

The Great Simplification

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[00:00:00] **Nora Bateson:** I want to invite you to think about the question, are we holding each other trapped in various forms of communication and what kind of colonialism, industrialism, mechanistic processes, these habits that run so deeply into ideas of, effectiveness of optimized productivity so that what we are actually doing is trapping each other.

[00:00:31] So growing up in the seventies in California, there was a whole lot of people who were working toward the betterment of the individual. And there was a question, how do I be a better person? I've pushed that to a different question, which is, who can you be when you're with me? Who can I be when I'm with you?

[00:00:52] And already in those questions, we're looking at a much more ecological question, right? When you're in context with me, how do you shift? What stories do you tell? What tonalities do you use? What comes to mind? What do I remind you of? Right? This whole world.

[00:01:17] **Nate Hagens:** How do you communicate in your own life and how does your unique perspective on the human predicament, climate change, the meta crisis, interact, conflict, differ, or merge with other people? others in different environments. How can we nurture better conversations and what does it even mean for a conversation to be better?

[00:01:39] Today's conversation is with four individuals who are all uniquely bringing their voices and perspectives to the metacrisis space and to the questions I just asked. They also all happen to be friends of mine and former guests on The Great Simplification. This conversation, I've said that word four times already, focuses on the E.

[00:01:58] ecology of communication, more specifically, taking a closer look, not at the problems our culture faces per se, but how we discuss the problems and what we might do in the future to create more diverse, vibrant, and productive conversations. in service of life. Joining me today is Nora Bateson of the International Bateson Institute, and also the founder of Warm Data Labs, which

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aims to collect and communicate information about the interrelationships, connecting elements of a complex system.

[00:02:29] Also joining me are Vanessa Andreotti, the Dean of Faculty at the University of Virginia. Victoria, and the author of Hospicing Modernity. Her work aims to change the way people live, think, and communicate in order to move beyond the dominant culture of modernity and into a more sustainable future. Rex Weyler is a co founder of Greenpeace International, has been a writer and editor, with them for over 50 years.

[00:02:53] He's a leader in environmental activism and now continues his work living on Cortez Island, in British Columbia. And I've been to his house. Daniel Schmachtenberger is a founding member of the Consilience Project, as well as the Civilization Research Institute, which aims to improve sensemaking and dialogue.

[00:03:13] I've been to his house too. with that, I hope you enjoy this, episode of Reality Roundtable on the ecology of communication. Welcome to another episode of the Reality Roundtable. joining me today. are all veterans of this podcast. my friend, Rex Weyler. Hi Rex. Good to see you. Vanessa Andriotti, who is close to Rex, both, near Vancouver Island.

[00:03:45] Nora Bateson joining us from Sweden. Hi Nora. And Daniel Schmachtenberger, the, mountain man, in his new, physical beard appearance. So, I'm really happy to be with you all today. you four have a lot of things in common. you've been on my podcast, many of you more than once. You are all kind and wise people who are devoting your time to what we call the metacrisis or the human predicament.

[00:04:18] And you all have, a wisdom that goes deeper than just talking about the facts of our situation. And that's why I've invited you here today. We have on my podcast, trying to explain the ecology of the world. of the planet and the ecology of humans and our interaction with the planet on how all the different things fit together.

[00:04:46] But underpinning that is, something that we don't talk about much, which is an ecology of communication. What is the landscape and the discourse,

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how humans. Converse and share and debate and converge on different ideas. And so I would like the four of you to, opine and, share your wisdom on this today.

[00:05:14] So let's start with you, Nora, because I got this idea from you, and your newest book, can you define for us what is the ecology of communication and how might we, shift the way we use language, to relate to other people, ideas, cultures, other than our own.

[00:05:38] **Nora Bateson:** Thank you, Nate. And it's wonderful to be here with this group of people.

[00:05:44] an incredible opportunity actually to explore this topic of an ecology of communication with an ecology of communication. so, Essentially, this idea of ecology of communication is starting with the idea, with the notion of ecology, that ecologies produce life. And they do so by being in multiple relationships.

[00:06:13] So any kind of ecology, a meadow, an ocean, a family, there's going to be lots of different kinds of relationships. And those relationships go on to produce what is the life. continuing process. so in this era of the human predicament, the metacrisis, the polycrisis, whatever we are calling it, there is a high degree of complexity in every topic that is needing attention, needing our, full engagement.

[00:06:50] And yet, when those topics get parsed apart, they lose that Necessary communication and relational process. and by and large, we haven't really been, those of us who went through school systems or even are partaking in this world that we live in. We haven't really got a lot of practice in perceiving relational process, let alone.

[00:07:21] Going one step further, which is in noticing that if the world is made of interrelationships, what makes relationships is communication. so, largely, I think one of the things that is very challenging is this predicament. Within our predicament that there is a monoculture of communication and how to address that monoculture of communication is, I think, an invitation to pay attention, not only to all the different voices and different ways of knowing all the different tonalities, but also how they are in relationship with each other and how that communication is not only, providing a spectrum, but is actually providing, another kind of information, which is in how it's coming together.

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[00:08:26] So an ecology of communication is that recognition that anything that you say. And anything actually that you don't say is landing in context. And in that context, there are lots of things happening. Some are intellectual, some are historical, some are economic, some are very personal, some are professional, and some are military.

[00:08:51] Some are based in technology, but all of these things are happening simultaneously. So. My interest in an ecology of communication is in bringing this not only to groups like this that are speaking, but also into the attention of the audience to, to be Watching out for those habits of industrialism that focus on the individual that might say, This is Nora's voice.

[00:09:25] So this is Vanessa's voice. This is Rex. This is Daniel. This is Nate. And then to begin to look for what's on the transcript. What did Nora say? What did Vanessa say? What did Daniel say? when what is actually interesting about this conversation that we have yet to have, is the way in which maybe something I said made it possible for something Daniel would say, which made it possible for Vanessa to respond in a certain way.

[00:09:56] So the habit is to Be like a courtroom transcript and to think, this person said this and we should hold them, you know, really accountable for these precise words without looking at the contextual relational movement that maybe those words opened up. So things that get said, things that don't get said, they are all in this ecology of communication.

[00:10:20] and particularly in these moments. Now, where we're, there is a sense of urgency. That urgency can actually produce a particular sort of response system that's only existing in a very thin, Set of limitations of tonalities of what is authorized, what is credible, what is important, what, will express that urgency.

[00:10:45] But you and I, we are complex systems. We are living within multiple complex systems in order for there to be learning, to be movement, we're going to have to meet each other intellectually, emotionally, historically. technologically, in sweet moments, in sour moments, in very gritty moments. so the invitation is to explore what it means to get out of a monoculture of communication.

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[00:11:17] **Nate Hagens:** So thank you for that. you mentioned monoculture and, diversity. Rex, what happens when communication and information becomes And you as a lifelong study, a student of ecology and the natural world, is there a natural world analog for this of, what Nora just said, monotone conversations?

[00:11:45] **Rex Weyler:** Nora said it. It's, the monoculture. It's when you cut down a forest and then you plant trees all in a row and think that you have a new forest. And you do not, because you have killed off those relationships. You've destroyed those relationships. And oftentimes when we are discussing these issues, we have a goal, we have something we want to achieve.

[00:12:19] If we're talking about, Ukraine or Palestine or global heating or toxins in our environment, we want to solve the problem. This is part of the sort of industrial thing we learn in our education is, You have a problem, you solve the problem. But this is a very linear way of thinking. It's not the way ecosystems work.

[00:12:43] So how does change actually happen in an ecosystem? That's the, that would be my first question in almost any conversation about how are we going to change the world? How are we going to make this thing better that we, My first question will be, well, how do, how does change happen in an ecosystem? And when we start thinking about that, then we're back at the complexity and the interrelationships and the multi context of everything that occurs in an ecosystem and change happens way down the road from events.

[00:13:22] It's not a linear process. It's, this complexity. Everything affecting everything. So, let's think, I mean, we look out at our gardens that we try to grow. We do our best to grow them. We know they need water. They need pollinators. They need soil. The atmosphere has to be right. Things can go terribly wrong.

[00:13:46] And the plant we planted isn't growing the way we hope. Because it's a complex system, and the plant does not exist independently from the soil. The plant does not exist independently from the pollinator. The bee is part of the reproductive system of the apple tree. This isn't just language, this isn't just a cute way of saying it, this is actually the case.

