



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

**Steve:** Good morning. Wonderful to be here again Nyck.

**Nyck:** Yes. Well, we just heard the news there—there is always negative stuff in the news; that seems to be the predominant thing that people focus on with news reporting north, east, west and south, but ... there's other things going on in the world. We're going to focus a bit on some positive signs of change today.

**Steve:** That's right. We can look at signs of progress and particular signs of emerging new human values, new ways of being human that are more complex and more capable.

**Nyck:** Very good, and folks, just remember that you can text in at any time. The text line comes up on the computer right here, 0434 371119. Please text in and anything you'd like to say, contribute, or bring our attention to. We'd love to hear from you.

**Nyck:** Here on *BayFM* 99.9, you're tuned to *Future Sense* with myself, Nyck Jeanes, and Steve McDonald. We're looking at signs of change, the emergence of new values and new ways of being—some of those signs that we can point to as a positive indication of the transition to a new paradigm in our consciousness, in our beingness on this planet, in fact. A big task, but it's happening.

**Steve:** It is happening indeed. There are multiple shifts underway all around the world, not only the shift from the Modern Scientific-Industrial era to what's emerging, which some people might call Postmodern, but it's a humanistic, network-centric way of being human. That is obviously the headline but there are lots of other shifts underway as well. In fact, pretty much every society around the world is changing in its own way, and depending on its starting point—whether it's starting from a Traditional-Tribal way of living or perhaps a Martial, conflict-based way of living, or an Agricultural way of living—all of these societies are going through change.

It's a result of many, many different things—I guess you could generalise and say an increase in the complexity of life conditions, which is what Clare Graves would say from his research, and those life conditions are all-encompassing. They include what we've created ourselves in terms of our physical life conditions, they include our psychological life conditions—so the sum result of our psychological history, what that's brought us to today know how people are thinking around the world—and also life conditions from off the planet—the influence of our sun, the influence of this particular part of the galaxy that our solar system is flying through at the moment. That includes, as discovered by the *NASA Interstellar Boundary Explorer* mission, which is their *Voyager* spacecraft, the fact that we seem to be crossing into a new part of our galaxy right now. Our solar system is transiting out of what's called the Local Cloud and entering into another part of the galaxy called the G-Cloud, which is different ambient weather conditions.

**Nyck:** It's not to be confused with the G-spot.

**Steve:** No, not at all, although there may be a G-spot in the G-Cloud that we haven't discovered yet.

**Nyck:** Exactly true.

**Steve:** We'll keep an eye out for that.

So what we're going to have a look at here is some of the more obvious things today, and these are the things that quite typically don't make the headlines in the news. As you said earlier on, the news often focuses on what's wrong, what's dramatic. There are

lots of things that are changing and things that are emerging in the world which are evidence of more complex ways of thinking and being, evidence of new, more co-operative, more community-oriented values, and also there are some hidden signs which most people probably wouldn't notice which come from the non-linear dynamics of complex systems. We won't talk so much about those today because we often talk about those anyway, and often those signs are, in an obvious sense, taking us in what seems to be the wrong direction but because of the complex nature of these different systems in the way that they operate, then sometimes they go backwards just before they go forwards. We might touch on that briefly, but mostly we're going to look at the obvious things.

**Nyck:** Can I just mention quickly that as you're talking, I'm thinking about, as you said at the beginning there, the different changes going on throughout the world. Wherever people and communities, societies, nations are situated generally in their layer of development and evolution, they are emerging.

You can think right now of the battle, so to speak, or the issue between Hong Kong and mainland China as a good example of this, and we talked about this off-air a little bit, that Hong Kong, having been a British protectorate for all those years clearly had a much more Western influence, clearly had a lot more freedom, clearly had a lot more financial freedom, and a lot more other aspects like their population growing up in an education system, which was, I guess, more Western and so on. They're coming up against now, after 20-odd years, being back under the umbrella of China proper, mainland China, the pressure to submit to what looks like these extradition laws—somewhat arcane and backward-looking in terms of the perspective of how the Chinese mainland and the Chinese government in particular sees things, coming from an earlier stage of evolution, you could say—so there's this contest between Hong Kong and China, in a sense, that is very much an example of what you're saying, isn't it?

