, and suddenly I found my fingers spontaneously typing letter combinations before I consciously recognised the letters." Indeed.

Steve: Exactly, and in fact, most people experience it when they're driving. Of course, when we learn how to drive, we have to think about it at first, but then we just do it without thinking.

Nyck: I might just mention this too, now. Tiana's written in: "Yes, I've had a couple of experiences whilst working on people's necks. The first time I was working on a friend's neck, I fell into a profound state of deep wisdom and all knowingness for about 15 minutes, and have been trying to get back to that state ever since. The second time, I was also working on a client's neck when something took over my hands and I was

releasing the muscles and realigning the vertebrae and it wasn't me doing it, but it was also profound, and now I have the ability to work on soft tissue and align the spine without cracking. I always thought it was a guide coming to show me how to treat necks but maybe I was just in the flow. Whichever. I now specialise in necks."

Steve: That's beautiful. Thank you for sharing that.

Nyck: Yes, thanks Tiana—a good friend of mine.

Steve: Awesome. Some people call that kind of process moving from form to formlessness, and it's important to remember that the journey to get there, just like the journey throughout life in general, takes us through these different zones. We're born into formlessness and we grow into form where the rational mind is dominant, and then we can transcend that into a higher level of formlessness. Form or structure has to be involved in some way, so it's good to have some kind of structural basis from which to move into formlessness. I guess I know it best from the world of martial arts, where typically when you start studying martial arts, you're taught a form—so a structured way of moving that you repeat over and over and over again—and through the repetition and the practise and the meditation involved with that, you eventually reconfigure the whole way that your body moves and you move into the capacity to operate without the structure—formlessly, but following a particular path.

Nyck: Yes. Another analogue, of course, is if you learn to play musical instrument, you do need to have some skills, usually.

Steve: Exactly. It's exactly the same thing. It doesn't matter what topic you're talking about, that learning process just goes along this pathway. In learning theory, sometimes it's described as the journey from unconscious incompetence where you don't know what you don't know to conscious incompetence, where you start to learn and you realise that you're incompetent, and then to conscious competence where you can operate competently when you are consciously focusing on it—so that's the rational mind dominating there—then, with the achievement of mastery, you go to a place of unconscious competence where you can be competent without the rational mind having to think or control, which is the flow state.

Nyck: Yes. Another text on exactly that: "For example of me being in the flow, driving to the airport and the traffic slows to a crawl so I'll be late. I just surrendered. I let go and disengaged my normal response, annoyance. It was neither a good thing or a bad thing, and literally a moment later, an HOV lane (I'm not sure what that is) began on the

freeway and I pulled into it and zoomed along and got to my flight on time. If I'd been angry, that lane would have not collapsed into the particle of reality."

Steve: There you go. That's hacking the matrix, right there.

Nyck: That's hacking the matrix right there. There you go. Well done.

Steve: Nice work.

Nyck: That's all. Great work from all of our listeners. Well done.

Steve: Indeed.

So ... we're talking about everything and nothing today.

Nyck: Intellect and intuition. I mean, you're talking about this now and I just want to maybe flesh a little bit out, about the fact that in one sense, these are opposites and yet, of course, they're also not, in the sense that we're encompassing everything—transcending and including everything. How do you work with intellect and intuition together? I mean, you're sort of saying that in these examples you're giving, but I think it's a place of quite profound confusion for many people at the moment. As we're seeing from the texts that are coming, people are having these kind of experiences of more intuitive flow states on one hand, and on the other hand, we're having to deal, still, with a very rational world overall, and the intellect that needs to be engaged to deal with the very real—supposedly real—things that we have to deal with on a daily basis.

Steve: That's a really nice question, because it feeds into what I was going to talk about next, which is around the personal practice of this. First and foremost, the most important thing is to be in integrity. We're talking about operating in an integrated way, which we can all achieve in various ways within the First Tier of consciousness, however, we're achieving it as a kind of a radical difference to the normal flow of life, which is where we're encountering this left-brain/right-brain alternation and we're accepting, rejecting and trying to juggle the paradox. But regardless of that, for most of us in life within the First Tier of consciousness, we do achieve some level of mastery in some thing, and it might be something relatively urbane but nevertheless, we all have the capacity and often do that.