[00:14:10] That the bee is part of the reproductive system of that tree, and the soil is part of the, system, nutrient system of every plant, the atmosphere, and the

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atmosphere and the soil are what they are because of the plants that are, that they're supporting the environment. And so, we make this mistake, of course, all the time, in trying to solve problems, we think, oh, we have a global warming crisis, global warming is our problem, well, we need to stop putting carbon in the atmosphere, so Let's build electric cars and lots of windmills and solar panels and we'll solve the problem.

[00:14:54] Well, we've had 20 years of billions of dollars going into electric cars and solar panels and windmills. There's been this massive growth of all these things. And through that last 20 years, and meantime, we're having climate meetings, international climate meetings, every single year for those last 20 years, and for every single year in those last 20 years, human carbon emissions have increased.

[00:15:20] So, something's wrong with this way we think about solving problems, and I think the fundamental thing that's wrong is we do not yet. Either understand or appreciate or acknowledge or pay attention to the multi contextual process of ecosystems. And when we speak about it, we fall back into this sort of linear industrial problem solving type of language and we need to, start thinking about our language as an ecology.

[00:16:01] Communication is an ecology. How do we participate? How do we help make change? It's very different than I've got a solution. If everybody would just do X, Y, or Z, we would solve the problem. Doesn't work that way. So how does it work?

[00:16:17] **Nate Hagens:** Let me, bring in your British Columbia colleague, Vanessa. Vanessa, I'm not sure you know this, but, when I started this podcast a couple years ago, it was my intention to not only share facts, about our myriad different challenges that we face, but also have a way of speaking about them that highlighted a different way of, conversing that was, polite and respectful and curious and, open ended.

[00:16:52] I don't know how well I'm doing at that because I'm, not experienced at this, but you have written, and we've spoken about how our conversations themselves are an expression and in many ways a cause of the metacrisis, but could, if we. changed them somehow, potentially be an expression and cause of a more holistic, healthy world.

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[00:17:17] what are your thoughts on that, Vanessa?

[00:17:20] **Vanessa Andreotti:** Thank you, Nate. I think I'll start by saying something that I heard from, Rex in the warm data lab, which was a distinction between environment and ecology. So Rex was inviting us to, to rethink, because what one thing evokes, what the environment evokes, is very different from ecology, and the invitation that I understood of ecology was to pay attention to the metabolic alchemy and motion of things, rather than the aesthetic form and, utility.

[00:17:54] of the environment. So environment is something out there. Ecology is something we're part of. We're part of this moving metabolism. and if we're thinking about language, in the habit of industrialism, as you're, as you're calling it here, I would call in the habit of colonialism. in the habit of industrialism and enlightenment, if we're thinking about communication there, there's a certain relationship with language and with form itself that prevents us, from, getting into a different habit of paying attention to motion and mystery of the interrelatedness and entanglement of everything.

[00:18:37] So figuring out how to break or deactivate certain habits, to reactivate capacities that have been exiled by these habits is extremely important. Back to your point, Nate, if we don't find a way to communicate differently, we won't be able to coordinate. We won't even be able to notice the magnitude and depth of the, predicament that we are facing before us, we will try to go back to the same habits.

[00:19:07] And the habits have layers. So there is a cognitive layer about our relationship with language and what we want language to describe or to prescribe, how it gives us certainty and control of things, how then in the affective layer and relational layer, how it also It's related to our perceived need or entitlement to authority, autonomy, arbitration, affirmation of our virtues or, superiority, let's say.

[00:19:43] And, it is all related. I think for me to, to the basic, there's a baseline which is, this imprinted, neurochemical and neurophysical. Imprint, that separates us, that imposes a, separation between us and the land, us and each other, as in everything else, so that, that's not metabolic then, that, separates things into categories and ranks them up, and tries to predict and to control.

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[00:20:16] So there is a kind of a grammar of language and communication use that comes from that. And, of course, there are variations within that, but that kind of monoculture has become an invasive species in this ecology and has made it, Less possible for us to have, commitments that are, related to the motion and the mystery and the matter of the whole.

[00:20:48] So the kind of politics that is possible within the habits that we are describing here as a monoculture, are politics related to entitlements to more entitlements, and a politics that could emerge from, the attention to the metabolic, alchemy, and motion is a politics related to responsibilities to more responsibilities, not entitlements to more entitlements.

[00:21:16] So that redirection, that shift, from one, habit of being to another is extremely important. In, the past, I think, this was, done in a certain way through communication itself, but now it's algorithmically defined. So we're being trained by algorithms to expect certain things from language and from communication in ways that are much more difficult to penetrate.

[00:21:48] Although we use them, we're using them right now, to also try to intervene in the process, but There's so much, I think, that we need to be talking about and thinking about. And I think my, last, in my last conversation with Daniel, we were, actually talking about, the, mediation, right?

[00:22:07] the mediation of experience and reality, in our relationship with language. being something we don't talk enough about. And what's happening then as a result of exposure to these algorithms, in coming out of, the experience of the Enlightenment where there was this push for a universal framework of representation that could be, you know, Probably describe and prescribe things, but that was a heuristic that could give us some conventional way, to talk about things in post modernity or liquid modernity, that impulse, the impulse may be there, but the possibility for, a universal, convention about reality.

[00:22:57] is rendered impossible. So we then are left with, this fictions that we use to navigate reality, which is our, understandings, of fictional narratives about that. and there's less possibility in terms of communication for us to be testing it out against the met, the metabolic reality of the planet, right?

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[00:23:22] So we are very, far from that. So, yeah. We can take the metaphor really far, but there's so many conversations that need to be had about language and reality that I think one podcast is not just, it's not enough for that. but I'm really grateful you have started it. Thank you.

[00:23:40] **Nate Hagens:** I have so many questions.

[00:23:42] Daniel, I haven't forgotten about you, but I want to ask a follow up to, Vanessa. and you're right. This is, especially with the four of you, this may be a five hour, round table. How much of the algorithms, that you said are because we are all in this discourse forced to use English and the rules, and, synthesis of the, media landscape and English, how big of a constraint is that to widening the ecology of communication?

[00:24:14] I'm just curious.

[00:24:15] **Vanessa Andreotti:** That's part of the monoculture, right? And it's a monoculture that not only it renders things invisible, right? I was just, in the opening of, of a conference called Stabilizing Indigenous Languages. And one of the things that comes up very, often in, in, spaces like that is that people talk about, people complain that when, Indigenous people complain that when they say the land as a living entity, In English, it's translated as the concept of the land as a living entity, and they say it's not a concept, it's a materiality, and there's no way for the English language to access a materiality without going through that process.

[00:25:08] concept, right? So that then becomes a barrier for us to be able to speak to the land without, without representing it through a concept. And I think Daniel can talk more about that too.

[00:25:24] **Daniel Schmachtenberger:** Vanessa, do you mind if I ask you to, remind, me, the quote that you shared about the essence of colonialism.

[00:25:33] **Vanessa Andreotti:** Right.

[00:25:33] So it's Chifni Nawa's, Chifni Nawa's voice saying that colonialism, so there's, in the literature, we see colonialism generally represented as the, either the

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oppression, the subjugation of people or the occupation of lands. But Chifni Nawa talks about the root of colonialism being. The imposed false sense of separability between humans and the land that then creates the conditions for all the hierarchies and rankings of species and cultures and peoples.

[00:26:11] And it's, it, is not a concept. It is a neurophysical issue.

[00:26:17] **Daniel Schmachtenberger:** Thank you for that. The, when you shared that, he framed the essence of colonialism as something like the belief or pattern of perception that there are separable things at all. That there is a universe of things that are separable from the rest of the universe, and that idea of separability is what allows us to think that we can advantage something at the expense of something else, allows us to consider the well being of something or a perspective independent of everything else.

[00:26:49] it's exactly what Bohm said, right? It's exactly what Krishnamurti said. It's exactly what has been said in so many ways, but I thought it was a particularly poignant way of talking about it. I want to just, I want to acknowledge briefly that, Nate invited me to this call, after I believe all of you were together at a conference speaking about these topics on ecology of communication.

[00:27:14] I was unfortunately not able to, be there, but I said yes, just because of my respect for everybody on the call and my interest in the topic. And Nora and I have had a couple dialogues where we've talked about discussing this more because we had a couple of public dialogues and Nora and I speak in fairly different voices.

[00:27:34] And I learned so much from her and some of the people that know And Nora's work in Follow and Resonate heard me talk and they're like, he uses a bunch of academic polysyllabic words that sound kind of military or whatever. I don't resonate. And some of the people that knew my work were like, she speaks in poetry.

[00:27:52] I don't get the relevance. And we were both like, ah, no, like there's so much that there's so much important relevance to being able to speak about related topics in different ways. and so, yeah. And, I just wanted to say out of appreciation, even though it's off topic, forgive me, this is my first time meeting

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Rex, and I just, let him know that my 11th birthday as a kid was at the Greenpeace headquarters, and, many early experiences that put me on this path had to do with early exposures that Greenpeace was a part of, so I feel a great debt of, appreciation.

