

The Great Simplification

Nate Hagens (00:00:02):

You're listening to The Great Simplification with Nate Hagens. That's me. On this show, we try to explore and simplify what's happening with energy, the economy, the environment, and our society. Together with scientists, experts, and leaders, this show is about understanding the bird's eye view of how everything fits together, where we go from here, and what we can do about it as a society and as individuals.

Nate Hagens (00:00:33):

Joining me today is my longtime friend, colleague, board member, and muse, Joanie Diamond. Among other things, Joan runs the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere at Stanford University, sits on several nonprofit boards, including Energy and Our Future, and has a long history of systemic risk analysis and expertise, particularly on nuclear risk and energy issues. Since Joan and I talk almost every day, it was strange to hit the record button for a podcast, but I expect you'll enjoy and learn from this exchange as I did. May I introduce Joanie Diamond.

Nate Hagens (00:01:25):

Good morning. Aloha, my friend.

Joan Diamond (00:01:28):

Good morning, Nate, or I guess good afternoon to you.

Nate Hagens (00:01:31):

Yes. So, that background does not look like San Francisco.

Joan Diamond (00:01:35):

It doesn't look like San Francisco and it is Hawaii. I'm both pleased and honored to be with you and explore these issues and see where we can go.

Nate Hagens (00:01:48):

Well, thank you. So, we have had literally hundreds of conversations, the two of us, in the past decade or so, lots of magic and advice and converging on creative thoughts. And this is the first one that we've hit the record button. So, I hope we can still talk as friends and colleagues and not worry about the fact we're being recorded.

Joan Diamond (00:02:13):

Sounds good.

Nate Hagens (00:02:14):

Okay. So, with that, since you're one of my closest friends and colleagues, I don't really have a list of scientific questions to ask you, because we talk about this stuff all the time. So, I just want to take this time to highlight your wisdom, your grace, your efforts on these issues during your career and see what you've learned, what you think about the current meta-crisis, human predicament, global challenge, whatever you want to call it. And we'll just go from there. So, why don't we just start at the basics? How have your life experiences shaped your current worldview?

Joan Diamond (00:02:54):

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Well, one place I'd like to start on that is it's good you're not asking scientific questions because I'm not a scientist. I mean, my role and engagement in this field is as a knowledgeable person who from multiple perspectives has been working with these issues, but as a teacher, as a corporate executive, as a nonprofit leader, but always around the issues of the future and what we need to be doing today for that future. So, I come at this from a slightly different perspective than some of your guests who have deep knowledge in specific analytics, scientific fields, but I think that I'm responsibly knowledgeable. That also has created the opportunity to be a good bridge between the scientists and people who might be intimidated by scientists.

Nate Hagens (00:03:51):

Well, what you're describing is that we need the science and we need communicators and facilitators, and it's not easy. I think scientists are trained in the scientific method. So, they're scientists first and humans second. And we just haven't had some cohesive head and the heart merger of what's going on, what we can do about it. So, I know you've worked a lot in that sphere. So, from your upbringing to your career to world events you've witnessed, what were some of the guideposts that brought you to this point and how you think about the future?

Joan Diamond (00:04:30):

Okay. One thing I'd just like to add to your list or an adjective is good science, excellent science, the best science, because I think one of the things that has made dealing with the human predicament or if you have a preferred word, we can use that. I know you listed some. There's a lot of bad science out there, which has misled people, confused people, and made it difficult for them to understand and engage. But I grew up in a normal family in the '50s in California, one where we were free and grew up in the hills and in the creeks and catching frogs and summer and being able to ride bikes long distances without a lot of worry.

Joan Diamond (00:05:17):

And there was also the normal trauma. There were people recovering from World War II. There were women who were deeply depressed having been very active during the war and supporting the war effort who were now in roles of being perfectly coiffed and vacuuming floors. And so, there was a lot of depression. With that, moved into the times of the feminist movement, the Vietnam war, everything was being turned upside down.

Joan Diamond (00:05:50):

And I think that what that actually created at least living in Marin County in California was the opportunity and not just the opportunity, but the requirement that you always ask questions, that it was good to ask questions, that things could change, that life wasn't about holding on to the way things used to be. And I think that prepared me well.

Nate Hagens (00:06:16):

So, speaking of asking questions, you said a lot there. Let me go back to the beginning. How does anyone distinguish between good science and bad science? And certainly, how does the general public make that distinction and how do you and I make that distinction as communicators?

Joan Diamond (00:06:32):

I think that's our job. I mean, our job is to present good science, incredible ways, and let people know without being judgmental. I'm talking primarily about the nonprofit community and including education.

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Let people know that there is less good science out there, but there's great science and bring it to them in ways that can be absorbed.

Nate Hagens (00:06:59):

Well, I think one of the hallmarks of good science is uncertainty and that there are error bands in what people project and describe. Yet humans, especially as we get more anxious and scared about the future, we want certainty. This is going to be the climate scenario. This is how plastics are impacting sperm counts, our endocrine disruptors. And what do you think about that, the human need or desire for certainty versus science's need for error bounds?

Joan Diamond (00:07:34):

Well, I think that's the responsibility of our education system, a responsibility that's not met, but is teaching people to be comfortable with uncertainty, that uncertainty is part of life and managing uncertainty is one of the responsibilities of a citizen and a member of the community. I have a lot to say about uncertainty that I think we might come to later when we talk a little bit about scenario planning, that how you bring uncertainty into conversations and create comfort for people that uncertainty's part of it. And as you're saying, one dimension of bad science is when people present things as certain, making predictions, this is absolutely. Humility is a huge dimension of effectively and staying mentally healthy in this field.

Nate Hagens (00:08:34):

And yet those people who are not humble but are certain end up having a larger megaphone.

Joan Diamond (00:08:41):

They do have a larger megaphone and that's our job to find other pathways and ways of reaching people. I think it's an easy target. If our education system, if our media presented things in terms of uncertainty and created this sense that it is uncertain and we're okay with it because we don't have a choice, then there would be more space, more bandwidth for people to hear the voices that identify the uncertainty and that explain why you can't be certain and the dangers of being certain and the bad decisions we make when we make absolute predictions.

Nate Hagens (00:09:28):

I want to get back to your background and your history, but on this point, humans abhor uncertainty. And for me, the only thing that is an antidote to all the various scenarios and uncertainty we face on economic, on social issues, on ecosystem decline is the sharing and community I have from discussing these things with you and others of our colleagues. That's the only thing that gives me the strength to manage all that uncertainty. Because I think as an individual human, if you were buffeted with so much uncertainty, it can become paralyzing.

