

The Great Simplification

Nate Hagens (00:00):

Greetings. Time for a Frankly, and here is Frank. Frank got in a fight the other day with Murphy and he got the worst of it. So he likes to sit on daddy's lap. I am back from six weeks in India and I am partially back from two weeks of COVID. So while I was in India, I had intense clarity about my work, the work of our organization, and about what work broader global society, especially western society, needs to undertake ahead of the Great Simplification. When I do these Franklys, sometimes I have outlines, usually I just riff. And part of this is a test to myself to see if my post-COVID brain can still call up my ideas. I have no notes actually. I'll take a picture of what my setup looks like. I'm looking at a camera and you can see that when I have podcast guests, I'm actually not looking at them, I'm looking at the camera.

(01:16):

So here goes. I have increasing confidence that we are at the 11th hour globally, culturally, physically, financially, geopolitically in many, many ways. And I think there are lots of isolated projects to work on the future that hold everything else constant. Let's scale lithium batteries and electric cars holding the rest of the system the same. I also think there are many issues that are looking at what we should do 20, 30, 40 years from now that would be sustainable, that are missing the choreography and the cliff that lies on the road between here and now. I no longer believe there are any non-radical pathways forward. We've kind of baked our cake and are going to have to respond to what I refer to as the four horsemen of the 2020s. And you could actually include global heating and ecosystem disruption as a fifth horseman because it's here, it's growing and it's going to increase.

(02:34):

So I especially am worried about Russia, the United States, China, the Middle East. Those things keep spiraling outward in a vortex that is unpredictable and chaotic and risk homeostasis and hubris rules the day. So I have intense clarity on the work. The nuggets of wisdom for you all will be back loaded on this. Let me first share the clarity I've had for myself. I already had this clarity when I came back from India and now that I'm post COVID, it's even more clear. So here are the seven priorities for me this year, 2024. Number one is to prioritize my health and my mental and physical and spiritual health and my routines above all else. I have not been doing that. I haven't

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really had a break in four years. I have breaks every day. I lead a privileged life, but I've been working, thinking about this stuff nonstop.

(03:49):

And my next Frankly is going to talk about the learnings I had in India. For one thing, my fight or flight reptilian system is damped down substantially and I didn't realize how I had been living with fight or flight looking at new climate news, or some news about Russia, or what's going on in Israel, and it takes a toll on a human. So more about that later. Top priority is my health and I'm going to recommend that to as many of you as possible. And that'll be next week's topic. Number two priority is these Franklys. I have over 30 Franklys mapped in my head. Hopefully, my post COVID will be able to access the ideas, the choreography for the future, the importance of sunk cost, a framework for philanthropy, lots of different, relevant ideas that are kind of the advanced integration of the basic synthesis.

(05:03):

And I feel it's difficult for me to convey the advanced integration to those followers of this podcast and the basics at the same time. And while I can, I want to share the clarity of what I think needs to happen in these Franklys to inform and inspire the global scout team of life over power as it were. So I have a lot of really, really important things to say on upcoming Franklys. We'll try to do them one a week. No guarantees. The third priority is continue to highlight diverse and especially scientific environmental science voices on the podcast.

(05:53):

I have a huge amount of great guests scheduled in the coming four months, and I'm scheduling beyond that as well. The time is now, maybe the only time is now is to highlight exactly what is happening to our oceans, to our forest, to our biodiversity, and why I also want to increasingly spend time with people looking at responses. I've got a music historian coming on looking at the importance of music and resonance to our inner cells and our health, which we jettisoned 10,000 years ago.

(06:35):

I increasingly am of the belief that the human software that we're culturally running is not only incompatible with the biosphere, but it's not a fit for our evolved hardware. So I want to talk a lot more about trauma, inner technology, human behavior, because I

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think the behavioral part underpins all the other things. So I'm going to have guests on like that. And this is a global story. I'm going to have guests on from India, from all over the world. We're all in this together despite the tribal collective action, game theoretical response that we naturally have. This is a species level story. So I want to still focus on the podcast.

(07:33):

The fourth thing is networking. And I'm blessed to be introduced to lots of people, scientists, philanthropists, activists, thinkers, political people. And I spend probably 20 hours a week on the phone or on a Zoom call networking and introducing people to others. And I think being kind of a golden retriever, or dachshund in this case, a catalyst for influencing the future is a worthwhile use of my time. I think there needs to be a standardization of the basic science story of ecology, human behavior, energy, money, technology and the future. While I was in India, I gave six lectures, which were 800 slides and about a seven-hour total lecture series, which is online or will soon be online. And I want to expand that in a professional way that can be scaled, because I do think that a lot of people come across this podcast, their friends send them the link and they either find too complex or too scary.

