

The Great Simplification

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[00:00:00] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Grief is the other side of your love. So in order to be in love with your world, in order to care, in order to feel the empathy, the compassion requires us to pass through the gate of grief. Because in order to come back into contact with that caring, with that love, we need to be able to feel what's happening, what's befalling, what we love.

[00:00:22] And it's that which resources us in this kind of non-linear way, beyond the personal individual self to act on behalf of life. But it's not you saving the world. It's the, resources of earth moving through you. That is where that life sustaining power arises from. And you know, for many of us, grief is the doorway to that.

[00:00:46] **Nate Hagens:** Today I am joined by John Seed and Skye Cita Flore, who are expert facilitators in processing and redirecting the deep grief that many people encounter when learning about the fraught state of our world. John Seed is an activist, facilitator, musician, and co-author of the seminal book, thinking Like A Mountain with Arnie Nest, Joanna Macy and Pat Fleming.

[00:01:10] John is the founder of the Rainforest Information Center and has dedicated his life to the protection of rainforest. And their biodiversity since 1979 and over the past few decades, John has also become a pivotal figure in the deep ecology movement. Sky Cita flour is a teacher folk herbalist and plant medicine Ritualist.

[00:01:33] Skye underwent a traditional three-year app apprenticeship in Taoist healing practices before moving to the Peruvian Amazon where she entered into a five-year traditional Curran Ismo apprenticeship with indigenous peoples.

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There. She has continued this work as a facilitator of experiential deep ecology, as well as a grief ritualist and co-facilitator of the Mythic Body, a year long course by Josh Schrey.

[00:02:02] John and Skye are also both deeply familiar with Joanna Macy's, the work that Reconnects actively incorporating it into their own work, which we discuss in today's conversation. This episode explores the philosophical and practical sides of grief and touches on the importance of processing difficult emotions as a way of caring for and loving ourselves and the world.

[00:02:26] John and Skye both echo the themes of past podcast episodes on the importance of community and ritual as a way of fully feeling and transforming grief into action in service of life. With that, please welcome John Seed and Skye Cita floor. John and Skye, great to see you.

[00:02:48] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Yeah, likewise.

[00:02:50] **Nate Hagens:** Great. We are labeling this, the work that reconnects roundtable.

[00:02:56] I'm, very glad that, the two of you are up early and I'm staying up late, in Australia where you are, to have this conversation. Maybe before we get into it, you each could briefly, introduce yourself, starting with you, John.

[00:03:10] **John Seed:** Well, I'm a rainforest activist from way back involved in rainforest conservation in Australia and around the world.

[00:03:20] And from there that led me into the philosophy of deep ecology and I've been, professing deep ecology and Designing and facilitating experiential workshops so that people can, have a felt sense of this work and sky.

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[00:03:40] **Sky Cielita Flor:** So I'm a South African who now lives in Australia and I am a, student of John.

[00:03:46] I've been, working in the work that reconnects and experiential deep ecology, which are slightly different variations of a same body of work. So I've versed in both bodies, both versions of the work. so that's one of the things I do. And then I also lead study groups on, bodies of work like plant intelligence.

[00:04:04] And I'm a co-facilitator of Josh Sch Rise Year long course, the Mythic Body. So anyone who's familiar with the Emerald, Josh, I do that with him.

[00:04:12] **Nate Hagens:** Oh, I've been wanting to have Josh on the show. boy, he would've been a good one, to complete this round table. I'm glad that you know him. I've listened to quite a few of his episodes.

[00:04:24] so I have invited you both, today to discuss the work that reconnects, which began with Joanna Macy, a scholar, systems thinker and grief counselor. Joanna wanted to bring people back into relationship with each other in the web of life, in order to reclaim our lives and the broader biosphere and planet.

[00:04:44] she developed that work along with others, including you, John, a long time ago. So let's start with you for those hearing about the work that reconnects for the first time. What's the origin story there and what is the ultimate goal of this work and what is it trying to reconnect us to?

[00:05:02] **John Seed:** Well, the origin story is, that, As a rainforest activist, I'd worked since the late seventies in direct actions and, campaigns to protect rainforest. And in spite of considerable successes, especially in Australia, by the mid eighties, it was clear that for every forest that had been saved in the preceding decade, a thousand forests had been lost.

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[00:05:29] And clearly there was no way to save the planet one forest at a time that unless we could address the underlying psychological disease that allows modern humans to destroy our own life support systems, these actions would, not lead anywhere, would do nothing to halt the mass extinction that was clearly underway.

[00:05:52] And so I discovered the philosophy of deep ecology, which we can look at later. And, I. According to Arnie Nest, the professor of philosophy from Oslo University who coined that term, it was the illusion of separation between human beings and the rest of the natural world that drove this, mass extinction that we were seeing.