Joan Diamond (00:10:11):

But there are levels of what can you be certain about. Ideally, we can be certain about certain friendships, people we love, the communities we build still with a level of humility, and then using that as a foundation. I'm not sure that the attachment to certainty... I really don't know this, but I have this hunch that Americans and maybe, but I don't know, Western world in general is more attached to certainty than China, India, and Asia. I mean, my experience in that part of the world, there seems to be more of the no problem, karma will see built into the culture.

Joan Diamond (00:10:59):

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So, there's a greater comfort with uncertainty, but I very strongly agree that it's not only a huge issue in the US. I think it's a growing issue in the US and at all ages. And I look at young people or older people who want to read, find the definitive book on everything from raising children to the energy crisis, just give me the definitive book. You might have noticed life doesn't work that way.

Nate Hagens (00:11:32):

Yeah, there's a lot of nuance and complexity. So, getting back to something else you said, after the war in the '50s, when we were at peace, suddenly, there was not a world war. People were depressed. So, explain that.

Joan Diamond (00:11:48):

Well, first of all, I mean, there was the cold war and we had drills at school, duck and cover. We had homework assignments that were, "Your bomb shelter holds 12 people. How do you decide who to let in?" We did not have a bomb shelter. No one on Ihabod Court had a bomb shelter, but there were some in the school district. So, that's not a happy thing for kids and families to grow up with. You hear planes at night.

Joan Diamond (00:12:18):

And I can remember being very young and wondering whether this was the plane with the bomb. I mean, it wasn't paralyzing. It wasn't terrifying. It was maybe offset by the time in the hills and nature and frogs, but it was life. Those two things lived together and it didn't seem crazy that they lived together. And that was a difficult thing. I think it was a difficult transition for women who had had really major roles in the war and suddenly found themselves with a very different image and set of pressures.

Nate Hagens (00:12:53):

So, do we need a major crisis to have women play a larger role in our society?

Joan Diamond (00:12:58):

It's going to depend upon what we do with the men, because the deal was the men were all out there fighting in the war and there were certain jobs that needed to be done. So, there were more opportunities for women as a result. So, you have to figure out, "What holes are they going to fill or what gaps in the system?"

Nate Hagens (00:13:19):

We will get back to that topic. So, on the fact that you were ensconced in nuclear risk from a young age, you worried about it, you thought about it. I believe if I recall correctly, you wrote papers on it when you were younger. How did that exposure or did that exposure contribute to you spending a career on existential risk collapse, nuclear threats because you were exposed to at a young age and you had already psychologically processed it, or what do you think about that?

Joan Diamond (00:13:55):

Well, I think the underlying issue there is a comfort and I touched on this, but I haven't really thought about this a lot before. I've thought about it some, but is living with, whether you say the yin and the yang, that there are terrible things. There are terrible threats. Also, at that time, there were opportunities and expectations to be building careers in a life that made the world better. Maybe there was some early childhood acclimation to that just being part of life.

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Joan Diamond (00:14:35):

Another thing that ties in there and getting all over the place here is it wasn't seen as an injustice. Now, when bad things happen, it's an injustice. Where's the lawyer? Who do we blame? Who's the evil? Who's driving it? I feel that in my growing up, it was not that way. That was just the way life is. Bad things happen. Grandparents who walked out of the Ukraine at 15 to escape the pilgrims with pennies in their pockets, that was life. That was human experience.

Nate Hagens (00:15:14):

Your grandparents are from Ukraine?

Joan Diamond (00:15:16):

Yeah. On one side, yes. We visited, I wanted to see where my grandmother came from. And so, however many years back, we went to the Ukraine and found the village where she had grown up, which had not changed a great deal and some other key areas in the Ukraine like Chernobyl and a nuclear missile silo, where you could go all the way down in the silo and sit in the chair and see the gun and pick up the phone for the missiles that were pointed at Europe. We called it a nuclear holiday, nuclear family, Chernobyl, and nuclear war.

Nate Hagens (00:15:59):

So, you spent a good many years of your professional career on nuclear de-proliferation and associated risk. Yes?

Joan Diamond (00:16:09):

I guess that's true. I hadn't thought of it that way, but obviously growing up, it was a dominant theme. And then later after another chapter in my career, I worked with the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability, where we dealt with nuclear issues, primarily Northeast Asia and North Korea, and how to reduce the possibility of North Korea having nuclear weapons. So, it has been a recurring theme.

Nate Hagens (00:16:36):

And do you think that being exposed to these issues at a young age shaped your ability to process and handle them today or equally your dedication to trying to navigate a better path for our society?

Joan Diamond (00:16:54):

I think that's probably true. I think that's probably very likely, which suggests that the amount of shielding we do of children or trying to shield them doesn't really serve them well in the long term. That doesn't mean to terrify them. It doesn't mean to paralyze them. It doesn't mean to create a bleak future, but it does mean to have it on the dinner table.

Nate Hagens (00:17:18):

Well, I grew up in the '70s and I was pretty much just watching Gilligan's Island reruns and eating Cheetos. And I did not have any existential fear or risk when I was in my teens or even after. It's only until I started reading books, some of which are written by our close colleagues, that I started to process all this. So, I had a little bit different upbringing there. So, the discussion of collapse, a topic that you and I are fluent in, has become more frequently discussed for many. When you hear the word collapse, what does that conjure up? What does that word mean to you?

Joan Diamond (00:17:58):

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Well, I always laugh, because in the early years that I worked with the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere, the MAHB, which is much easier to say, we would debate hours whether we could even say the word collapse. If we had the word collapse on our website, would that just turn people off? Would it be too dark? We would be having a party and no one would come. And now, I might have mentioned this to you. I was at my grandson's soccer practice, he's five, a few weeks ago. And this guy was talking to me about kids who are very athletic and can do a lot of things. And then he was just musing. He was just some lawyer. I'd never met him before.

Joan Diamond (00:18:45):

And then he said, "Well, at least those kids will be ready for the collapse." And I thought, "What is this?" It's acceptable conversation in those situations. Another example of that and then I'll go back to your question is there's a very popular mystery writer called Louise Penny who writes about a particular town and area in Canada. And her latest book is about the response to the threat of collapse. And so, from these just very sweet stories, it now is so central. And I think of the people who read her, who are not people who are reading the science fiction and ministry of the future, it obviously is a comfortable, familiar enough topic to be out there.

Joan Diamond (00:19:38):

To me, it means that society cannot take care of, protect, ensure a certain level of life for its citizens. I mean, I know that's not a very sophisticated definition, but for me, that captures what it's really about with collapse that human beings are suffering, can't function. The systems that support them are too broken and things fall apart and the center cannot hold.