[00:28:32] the topic of there are no separable things. We have these boundaries, you know, our skin defines a physical boundary. We can look at boundaries of Creatures or, ecosystems. But the boundaries are permeable, and they're exchanging energy, information, and matter bidirectionally, and if they weren't, the thing that we call the thing would be dead, wouldn't exist.

[00:28:56] If my lungs weren't taking in other than me, if they weren't releasing things that were me to other than me, if my digestive system wasn't taking in other than me, if my system wasn't able to process the energy, information, matter exchange, there would be no me. And so, yes, there's a boundary. But the critical thing is the information exchange across that boundary.

[00:29:17] This is true for all things. So that's a communication, right? That's a communication of every being with its environment without which it wouldn't exist. So literally there are no separable things. What would I be without the atmosphere? I wouldn't be. What would I be without the plants that mediate it? I wouldn't be.

[00:29:34] What would I be without the bacteria and fungus in the soil that allow the plants to be? I wouldn't be. What would I be without the electromagnetic field or the strong force or the sun or the center of the galaxy? I wouldn't be. And so I am an emergent property of all those things and all the people that created the language that I think in and all of the ideas that I was taught.

[00:29:57] And, so I'm not a separate thing. I'm not a separable thing. I'm an emergent property of everything else, right? And there's some, there's uniqueness and interconnectedness. And, when And to me, that's what I understand the heart of the concept umbum tutu really mean. I am because we, but the deepest we, the totality of everything, are.

[00:30:21] I am because we are. And in getting that, how could I advantage I at the expense of everything that I depend upon. It would be some kind of insanity, but

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like the proliferation of the cancer cell, there are a maximum number of cancer cells right before it kills the host and they all die. So it is possible to have a kind of insane process that leads to harming and debasing that which we depend upon.

[00:30:51] But it is kind of an insane process, not a sane one. And, one thing is that there's this concept often that if someone is being authentic, that they're the same in every environment, that they're the same with everybody. And that if they say different things around different people, that it's some form of strategic communication or manipulation or something like that.

[00:31:14] And that can be, right? Like one of the signs of someone who is being strategic or manipulative or sociopathic is that they're saying different things to everybody. For some kind of strategic purpose. But if someone's authenticity is the same with everybody in every environment, they're not very attuned to what's around them because what is authentically arising should be in connection to who's there.

[00:31:42] if I'm meeting someone and they're there. grieving the loss of a child, and I'm talking the same way that I would talk to someone else who just won a football game. There's something wrong with my attunement to who's in front of me and what feels important and what I want to talk about and what energy I want to be in.

[00:31:57] And so there's something about when Nora was saying it's not just like each person on the transcript, like, what am I saying that's my own thing? It's like, no, what other people were saying evokes from me something that wouldn't have happened outside of that relationship. And so there's something about that what is.

[00:32:15] Authentic and what is in authentic connection are the same or are inseparable topics as well.

[00:32:24] **Nate Hagens:** Thank you. thank you each for your, opening comments. Let me, go right to the heart of this because Daniel, you just jogged my memory because I was there when you had that conversation with Nora and It is true, especially in both of your cases, on the podcast that we've done and in public appearances, you have a large amount of just absolute, adoring, fans that, well, I

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don't know if fans is the right word, but people love to listen to you discuss these issues because it's helpful to them.

[00:33:00] And yet there are people that. can't listen to the poetry of Nora or your polysyllabic, intellectual, choreography of these things. Is that to have to do with the individual? Because there's just this huge distribution of different people out there listening and playing a role in these conversations.

[00:33:22] It's something that I really struggle with because it doesn't seem like there's one sort of discourse that can be, heard and integrated by all humans. So how does that change? And can you explain that, Nora, I'll go back to you, for that. I mean, this is why we did this, right? This conversation, because it's so important that people dive into this and understand it.

[00:33:48] I don't understand it.

[00:33:51] **Nora Bateson:** I think, well, to begin with, one of the things that I think is very concerning, in, the long list of our crises is the divisiveness, that, certainly the social media communication patterns, and these algorithms are enhancing. but that divisiveness was there to be nurtured.

[00:34:19] and it was there in the sense of defining a way of belonging by identifying a particular, grouping of, aesthetic communications, and cultural communications that, that, that provided, company. that provided survival, that provided a sense of, being. and, that has been played with, preyed upon.

[00:34:51] and so I think one of the things that's, facing us right now is that Without realizing it, I want to invite you to think about the question, are we holding each other trapped in various forms of communication and assessment, not only of ourselves, but of each other and what, kind of colonialism, industrialism, mechanistic processes, these habits that run so deeply into ideas of effectiveness, of optimized productivity, so that what we are actually doing is trapping each other.

[00:35:44] and you see, this is an ecological problem, right? So, so growing up in the seventies in California, there was a whole lot of people who were working toward the betterment of the individual. And there was a question, how do I be a

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better person? And I, think for me, in my work, I've pushed that to a different question, which is who can you be when you're with me?

[00:36:12] Who can I be when I'm with you? And already in those questions we're looking at a much more ecological question, right? Who? When you're in context with me, you know, coming back to what Daniel said, how do you shift? What stories do you tell? What tonalities do you use? What comes to mind? What do I remind you of?

[00:36:35] Right? This whole world comes to life in, our relationships. My, my husband works with, making wallpaper. And in making wallpaper, he struggles sometimes to make color, color similarities, because the blue that looks blue here is not blue when it's with other colors around it. So the things that are said are not just the things that are said.

[00:37:07] They are held and shifted in, in contextual relationships. To your question, how are we going to actually implement any of the plans or models to do anything? To make any kind of change if we don't have the capacity to be in communion with each other. So losing that communion because of the divisiveness makes it all the more difficult to even begin to address other things.

[00:37:42] So how. what might we do to unstuck each other, unstick each other, to be able to learn together to be in another way?

[00:37:53] **Nate Hagens:** And how might we unstuck each other and ourselves?

[00:37:58] **Nora Bateson:** Well, I mean, I think if you respond in another way, if you start to perceive the relationship in another way, the unsticking just happens.

[00:38:11] and that may sound frivolous, but that is my experience. if you perceive somebody in their complexity, they actually behave really differently than if you perceive them as a category.

[00:38:24] **Nate Hagens:** So I just had an insight and I'm going to ask a question and open it to anyone. in our linear conversations, in our current world where a lot of people are stressed and on the backs of a fossil energy surplus, we have.

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[00:38:44] become at least in the global north, an individualistic culture. So how much of our conversations are performative and about, self promotion and that the, proximate, discourse is about the meta crisis or climate change or social justice. But the ultimate, goal is. status increasing and hierarchy and that, that performance actually precludes actual connection and authenticity and context of a real conversation.

[00:39:27] Is that going on?

[00:39:28] **Rex Weyler:** It's going on all the time. Of course, Nate. social movements of all stripe, fall victim to this almost immediately, right? If you look at what happens in any social movement, suddenly, you know, you have a ra say, you have a radical idea from somebody. Whether it's communism in 1900 or ecology in 1970, you have an idea that the, that we need to have a different kind of conversation or a different way of being with each other.

[00:40:04] Then, once someone thinks that's The end of it, that's the solution, and they, it gets institutionalized, and then there's certain things that you can say and cannot say, and then pretty soon you've got power structures that have to protect themselves, and this happens in social movements, it happens in the environmental movement, it happens in all kinds of Efforts, even well intentioned efforts to make the world a better place.

[00:40:39] And it, it appears in our language when we talk about any of the issues in the world today, say the geopolitical issues in the world today. Or the separation of people from the land type language that Vanessa mentioned. we, people tend to take sides. And, you know, I have a little new personal mantra I use all the time.

[00:41:10] I tell myself, don't take sides. You're going to get in this conversation with this person. Do not take a side.

[00:41:16] **Nate Hagens:** So by not taking sides, you're, suppressing your individualistic impulse and, just consciously trying to have a broader lens. Because if you

[00:41:27] **Rex Weyler:** take a side, you find yourself defending that side.

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[00:41:30] So if you take a side, you're looking for Evidence, little factoids that make your side look better. And then, of course, we do that for ourselves because we want ourselves to look good in the social milieu that we're in. We want to speak in a way that we think is going to be impressive or something.