**Steve:** Absolutely. It was always going to be a problem because of those things you just mentioned. The political system in China, really—and everything we say on this show is a generalisation because there are so many different complexities and unique conditions around the world that we can't speak to all of them—so in a general sense, the Chinese communist system of government is evidence of a former era, a former paradigm from a Western perspective, which has really come out of the Agricultural era. It's a relatively rigid system, although certainly in recent decades it's loosened up a hell of a lot because it's evolving itself. But Hong Kong, being under Western influence and being a free country and also one of the world's amazing melting pots where so many different cultures came together—it was a crossroads for travel and all those sorts of things.

**Nyck:** Yes, my mother used to call Honkers. She used to go there all the time.

**Steve:** And that kind of complexity is juice for evolution, for development, and so it was always going to be an issue with Hong Kong going back under Chinese mainland control and we're seeing that values clash now. People who have enjoyed freedom up until recently are now pushing back against some of the more rigid controls which are trying to be established, and I guess from the mainland China perspective, they're trying to reel it in and get it under control.

**Nyck:** It's interesting, too, because in terms of Clare W. Graves's work, which we refer to often—and if you haven't listened before, you will have to listen back to our other podcasts at [www.futuresense.it](http://www.futuresense.it) for some of the previous podcasts where we've talked about all these things—but in terms of Graves's work, it seems to me that Hong Kong has been very Layer 5, which is the 'Orange' layer, for most of its history under British protectorism, and now, in a sense, with up to 2,000,000 people (that's what they're saying) in the streets at the moment, that seems to be an emergence into a more communal, into a networked, network-centric organisation against this older Chinese formulation.

**Steve:** Yes, absolutely. With everything going through change, we should expect Hong Kong to be transitioning from 5 to 6, which is from the Modern Scientific-Industrial which has been the dominant paradigm for the last few hundred years, into this more network-centric, humanistic, human-values-centred way of being. For China itself, of course, its dominant shift at the moment is probably from that more rigid Agricultural, very structured, controlled kind of way of being, into a more free market, Modern Scientific-Industrial way, and certainly that seems to be evident from the widespread industrialisation and the power of China that's emerging as a very dominant country globally.

These things are, like I said, generalisations. There are lots and lots of complexities. One of the things that makes it really interesting is the new technology which is coming out. We have this thing called trickle-down effect with technology, so some of our technologies are quite advanced and they'll emerge out of centres which are relatively developed or relatively evolved. This is very complex thinking that leads to the creation and distribution of this technology, and those technologies then become available to everybody, so you've got people in what are still very much Traditional-Tribal village-type living scenarios who are getting smartphones and getting on the internet and those sorts of things, so it creates a very, very rich and interesting situation.

**Nyck:** Indeed it does. I hesitated there because 5G immediately popped into my head and we are not going to go to 5G today but all these technologies are interfacing, are coming together in a variety of ways, and as Steve is saying, we always say the complexity of the system is really what needs to be acknowledged and focused on in a way; there's no simple one way that things are. And that's exciting, too, because it gives

opportunity always for choice and change to emerge out of how we approach with awareness and consciousness what's actually going on on the planet.

**Steve:** Yes, so what I will do now is I'll just walk us through. We'll focus on the emergence of Layer 6 from Clare Graves's model, which is this quite obvious, at a global level, emergence of a very human-centred perspective—many people are calling this the Anthropocentric era for that reason—and so we're looking at everything from a very, very human perspective. That sounds like an obvious thing, but there's a real turning inward with the emergence of this particular set of human values, so we're taking a lot more notice of ourselves, who we are, how we're showing up in the world, what we need to change about ourselves in order to adapt to what the world is calling for from us.