Nate Hagens (00:20:10):

So how has this concept that you just defined been part of your life work and your career?

Joan Diamond (00:20:16):

I think that the underlying issue is a set of values about every human being. And I know they're values that you share and every living thing. I don't want to exclude dogs and cats and so forth, but we'll just talk about that there are certain qualities of life that every creature that is born on this planet has a right to. And that if we look at what we do in the decisions that are made and whether it's who we vote for or how we talk to the people in the grocery store, there's a respect, acknowledgement, and we can talk now about it or later.

Joan Diamond (00:21:08):

And I think this is something that is a big problem for us at this point in time, because we often don't show that respect for people of different backgrounds, different cultures. Sometimes we even think we do and aren't aware of, and I'm sure I'm guilty. I mean, I am guilty of every fault that I put out on the table in this conversation.

Nate Hagens (00:21:32):

I'm only guilty of half of them, but keep going.

Joan Diamond (00:21:34):

Okay, but yeah, you're more evolved than I am. So, anyway, I think that there are certain values that no matter what you're doing can guide your responses that are guideposts, check-in points. Is this building confidence in people? Is this building a sense of community? Is this opening doorways for

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communication with people who are very different than I am, or is it just reinforcing my world, my worldview, and feeding my ego?

Nate Hagens (00:22:12):

So, the concept of collapse, first of all, two questions about this one is the word itself comes across as binary. Either we're going to have a collapse or we're not. And the reality is there are many different shades. And if I was an insect or an elephant or someone in Ukraine, collapse is now. It's happening already. So, the future's already here. It's not evenly distributed. The second thing is the future is rife with possibilities.

Nate Hagens (00:22:46):

Yours and my work and that of our colleagues might be able to cordone off some glorious economic energy futures that are really not feasible, but we don't know what's going to happen. So, you have been an expert in your career, an expert facilitator on scenario workshops, where you help people look at various possibilities. How do you merge your expertise on envisioning scenarios with this concept of collapse? What can you offer on that?

Joan Diamond (00:23:21):

Well, I think that usually, I like the methodology for scenarios where you use some matrix, but that's not necessary. It just helps focus a conversation. Central to the conversation, as we've already said, is that of uncertainty. So, how are we going to capture best possible outcomes and what are the worst possible outcomes and what with different dimensions are other outcomes? And so, I usually work with collapse being one of the axes. It might be in different ways, but it's essentially to identify a particular point in time. This is a very interesting issue in scenario work, because you used to be seen that you needed to look at 25 years.

Joan Diamond (00:24:15):

Things are happening so rapidly now and there's so many surprises that shorter timeframes are necessary and often used. But one of the problems with that is there's less time for intervention. So, the idea is in the work I do, we'll get our four end points and recognizing that they actually represent a spectrum and then work back just in a story form, in a narrative. It doesn't have to be true or rigid as to how we got from today to that endpoint, whether it's the worst endpoint, the best endpoint, or somewhere in between.

Joan Diamond (00:24:51):

And then using those stories to look at, "Where were the opportunities for intervention?", and from there, after looking at those intervention points, what are robust strategies? What should we be doing today no matter what happens in 10 years or 20 years or 30 years, depending upon our end point? What are the things that are going to help us no matter what happens? And with that also is the hope and wisdom that we will pay attention to some of the intervention points.

Nate Hagens (00:25:28):

Well, it's interesting because I think our work over the last 15 years or so has been to highlight the scenarios for most people that things on the energy, money, currency, financial front are much darker than most people realize, because we're energy blind and we've been kicking many cans unsustainably with finance. So, we've been trying to educate people about the darker scenarios so that more people can prepare and plan, but recently, the inverse has happened.

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Nate Hagens (00:26:04):

We have to put in the positive scenarios, because there's a lot of people that learn about collapse that just immediately go to, "We're screwed. It's game over. There's nothing we can do." And then we have to inject the scenarios that we can intervene and that might end up in positive but more benign outcomes. What do you think about that?

Joan Diamond (00:26:25):

No, I think that's a very powerful way to approach the thinking about the future and what can be done and where is their agency, but that issue that's at the core of what you're saying is how do you decide. I ran one workshop in Seoul, Korea that had Chinese, Japanese, Australians, Indonesians. It was a very mixed group. And one of the groups came up with a scenario that there was a major earthquake off the coast to Japan that destroyed a nuclear power plant and there was a nuclear crisis.

Joan Diamond (00:27:02):

We probably spent an hour deciding whether that met the criteria of plausible. Was it too unlikely, too far out there to be useful in thinking about today? Well, a year later, we got the real answer to that question, but that issue of, "What can people imagine and when is it not productive and when is it essential on the positive and the dark side?"

Nate Hagens (00:27:30):

But on the darker side, does imagination and creativity help? No, I mean, does it help people to get creative and come up with positive solutions or does it shut people down because they didn't imagine that things could end up so badly and they'd never thought about it?

Joan Diamond (00:27:48):

It opens it up because they're using a different part of their brain when they go to narratives and stories and imagination. There's a freedom there that even though they can't see it, that's very different than if someone lays out in a nice linear, analytic form, this horrible thing, this horrible thing, this horrible thing, this horrible thing. Then it's just screaming, pulling your hair, running out of the room.

Joan Diamond (00:28:18):

Often what we found very effective was to have a day talks, just information on whatever the topic was, and then go into a two-day scenario workshop, which brought in the creativity and the imagination. So, there was a solid analytic framework that people could use, but then in the actual development of the scenarios and the interventions and robust strategies for today, they were freed to go to very dark places by the creativity and the narratives.

Nate Hagens (00:28:57):

So, let me ask you a follow up to that. You and I both go to conferences and convenings on these issues. And one experience that I increasingly have is a portion of the participants are absolutely dialed into energy, finance, nuclear, end-of-growth risks, and of the systemic situation. And others are bright. They're pro-social. They're well-intended, but they have one issue, whether it's expanding cooperation or climate mitigation strategies with geoengineering or political activism or whatever, but they get lost in the larger conversation.

Nate Hagens (00:29:41):

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And so, you end up having two different scales of conversations with people. It's like mixing a sweet and a savory breakfast and a blender and it ends up being mush and nothing happens. And furthermore, then it's like, "Oh, well, my risk is the biggest risk and you don't understand this." And they're like, "How can you say that? It's got to be equality or whatever it is." What do you think about this and how can that be helped maybe?