[00:41:54] And so what you're what you were talking about, Nate, is how much of our language is actually, virtue signaling, performance, posing, wanting to be seen in a certain way, and sometimes even trying to live up to the caricature of ourselves that We've allowed other people to create, oh, here's Nate, he does a podcast, you know, here's Nora, she, created the Warm Data Lab.

[00:42:25] So now all of a sudden you have to be this thing that you get introduced as, and there's, those are just a few of the traps, Nate, I, no reason to go on, but there, there are myriad, endless traps of, that sort. So,

[00:42:43] **Nate Hagens:** so that, that hits home. And, most of you know the, story, but I would like to recount my own experience at the warm data labs that you and Nora hosted at Bioneers a few months ago.

[00:42:59] So Nora, said, There were a couple hundred people there. Vanessa, you were there too. we were in groups of four or five people with the chairs around and, there was a piece of paper, on the floor and Norris said, think about food. In a changing world. And I'm like, Oh, I have a lot to say about that.

[00:43:22] I know a lot about that. And then everyone turn over your paper and the different papers said different things. My first one said family, but there were other ones that said politics and ecology and business and technology. And so what we did is the five of us talked, shared, took about food in a changing world with.

[00:43:45] family, and I had a lot to say, and then Nora said, switch groups and whenever you want and just randomly walk around. And so then I went and talked in politics and I had an opinion on that too. And after I had done like four or five of those, each time I was like, Oh, I didn't think about that because that was a different context, but what also happened, and maybe it's because I'm a gregarious, loquacious, Sasquatch person, I noticed that my impulse to talk actually was subdued.

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[00:44:21] And after I went to four or five of them, I didn't say anything. I started listening and I guess I'm not the best listener, but I wonder how much that is a microcosm of our broader thing. And I guess that leads me to say, Oh my gosh, it's such a great thing that you're doing with this warm data labs. do you or Rex want to comment on that?

[00:44:44] **Nora Bateson:** You know the, the, moiré pattern? You know what a moiré phenomenon is, where you have a pattern, and then if you overlay another pattern, you get a third pattern, and that third pattern, it, says something about the first pattern, it says something about the second pattern, but it makes it a new thing.

[00:45:09] Now, what's happening? in this warm data lab process is we're essentially in a sort of moiré phenomenon, only the patterns are not static. The patterns are living versions of, communication and expression. but what's important about the, moiré metaphor is this possibility for new things to Out of these overlapping, intersteeping, coming together.

[00:45:41] So you say a thing that reminds me of a thing, but it's a thing that I haven't thought of in a long time. And it only came up because of the last conversation that I just had. So there's this way in which that process, enhances the, ecological, contexts and contexts in their, intermingling so that you get that experience that you had.

[00:46:11] And I think for me, this has really been why this ecology of communication has become, So upfront, in, in what I'm doing because I, and what I'm seeing, what I'm longing for everywhere, you know, in these conversations or in conferences or wherever, just longing for this conversation. This experience of being able to be with a group of people and be in mutual learning with them.

[00:46:45] And, that is really running contrary to this idea of performative, you know, re confirming my identity, using language and expression to re concretize a particular set of expectations when it's exactly the opposite that I'm hoping for.

[00:47:05] **Nate Hagens:** Could you imagine, look at all the high level, high profile, silverback scientists, politician, business conferences around the world, that if each of them had to do a miniature warm data lab before the conference started,

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because I think for me, it, gave me more context and humility and it quieted me down.

[00:47:29] so, But good luck to you on that. I hope you can scale the effort. Vanessa, did you, were in the room as well. Did you have any thoughts on that or, thoughts in general on, on what Nora is saying?

[00:47:41] **Vanessa Andreotti:** Yeah, I, was in the room and it was a very interesting experience. I was also, struck by wanting to hear and not wanting to think about what I wanted to say and being conflicted between, Really trying to be present to what was presenting itself in the phenomenon and then being asked to contribute when I felt I wanted to observe and I shared that and then some people questioned that because in the beginning people were still thinking about how do I follow instructions and I said this is not about instructions.

[00:48:21] but I, agree with you, Nora, that, longing for inquiry for affinity of inquiry for us to really put the questions of consequence in the middle of the room and for us to be present to what's there, which is very much when, we talk about getting together, that's what really warms my heart because most of the time, People are expecting you to perform to a certain market value and expectation that they have, and they want a high out of that.

[00:48:55] So it's, a form of extraction and exploitation if we're thinking about it in market terms as well. And in my research team, and that's a funny story, parallel to the Warren Data Lab, we, have been talking about consumption, right? So we are consuming everything we can. It's another entry point in this conversation about how we consume not only stuff, but we consume stories, we consume knowledge, we consume critique, outrage, and that creates a huge, if it's not digested, it creates a constipation.

[00:49:31] And that constipation hurts, and we were working with artists after I went to the warm data lab and talking about the constipation and what is in that constipation as Rex was talking about, like, what are, what is getting us stuck? Right? And we talked about a tapeworm, of five A's and five E's.

[00:49:55] We love these acronyms to, as, reminders. So the five A's was, the first A is epistemic and moral authority, So that's why we're, that tape form wants to eat

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from the conversation. Then the second one was, the arbitration of justice, lawfulness, and common sense. Then we have unrestricted and unaccountable autonomy.

[00:50:23] We want to get out of the conversation, that sense. Then we have the affirmation of innocence, virtue, whatever it is that gives us status in the virtual reality we have in our head. And then the last A was accumulation. of, some form of capital, could be intellectual capital, could be other forms of capital, and then that kind of, of, desire then leads us to the politics of the five E's, where we have to perform exceptionalism, we need to be, to, stand out, or our group needs to stand out.

[00:51:04] A group needs to stand out. So exceptionalism. The second is exaltedness. So we need to, our, praises need to be sang. then there is externalization of culpability. We, the problem is we are in the good team, the bad team is over there, the expansion of entitlements. We deserve more. And the last one was this escape from responsibility, right?

[00:51:30] Because we, because as we are separate, And we are performing all this separability. We are also not responsible for what's going on in front of us. And then in the end of this activity with the warm, we were thinking about how to invite people to kind of open their belly and, be vulnerable with , the smell , the, and the taste of, the gut.

[00:51:54] in that sense. And then we said we needed, we need a warm day. Alongside the warm data lab, because I think the experience of it, as you said, Nate, of, getting in touch with what we're really hungry for, which is the inquiry, I believe, that is not prefigured or predetermined or concretized, as you said, Nora, that That, it's a yearning.

[00:52:23] It's probably a biological yearning. That's not a, your dad talked about, right? It, that biological yearning is in there. We need to create the context for that. And we need to catch that worm and compost it in the pile as well. Otherwise that the nutrients that we need for the body are going to be sucked up and As that worm is blocking the, passage of other things, we can't even digest what we are consuming, including this conversation, right?

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[00:52:56] So how do we digest and process and metabolize what we're hearing? Not in a way of over intellectualization that happens in the head, but in the gut.

[00:53:08] **Nate Hagens:** But what I'm hungry for, generally, is understanding and learning and curiosity, but also the feeling I get when I'm with close friends who are also doing work in service of life, like the four of you.

[00:53:22] So I wonder, at the same time we are performing right now, we have the camera running, we know this is recorded, and I almost wish That there could be a secret camera and the four of us could be, at Rex's house, just having this, conversation. I'm sure we would be saying the same things, but social media, our, time is money sort of world also act.

[00:53:50] as a constraint on all of this. Daniel, what do you think? And, how is AI going to make these challenges even harder? in addition to what Nora, Rex and Vanessa have been saying. It'd be fun to have a shirt that said,

[00:54:08] **Daniel Schmachtenberger:** I like speaking more than listening, because it is true for most. people most of the time, and to just admit it would be valuable.

[00:54:17] One of the things that I like about a conversation like this where there are five people is nobody is speaking more than half the time, right? Everybody's listening four fifths of the time. And, when I was younger, I had the, like, huge blessing of, getting to do counseling with people, particularly a lot of relationship counseling.

[00:54:45] And I think If everybody had the chance to, like, actually be a relationship therapist for a little while, it would heal the world tremendously, getting to watch the communicative patterns between people who love each other that lead to war, that are so obvious from the outside that they can't see from the inside, where we do the same things when we're on the inside of it.

[00:55:05] And so I got to see certain patterns emerge again and again. It was like amazingly insightful and such that there was a point where I just switched the process of what I had done. And so I'd be sitting with a husband and wife and let's say she was going to kind of tell me what the issues are from her perspective.

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[00:55:25] And then he'd tell me the issues from his perspective. And I'd be like, I know you each know your own perspective on it. so I'm wondering if you would tell me each other's perspective to start. Okay. And so I would ask the wife, can you, do you feel like, you know, his perspective and his needs and his upsets and all like that pretty well?

