

# The Great Simplification

---

**PLEASE NOTE: This transcript has been auto-generated and has not been fully proofed by ISEOF. If you have any questions please reach out to us at [info@thegreatsimplification.com](mailto:info@thegreatsimplification.com).**

[00:00:00] Greetings. I cried unexpectedly three times last week, and I'm really tired. I'm just back from New York, but I want to, I want to talk about, my experience because it, Has much larger implications for, what I might refer to as the shadow of the carbon pulse or the shadow of the superorganism.

[00:00:30] first time I cried is I had to put down my 14 year old, coonhound, Maisy, last week. I knew it was coming, she had cancer, she was going downhill. but when we put her down, she was just the sweetest girl. And all the memories of the last 14 years, her as my friend, as part of my family, came flooding back.

[00:00:53] And, yeah, I cried. Which is appropriate. dogs are family. The next time, was in New York, last week for Climate Week, I went to a movie screening of a movie called Future Council, which is, eight 12 year old children from around the world, went to talk to a bunch of corporate leaders about climate change and the environment and the future, and it was kind of loosely based, the monster in the movie was called Groth, which was loosely based on the economic superorganism.

[00:01:27] And, something about the way that 12 year old children can unlock one's heart and speak the truth that adults, feel but can't articulate, opened up something in me and I, welled up at the, United Nations showing. The third time was at the, inaugural, planetary health check meeting announced by the planetary guardians and.

[00:01:57] Mampela Rampele was there, and Carlos Nobre, and Cristina Figueres, and all kinds of people talking about, and Johan Rockström led it off. They all talked about how our planetary health check is, leaving the stability of the Anthropocene, and it's very precarious. positive feedbacks, loom, the Amazon forest, turning to savannah, climate, oceans, and how this is all critical to save humans and our future society and civilization.

[00:02:33] And at the end, Jane Goodall spoke. I'd never seen her in person before, and she's like, everything that was said was so important, but we neglected to mention that not only is it important for humans, but for other non human animals.

# The Great Simplification

---

And she ended with a greeting, a chimpanzee vocalization. And unbidden, I just completely welled up with tears, and my heart came up in my throat, and I don't know if other people had that same reaction, and maybe it was a an externality of my dog just dying, but you feel The urgency and salience of this species level moment of this one planet.

[00:03:21] in the universe that we know of to harbor life and complex life and the stakes of our times. and so, I think it was appropriately emotional. What I want to talk about today is, You know, this podcast, my work, my presentations, my franklies, I'm known as a systems scientist. Energy, human behavior, ecology, money, how things fit together.

[00:03:55] but there is a very real embodied emotional underpinning to our experience, our lives on the earth. And I just want to riff on that, a little bit. so that's going to be, today's topic. I'm just going to share a couple of stories. So in New York, I met someone who just sold his company for like hundreds of millions of dollars.

[00:04:33] and he had followed the podcast and he's like, I am becoming aware of my time on this planet where I have to do good and do what the right thing is. So I've been learning from you and we had just a really good meeting. And then I went to a party. And I wrote a note as I was going into the party that I need to call my friend in California who introduced me to this guy and said, we had a great meeting.

[00:04:57] So I like wrote myself a little note on my phone. I go into this party and I was early and there was only one person there. I didn't know the person and I introduced myself and I'm like, how do you know the people here? He's like, Oh, this guy in California introduced me. And it was the same guy that I'd just written a note.

[00:05:15] and there were like, Ten of these things happened in the last month. These little serendipities that you think about someone or you worry about something and then all of a sudden it happens. And I told this to this guy that I had just met. He's like, Oh yeah. He's like, I was in the Amazon. a few years ago, and I befriended one of the shamans down there and they said, when these things happen, these serendipitous things, that's what's supposed to happen.

# The Great Simplification

---

[00:05:46] It's when they don't happen that you're out, that you're not aligned. And when they do happen, you're in the zone and you're doing the work that you're supposed to. So I am a. Historically anyways, a materialist, not like a consumer, I'm not talking about material things, I'm talking about a material, explanation and understanding of our world, and I still am, but there are things that happen that I cannot explain, here's an And I'm not going to go woo here.

[00:06:23] you, you don't need to, worry about that, but I know a lot about the global macroeconomy. I don't know a lot about the more spiritual, side of, the human predicament. So I'm like a kindergartner there and I'm learning. but a couple of weeks ago, something really interesting happened and I was in ceremony with five other people.

[00:06:49] All of one of which I had known and trusted. They're deeply working on the Metacrisis. and we were talking deeply about this stuff for several hours. We were holding hands. and. I was talking about an experience where someone emailed me a nasty email and wanted to be on the podcast and wondering why I wasn't inviting her.

[00:07:15] And I was talking, I referred to her as this psycho woman who emailed me. And then we talked for a few more minutes and then the guy next to me, yes, mom, I was holding hands with a man. It was okay. He's like, did you notice that the energy field, between the six of us dropped when Nate referred to this woman as psycho?

[00:07:42] and I instantly knew it myself. As soon as I said that, I felt some disturbance in the force. And so then we talked about it. But in the interviewing few weeks, I have stopped short of using adjectives or pejorative language to describe people. And I'm like, what's up with that? I was with six people or five other people that I trusted and we had a beautiful experience and came away like closer friends and bonded.

[00:08:17] And the only scientific explanation that I have is that is, that was a deepening of my recognition and embodied perception that everything is connected. That we're connected to nature, we're connected to each other. Yes, multi level selection and such is still operative in our past, but there is a connection.