Joan Diamond (00:30:10):

Okay. So, two angles there, one of the last points you made is a very important point, which is I'll just say the industry, the nonprofit industry, the research industry is designed for people to compete for dollars. I've heard it called the nonprofit hunger game. So, my future, my survival depends upon me getting the dollar for what the work I'm doing and they're limited number of dollars. So, you got it, anyway.

Nate Hagens (00:30:42):

No, no, no. Let me ask a question there, because when you're in a corporate world and you're designing a new product, you're competing for consumers to choose your product, but in the nonprofit world, we're not making products. We're making ideas to help society navigate what's coming, but it is a zero sum game because the dollar pool in the NGO world is a tiny, tiny fraction relative to the corporate world. So, does that describe the lack of an umbrella synthesis framework from which everyone can work towards? Is that what's going on at these conferences and writ large?

Joan Diamond (00:31:25):

Well, that raises also a different issue and then I want to go back to question you asked, but it raises the issue of whether we went back to a time, imaginary or not, when the government put much more money into research and universities were much broader in terms of research. It wasn't as desperate, the funding and the grant world that is now, whether there was room for broader types of thinking. I think in terms of the conferences, I think every conference in one way or the other and there are different ways to do it should begin with something about systems and interdependence and interconnectedness. That has to be the first thing out of the box. And then you can set the foundation and you can be light about it.

Joan Diamond (00:32:24):

When people are going down a silo and forgetting they're part of a system, you have the language and you have the tone and maybe you even have some laughter associated with that interconnected. That can be done with a great talk or presentation. Sometimes there's some great movies that in quiet ways do that. I've done exercises where we take a real, great, big fat, old sailing sheet, the thick kind, and we'll put groups in the room depending upon how many people are there. And they have to make the most horrible knot they can where everything is tied together and knotted together.

Joan Diamond (00:33:13):

And that becomes the metaphor for what we're going to be dealing with in the workshop. And then the ending activity, I know it gets a little cute, but the ending activity is then a different group having to untangle that knot and what they learn in the process of untangling it. It's very tangible that these are naughty issues, wicked problems, and that they're interconnected, not words, but every workshop should begin with some approach and something that wakes people up that we're dealing with a system, a complex system.

Nate Hagens (00:33:51):

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You know that I agree with that. So, you and I have been working together 15 years anyways, and you've been working on this stuff a lot longer. There is both an age and a gender gap in people working on the systemic overshoot, energy, economic, climate, environmental crisis. So, on my podcast in deference to their lifetime of work, a lot of the guests on my show have been in their seventies or eighties or now Paul Ehrlich just turned 90 and most of them are male. And part of this is I'm trying to out of deference to their lifetime contribution, they've been working on these issues for 50 years, but a lot of them are very old and mostly male. Can you speculate as to why this is the case?

Joan Diamond (00:34:40):

Yes, as long as we keep in mind that I'm speculating here, but this is an emergent field still. I mean, there are pieces we can reference, pieces that were written 30, 40, 50, and in some cases, 100 years ago, but really as a field of study, it's still emerging.

Nate Hagens (00:35:00):

The field of collapse broadly.

Joan Diamond (00:35:02):

Of collapse, whatever, right. Thank you. Most of the work has come out of academia. Now, we run into a couple of problems when we come from academia. One is that early in one's career for a young person to deal with interconnected issues, it is not the pathway to promotion and grants. So, you have to wait until you're really at least a pretty established associate professor, maybe even a full professor, and then you can go broad. Then you can break out of your silos. Then instead of just going deeper and deeper in your field, you can go broader. It's shifting, I think, a little in some universities, but there's still this deep silo focus.

Joan Diamond (00:36:01):

I mean, when Paul was young, he was telling you about butterfly populations, probably not because of promotion, but that's the way it was and later. But I have heard him advise young people not to go broad too early because they will not get the promotion in the university. They will not be part of academia. Some spinoff. Some know early on. They want to go into that field, but you're fighting against the silos of our educational system and the rewards within the educational system.

Nate Hagens (00:36:37):

That makes sense to me. If I could offer my own speculation, another parallel phenomenon is in the 1970s, we had a dry run on a lot of these issues, the hippie movement, Earth Day started, and the Clean Water Act and the population. And we started to figure this stuff out, but then technology, debt, and globalization caused all that stuff to get removed from the front burner in people's minds. And so, I think those three things combined to skip a generation of people acutely interested in working on these. Of course, there always have been people, but the large numbers of people interested in speaking about them went away when Reagan took office. And so, there's this gap.

Joan Diamond (00:37:30):

Okay. So, I agree with you. I would also toss out two things to add to the list. One, we also got comfortable that those issues were being taken care of. And so, with that comfort, there was a stepping back. The other issue, which has worked against it, is many of the leading educational, certainly, the private universities have become corporations and they have a different public service. They have a different goal. They have a different metric for what's important.

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Joan Diamond (00:38:06):

And so, whereas the universities might have been places where a lot of the energy and the action and the teachings and the talking happened at the leading universities. As they became more about money and corporations and run like corporations, these issues fell, if not off the table, to the very edge of the table, holding on by a few fingernails,

Nate Hagens (00:38:36):

That makes sense. So, that explains or at least speculates on the age gap. What about the gender gap?

Joan Diamond (00:38:44):

Well, one, the gender is that you have more women going to universities now and studying 10 years ago. So, it's getting them through the system. Again, these are things people have said to me and I don't have a strong understanding. Some people say that women are fundamentally more hopeful.

Nate Hagens (00:39:08):

Do you think that's true?

Joan Diamond (00:39:10):

I don't know. I can say that maybe as a mother or grandmother, we're forced to be more hopeful. There are certain barriers in there, but that's not coming from my heart. That's an analytic trying to. But in one group where I asked this question to, they said women are fundamentally more hopeful and so they avoid this going deep and into the darkness. Another group I talked to says that and there was a lot of agreement on this and again, I'm not sure how I feel about it, but that women are more action oriented. Men are more comfortable analyzing, talking about the problem and what can happen with the problem, where it's going, how much in details.

Joan Diamond (00:40:04):

Men are more comfortable with that and women want action. And if you look at women, faculty members are very project and action-oriented and setting up big projects. And so, this field just feels like talking heads. Now, I want to soften that, because I think that, as I said, it's an emerging field. And I think we're at a transition point where we're looking at responses to the crises and that is where the action comes in. So, it may just also be the age of the field. And as the field becomes known as being more action oriented and interventionist and agency, then it'll be more attractive to women.