[00:55:45] And usually she'd say, yes, I feel like I know them pretty well. I'd say, would you mind, you know, sharing his perspective? And, what was interesting is, of course, they've been married. They've had the conversation. She's listened. So she knows some things, but typically in the process of sharing, He did not feel understood, right?

[00:56:05] He felt like she understood some kind of like collapsed version of what he was saying that was filtered through the lens of her own defensiveness of that. It really wasn't her fault that he wasn't taking responsibility for why he made her do that thing or whatever it was. And so, And then when I would ask him, do you feel like you understand her perspective?

[00:56:25] Oftentimes, just as a bi gender normative thing, more often he would say, not really. But, you know, still thought that he did to some degree. And I'd say, please share. And she would feel usually profoundly unseen. And so then I'd just try to facilitate. Each of them getting the other person's perspective well.

[00:56:45] And then usually I was done. Like, usually there wasn't that much more to do because in the process of them actually really getting where the other person came from deeply, which required them letting their own perspective go, not having a defense in it or a, you know, who did what thing first or whatever.

[00:57:05] They knew opportunities opened and their own position changed. Right, their own what is true for me changed and they understood where the other person was coming from and why better. And one of the things that's so fascinating was when I'd be listening, her version of the story and his version of the story were so different in their moral valence and their laycough framing and all those things.

[00:57:28] And even in the objective things that they told that had they not been sitting together, I wouldn't even know they were part of the same couple. And they obviously were. And it was so obviously a microcosm of macrocosms in the world

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that lead to war and macrocosms in the world that lead to class issues and ideological issues.

[00:57:47] And so St. Francis seek more to understand than to be understood is just so, like, obviously at the foundation of everything that matters. Seek more to understand than to be understood. Because so often, The thing I want to be understood for isn't even true. As soon as I understand better, I'm like, I was wrong.

[00:58:08] Never mind. I'm really glad I didn't talk first because I don't even want understood for that because it was nonsense based on me misassessing who the other people were and where they were coming from. And so if people can Like quiet, just shut the fuck up a little bit and really endeavor to listen more deeply and potently.

[00:58:30] First, one, it will create more space and interest in the other person to hear what they have to say. And two, what is true for them and what they want to say will change in the process. And there's a few things about this. I want to just add. The first verse of the Tao Te Ching, the very first thing when Lao Tzu was like, all right, I'm going to write some stuff for posterity.

[00:58:54] So maybe this helps people. The first words were the Tao that is speakable in words is not the eternal Tao. Why were those the first words? So that people didn't attach to the rest of it too literally and tried to get what can't be conveyed in words, right? That the words can kind of point to. And The Great Semiotician, Charles Sanders Peirce, who was one of the kind of great logicians, mathematicians, and did a lot of work on formalizing semiotic systems, you know, language type systems where there's, a ground reality and we make up a symbol, right, a word or some kind of symbol to represent it.

[00:59:29] He did some very good proofs that the symbol, no matter what it is, no matter which language, can never contain all the information of the ground. So when we're talking in words about reality, we're not talking about reality. We're like, we're not in direct relationship with reality. Tree. Does not have that much information in it, the sound tree or the sound arbole or whatever language, a tree has almost an infinity of information in it that is different than another tree.

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[00:59:58] And so, of course people have to talk about the same thing a bunch of different ways to get a parallax effect that can start to get a sense of what ground reality is, not a very, limited linguistic compression of it. And so, the last thing I'll say here is, the Dunning Kruger curve. Most people are familiar with the Dunning Kruger curve, this idea that when you know almost nothing about a topic, you don't know how much there is about the topic you don't know, so you can have a faulty confidence about it.

[01:00:32] And so a lot of people have like Geopolitical views about Russia and Ukraine or whatever, but they have never studied the history of Russia and Ukraine. They can't state what those early empires were like or where boundaries were drawn or what happened in 91 or whatever. And so they have confidence that is totally unwarranted and totally problematic.

[01:00:52] So as they start to learn more, they start to become aware of how much stuff they was in the That's unknown for them that moves into the known, unknown, and they start to get way more unconfident as they learn more. So they're getting more knowledgeable and less confident. This is a very good thing.

[01:01:11] **Nate Hagens:** That's what's happened to me on this whole podcast.

[01:01:16] **Daniel Schmachtenberger:** There's this idea that in the Denning Kruger curve, you start on this kind of mount dumb, where you think you're com like you know, and you aren't really, and then you learn more and you're like, oh, man, shit, I don't know anything. And then slowly your confidence builds as you know more.

[01:01:30] I don't find this. I find that's true for a specialist learning a domain, where they can start to get a lot of the basics of the domain, but when we're really trying to understand the world, I find that the more that I learn, The more new areas I didn't know that I didn't know anything about come into my awareness at a faster rate at the surface area of the expanding sphere, that my sense of how much is important, that really matters, that I'm clear that I don't know is increasing faster than how much I know, so I'd never get the confidence, like the confidence never ever comes.

[01:02:05] And what comes, like, an increasing awe that the universe works, an increasing recognition that a lot of people know a lot of important things I don't

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know, an increasing desire to listen, an increasing humility, and with that, one's own knowledge and capacity is also authentically growing.

[01:02:27] **Nate Hagens:** I'm going to throw in a non sequitur and then, throw it open to any, anyone else that wants to follow up on, on Daniel's comment.

[01:02:34] this is not performative. This is actually an insight I had while Daniel was speaking. After basic needs are met, conversations among friends. Are the best technology ever invented by humans because you don't know what's coming next. There's unexpected reward. There's emergence. There's new context.

[01:02:56] There's discovery. There's curiosity. There's love. They're sharing true human conversation is gotta be the most valuable thing that we have, assuming that we have a stable biosphere and, food and shelter and such. Anyways, just wanted to opine on that. who wants to follow up on, on what Daniel just said?

[01:03:23] **Nora Bateson:** I just want to add, something about silence, because there are so many versions of being silent together. And if you look at that, you know, we can be quiet together in ways that are nervous, in ways that are screaming, in ways that are angry, in ways that are deeply resentful or judgmental, in ways that are absolutely profound and full of love, in ways that are hilariously funny.

[01:04:01] we can have entire conversations. and silence. So it's, I think, important not to forget all of the nonverbal communication that is part of the ecology of communication. the tacit communication, the implied communication, the way in which somehow I can, I know in our silence that there is a resonance that we are meeting in.

[01:04:39] And that resonance can have very many things happening in it simultaneously. So this is, for me, you know, Daniel was talking about this awe of what it is to be alive together. I think that It's also possible to have those experiences with other organisms. It's not just human to human. And so there is this, kind of right of being alive that has to do with being in communion.

[01:05:20] And I think the more time that we spend there, the more likely we are to attend to those. Organisms. Absolutely.

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[01:05:36] **Vanessa Andreotti:** Agreed, Nora. I've, when you were talking, what came to me is that words can become clutter. Right? In the resonance that you're talking about, because wording and what, how does, how did we get to the point where there's this totalizing expectation of wording everything?

[01:05:56] When we know that what we can word is a fraction of what we can think, what we can think is a fraction of what the body perceives, what the body perceives is a fraction of what's around us, is a fraction of what's, what exists in the wider context, but we have placed so much expectation that wording will, give us something that is actually unrealistic to expect for that wording to do that for you.

[01:06:27] And if you go with that very specific desire into the communication, maybe that is what becomes the clutter that then prevents you from being in resonance. And what I remember too, there was a question I asked at the end of the warm data lab when you were signing the books, which was, have you ever tried doing the warm data labs long enough so that all the, there, there's an emptying of narratives?

[01:06:54] Of that, that warm goes out, , the constipation goes out, and then we can be with each other with empty hearts and empty bowels and empty heads so that we can actually listen what to what the limb that is, the body is resonating, in the room. and I remember that she said like, we will. Keep talking about that.

[01:07:20] Pause that conversation. But there's, it's, it is not, I don't think there's ever silence. There's only silence of words. There cannot be, right? And it, and Nate, it's not a human invention. I'm sorry. This is just biology, basic metabolic alchemy between everything. No, you're right. You're right.

[01:07:44] **Nate Hagens:** But let me, talk, let me, Follow up on the concept of silence.

[01:07:49] relative to our ancestors, even our not so distant ancestors, the amount of time we spend alone now because of the energy surplus in our society relative to, you know, 100 years ago or 10, 000 years ago is a lot. So how does that affect the ecology of communication when most of our interactions are online or at home with just one or two people rather than in a village with constant interactions and context with other humans.

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[01:08:23] any thoughts on that?