What we're talking about is transitioning into Second Tier where this becomes the norm, and on occasion we might fall out of it, so it's the exact opposite of being in the

First Tier. The important aspects of that experience for us in terms of creating this, start with being in integrity within ourselves—so I'm talking here about our relationship with our self—and moving beyond any internal dichotomy where part of us is struggling against another part of us. That is a growth process, of course, and it goes through that same process of learning, where we start out not being aware that part of us is struggling against another part of us and we become aware of that, but we don't know how to control it.

Nyck: Or we even enjoy that part, I would suggest, too.

Steve: Tell me more, Nyck.

Nyck: Well, I think there's a part of self-sabotage in many of us that enjoys the battle between those different parts of ourselves, and that becomes its own little cul de sac, its own little addiction at times, until it's not.

Steve: Yes, isn't that interesting? I mean, I'm a firm believer in that everything is right in some way and everything is leading us along this path of growth in some way, and no doubt there will be some beneficial outcome, eventually.

Nyck: Yes. Well, the HOV lane has just opened up and thanks for the texter who is clarifying what HOV stands for. Did you know?

Steve: I didn't, no.

Nyck: It's actually the High Occupancy Vehicle lane.

Steve: Oh, there you go.

Nyck: So when we're all together in the same direction, the lane will open up and off we go, zooming off to the future.

Steve: That's great. They used to call those Transit Lanes once upon a time.

Nyck: That's right. HOV sounds more interesting. Deeper.

Steve: It does. It sort of sounds like it should have hovercraft going down it, doesn't it?

Nyck: That's right. HOV—hovercraft.

Steve: Yes.

So, first and foremost, being in integrity—growing beyond that place where we are struggling against ourselves. Once we achieve that integrity, it allows us to stand on solid ground, metaphorically—be solidly grounded—and when we can be solidly grounded, then we can act firmly and stay balanced without throwing ourselves off-balance, whereas if we're not balanced inside, then we're not balanced outside either. For me, this again, is a lesson that I've learnt through the practice of meditative martial arts, where if my mind is not present—in other words, if it's somewhere else—then my body will be off-balance. Often that will show up where I'm doing my training routine and all of a sudden I lose my balance and I realise that my mind wasn't here; it was somewhere else, and therefore the mind was creating the balance which manifested in the body. With balance, then we can act firmly and stay balanced, and when we can do that, we can act and influence people and life wisely, humbly and softly and remain in the flow of life. What we're effectively doing is we're opening up space within our life for that mystery and magic to flow in, which was quite beautifully described by some of the listeners' texts.

Nyck: Exactly. This doesn't happen very often, but I'm going to quote the *Bible* here, because it popped into my head: "The meek shall inherit the earth." In a way, this is what you're saying.

Steve: Yes.

Nyck: That ability to have to soft power, you might say, is the capacity which we're evolving, whereas for many of us, I think, what we thought of about how to reach change internally and externally was kind of like, 'let's go gung ho at this; let's break down the barriers, let's pull down the structures'. We're seeing this, of course, all around the world at the moment as an expression, but at the same time, there's this feeling that we're articulating today that there's something else going on for many, many people now on the planet who can actually feel this other change moving through them—this softer power, this meekness, but not meek, in that ... you know what I mean, I think.

Steve: Yes, and until we become conscious of the natural flow of things, then often we're working against the natural flow and we don't know it. This is the unconscious incompetence place. This doesn't mean that when we get into the flow state, we're not going to be surprised by life—it doesn't mean that at all—and it doesn't necessarily mean that things are going to transform radically. What it means is that WE transform radically—our perception, our experience of life, transforms radically—and whatever happens, we will understand and be able to accept why it happened and it will further our growth, our expansion, in some way.

Nyck: It goes back to what we were talking about earlier, about sports people and being in the zone. It is that, isn't it? Because if you are in that zone in yourself and radiating, so to speak—emanating that beingness in this new way, you could say—that, itself, has profound effects that we may not be aware of, and yet to really own how powerful that space can actually be to transform things.