Some of the key themes that are emerging with this particular layer and the changes from the Layer 5, the Modern Scientific-Industrial, into this Layer 6 can be traced pretty easily back to the mid-eighteen hundreds, at least. It probably started before then, but that was when it started to become obvious within society. The key driver of this particular way of being human is a desire for deep and meaningful human connection—a desire for everybody to be noticed, everybody to get their fair share of things, everybody to have their own voice ...

**Nyck:** Everybody to be an Instagram star.

**Steve:** Yes, exactly. And it's also characterised by an expanding perspective on the world. From the Modern Scientific-Industrial standpoint, we looked out at the world and we saw the world as a collection of opportunities that we could potentially explore and exploit, and we would look at all those different opportunities and try and choose which was the best option for us to follow. It was a multiplistic way of thinking—that's what Graves' called it—and we're moving into a what is a Relativistic way of thinking, so rather than having one standpoint and looking out from there, we're now moving into a way of being human that allows us to move our place of observation around and put ourselves in someone else's shoes, figuratively. Without moving from our lounge chair, we can literally do that—put ourselves in someone else's shoes on the other side of the world.

**Nyck:** The wisdom of the moccasins, as you referred to before.

**Steve:** Yes, it reminds me that Beatles song: "without going out of my door".

Some of the themes that we're seeing showing up—and we'll look at some examples of these later on. The first is: calls for social justice and equal rights. These were some of

the earliest things that really showed up as changes in society back in the mid-eighteen hundreds when we saw these social justice movements emerging around women's rights, racial equality and those sorts of things.

A flattening of hierarchies—so looking back at the Modern Scientific-Industrial era, one of the things that looks wrong to many people now is the idea that power has been centralised and these hierarchies have been built, and the most benefit has gone to the people at the top of those hierarchies.

**Nyck:** Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

**Steve:** The wealth has filtered to the upper end of the hierarchy and those sorts of things so there's a strong desire to want to flatten hierarchies and for people to have more input from all places within society to break down those layers of society.

Networking in general. We've had the emergence of networking technology, which has really come out of Layer 5 and it's one of the obvious examples of how a paradigm will solve the problems of the previous paradigm but then it will create new problems. Layer 5, the Modern Scientific-Industrial, has created a problem for itself through network technology. That network technology has increased complexity and it's driven the evolutionary tension that's causing the emergence of a new way of thinking, a new paradigm. Just taking a brief look at the status of social network sites around the world at the moment for example, *Facebook* stands out as by far the largest, with about 2.3 billion users—and I'm quoting from a website called [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com)

**Nyck:** Yes, *YouTube* comes second with 1.9 billion followers.

**Steve:** Yes, followed by *WhatsApp*—1.6; *Facebook Messenger* gets its own line there—1.3 billion.

**Nyck:** Oh, I hate *Facebook Messenger*.

**Steve:** And then going down in order: *WeChat*, *Instagram*, *QQ* and I don't even know what that means, to be honest—*Qzone*—there's a few here that are obviously not on our radar, but *Qzone*, *Tiktok*, *Sina Weibo*, *Reddit*, *Twitter*.

**Nyck:** I'm surprised about *WeChat*. That's the Chinese one, isn't it?

**Steve:** I think so.

**Nyck:** Yes, so that is up there. **W**hat does that indicate to you? I mean that's a lot of people involved in these platforms, of course—in these networks; they're essentially networks.

**Steve:** Exactly, and so there's a good slice of the global population which is already living in a networked way. That doesn't necessarily mean that the values are reflective of Layer 6 because people will use these networks for many, many different reasons and no doubt there would be a full spectrum of human values within the user sets of these particular networks, but just the fact that the networks are there, that they're becoming so dominant in terms of their involvement in the way that we live life and the influence on society is a reflection that this new network-centric way of being human, this Layer 6, has already emerged quite significantly. Although it's still obvious that the controlling influences on the planet—the people who are driving the dominant economic paradigm—are still operating from Layer 5, we're getting very, very close to a tipping point now, which I'm predicting will come roughly within the next 10 years or so.