[01:08:25] **Rex Weyler:** Wow. Yeah, that's huge, Nate. I'm fortunate, feel fortunate to live in a small community. And one of the difficult things of living in a small community is everybody knows your business, everybody knows what you're up to, everybody knows, you know, and, That can feel annoying at times.

[01:08:43] One of the advantages is that everybody's on the case. Everybody knows, like, you know, you can't be anonymous here. We live in a place that's kind of far out, far away, remote. Some people come here and they go, Oh, this is a good place to hide out. This is the worst place in the world to hide out. Everybody knows that they haven't seen you before.

[01:09:05] Who are you? What happens in the urban environments in this world is that you can be anonymous and are anonymous. Most of the time you walk down the street, nobody knows you. Nobody says, so, hey, Rex, how's it going? I heard you really screwed up the other day. so there's this advantage of being in a real, community.

[01:09:35] But here we're talking about a community of humans. How much more of an advantage if we can re, if we can rethink and re feel this whole idea of what the self is?

[01:09:51] I'm an animal too, and I'm an animal trying to survive even when I'm not conscious of that. So many of my instincts, even my, even the instincts that get us into trouble evolved because they had some survival value sometime over the course of evolution. But if I can be, if I can be a living animal, With all the other living animals and feel what there is to feel.

[01:10:19] And what Vanessa says is so true. I mean, our ability to feel is such a small fraction of what's available to feel, but we can pay attention to it and then maybe help that enter into our communications. The best way to enter into the communications is silence. And a lot is going on in silence, and it's not just listening, it's feeling and being there, and feeling the deeper context of it, and what goes on, we ask a question earlier, how does an ecosystem change?

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[01:11:00] How do natural systems change? Well, this is something I've discussed and learned from Nora and from her father, and well, what's going on in these systems? What they're actually doing is learning. Every piece of the system is learning all the time. So if we have an idea that we want to change human society, let's look at how change happens in an ecosystem.

[01:11:28] Everything is learning how to be in relationship to everything else. So trees grow in a certain way, Because that's the conditions they have to survive. So plants grow in and around each other. Some plants cover other plants. Everything's looking for a way to be okay. And animals are looking for a way to be okay.

[01:11:54] A good friend of mine ran into a cougar the other day and was out on his boat and was just in a strange place. No people. He was getting some water and he comes face to face with a cougar. And the cougar is staring him down. So, Okay, so he's gently backing off, giving off every vibe he can give off, that I am not a threat to you, and I have respect for you, and we don't speak the same language, but I'm telling you, I am not a threat, and bless your heart, you live in a beautiful place here, I'll see you later, and he's backing off.

[01:12:37] Okay, so, that's pretty deep level communication. And it, you know, it better work. And our bodies are prepared for this. So, actually, we're prepared to go out and commune with everything that's alive out there. The plants, the trees, the animals, the cougars, the wolves, the birds. And practicing that is a good, is, very helpful.

[01:13:07] And I think this ties in, a sense, to what, Daniel was saying about, confidence and knowledge. Is that there's such a deeper learning and I, agree with Daniel that the more we really learn about the world, it just makes, I feel, it just makes me feel more and more humble in the face of it and Lao Tzu or whoever it was that said, The Tao we can speak is not the eternal Tao.

[01:13:40] That, thank you so much. And we have a map is not the territory and we have many people who have addressed this idea and, Bless their hearts, because we need these kinds of messages in our communication.

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[01:13:54] **Nate Hagens:** More broadly, I'm guessing that a lot of the people watching this or listening to this are nodding their heads and agreeing with much of what the four of you are saying.

[01:14:05] What sort of practices, can lead to us better being able to discuss really difficult and charged issues that allow us to understand the complexity and the nuance without dropping into tribalism and bickering and trying to be right, as you said earlier, Rex, because I think And unless we can do that, we being the scout team of people that are, you know, trying to, you know, midwife, the energy transition.

[01:14:40] And by the way, the energy transition is not about energy. It's about our relationships and our boundaries of self and how we interact with everything. But do you have any advice or do you have any, you know, protocols or, wisdom on this other than seeking out where one of Nora's, warm data labs is offered.

[01:15:03] what are your thoughts? because I'm a student of this. I would like to know the answers because I think as events accelerate in the world, the default is I'm right. You're wrong. And this is what I care about. And you don't understand, and I'm not going to listen to you. So how. Can we, as a culture, or even a subset of the culture, move in the direction that the four of you are painting?

[01:15:26] **Rex Weyler:** I'll give a quick, answer, a couple of quick answers. One is what I said earlier. Don't, take sides. You know, even if you feel maybe you know which side to be on, don't take sides. Just go into conversations and learn. silence that Daniel has, and Nora have mentioned, and Vanessa have all mentioned it, silence is a really good way to learn.

[01:15:50] and third thing I would say is work on expanding the sense of yourself, who you are, what you are. You, as Daniel said, the boundaries are all porous. Some of them are even quite arbitrary. Get over being defined by your body, by your nationality, by your race, by your gender, by anything, and, really practice within yourself being that larger self that includes everything.

[01:16:23] **Nate Hagens:** So if 1 percent or 2 percent or 5 percent or 8 percent of people did that, it might lead to some emergence like Nora has said, how does a

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meadow change? You can't predict how a meadow will change. Nora, what do you say about that?

[01:16:41] **Nora Bateson:** Every time I have found myself in a polarized situation, the movement of communication and relationship has taken place because of some information or input that comes from another direction.

[01:16:59] that is outside the polarity, every single time. If you dig down on one side or the other of any kind of binary, you're going to create this continuing, push and, is distracting. So we get into these polarized situations and they can be quite consuming and they scream louder and louder. This is, I mean, my whole being is dependent on this positioning.

[01:17:35] And then there is some learning that takes place from another seemingly another realm, another context, another grouping of people, another part of the story that I wasn't paying attention to. And then. The thing can move and it comes out that the polarity that I thought I was in is a very small aspect of a much larger landscape.

[01:18:02] So for me, that's been the way of meeting these, what my dad called schismogenic, situations. And it's not easy. Because they are, very, they're all consuming. And so, you know, it can seem like the words that are being said or the positions that are taking, they're being taken are life and death.

[01:18:38] and then there is actually more information somewhere else. So I think this is for me, one of the reasons I wanted to bring this grouping of people together with you, Nate, to have this conversation in particular is to open the beginnings of this place of, of inviting each other to go beyond our usual scripts, our usual positionings, our usual habits, and to, To not know exactly what we're going to say, to be at a loss for words, to think, I'm not sure how I feel about this, to, to have that moment of, for me, that's, you know, Daniel, you were talking about this authenticity and Vanessa, you too, for me, that's a big one.

[01:19:32] When I, get quiet and I find myself groping around inside to look for the thing that I have, I'm, trying to say, and I don't have any words for it. then I know, okay, this is worth, my time, this, let's play with this, let's find this, what do you think

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about this, is this the right word, is this the phrase, is this the metaphor, but there is play in there, not necessarily silly, joyful play, but play as in trying things.

[01:20:11] **Nate Hagens:** So if I'm trying to, chaperone a better default than the future, trajectory, and I encounter a group of people that, are 10 people and five of them think that climate change is a socialist hoax. And the other five, think that we're going, you know, on a runaway, Venus, runaway warming path.

[01:20:38] So you're kind of suggesting that instead of getting in the trenches and talking about the facts to throw a curveball into the conversation that's no one's expecting or talking about and then that, that broadens out and softens, the conversation is, that kind of what you're saying?

[01:20:59] **Nora Bateson:** I mean, if you're in a complex system, anywhere you start is going to lead you everywhere.

[01:21:04] So if you just don't start with the thing that everybody's angry about, you're going to end up with bringing information in that isn't necessarily there to begin with. so yeah, start somewhere else, but know that it's going to go, it's, this is not about, you know, You can't escape. Yeah. It's not about escapism.

[01:21:26] It's about recognizing that in a complex system, everything leads everywhere. Everything's dependent on everything. So if you start and you're just talking about your blue jeans, pretty soon you're going to end up in the whole world of economic exploitation and the production of chemicals and the, you know, what is fast fashion and the idea of identity and the, So it. You can start wherever you want, but be careful about starting in the middle of the battle.

[01:22:00] **Nate Hagens:** So Daniel and I just did a podcast, it came out yesterday, on naive versus authentic progress. And in his previous conversation, and also Vanessa and I talked about that, was on narrow boundary, wide boundary, and wisdom.

[01:22:15] Does being quiet, does, listening versus speaking, does a better ecology of communication in our current culture, won't those things be outcompeted by those behaviors and conversations that are more attuned to seeking power?

