

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.

[00:00:00] **Nate Hagens:** Greetings. someone recently left a comment that stuck with me. It was pretty simple made. Of all the things you've learned after all the things you've learned on this podcast, what, is it that you want? And I found myself chewing on this for a few days, and at first of course I had dozens of answers, but then I realized that there's a bigger question embedded inside that one, which is, what do I want to want?

[00:00:29] I. Not what I used to want when I was younger, not what our culture tells us to want, not what I see ahead of me in the road that I want, not what advertising or the ghost of dopamine past or status games lure me towards, but what, looking back from some future date, maybe even probably even beyond my own lifetime, what would I have want to have and experience in a human life?

[00:00:57] So today I am gonna share a dozen or so things that I want to want, not in some fantasy world, but in a grounded human one. And these aren't goals. these are my own personal flavor of what I perceive to be the foundations of humanity, whether 50 years from now or 500 from now. but before I get. To these, perhaps those of you watching and listening could pause this video now and consider for yourself what are 10 or so things that you want to want for the future.

[00:01:45] Okay, here we go. number one of course is basic needs. Food, water, shelter, heat, cooling as needed, but we don't need all the heat and cooling that modern culture, says. I mean, I have a sleeping bag that keeps me warm to zero. if there is no heat, And I don't need fancy things on food and, all the things just solid, tasty things like everyone else would have.

The Great Simplification

[00:02:15] But basic needs are essential because without enough, nothing else, really matters. But with enough, a lot becomes possible. Second thing, and these are in no particular order. just how I, jotted them down. The second thing is stability. and maybe this is a product of me being alive during this time and being aware of how unique, the upside of the carbon pulse has been.

[00:02:43] But the downside of the carbon pulse, seems to me to have, Many of the ecological stability foundations of the biosphere are at risk. And, there are social geopolitical instabilities at risk. We've lived writ large. Most of the people following this show have lived during a time of stability. And, I think to have a stable expectation of the future is really important as, for a human to, to thrive. next would be agency, or freedom, or volition. The ability to act, to shape one's day, to choose how I respond to things. this quiet confidence that I can respond, not just react to things. A little bit like freedom, but it just means that I can have conditional control over many things in my life.

[00:03:54] Another core tenet, related would be restraint. So not unbridled agency and freedom, but bounded 'cause. I would want some rules that bind us, as humans living together. not because they're oppressive, because they protect. things that we have collectively decided are important. Guardrails for the commons.

[00:04:25] ethics and laws that keep tragedy of the commons at bay, that remind us of something larger. So I actually think, some level of restraint. And wisdom are, linked and that we need that, I would want that. Full spectrum. Love is something that I would want. romantic, sexual, sensual, psychological, spiritual, intellectual, all the different aspects of love in one's life.

[00:05:09] I can dream, beyond. One-on-one person. Love, friendship, and networks are probably the greatest thing of being human, is the interaction with

The Great Simplification

small groups of others. And in my life, I think there are three types of friendships and networks. One is people. I just enjoy doing fun stuff with fishing or.

[00:05:38] Going bowling, not that I do that much anymore, or playing games. just hanging out with another is my intellectual friends that we're curious and we learn and we process things and, we hash things out from an intellectual standpoint. And then third, increasingly part of my current, lifetime is. doing things, towards some goals, some purpose with some of my friends and network, friendship, of course after basic needs and some of these other things is the foundation of a good human existence.

[00:06:16] I. Building on that community, a sense of, belonging and interaction with others beyond close friends, and that would mean shared rituals and mutual aid and neighbors who have each other's back. the feeling of being embedded in something larger, durable, and reciprocal with other humans. Another thing that I would want to want is.

[00:06:46] To have a craft, something to get better at, something to practice, whether it's writing or gardening, or teaching or building. But it's the joy of kind of sharpening the samurai sword of something that you value, your craft, that you create and care for. What else would I want to want? Entertainment and novelty play. Music games, stories. We're not just thinkers and doers we're players too. and sometimes a, beautiful song, or a silly joke or a poem is what gets us through, or just a game of cribbage or backgammon or something like that. What else would I want to want?

[00:07:38] Curiosity, wonder, awe. I love to learn and to see things and try to understand why they work and how do they fit together. And seeing an old growth tree and how it grew to be that way in the current meadow that it's at as a wolf tree, and. All the different things that follow in its succession and just learning about the wonder of it all.

The Great Simplification

[00:08:07] I'm building on that, of course. access to the natural world to have daily reminders that I'm not separate from nature, I am part of it. And to see the beautiful, wondrous complexity of the web of life, on a daily basis, which many humans alive today don't have access to. Building on that. What I would want to want is a non-human companion during my life.

[00:08:36] Yes, I have dog, but could be a goat or, a bird, or a duck or something with eyes that are not human, a creature to share time with. And maybe this is a privileged 21st century, sort of want. but in my life, some of my best experiences have been. With my non-human friends, because I can truly be myself with my dog.

[00:09:05] and there's a reason we co-evolved with wolves, and that we now have dogs, but it's some non-human reminder of a tether to the natural world. I. Last but not least, what I would want to want is some purpose greater than the surface, details of, my life to be useful, to contribute, not for accolades or likes or status, but just to matter, to make a dent in the fabric of something bigger than myself.

[00:09:42] so those are a short list of the things that I would want to want. what do you notice about this list? I think some of these things depend on society and earth's ecosystems and our level of technology and energy and material throughput and societal cohesion, et cetera. But many of them. Most of them, they're internal.

[00:10:10] They're about the human condition, and they can exist in good times or bad with money or with no money. Their durable human desires through time. Another thing that you may have noticed about this list of my wants is what's missing? No yachts, no skyscrapers, no brand names, no hyperloops, because once basic needs are met, which.

The Great Simplification

[00:10:36] Again, for many people in the world that are not, but once basic needs are met, most of the best things in life are free or close to it. And then the other thing that comes to mind when thinking about this list is culturally, economically, and even psychologically, we are tied to what we've already invested in.

[00:11:00] We're attached to the stories that we've told ourselves about what success looks like, but if we are able to start fresh, or our children and our grandchildren were, many of us would want. Quite different things, better things, more sustainable things, more fundamental things. So it makes me question how much of what we want is a product of the sunk cost in society and in our own lives.

[00:11:34] So in this, brief reflection, my concluding thought is. I think this is where any real conversation about the future should begin. Not with technology, not with policy, but with a conversation about what we desire. What do we really want, or what do we want to want? Because if we don't ask that, we're gonna keep building futures that serve desires tethered to an extremely unsustainable period.

[00:12:08] Of human history and we're gonna beke our kids and grandkids of world optimized for the wrong things. Thanks for watching, and maybe take a moment today to ask yourself, what do you want to want and how much does this sunk cost of your situation and our culture influence your answers to that question.

[00:12:35] next week I'm gonna do a, frankly, on the key blind spots underpinning progressives, which is response to, the bookend to two weeks agos, the 10 core myths still being taught in business schools. watch out for that and. Talk to you soon.