Nate Hagens (00:40:51):

Well, I mean, we do need a lot more people actually doing things in addition to people thinking about things. We have a whole lot of people thinking about the risks to the future, and I'm afraid that the doing will not happen in earnest until it's forced upon us, which is all of what you and I are trying to do. We're trying to change the initial conditions of when these moments arrive.

Nate Hagens (00:41:18):

So, Joanie, as I have no doubt that you are aware, in the past week or so, we've had a double barrel Supreme Court rulings, both on Roe vs Wade and this morning on the West Virginia vs EPA climate coal rules. Do you have any suggestions for how women, especially, can cope with the influence of direction that SCOTUS has been taking regards choice, environment, immigration? How can women handle their understandable rage but also the feeling of hopelessness? What do you think?

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Joan Diamond (00:41:54):

Well, it leads me to a place I don't like to go because it's not the way I'm wired, but I think we have to pay more attention to politics. I mean, there are many other things that I'd like to do, feel I'm good at it. It's politics or what sort of guerrilla warfare, is possible. I mean, there are great organizations like EMILY's List, getting more women in, but it may also be getting more of the right women in, not just the snapshot, but in leadership roles and decisions. Not just women, getting the men and women in, but being deeply involved in the political.

Nate Hagens (00:42:44):

Not to put you on the spot, but who would be the right men and women?

Joan Diamond (00:42:49):

What would they be like? They would be people with credibility and inspiring people and create aspirations, stand up to the norm, and if necessary, break from their group. Because I think that if there's a little more breaking out from groups, there are going to be a lot of people who follow, but too many people who are in office in positions of power and authority are afraid to break out of their group. And we just keep getting stuck and stuck and stuck and deteriorating. But agency isn't responding to the 20 requests for money from capital letter, exclamation point emails a day. There has to be a deeper agency if we're going to deal with our rage and our fear for the future and what it means.

Joan Diamond (00:43:46):

And as I say, it's guerrilla warfare. What can I do to help or support women who have to cross borders? This isn't quite guerilla, but do I open my home, where people can stay there for two nights or whatever? Some people are so deeply concerned that if someone gets an abortion across a state line, their money's going to be tracked and then they'll be prosecuted. So, do you set up systems where people pay you money, ostensibly, for doing something that's not tied to it? I get the money and I send it to the clinic.

Joan Diamond (00:44:28):

People have really thought of a lot of underground railroad, those types of actions, or you talk about how we're going to really change the system and the way it's set up now. It's politically and going to a lot more meetings and walking in the street a lot more and making a lot more noise. Whether that'll work or not, I don't know.

Nate Hagens (00:44:55):

Well, you and I share that aversion, well, lack of focus on politics, because we look at ecology and human behavior and energy. And at the end of the day, politics may be the most important arena that dictates which futures are possible and which happen.

Joan Diamond (00:45:15):

For me, this is a very personal thing. John Kennedy, anyway, we don't have to make all the apologies about it, but John Kennedy was assassinated on my 13th birthday, which I felt was even at the time, very symbolic of the end of innocence and what could be. And I was the state chair for youth for Robert Kennedy's campaign. And for me personally, and everyone has their own story, those really dampened interest in politics. It's a different world now completely in different ways, but I think just personally, that's a barrier I need to overcome if I'm going to.

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Nate Hagens (00:46:02):

Well, I know you pretty well and you have a trait that is dearly needed in our society in that you are a diplomat and a facilitator and you can suppress your own opinions or politics in a group to engage in a broader conversation and have everyone be included and participate towards an outcome. And our society deeply needs those sorts of people that can have the ability to look beyond their own identity towards the greater good.

Joan Diamond (00:46:38):

Well, thank you. I will simply say I try, but maybe now one way I do try is in identifying groups that are out there that are working in really meaningful ways at dealing with some of these issues. The founders of MoveOn.org, one of them is now starting and has started an organization with some other people that in a very structured and systematic way is dealing with conversations with people with big differences. Another group that I've become in a very strange way, involved with is a group of Evangelical Christians really, Republicans, I'm very clear about that, who are deeply concerned about fake news and what fake news has done to Christianity.

Joan Diamond (00:47:38):

I mean, that's their thing. I don't tap into any of those issues, except the fundamental one, which is that fake news is very different. And these people put together a phenomenal program. And I think the more we can do to identify those groups and lift them, so others are aware of good things that are happening, that will energize other people to deal with some of these really difficult issues that we tend to write off as being impossible.

Nate Hagens (00:48:09):

Well, I've learned a lot about fake news and polarization and algorithms and the social media vortex, which affects our issues. And it gets back to what you said before. We need a systems map of how the stuff fits together and then create a big tent and get people in. So, what do you see, Joanie, as the largest and the most looming existential threats to humanity's future?

Joan Diamond (00:48:35):

Just human behavior, the tendency for people to behave out of their own egos, their own need. One could get deep in psychology as to what drives that. The tendency, and I'll only talk about pro-social people I know who ridicule and demean people who are very different than they are. The elitism and exceptionalism that seems to be growing on the left and I think alienates people on the right or people in the middle, and these are what I call the good guys. The rules don't apply to them and yet we're very harsh about other people who say the rules don't apply or who aren't doing what we think-

Nate Hagens (00:49:30):

I expected you to say nuclear war or climate change or endocrine disruptors, but you said our biggest challenge is human behavior.

Joan Diamond (00:49:40):

Is ourselves, what we see in the mirror, and just coming closer to thinking of each day. What statement am I making about the future by my choices today? How am I building the future? How am I, as you say, meeting it halfway? But that should be the metric of our days and choices, but I see us deteriorating. I see friends and colleagues deteriorating into this behavior that I think assures destruction and collapse and a catastrophic collapse, not a gentle collapse.

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Nate Hagens (00:50:28):

So, at least in the short term and probably in the intermediate term and maybe not even the long term, we can't change who we are as biological creatures, but we can change our culture and therefore our signals that we get. We can, those of us with discipline and a plan, change our own behaviors and the framework with which we view the future. So, how do you think as individuals we can work to overcome our behavioral tendencies and how do you implement this in your own life?

Joan Diamond (00:51:02):

I think one way is that checks and balances - what's motivating me in this situation, owning up to maybe behaviors that are less good for the future than others, connecting that and we can only do this by our groups, but to trusting people we don't know and believing in people we don't know. And sometimes doing things, even very small things, very small conversations in the grocery store. I'm thinking of yesterday, I get sunrise on the beach and I was taking a picture of the sunrise and there was a couple standing at the water's edge. And they were just in my way. They were in my picture, but I had to take the picture.