**Nyck:** While those platforms have been of great benefit—as we're saying, they've solved a lot of problems, they've networked people together, they've given the opportunity to share yourself, share information, to understand, to know things instantaneously around the world—it's also, of course, been fraught with things like fake news and the manipulation of the algorithms and we're seeing a lot of that; a lot of 'the emperor has no clothes' is being revealed and we're seeing the shadow puppetry, so to speak, behind the scenes. There's those two things operating at once, so it's not all good, it's certainly not all bad, it's a transition to something. I guess that's how we would see it.

**Steve:** Yes. In the overall scheme of things, if we look at this trajectory beyond the Modern Scientific-Industrial era, we're really still in the collapse phase at the moment and that's going to continue for some time. The best guess I can make around a tipping point—and the tipping points are never so clear; it's not like you point to one day in the calendar and say this was the day that the global paradigm shift happened.

**Nyck:** We used to imagine that sort of thing back then—the eschaton is the word for it; eschatology—the end times.

**Steve:** Yes, that's right. Certainly in the leadup to 2012, a lot of people thought that was going to be it and it was all going to shift in one day, but that's never the case. These

things are always fluffy and blurry and they happen in different places at different times.

**Nyck:** Some people have got a lot of cans of baked beans stored away.

**Steve:** That's right, and bags of rice, too, which can be quite handy.

Some of the other characteristics that are showing up in society are things like the desire to share knowledge. One of the early manifestations of that was the idea of data sharing on networks and those sorts of things—analysing big data from a Layer 5 perspective—but everybody wants to share now and your comment about *Instagram* before is an obvious example of that.

Decentralisation generally is a huge theme. The previous paradigm, the Modern Scientific-Industrial, has been very centralised and we're now moving back to decentralisation as a way of reorganising society in general. Consequent to that, we're seeing a relocalisation of most things, which is showing up as people wanting to move out of cities, go back to villages, rebuilding the local village, rebuilding the communities around the villages; the local resourcing of everything—people want locally grown food; organic food, particularly, is becoming very popular—locally produced energy, and really as many things as possible. People want to have that security of actually knowing the people who are providing their things rather than having their suppliers and their provisions come through long supply chains from countries on the other side of the world where they don't know what kind of conditions were present during the preparation or the growing of those particular foods and things.

**Nyck:** Exactly. One of the articles from *Nielsens* is about sustainability in the consumer packaged goods—the CPG landscape—which is evolving. "Consumers aren't just demanding that companies make changes to better the world. They're also making a few adjustments themselves. The majority, 73% of global consumers, say they would definitely or probably change their consumption habits to reduce their impact on the environment" (<https://www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/04/global-sustainable-shoppers-report-2018.pdf>). Obviously the best way to do that is to relocalise as much as possible. That doesn't mean that every sustainability trend provides an equal opportunity for growth. "There's a wealth of sales trends globally that show that products living in the sweet spot of 'healthy for me and healthy for the world' are growing in demand."

**Steve:** That's right, and on my list of emerging themes there, the next thing is ecological awareness, which is showing up in that example that you just quoted there. There's a general desire to want to reconnect with nature, there's a perspective that the Scientific-Industrial era has disconnected us from nature and made us think that we're separate



from nature and that is rectifying itself, and certainly a strong desire to want to repair the obvious damage that we've done on the planet through our various exploitation of resources and dumping of garbage and those sorts of things that have happened out of the Scientific-Industrial era, which produced an awful lot of garbage. I mean, the whole industrialisation of things and packaging and all that kind of stuff has produced a hell of a lot of garbage and it's making a big mess.

**Nyck:** We're seeing a lot of technologies which are starting to reuse, to reconfigure, that garbage in various ways, including an interesting piece I heard about second-hand clothing and how that can be made—not all old materials, but many materials—into small pellets which are then used in a number of ways that they're being utilised for. So the potential for that incredible amount of waste on the planet to be reconfigured in one way or the other is growing at pace.