Steve: Yes, absolutely. And those athletes, you know, they don't get there accidentally. They get there through solid structure underneath, which is through their application, their training, and their learning. So in order to operate in this flow state on a day-to-day basis, we also have to have that nesting of structure underneath, and that most often comes as structured practice of some sort—mindful practice, meditative practice—that then allows the other to layer over the top.

Nyck: Beautiful. Let's take one more break and we'll come back and finish up.

Nyck: We've been talking about the play of opposites today.

Steve: That's right, and growing into flow, most recently. And we've covered everything and now we're left with nothing ... except a few text messages.

Nyck: The last few text messages here, and they come in and out from a couple of different people, so I'm not sure how they relate directly to each other. One person has written—I think it might be Dudley—saying: "I think it is when our awareness shifts from taking in an increasing number of distinct items to a sense of all integrated into a oneness." Yes, that's pretty cool. Then he says: "and the shift is abrupt." I think that follows on from what you were saying. There's a couple of other texts that came in between that. And this is a beautiful—thanks to Peter M. for writing this: "Surrender

and trust, fearlessness and focus, yin and yang, allowing space for all that is. Beautiful. Thanks, guys, Peter"

Steve: Thank you.

Nyck: Thank you indeed. Thanks for your contributions, all of you today. It's been fantastic.

Steve: It has been awesome.

Nyck: And also not awesome.

Steve: It's everything and nothing.

Nyck: I mean, have fun folks with this, you know, because we're not making light of—well, we are making light, it seems—but it doesn't have to be difficult to start to approach this way of thinking, I guess you could say. Not that any of us are experts here. I feel like I'm learning continually, sitting across from this man here, and I'm sure he learns things from me, too, occasionally.

Steve: Of course. I do.

Nyck: But just that ability to be open to the greater feeling of being in this world and the potential that we actually have now for true transformation. I think many of us are really reading that in our environment, in our reality, in our internal space. I hope so. I think that's true. It's easy to generalise and we are in a bubble here, that's true, but nevertheless, have a look at what's happening in the world and the breaking down of all of the structures that we've known and held to be the stability of our universe for hundreds of years, if not thousands. They're all breaking down, and what's left? What's left there is something else that's emerging in the human heart, I would suggest.

Steve: That's right, and we're moving into a very intense period of change that may well last for the next decade or even two, in my opinion. During that time, we are going to gradually see the collapse of our social structures and modern way of living, and the emergence of what's next. The old things won't go away—they never do. We still have evidence of many, many older ways of living, very prevalent within society, but in terms

of our dominant global culture, we're moving to something new. We're adding another layer—something that's more complex, something that's demanding that we grow with it, grow with the planet, and move beyond the either/or mindset which has been the result of this left-brain/right-brain alternative dominance during the First Tier of consciousness. We're making this huge leap into Second Tier where it's a both/and space, and we are literally moving to a place where we can operate with both left- and right-brain active at the same time in an integrated way.

Nyck: Yes, and it just occurs to me that you can practise a very simple little technique that I practised years ago in workshop that I was involved in, where you find a friend—or maybe a stranger—and someone comes with a topic, like 'there's a spider that's climbing up the drainpipe and suddenly a lightning bolt strikes the ground nearby', and the next person picks up the story. The tendency is for the other to say, 'oh, but something else' and to contradict or to go against, rather than saying 'yes, and'. So you take a story and you just go, 'yes, and', and the person continues. Now, that seems very obvious and simple at the beginning, but if you do this for five, ten minutes with someone else, the energy lifts up and an extraordinary new capacity to see ideas, visions and connections occur, quite immediately, really, for most people.

Steve: I agree. It's a great exercise.

Nyck: Some people are quite challenged by it, of course, also because ...

Steve: It is challenging.

Nyck: Yes. Many of us just like to have the contradictions, we like to have the opposite because it makes us feel kind of safe, I think.

Steve: It's been the way of the world for a long time.

Nyck: It's been the way of the world for a long time.

Thanks for joining us here. That's it for *Future Sense*. We'll be back next Monday morning, and keep those texts rolling in. Stay tuned to *BayFM*. We know where the love is here, and it's for you and for each other. That's how it should be.

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