(08:58):

But those of you that keep coming back, somehow are able to dance the dance of moving between the tragic and the post tragic, which I find that, I, last year was spending too much time in the tragic, too much time on focusing on what the negatives are and not enough time in the post tragic, recognizing, acknowledging what we face and where do we need to go. I'm going to speak more about that next week. So I do think there needs to be a Reality 101 project. Related to that, one thing that I think would be cool and important and my team could do is a glossary of the future where every week we do a couple of short two to five minute videos that describe one thing, positive feedbacks. What are they? What are some examples? Why is this relevant to our future?

(09:58):

Loss aversion, cognitive dissonance, the carbon pulse, the tragedy of the commons, and just have 100 or 200 of these concepts that are integral to the future explained in short videos. And then finally, the priority for the org is to partner and influence

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behind the scenes, Hollywood, media, other people working on all the important things happening in this cultural transition and to tell the story outside of this podcast, but to influence other people around the world, either with presentations or helping a group understand what's going on. So that was a long-winded overview of what my work... the clarity I had on my work. Let me now spend some time on the seven categories that I think are essential for humanity going forward.

(11:09):

And these are not in any order though, I'll have an opinion on that at the end. The first is we do need a roadmap on the horizontal and vertical synthesis of the human predicament. How does our productivity, our money system fit together? What is possible in the future? What are the various buckets that people need to work on? Not everyone can do everything, but lots of different people need to work on different projects and different scales. What are the categories, like a comprehensive systems map of where to go and what to do and how to get engaged in the Great Simplification. That needs to happen out there. And of the seven, this is one that this organization and effort can help contribute to.

(12:08):

The second is an odd category. I'm going to call it the 1500 for lack of a pithy term. I think there is a global elite that are not calling the shots per se, but they are pulling the Superorganism forward in the human brain software that is not compatible with the biosphere.

(12:36):

They're turning digital and artificial intelligence claims into social power that end up having an extractive and ecological impact on the planet. And I believe, I don't know that a lot of these people may or may not be well-intentioned, but they're disconnected from the feeling centers of their mind. So they're consuming and accumulating power as if a hungry ghost. And because they're so powerful and have that much money and influence in the markets and in technology, it pulls the entire Superorganism towards the Mordor economy that I've spoken about. And I think to raise the consciousness of the stakes of our time with some of these 1500 influential people, to pull them away and direct their efforts, their resources, their attention

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towards the stakes of the biosphere and life and the sacredness of what's going on, that security is the illusion that they can afford.

(14:00):

And we need a lot more people of influence and of power to turn their eyes backward towards Earth on navigating the next 20 years. Otherwise, they're going to have nothing left to enjoy their excess, outsized social wealth. So second category is the 1500.

(14:24):

Third category is what I've referred to in the past as advanced policy, which is there are many people doing their day jobs right now working on technology and policies that will help a future based on extrapolating recent trends forward. I think extrapolating recent trends forward is going to hit a brick wall in the not too distant future. So there are really three timelines of interventions. One is right now doing the things we can to prepare. Another is this bend or break moment when our financial musical chair games, the music stops. And that can happen for many reasons. I mean we are in the United States, \$34 trillion in debt. That's not even the big deal. We're \$200 trillion in unpaid claims with social security, Medicare, et cetera. There is no way out of our current financial system. And you might say, "Oh, well the stock market's at 5,000. Clearly there's no problem." The stock market's at 5,000 because of the responses to these problems, which is using more and more debt to continue our prior consumptive ways.

(15:46):

So I think there needs to be different people working on different timelines of these interventions. And the advanced policy is what are those things that are really radical now that won't be accepted, that are going to be necessary in the not too distant future? And communities need to work on that. Governments need to work on that. Risk advisors need to work on that. So there are different scales of interventions.

(16:17):

Building on that is the advanced policy applied to businesses, technology and society and something I call Goldilocks tech and infrastructure. Goldilocks and the Three Bears, not too hot, not too cold, just right. We need to have appropriate investments, inventions and technology. We don't need the lithium to scale electric cars. We have

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100 million new 3000 pound vehicles are being added to the global population every year. Is that the type of tech that we're going to need in the future? Too cold, we don't want to go back to stone tools and the like, but there's a lot of things in the bend versus break and lower material throughput existence coming in the next 30-40 years that's going to need technology. For instance, sodium batteries, not as good as lithium batteries, but good enough. So Goldilocks tech is going to be those things that we can get 80% of the human benefits that we need with 20% of the resources. This is a huge category and lots of inventors, philanthropists, tech people need to be thinking along those lines.