Joan Diamond (00:51:50):

They were there and it turned out to be a really cool picture because the rainbow colors from the sunrise were reflected in the sand beneath them. And then I debated about whether I should offer to send them the picture. And I thought, "This is creepy. This is intrusive. This is yuck to do," but it was such a nice picture and romantic. And so, why do we have those barriers? Why do we second guess natural kind things to do for other people that build trust? And because that trust makes it possible to communicate, to talk about nuclear war, to talk about the system.

Nate Hagens (00:52:33):

So, why do we have those barriers? Did you contact the couple and offer them the picture?

Joan Diamond (00:52:39):

I did. I finally decided I would feel worse. They could look at me like I'm creepy.

Nate Hagens (00:52:43):

That's a natural human thing to do. You just shared a beautiful moment with two other humans and you're sharing. What is it about our cultural conditioning that the first impulse is to not intrude in that situation?

Joan Diamond (00:52:57):

Someone's going to pass judgment. We have an increasingly judgmental society. I mean, there isn't a perfect answer to it, but it's a good one to pursue further. We're afraid of other people because negative things in the news are emphasized. Maybe this is a mass murderer, and he's going to think now I have a picture of him in my phone. You can build out the scenario there, the story you want. What do we tell our children? Especially since the pandemic, we pull them away from strangers. You find that point where your kid can smile at a stranger, but not jump in the car with them.

Nate Hagens (00:53:46):

Part of it might be that back in the day without all this energy surplus and complexity, we knew what the options were during the day. There was 10 or 20 things that could happen, but now there's thousands of possible permutations. There's a fear. There's a payoff of risk versus reward that is

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different than the past. There's also declining returns to complexity, just as a story, which you don't know. We have an old tractor that's missing a part. And because of the supply chain snafus, we haven't been able to get the part.

Nate Hagens (00:54:23):

So, as I usually do before my podcasts, I get a little exercise. I took my mountain bike around the field, but our path that is usually mowed by this tractor is full of Timothy which I'm allergic to. So, a couple hours ago, I popped a Xyzal allergy pill and I'm a little not on my usual sasquatch articulate self now. So, the declining return to complexity influences us in strange ways. Anyways, I digress.

Joan Diamond (00:54:55):

It wasn't a digression because it dealt with the uncertainty and doing things in an environment of uncertainty where we don't know what the consequence is going to be or might be aware of the possibility. That's this world we're living in requires us to do, going back to embracing the uncertainty.

Nate Hagens (00:55:18):

And looping back to what we said earlier, I knew that if I was a little mentally slow because of my allergy pill, my buddy, Joanie, would pick up the slack on this call and it wouldn't be that big of a problem.

Joan Diamond (00:55:34):

Well.

Nate Hagens (00:55:34):

So, you have talked to me in the past about rationalizations and rationalism. So, in terms of human behavior, what is rationalism and what are the underlying dangers that it poses for our society?

Joan Diamond (00:55:49):

Okay. I think that we often talk about climate deniers or all the deniers out there. What I find in many of my friends, colleagues also, people I read and don't know is this issue of exceptionalism, why it's okay. They rationalize their behavior and not realizing that rationalizing can often be just the highest form of denialism. So, it's the other people who deny realities, but we can rationalize our way out of those realities.

Nate Hagens (00:56:30):

Can you give me an example?

Joan Diamond (00:56:33):

Yeah. I go to a foreign country. I get COVID. I can buy fake papers to come back in the country and I can justify it. I can come up with a great rationalization why I should be allowed to fly on the plane with COVID, knowing I'm positive with COVID, and exposing others. I know of other cases where people have been able to rationalize doing that. Another one a little closer to home and you're very good not doing this is travel. It's been easy the last two years to travel in a responsible way because of COVID. We didn't travel. And now, I find that I and many of my friends are back in the situation of what is responsible travel in terms of impact on the environment.

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Nate Hagens (00:57:27):

So how does this tie in with your comment before about the elite and the rationalizations? What's the central point there?

Joan Diamond (00:57:34):

Okay. There are two. The flippant one is guilty as charged. The serious one is this is part of the process of looking in the mirror and asking questions. And it might be this is so important to my mental health for these reasons and I'd like to do this. Owning, not rationalizing it, but owning that I am making a decision that is not good for my community as a whole. And then I think that leads into alternatives, but in order to do that, that has to be a norm. It has to be okay to talk about it. I mean, I'm really uncomfortable right here talking about it, that it's going to come back and bite me and everyone's going to know what a bad person I am.

Nate Hagens (00:58:27):

We didn't name names.

Joan Diamond (00:58:30):

But I owned some of the bad behavior.

Nate Hagens (00:58:34):

Well, that's the other thing. We can't be perfect. It's hard to strive to help the future and live your life perfectly with no contradictions.

Joan Diamond (00:58:45):

You can't. So, if we can talk about it and even sometimes laugh about it and find new paths for it and look at the people who do seem to do a better job at it and see what's attractive or what's not attractive about that and what it means for me, but if that can be part of the dinner table conversation. Maybe it's that 10 years ago, we used to talk about how you couldn't talk about collapse at the dinner table.

Joan Diamond (00:59:12):

Now, I think generally people talk about or a lot more people talk about collapse at the dinner table. It's an acceptable, within limits, and so forth topic of conversation. Maybe the next level of that is talking about how our own behavior is living outside the planetary limits and what we can do, not in a mea culpa way. And that's why I come back to this word if we can laugh at ourselves or laugh with others and then see what alternatives are. And I think there's possibilities there. I think there's also possibilities and just education of what becomes normal in a neighborhood.

Nate Hagens (01:00:00):

Yeah. I mean, I think the sooner that we remove the stigma from living lives with less energy, material, and monetary throughput, the more free and willing people will be to experiment with those things that culture currently frowns on. So, how do you think community and civil society could play a role in working through these larger challenges?

Joan Diamond (01:00:26):

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We need aspirational words and actions, and not just we need to eliminate to the extent possible that you have to make this sacrifice, you have to have less of this. Now, I'm getting very close to your territory of what makes people happy, but we have so many negative words associated with it. I think an important project is to really in a big, meaningful way, create a compelling image of the future with all the pieces fitting together underlying compelling, which doesn't mean hallucinatory or a fairy tale. So, that people can think of a very different future. It's going to be different. It's going to be hard because things are going to change. You can slam me for that, but that's okay.