**Steve:** You've made me and all the listeners curious about what those pellets of clothing are being used for.

**Nyck:** I'm just trying to remember. I'll have to look that up (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-06-15/textile-recycling-fashion-old-clothes-waste/11197904>). In fact, in a recent global online survey (from the earlier article): "A whopping 81% of global respondents said strongly that companies should help improve the environment. This passion for corporate responsibility is shared across gender lines and generations. Millennials, Gen X, Gen Z are the most supportive, but their older counterparts aren't far behind." That's interesting, isn't it?

**Steve:** It is interesting and it's busting an old thought bubble that we used to have about values being pegged to generational shifts. The whole generation gap thing was a very common discussion topic, but it was a limited perspective, a partial truth, because these values shifts that we're talking about don't necessarily relate to a particular age group or a particular racial group or particular sex or anything like that. They are, as best we can understand, evident across the board and it really comes down to the complexity of life conditions. So even if you're a person in the later years of life, if your life conditions change, then potentially your values will also shift in the same way that young people are coming through with different values about these things, so it's available to everybody is a good way to look at it.

The last thing I've got on my list here for the emergence of this sixth layer of being human is an inward focus. Our focus is turning from the previous perspective we had in the Modern Scientific-Industrial era of looking out at the world and wanting to change the things that we see in the world.

**Nyck:** Or utilise the things out there; use them in some way.

**Steve:** Yes, adapt the outside world to suit ourselves. We're now looking inside and so there's an increased focus on personal development, and we saw the early stages of that come in the later stages of the fifth layer, the Modern era, where it became about being the best that you can be. It was an early sign of the shift into Layer 6, where people in the Modern world really wanted to focus on improving themselves and making themselves better, and now that's going to a deeper level with the emergence of Layer 6.

**Nyck:** And that's interesting, too, because as you're saying that, I'm thinking that the first emergence of that is really on the physical level. People wanted to physically be better—you do yoga, do extra gym work, improve the look of the body—and then that moved further and further inside into health and wellbeing from the inside out, and then emotional health and wellbeing as well, and psychological, spiritual health and wellbeing is as it advances.

**Steve:** Exactly. There's been a rapid expansion of alternative healing modalities, for example, and we are looking to adapt ourselves to fit with what the world's demanding from us—to adapt to our what our communities are asking all of us, what nature's asking, almost the whole planet, as a general theme.

They are the general themes of the emergent Layer 6 and shortly we'll dive into some deeper examples of how they're showing up in the outside world.

I just want to talk briefly about Layer 7, because if we look at the time scale of the emergence of these new layers of consciousness, or all of the layers of consciousness throughout history actually, we can see that the time period between the emergence of one and then the emergence of the next one has slowly got shorter and shorter and shorter. Certainly one of the reasons for this is that change happens according to the speed of the available communications technology, so when there was no communication technology other than ...

**Nyck:** Pigeons.

**Steve:** ... like talking or cave painting, the speed of change is rather slow. If somebody came up with a new way to light a fire, it didn't spread around the world very quickly at all. But then we went to riding horses and sailing boats on the ocean and of course, now we have our more-or-less instant electronic communication.

**Nyck:** The British are coming, the British are coming.

**Steve:** That's right. So if somebody figures out a better way to light a fire on the other side of the world then we can know about it straight away, pretty much. Consequently, the paradigms, in other words the period of time that we live according to one particular set of human values, they're getting shorter and shorter and shorter.

We don't really have a lot of solid evidence for the timescales of the earlier paradigms. I think the best guess we can make around the Agricultural era was maybe roughly from about 10,000 years ago through to the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, so certainly thousands of years, roughly ten thousand years, and then we look at the Scientific-Industrial era—roughly 300 years from its full emergence to its current collapse. If we do a bit of a mathematical analysis of these timescales, then really, the sixth layer, this emergent, network-centric, humanistic way of being human, ought to really only hang around as a fairly dominant power for a couple of decades.