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[01:22:35] **Vanessa Andreotti:** So my research collective has tried different experiments, not for both preventing the hyperpolarization from getting to a point of, irreconcilable disruption, but also for bringing people to the space of humility, basically, to be able to be in inquiry rather than, seeking certainty, control, and coherence or consensus even.

[01:23:02] So thank you. We have one, one of these experiments is called anti asshole ism memo. The other

[01:23:10] **Daniel Schmachtenberger:** one is

[01:23:11] **Vanessa Andreotti:** called co sensing with radical tenderness, and all of them, there's also the seven steps back, seven steps forward or aside. There's another one, it's called Raiders for learning how to read and how to be read.

[01:23:25] And a lot of them were, informed by what we see when, we have the identity. The identity struggles playing out in the ecology, right? And we're trying to bring people to a space where they have the stomach to, be present to difficult issues and painful issues, or the shit. So where you have the stomach to face the shit, that we have inherited both metaphorically and literally without throwing up on each other, without throwing a tantrum.

[01:24:01] And without throwing in the towel. So we already, we are kind of upfront about that, that this conversation will lead us into a space where we will want to escape. We will want, so in this case, another way to talk about it is expanding our capacity to be present to all of this without feeling overwhelmed, feeling immobilized, demanding quick fixes, or.

[01:24:25] Or demanding to be rescued from the discomfort, to escape from the discomfort. So we, say that in the beginning, we try to create an invitation for a container where people are interested in an inquiry. And it's, and where we say, we generally actually say to people in our processes, I lovingly. don't care what you think, basically, but I care deeply about your, our collective capacity, mine and yours, to dig deeper, to relate wider, and to show up differently to each other and to what's going on in the metabolism that we're part of.

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[01:25:04] So figuring out that redirection, generally works better if it's done with humor. with a specific kind of humor, with gentleness, and in the beginning. Because when it's already happening, what, generally we refer to that is that the tide is high. And when the tide is high, everything is stopped.

[01:25:26] Kind of tumbling together, and you can't really do anything. So you have to wait for the tide below again, where you can invite a reorganization, an uncoercive reorganization of desires and affinities in that, beach analogy. So, how do we, as alchemists, as we are, I see each of you, I have enormous respect for the work that you do, because I know you're trying different things and you're bringing an alchemic quality to the work, not, I see you, moving people into diffraction.

[01:26:04] With your voice, with the tone of your voice, right? Each of us has, this resonance, alchemies that are doing things in the world. We, each of us are also, we're fabulous, but also super flawed human beings. And it's Extremely hard to be on the spotlight when people want us to be the guru or when people think that we have the answers.

[01:26:31] We don't. We're trying to, the way I see it, we're trying to intervene in the movement and the metabolizing of things and figuring out a way to, shift the expectation, that they place upon us to see us as human beings, fabulous and flawed. Human beings trying to do things and learning by making mistakes, right?

[01:26:57] That's how we all learn. It would help a lot. So figuring out a way that the podcast also invites that kind of relationship with the conversations, with the speaker, so that we can hold it together, both the beauty and what's beautiful, what's ugly, what's broken, and what's fucked up about humanity within us and around us, right?

[01:27:24] That, I think that is the task. And to see it as a lifelong and life wide inquiry, in collaborative, collective inquiry, we can't do this on our own.

[01:27:36] **Daniel Schmachtenberger:** I do have a thought to share on addressing polarized communication, but, I would love to hear what Rex has to say first.

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[01:27:47] **Rex Weyler:** Nate, you're sort of implying, oh, we're in a crisis, we don't have a whole lot of time to, to mess around with second, third order effects of our alchemy.

[01:28:03] I want to go back to our friends, the Daoists that Daniel brought up. they have this idea of Xinling, which is Roughly, we could say is divine efficacy, long term efficacy, deep efficacy, not just quick problem solving. I have the solution. but you have to have some patience for that. You have to have some trust in the natural process.

[01:28:38] People often ask me, where do I see hope? I see hope in the long, natural process. I see hope in nature. That's where the hope is, because it has this long, natural process. When people get, what's the first thing they say, Nate? In every first aid book, the first chapter, they say, when you come upon a crisis, stay Thank you.

[01:29:01] Calm. And why is that? Because when we get into this urgency, oh my god, if we don't solve this, we have 10 years to solve something, or we have to solve this year, or whatever, this urgency, it leads to this kind of panic response, and that's where people make mistakes. We do think, well, we got to do something.

[01:29:23] No, actually, we don't have to do something. We can do nothing for a while and see how that's going. We can pay attention better. And

[01:29:30] **Nate Hagens:** when we're in that state, we're probably worse listeners as well.

[01:29:36] **Nora Bateson:** And you can't see what's happening in other contexts, so you don't have access to those nth order processes.

[01:29:42] You can't pay attention to how your actions are moving through multiple contexts.

[01:29:48] **Nate Hagens:** Which is why this is, this conversation is triply important because as world events, accelerate, people are going to, the default is people are going to feel more urgency, not less. And so the, perils, that Rex just pointed out are going to grow.

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[01:30:06] **Daniel Schmachtenberger:** You know, I have something to share about addressing polarized, difficult conversations from the point of view of some communication tools. Also from the point of view of our come from, kind of energetically, because I just want to share a general principle is that let's say we're talking about physical tools.

[01:30:33] Any tool that is made for any purpose can be converted to a weapon. Maybe the hammer is not meant as a weapon, but I could use it as a weapon. Any intellectual or psychological tool that can bring about understanding or healing can also be used as a weapon. And they often are. So if we talk about tools of good communication, they can also be tools of weaponized communication.

[01:30:57] And if someone naively thinks if someone is a tool of Communicating with facts, or if they're expressing empathy or whatever, it's good. No, they could be weaponized. If they cynically think anytime someone is doing that, it is for sure the weaponized version, they're also not actually sensing or paying attention.

[01:31:14] They have to be able to sense the actual authenticity, which is a tricky thing to do, and there's no algorithm for it. But empathy can be weaponized. Someone can do fake empathy to try to make the other person feel like they get it so as to be able to convince them of something, right? let's take an intellectual tool like a dialectic.

[01:31:36] You take a thesis, you take an antithesis, you find a synthesis. That can be a truly valuable intellectual tool for understanding. But of course, it's very well known you can weaponize that. What's the conclusion I want you to come to? That's going to be the synthesis. So then I'm going to create, I'm going to manufacture a fake thesis and then a fake antithesis, walk you through those steps so that then you see the synthesis that reconciles it's the thing I originally wanted.

[01:32:00] So some people, the moment they hear Hegelian dialectic, they freak out and they assume that manipulation is occurring because they know that it can be used that way in the same way that a fact can be a weapon because you can cherry pick facts. And you can lay off frame facts and you can decontextualize facts.

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[01:32:16] Statistics can be a weapon. So every epistemic principle of understanding the world, every psychological principle of communication can be used for healing, for positive things, can be used as weapons. And there's no way a priori to know. Which one it is. So one's own earnestness about where they're coming from and one's discernment and kind of like subtle sensing into where others are really coming from is like, there's, I don't know a better answer than that.

[01:32:48] So with that, I want to say something about the come from and then a couple tools, if that's all right.

[01:32:56] In the come from of communication. One of the experiences that I got to have quite a few times. That was extremely valuable was, taking some periods of silence. And when somebody takes a vow of silence, which kind of like fasting or anything where you don't do something you normally do, you get to witness what your relationship to that thing is.

[01:33:24] I got to notice how much pressure to talk I felt. For no good reason. There's just this pressure to like say stuff. And when you've made a commitment, you know, for these 10 days, I'm just not saying any words. You got to be like, what is this weird pressure to make noise come out of my mouth and have other people hear it and validate it in some way where I don't?

[01:33:45] Why do I? What is that? What is the thing where I need these people who I don't even respect their opinion all that much to validate some nonsense noise that I made? And so getting to take a vow of silence, super valuable and notice that. Okay. But then to just also look at the pressure to speak, the pressure to have somebody validate something.

[01:34:08] At first, I didn't have empathy for it. I just thought it was really disgusting. And later you have empathy for like, okay, so there's some wounded little child part that didn't feel loved or included that learned to overcompensate by being smart or whatever. And now it needs that validation. I can have empathy for it.

[01:34:24] But. Good Lord, I don't want that thing to run me. So how do I give that inside so that part is not, you know, what's speaking outside? So to just notice

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where are you coming from a place that when you really look at it from the outside, you're like, like, why I don't want to do that. So that's one thing.