Nate Hagens (01:01:17):

No, no, no. Well, here's the challenge with that, Joan, as you're well aware is you can create that vision of a desirable and feasible future, but to most people who aren't aware of the energy, ecology, finance limits to that, it's going to look like a darker future than the one that society is currently promising. Only once you understand the system's predicament, then you paint this possible picture of humans using half the energy and resources as we do today. And maybe you fly once in your lifetime, you can choose where, or any number of possible things, but you have healthy food and vibrant local ecosystems and music and libraries. I think, I don't know, you have to glimpse the reality in order for this lower throughput future to look attractive.

Nate Hagens (01:02:16):

You have to grieve first in order to want what's possible, but maybe we don't need that. I don't know. I mean, we certainly have not been successful in scaling our message so far. Although suddenly, the world is catching up to the story we've been talking about.

Joan Diamond (01:02:34):

Right. And I think that there are a lot of missed opportunities with children in terms of what they're taught about the world and resources. And there are a lot of subtle ways that can be done. I mean, really, the battle against smoking was won by kids. There are all this great science out there, but it was really when it came into the classroom and kids started going home and dealing with their parents. They're not analogous, but there are probably some lessons there. I think also that when you think about what kids are taught about resources, what you do with kids, what's fun to do. Do you need to go to a big amusement park? Do you need to own those things? They're still fun. I think that there are a lot of possibilities there to change and transform the world.

Nate Hagens (01:03:31):

Well, I do think we underestimate teenagers and children. What would that look like? I mean, how could we enlist children or teenagers to make a future vision more likely to occur?

Joan Diamond (01:03:45):

A couple of things and these are not panaceas and they're not easy. So, I'm not trying to make them sound that way, but there are people who've put together real curriculum in raising at the far end, their eco-warriors. But at the other one, there are kids who are really growing up, their parents are consciously teaching them about the threat of collapse and what that means and living a life that might be different than a lot that's around them. But another is the education. It's a whole education system, education of teachers. Most teachers have terrible science background and training, much less even than they used to.

Joan Diamond (01:04:27):

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And of course, use Hollywood. And there's probably a lot more happening in Hollywood and on kids' videos about the environment, but more about energy, more about consumption. There's a tremendous amount of good brainwashing that goes on that isn't being leveraged or thought about. I mean, none of these have one way. And sometimes I think that's the good news. There's so many different windows and levers. If you understand it's a system, then people can decide which one resonates with me, fits my personality, fits my knowledge base. There's room for everyone to get involved when you talk about agency, because as I say, the problem has so many dimensions to it.

Joan Diamond (01:05:21):

We have to change our media to emphasize the problems, and in a way, that's truly systems oriented, how this is affecting this, is affecting that. And not just the supply chains are broken because of COVID. Wow, we got a system. It has to be more sophisticated than that.

Nate Hagens (01:05:44):

I mean, one of my worries is that as people learn more about the possibility of collapse or some variation of collapse, that apathy and just giving up becomes a risk. So, in your experience, what techniques have worked to promote agency and cooperation as opposed to apathy or polarization or combativism?

Joan Diamond (01:06:10):

That's an impossible and the most powerful question, but I'm going to give a simple answer, I think, which is I think it starts with respecting the differences. Learning to listen well and learning to speak clearly, not in a condescending way. Reading a lot and being able to write clearly and making it acceptable and normal to change your mind.

Nate Hagens (01:06:40):

I'm not surprised to hear you say that, because how many Earth Day scripts have I sent to you and you send it back by softening the language and making it more respectful and less preachy, et cetera? It's one of your superpowers, Joanie.

Joan Diamond (01:06:58):

I think respect just goes a long way. All that it does is it creates a foundation for other changes. We're asking for major changes in people and how they respond to things and think about things and connect. And it has to start with some solid, very human foundation.

Nate Hagens (01:07:19):

I totally agree with you. And I think if everyone had a 10 or 20% greater capacity for respect and tolerance of the other people in their immediate sphere, whether it's left, right, young, old, Black, White, north, south, I think that would go a long way towards enabling a discourse and better responses to what we face.

Joan Diamond (01:07:41):

That's beautifully stated.

Nate Hagens (01:07:43):

I am going to have you back as a future guest because we didn't get to half of the things I wanted to say. But you know since you've listened to all my podcasts, what's coming next, which is the questions I

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ask all my guests. So, you specifically spend a lot of time educating and chaperoning young people. What recommendations would you have to young people who become aware of energy, environment, biophysical constraints, the human predicament collapse as you point out?

Joan Diamond (01:08:12):

Okay. I would start with the mirror, the self-knowledge. Accept yourself. I mean, look at yourself, know yourself, accept yourself, because that's where the power to understand impact and the possibility of change and influencing others is. Know what you do well and care about and try to stay close to those passions. I could go riff on about people who stepped out of their natural selves for the right cause. And it just came across as being artificial or not genuine. And while their message was right and their heart was right, because they tried to be Nate Hagens, instead of whoever they were, they didn't come across. They need to be themselves.

Joan Diamond (01:09:02):

Build diverse friendships that sustain them and use those friendships, not in an exploitive way, but to realize that they are as important as an apple a day. I mean that they are true sustenance. They aren't just fun and delight, but they're the sustenance. To seek out diverse friendships means as you were describing, across generations, across races, across backgrounds, but also have a very safe close group of friends. Don't be afraid of being discouraged or depressed. It goes with the territory.

Joan Diamond (01:09:44):

Know your own strategies for not being paralyzed by the curve balls that will be thrown at you either by the Supreme Court or maybe very close to home. What are your strategies for dealing with that? Telling them that life sucks, but it's also very wonderful and those two things go together. Don't feel that they're being singled out when they bump up against the dark side.

Nate Hagens (01:10:17):

It can feel that way, but we're all going through this together. What's coming, we're going to face it together. So, a parallel question, Joanie, do you have suggestions on how people living in advanced economies today can prepare themselves and their communities for what we refer to as The Great Simplification?

Joan Diamond (01:10:38):

Well, I think part of it is what we talked about a few minutes ago. If we can drop some of the negative language that this is just what we have to do to move forward, to embrace it as the next step in life, rather than being victims to it. We have a choice to be either victims or to be pragmatists and to model that pragmatism. I think one is to find ways to be more generous to those who have less or being hit harder by, as you mentioned earlier, the unequal distribution of the existing collapse, to really model that, to show that how we are responding to it and making room for all humanity.

Joan Diamond (01:11:36):

Because I stumble across this and I don't know exactly how to describe it, but it's a tendency when we speak of people in other countries. We're trying to be very positive about it, but we're actually very patronizing because they don't use the same words to describe the same experience. The elitism subtly quietly slips in that our way of framing it, our way of talking about it is better, rather than really listening and seeing that maybe their descriptions... I've heard people in Africa, their descriptions are much more metaphorical than Western Europe or than the US, but it's the same thing we're talking about. So, that's the humility. Take a step back. Take a deep breath and listen.