**Nyck:** A generation or so.

**Steve:** And then going on the same mathematical trajectory, what that means is that by the time that this network-centric, humanistic way of being human reaches full flight on a planetary level, it's probably only going to be less than two years before the next paradigm actually steps up and becomes dominant, and that next paradigm is not just any old paradigm, of course.

**Nyck:** Not just any old paradigm.

**Steve:** This is the quantum shift that many people have been talking about for a long time.

**Nyck:** So all the rules change.

**Steve:** Everything changes. So I'm starting to think that we're probably not going to see any obvious dominance of Layer 6 at a global level. I think what we're going to do is we're going to go into this mushy period of change where things get rather chaotic and fairly confusing and the influence of Layer 6 is certainly going to increase and increase and increase, but at the same time, we're going to have the Layer 7 influence rocketing up. Because of the capacity inherent in human consciousness from the seventh layer, the influence that it's going to have is logarithmic, basically—it's on the logarithmic scale—so a very small percentage of people moving to this emergent integrative way of

being human at Layer 7 are going to have an extraordinarily large effect on humanity, on the technology that's produced and its influence on global life.

It's going to be very interesting time indeed and a time of very intense, compressed change and it's already starting. You can feel it out there on the streets.

**Nyck:** Well, can you feel it, folks? Let's hope you can, and any comments, as I said, 0437 341119. We have a couple of texts. I'll come back to in a minute.

We're on *Future Sense*.

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**Nyck:** Ah, we're having fun here. We're feeling a bit looser today. I don't know why, that's just as it is somehow. Well, that's me; maybe I'm just speaking about myself.

**Steve:** The royal we.

**Nyck:** We're talking about positive change on the planet and looking at all sorts of factors. Just quickly, one of the texts that has come in is worth responding to: "Hi, guys. What effect to the rest of the world do you think there will be when stage five is the dominant paradigm in mainland China?" which is referring to what we were talking about before.

**Steve:** It's a really good question and I guess we don't know; we've got to wait and see how that pans out. One of the interesting factors is that what we're seeing is an emergence of these more complex values sets in the West, so even though China is obviously becoming more powerful in terms of its trade capacity and wealth and those sorts of things, it's not going to be the most complex country on Earth in terms of its mix of higher order human values—in terms of the network-centric way of thinking that's clearly emerged, first in northern Europe, really, and now I'm seeing that spread to America and other Western countries. Certainly China has some of that happening as well, so it's hard to talk in a general sense about these things because they are so complex and it doesn't matter which particular example I give, there are always going to be exceptions in that particular country, so just take this with a grain of salt, it's a generalisation.

The emerging values set—the humanistic, network-centric—one of the key characteristics of it is its peacefulness, in terms of seeking inner peace and also seeking to reduce conflict and violence in the outer world, so as China rises and becomes more powerful, it's going to be rising within a world where there is potentially a dominance of this particular peaceful outlook and that's got to filter back into China somehow.

**Nyck:** Interesting.

**Steve:** Whereas that hasn't been the case for America, so as America has risen as one of the earliest examples of the Modern Scientific-Industrial way of being human and then grown into this powerhouse that it is now in various ways, it's done that in the context of the rest of the world being mostly immersed in less complex values sets, so it's been very easy for America to be dominant in that context. China won't be in the same situation. China will be powerful, without a doubt, but it will be powerful within a context of a world that is, let's hope, overwhelmingly dominated by peaceful values, and so I think the need for exploratory violence that we've seen through the last couple of hundred years ...

**Nyck:** Exploratory violence. That's a nice way of putting it.

**Steve:** ... is going to be lower and we should be living in a world that is overall more peaceful. We've got a rather chaotic period of change coming to get to the other side to what I'm just talking about there, but I'm optimistic about how that's going to show up and I'm also optimistic about how China is going to show up in the world. I think one of the interesting characteristics of China is that internally, historically, it's always had a big job on its hands to keep the peace and get all of those little subcultures that it's got happening inside its boundaries working together. I think that internal need to bring cohesion and internal peace hopefully will also shape how it shows up in the outside world as well.

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