(17:49):

The next category is community. And in this country, in the United States, the candidates for president are Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Somebody's going to win. And there are other elections around the world that are almost as polarized and about a third of the country is going to go ballistic when that happens. We need to be building social capital now. One thing energy surplus has done for us is it's allowed our social connections to atrophy. Because we're so wealthy, we can just order stuff. We don't need collaboration. The one thing I learned in India, community is messy. It's not as convenient. But one thing I learned in a big way was I always thought, "Oh, the importance of community is so you can borrow your neighbor's lawnmower or you grow garlic and they grow potatoes and you share and it's like an economic comparative advantage." What I was naive about is the benefits I got personally in my physiology from community. The oxytocin, the serotonin and the feeling I got from close interaction with 30 people for six weeks is something I haven't felt in a long time.

(19:18):

And the government ain't going to solve this for us. Our mayors are not going to solve this for us. We need to start building social capital, relationships and community, pro-social prepping, if you will, now. Wherever you are hearing this, you need to start. It's the only piece of advice that I feel 100% certain about. We need to start conversing with people that we don't necessarily agree with. We need to have conversations with people that we're going to share this ride with once the world becomes a much larger place again after these coming disruptions, TBD. Social capital and building community at scale around the world. Well, a lot of places in the world that don't have a lot of material wealth already have a lot of social networks,

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but the global West, Europe to some degree, but North America, Canada and the US, not as much. And we need to invest in this and scale it now. The sixth category is an upshot of that which is the individual. And this is a big change in my thinking, a big change.

(20:45):

We need to have people who are nourished with good food, who have rest, who have exercise, who have their systems in equilibrium as a priority before they engage with the metacrisis and the human predicament. Because I think there are so many people that view the information about oil depletion and climate change and financial overshoot and all the geopolitical craziness is almost like a mental video game that's dopamine and cortisol, and it's not actually changing how they're living or how they're interacting with their community. And I think this is because, and I can only speak to myself and the people that I've spent time with, there's an imbalance in the behavioral stack and the cognition is captured because of our limbic system, our enteric system, our reptilian systems are out of balance. So we need to heal from the root upwards. And my friend James likes to refer to as communities need libraries of healing where people can go and be together and in being together, they're healed.

(22:26):

But nutrition, sleep, exercise, all of it, and meditation, but also music, chanting, singing. So here's one of the big changes in my thinking. I have naively thought, how could I think otherwise, that telling people about the global predicament in an urgent sense, because it is urgent and that they're naturally going to respond and think of responses and solutions and do things.

(23:07):

I actually think we need to have individual, behaviorally stacked humans and communities of those people before a full integration of the global systems' synthesis because the combination of those two and then the knowledge, then the integration of what we face in a post tragic way where you have others around you to support it, that's powerful. That empowers people to be agents of change rather than just hearing a bunch of disparate, though true and accurate and linked facts about our situation. I think we need to divert, we being governments, philanthropists, community

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people, need to divert a lot more resources now towards healing the humans that surround us.

(24:10):

The seventh category is the times that we are alive right now via education, via a heart led recognition, via experiences in nature, we are at the cusp of ecocide, to put it bluntly. And we need a lot more humans. Not everyone, that will never happen. Not a majority, that will never happen. We need a solid group of 5% of the human beings alive today or more to recognize the sacredness of this blue-green Earth and integrate that into their value systems, into who they are and from the ground up have a feeling of we are connected as opposed to me. Our software going through this moonshot phase of ecological, financial, energetic overshoot has divorced us from the best sides of what humans are capable of. So if you look at my list of what I think needs to be happened, these last four community, individual healing, the sense of the sacred, all of those then need to integrate the map of what we need to do.

(25:38):

And that combination could be really powerful. Yes, we still need the 1500, we need advanced policy, we need a lot of other things. But for the followers of this podcast and the Franklys and the work that we're doing, I think this feels exciting and relevant to me. I have so much to say. I'm actually thankful that I made it through... holy crap, 24 minutes and I was still able to call up most of my ideas. So maybe my COVID wasn't too bad. I have so much more to say. I'm so grateful that so many of you are following this channel. I don't want to broadcast this to the world partially because the Eye of Sauron will redirect to Red Wing, Minnesota, but I also don't want to force this on people. My coach in India said that, "Wisdom cannot be scaled. Wisdom can only be shared in an individual one-on-one basis."

(26:44):

So for me to send this bat signal out there, there are people that probably shouldn't be integrating and hearing this because it's too much, but those people probably won't come back. So for those of you that are coming back, start talking to others about this. Find community. I don't know how to tell you how to do that where you are. Focus on your individual health and I'm going to have recommendations on this in the future. Though again, I'm no guru. I'm a client. I'm learning this myself. And I'm sure

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many of you already have a sense of the sacredness of nature following this channel. Lots more to say. This is a long one. I'll talk to you next week. Namaste. Thank you.