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Nate Hagens (01:12:34):

Throughout this episode, you've mentioned humble and humility several times, which is probably why we're close friends is because relative to some in our sphere, we do try to promote humility. Humility is the inverse of what our culture is currently promoting.

Joan Diamond (01:12:55):

And rewarding, right?

Nate Hagens (01:12:56):

Yeah. Yeah. So, what do you care most about in the world, Joanie?

Joan Diamond (01:13:01):

Okay. I want to add one thing to what I just said, which is that I think one thing we can do is create aspirational goals as opposed to survival goals.

Nate Hagens (01:13:12):

Jamie Wheal was on this podcast and he talked about prioritizing coming alive over staying alive.

Joan Diamond (01:13:19):

Yeah, that's nice. That's real nice. Asking what I care about most in the world, it depends upon my altitude at a given moment. At the highest altitude, I care what the world will be in 2100. There will still be some of the beauty, some of the nature, the human spirit that I have found in my life and that I believe is so important to people. At another level, what I care most about in the world and it's the same thing is the world that my grandchildren will know. And I look at their love for new experiences, simple experiences, but their love for taking a hike, for this. Can they live in a world where that joy to be alive is still natural and possible? And I see every day that's being threatened more and more and more. And that's very egocentric and I probably shouldn't be that it's about me.

Nate Hagens (01:14:31):

It's very biological. Most of my guests care about their families first and foremost, it seems, but it's interesting though, that your grandchildren, I mean, it's a truism that at their age, most of their favorite experiences are about family and nature and animals and food and things that are totally untethered from energy and material throughput.

Joan Diamond (01:14:51):

And they see their future that way.

Nate Hagens (01:14:54):

Right. Right. So, what are you most concerned about, Joan, in the coming decade or so for the world?

Joan Diamond (01:15:02):

Well, I am most concerned about politics, decisions that'll be made at the... As I've said, I don't like politics, but given what we've seen recently, they will determine the future. As we've seen in the last week, the Supreme Court can determine a tremendous amount about climate change, about population, about human rights. And so, it's with a heavy heart that I say I'm most concerned about politics and having wise compassionate leaders who value human life and human wellbeing.

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Nate Hagens (01:15:44):

But if you're most concerned about politics, isn't politics just an extension of the education and morality and zeitgeist of the population?

Joan Diamond (01:15:54):

Well, yes. That's a good question. I mean, there's always that question about education, which is what you're saying. Does education create society or reflect society? So, do politics reflect everything else that's going on or can they influence everything else that's going on? And of course, some of both. So, I will say yes. I guess I feel more agency in the short term, I hope, with politics or at least I can see the path than with some of these more complex issues. It doesn't mean ignore the more complex issues.

Nate Hagens (01:16:34):

Well, my fear is tangential and deeper than yours about politics. My fear is that the risks that we have on our horizon with energy, money, the growth, our political system is incapable of solving them. I don't know if you saw that video that was shared yesterday that Macron ran up to Biden and it was a hidden camera or something like that and said, "Saudi Arabia and UAE can't pump anymore capacity. Look, what are we going to do about that?" I mean, these, these things are starting to hit the political arena and they have no answers. So, I'm worried about that.

Joan Diamond (01:17:13):

I mean, I think they are. I mean, yes. So, politics was a broad umbrella for the ability to lead through these very dangerous times ahead. You're just being clearer and sharper and more precise about what that implies.

Nate Hagens (01:17:30):

Well, the allergy meds have not handicapped me that far. So, in contrast, Joanie, what are you most hopeful about in the coming decade or so?

Joan Diamond (01:17:41):

I think that most people know something's very wrong, that they're looking for ways to engage and change things, even just in their own small lives or communities. There's an increasing number and movement within civil society to give agency and belonging to these people. And I think there's not going to be a magic bullet. We're not going to be saved from the issues that we've been discussing, but maybe we'll be better equipped to deal with them. So, I'm most hopeful that there is the possibility. I don't want to qualify everything out of it, but there is the possibility that we may be able to manage the difficult times without disastrous consequences. There will still be pain. There will still be unnecessary death.

Nate Hagens (01:18:38):

Well, I agree with you on that. So, couple final questions and since you are a board member, I'm going to add a bonus question that I don't ask to most other people. But first, if you were benevolent dictator and there was no personal recourse to your decisions, what one thing would you do to improve human and planetary futures?

Joan Diamond (01:19:04):

That's another question that I want to give a short term answer to, but the short term won't help. I would replace simple answers to complex questions with clear answers that connect with people, with

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humans. I think that we get in a lot of trouble with being simplistic when it's a complex issue and then we just get deeper in the hole.

Nate Hagens (01:19:30):

Bonus question: since you're my board member and you are on many boards and organizations, the Omega Alliance and the MAHB and the FAN and others, what if your organization suddenly had \$100 million to intervene on behalf of better futures for humanity? What direction would you take with such a sum?

Joan Diamond (01:19:58):

Okay. I think two, but they're course related. And one is to get the word out, find new ways of communicating the human predicament, and making it this is something we share and this is what is causing it and why we're where we are and where we can go. So, major investment in sophisticated, which doesn't mean plastic, artificial communication. And that's going to be multi-pronged with involving Hollywood and everything, but the right people coming at that. The other, I would invest a large part of the funds in education at every level. And a third one would be to create jobs in this field for the young people who are interested, but meaningful ways for them to earn a living and be spokespeople and leaders in their community.

Nate Hagens (01:21:04):

Hear, hear. I tell you this periodically, but I will tell you again publicly that I could not have accomplished what I've done to this point without your frequent support and wisdom and grace. So, thank you so much for helping me and our organization and all the things that you've done in your career, Joanie.

Joan Diamond (01:21:25):

Well, thank you for the opportunity just to have learned and grown and thought through these issues with you. You're a phenomenal teacher and being of service means a great deal. So, thank you.

Nate Hagens (01:21:38):

Do you have any other closing thoughts of advice or wisdom for our listeners?

Joan Diamond (01:21:44):

No. I think that it's very exciting thinking about The Great Simplification in terms of the simplification and the beginning of conversations and dialogue on these issues from many directions. So, I thank you for offering that to all of us and all the unknown people you're offering it to.

Nate Hagens (01:22:04):

To be continued, my friend.

Joan Diamond (01:22:06):

Okay. Thank you.

Nate Hagens (01:22:08):

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