[01:34:49] So then the next thing is, I have a rabbi friend, he wrote the book's Radical Kabbalah, who says something I think is so insightful, that every failure of ethics is a failure of intimacy, because if you're in real intimate communion with somebody, you don't want something that is bad for them or that will hurt them, and if you're in real intimate communion, you actually know what's going on for them better, so you don't have positive intentions that are still miscalibrated.

[01:35:22] Right? Everybody knows what it's like to have a parent or someone care for you in a way you really don't like and feels oppressive. That's not actual intimacy. Real intimacy is both the caring and the grokking somebody enough. And so the idea that if there is a real intimate connection with reality, what you want is And the well being of others are not separate things.

[01:35:46] Like when Buddha said that desire is the cause of suffering, it's the desire of the self that believes it's separate that is the cause of suffering. But the self that is arising in connection with everything, the desire that arises in it is in connection with everything. So that's something on the come from.

[01:36:07] On principles, it's already spoke for a long time. We'll try to share this very briefly. The Consilience Project, where we, you know, put some articles back in the day, was really all about social conversation, the social contract and epistemic commons and stuff. But Nora said, when it's polarized, don't start right on the topic that is polarized.

[01:36:29] Start with something that creates consensus. Particularly start where people have some agreement on something else, start where they have the potential for intimacy, where they have the potential for recognizing the other as a human and not instantly as a anti vaxxer or a flat earther or a climate denier or a whatever, which or terrorist pejorative term makes them not human and makes it fine to hate them and just want to win.

[01:36:51] Start in a place where there's some commonality. Even when you then come to the area where there's difference, the first thing I like to do there is to see, are, both people aware that there might be stuff about this topic they don't know

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yet? Are they, oh, have they had the experience of things that they were certain about in the past that they later realized weren't true?

[01:37:19] And can they bring some like openness and curiosity to co learning together? If not, and they are just certain they're right. Nothing would change their mind. Don't even have a conversation. There's no conversation to have because it's just a war. So I will really only participate and facilitate a conversation where the people are like, yeah, I, have a best understanding, but I'm totally open to new information, new ideas, new perspectives.

[01:37:43] It might change that. Then we start with, what do we agree on? So we know where we have a shared derivational basis. We don't just start on where we disagree. Then where we think we disagree, if we can start to look at like, okay, why do we think we disagree? Is it, I believe proposition X, I believe proposition X is false or something else.

[01:38:09] Is it that I think I have seen data you haven't seen. Can I present the data, you know, or is it that I think my model is better, or is it that I have certain values I'm weighting and realistically, like you're weighting values that are also legitimate, I'm just weighting some heavier, or is it that I just have a hunch.

[01:38:27] So often the difference we're fighting over is actually an extension well beyond what the data or models can give adequate confidence margin on and it's a hunch. And just being able to be kind of honest about those things is very helpful. So there's, we put together a kind of consilience methodology for having complex conversations that are dialectics.

[01:38:47] Not debates. I'm happy to share that, but, that can be helpful if the people are coming from an earnest co exploratory place.

[01:38:57] **Nate Hagens:** So here, are my thoughts. Number one, I don't know if the four of you noticed this, but I was kind of in a foul mood when this conversation started and now I'm in a very good mood.

[01:39:09] just spending an hour and a half with, my friends. We just scratched the surface here. I would like to invite specifically the four of you back maybe in three or four months, we're going to do a reality round table every month. And I would

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like to ha I would like to continue this conversation at a deeper level, because I think it's so important to the metacrisis.

[01:39:31] how do we talk about this stuff with people in our choir and people outside of the choir and in the broader world around the world? so, I will, in the interest of time, let you each have a few closing words. Vanessa, why don't you go first?

[01:39:48] **Vanessa Andreotti:** Thank you. Thank you, Nate. I'm thinking about all the ways that you can see the effects of the metacrisis, polycrisis, permacrisis in the university itself.

[01:40:00] And as a dean, I can see, I generally say to people, like, do you remember The Ivory tower, and I say it doesn't exist anymore. It's at best a tower of Pisa, a leaning tower, and the ground is shaking, and it's, it, the fall, how it falls matters, right? If it falls too hard, it breaks. It falls in a contained way, in a gentler way, it can become a nursing tree for other things to grow from.

[01:40:31] Right? So I've been using this, analogy quite a lot and thinking about the stacked layers of complexity that I'm having to face as a senior leader, a senior administrator, and the need for right now as to have more experiments and experimentation. in bringing people to think together and engage together with complexity.

[01:40:57] So I would really appreciate, the creation of, another conversation where we can talk about specific issues too, and have intergenerational conversations about it. But when I say intergenerational, it's not about between generations, it's within generations that can be witnessed by people too, to see how we are processing these things together.

[01:41:20] And we don't have enough. Of, that, we have people talking to each other. And when you are the subject in the conversation, your attention to the conversation and to what you can do in the conversation is very different from the witnessing of people in inquiry, talking about the different layers of complexity of things, and that we have lost in the interruption of the intergenerational sharing, that was supposed to be education.

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[01:41:50] Education now became transmission. in a very specific and narrow boundary way. So thank you for offering this opportunity for me to witness the processing and participate in the processing of the different moving layers of complexity of what we're facing in the metabolism that we're part of today.

[01:42:09] Thank you.

[01:42:10] **Rex Weyler:** Yeah, I don't want to have a concluding comment because this conversation is going to continue. That's what I'm looking forward to. But I will say that I have one little piece, I don't know if it's advice, but it's something I do. If I have a question about something, how should we do this? How could we, as a group of people, as a community, or as a world, or how could we, deal with this situation?

[01:42:39] Always ask myself, well, how does nature do this? How does the natural world do it? How does an ecosystem do it? Ask earth, ask nature, ask the living world. How do you do that? Always ask that question. Invite, you know, all our board meetings of all our groups. We should have a chair for our dear Mother Earth.

[01:43:03] Let her sit down there and ask her every time. How do you do this?

[01:43:12] **Daniel Schmachtenberger:** that's a useful trick. I have found that the conversations that I have with people who, whose life experience background. whose training and whose worldview is most different than mine are where I learn the most by far.

[01:43:36] I know how to learn a lot from people where they're not. I'm familiar with their epistemologies and their worldviews because I know how to ask the right questions. Sometimes when someone's experience is so different, I had this experience like first time I met people who actually had a more tribal indigenous life.

[01:43:53] And I'm like, Oh, you don't have the same ontology of the universe. You don't like almost everything is different. I don't even know how to ask the right questions. But in hearing what you share about the nature of the world, my whole way of seeing the world possibility space is opening up a lot.

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[01:44:13] Similarly, like when it comes to political views, I find that Anytime I understand, I think I'm starting to understand the topic. Well, I think who are the people that have studied this topic for a long time that have the most different perspectives than me? And let me go talk to him. And that's where the most fruitful learning happens.

[01:44:36] **Nora Bateson:** Yeah, I, love that. because I feel Again, that really the only way we can find our way to places we didn't know where we needed to go is to get lost. And that's what happens when you're in a set of codes that you don't, you can't even receive when you're, when there's signals that have nowhere to land in you, there's a disorientation.

[01:45:03] And that disorientation, for me, shows me so much about the edges of my own epistemology, the edges of my own bias, the edges of my own filtration, and I, I think that is so important to be in circumstances that are confusing. And that's it. The way that learning can actually reveal where the limitations are resting, because usually they are drawn in very invisible ink.

[01:45:44] And so finding those limitations, and so for me, again, this conversation has been a little bit of us, you know, hanging out in the clubhouse, taking the lemon juice ink and putting it over the candle and finding where are the secret boundaries. of discourse, of ways of speaking with each other in public, because particularly this is a public conversation.

[01:46:10] And being in public is a particular kind of, of expression of competency, of expertise, of identity, of all of these things. And yet, I know, and, adore each one of your, ways in which there is a, curiosity of how do we get lost. Can we get lost together so that we find ourselves someplace we didn't know we were going?

[01:46:47] Otherwise, we're just perpetuating the same thinking that's going to perpetuate the same pathways.

[01:46:55] **Nate Hagens:** So getting lost together in a public conversation is the ecology of communication equivalent of lifting weights and tearing your muscles a little bit and they grow back in a new emergent way. Thank you, Nora.

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[01:47:09] Thank you all for the beginning. Of, of a conversation, to be continued, my friends, and thank you all for your work in, service of life.

[01:47:20] **Nora Bateson:** Thank you, Nate.

[01:47:22] **Nate Hagens:** If you enjoyed or learned from this episode of the Great Simplification, please follow us on your favorite podcast platform. You can also visit the great simplification.com for references and show notes from today's conversation.

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