# The Great Simplification

---

[00:08:41] And if we're connected to everyone, I don't have to hang out with everyone, I don't have to like everyone, but I should probably have compassion and tolerance for everyone. So it's like this speed bump has been placed in my mind where I don't like bitch about someone or call them an idiot or psycho or anything.

[00:09:01] I saw that person is having some troubles right now or some challenges. It's just very interesting. so I also went to this sound meditation, in New York and saw a wild disparity of responses and grief and suffering and, trauma, just under the surface, and this is all to say. That the carbon pulse and the economic superorganism, we focus on the material and economic benefits that all this fossil energy and materials and complex technology and just in time conveniences for us have delivered.

[00:09:53] But as we've gone up this curve, there's a corresponding declining curve underneath, which is we've created systems where profit has been prioritized over our consciousness of people, of all living things, of the environment. We're becoming divided, from within the, feminine, the masculine yin and yang within us.

[00:10:19] we are, we're polarized in society. We're fractured. people's nervous systems are completely on edge. and I think there's this giant, like, societal root canal appointment on November 5th or whenever the election date is and people know that things are going to get crazy no matter who wins.

[00:10:43] And we're all carrying that. we are a species out of context, completely divorced from our ancestral conditions on the Pleistocene when we had 150 people plus or minus we lived with for our entire lives. And I think, you know, we've lost our moral compass, so much of the technology and riches and wealth of the world, in our global north society.

[00:11:09] And, by the way, everything I'm saying here largely applies to the United States, which is where I live, so I don't want to speak for, other places, though I'm sure they, they rhyme. but we get the reward without the work. People are addicted to pornography where they have the orgasm that is completely divorced from the tenderness, the intimacy, and the human touch.

[00:11:30] We have stock options and stock trades, which give us instant, dopamine reward, unrelated to the long work that gave us, killing and stocking an antelope

# The Great Simplification

---

and bringing meat back to our tribe. There's a Lots of things we do that are dopamine centric but our nervous systems, our limbic systems, our reptilian fight or flight systems are really in bad shape as a culture.

[00:11:57] One of the richest societies that's ever lived and we live in a sick society. mentally and physically. Not everyone, of course, but we've got the elites and the military and the government who are living high, riding high on the superorganism. And then we've got the people that are, attached to them. And then there's people that are, trapped, in their daily jobs, just trying to do, meaning, meaningless stuff to get a paycheck.

[00:12:30] And then there's a lot of people that are completely untethered and unsupported. And I feel deeply that mental health and resilience is about the most important thing that's going to be needed in our country, in the, next five years. So, If you take Marvin Harris's cultural materialism framing, which I've talked about a lot, we have the infrastructure on the bottom, which is the energy and the environmental waste capacity and what sort of technology and all that.

[00:13:06] Above that is the social structure, which is our laws and our institutions and our economic policies. And above that is the superstructure, which is our ideas and our beliefs and the morals and such. But what he didn't talk about is potentially a circle, that surrounds those three things, which is the health and the nervous systems of the individuals, that comprise the society that's being studied.

[00:13:38] And I think we could even go a step beyond that and. make that circle a sphere, which represents, the emergence and the connections between the humans in proximity. I was in New York and I was with these, eight people in a circle. we just stood around by these cupcakes, in a room at this party on Friday night, and they were talking about this energetic field.

[00:14:08] And I'm like, mmm, energetic field, come on. but I looked it up this weekend, and humans have an electromagnetic field that goes 8 feet. And it comes from the heart, not from the head, it's from the heart. And you can measure people's reactions, and if you go beyond 6, 6 feet, Oh, is it 6 feet or 8 feet? I forget.

[00:14:28] But if you're like eight or no, it's six feet because at eight feet, you no longer feel that. And at two feet, it's like really intense. So there is some sort of a

# The Great Simplification

---

non quantifiable, but also non woo energetic field. When people get together, that's also something we've lost because the carbon pulse has allowed us to just order stuff from brown boxes and sit in our living room and consume dopamine, and, you know, without any of the, social benefits that we used to consume things and by drawing down, the health of our ecosphere at the same time.

[00:15:09] I don't know what the conclusion is, other than there is a shadow. of the superorganism. And despite all the stock market at all time highs, the real stock market, which is the biosphere, is at all time lows. And a lot of people are suffering, and anxious, and depressed. and I don't think our nervous systems are that healthy.

[00:15:36] Yes, as a host of this show, I plan to continue to drill down on the energy, natural science, economics, bend not break interventions, for the coming decade, but I also am going to explore, the, the shadow of the superorganism, which is the stuff on the liability side, right? in our society, but there's a tiny, sliver on the positive side that the carbon pulse and the superorganism have enabled.

[00:16:13] They've enabled in me this recognition and maybe, It's this change in awareness, this change in consciousness, this change in perspective of the critical moment that we're all alive and sharing this conversation together. Maybe that's starting to bubble up. Maybe something is happening that is a little bit woo.

[00:16:37] I don't know, but I'm, going to continue to, explore this and at the risk of seeming woo to some of you hardcore, left brained scientists, I won't do it all the time, but, I will once in a while. Namaste. Talk to you next week. Bye bye. My wonderful welcome comes to you from the forests and hills of Gombe National Park in Tanzania.

[00:17:02] The sound that you would hear if you came, some of you have been, but if you go to Gombe and climb the hills in the morning, the sound of a chimpanzee greeting the day, announcing, here I am, who's out there? oh, oh, Hello. Ahem.