[00:06:14] And he called for community therapies to heal that illusion of separation. And, later, in 1985, when I attended a workshop by Joanna Macy, when she was in Australia for the first time, she was doing workshops. She called despair and empowerment. I realized that in Joanna, I'd found the missing link, which was the way to turn the ideas of DB ecology into the community therapies that Arnie Nest was calling for.

[00:06:48] I, excitedly shared this with Joanna, who was just as excited to hear about Deep Ecology, and within a week we had designed the first of the experiential deep ecology processes and, what is now called the work that reconnects.

[00:07:06] **Nate Hagens:** So can you explain the, core tenets of, the work that reconnects?

[00:07:11] what's going on there?

[00:07:12] **John Seed:** Well, the work that reconnects is, a spiral. we start with gratitude and move from there to honoring our pain for the world. I was very

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excited to see your podcast with Francis Weller a couple of months ago because that's very much about, honoring our pain for the world.

[00:07:35] And, so Joanna, taught us that when we, Invite and honor our deepest feelings of anguish and rage and terror and despair about what's happening to the world. Far from being crushed as we have been taught, as we have become fearful of these feelings, they lead to empowerment from there. The work that reconnects is a spiral.

[00:08:04] It moves to seeing with new eyes. And these are the experiential deep ecology processes. Aness said that ecological ideas won't save us. What's needed is ecological identity, ecological self, and that we need to move much deeper than ideas. And it's Joanna's, I could have to call it spiritual technology.

[00:08:28] The incredible body of work that she developed that wedded to the ideas of deep ecology, create that, deep change in values in, And then the spiral of the work that reconnects moves to going forth. How do we take this out into our lives? And finally we come back to gratitude.

[00:08:54] **Nate Hagens:** So let me admit something, to you both.

[00:08:58] I've been working in this space for over 20 years, and I first came into it, concerned about the natural world, climate change, the oceans, the other species. And then I started learning about energy depletion and debt and geopolitics and, then human behavior and all the things. And I came across Joanna, both in person and, her work multiple times between 2005 and, 2020 or so.

[00:09:30] And I always felt that this was tangential to, what's now being called the metris. I call it the human pre predicament, the down slope of the carbon

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pulse. Okay? So we need to grieve more and, we need to face, the shadow and. Have anguish and, vent and, our experiences and live in embodied way.

[00:09:55] It never resonated with me until a few years ago where I saw that this was actually fundamental. Like you said, Arnie Ness said that knowing about ecology is different than having an ecological identity. So why do you both believe the approaches that you have studied and are now leading workshops on are so important in today's ecological, economic, social context?

[00:10:22] sky start with you maybe.

[00:10:23] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Yeah. I totally understand the feeling and, I think that there's a lot of people that feel that way and I've encountered many folks in the activist world who have doubt around, you know, the validity of, taking time out to grieve and reclaim. eco, you know, ecological identity and my personal experience and something that I've witnessed, time and time again is that the reason, well, firstly the spiral is an incredibly elegant map.

[00:10:53] We've, we start with. Gratitude, which is not in any way a kind of pasting over what's happening. It's a kind of recognition of what is also happening at the same time. It's like, yep, we are in this great unraveling and this is also here and it's a kind of resourcing. So we really resource ourselves in the beginning.

[00:11:12] And, I think that's something that many folks wanting to work towards change need more of. That's been my experience. So many people who come to our workshops are activists who are burnt out Yeah. Who are congested with grief and, don't know how to keep showing up and, but want to, but are kind of like losing the energy to do so.

[00:11:33] and partly that's this, matter of resourcing and, continuing to find something to celebrate something, to love. Some as. your conversation with

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Francis Wella was so beautiful. You said it's not just about moralistic action, it's about the affection. It's about the love. For the world, right?

[00:11:50] So we start there, and that's a really powerful place to start. And then that kind of helps us build trust with one another to then enter into the really painful territory of acknowledging our grief, which is, in my opinion, an essential step. And the reason being that when you love the world, as so many of us do, so many of the people again, that are interested in listening to a podcast like yours do so because they care, I assume, right?

[00:12:21] but to constantly be in contact with the data and the facts and the way that we are, especially data and facts that are for mo for many of us, for those of us who live in privileged places, not, something that we are living in our immediate experience. You know, I can, I'm someone who likes to keep up with the facts, right?

[00:12:41] Yet I still have to then play with my toddler who wants me to be really present and finish, do the shopping and take care of my home. And that disconnect of taking in the facts, having the grief arise, but then still having to show up for your life. And particularly as Francis spoke to so beautifully, 'cause he's someone I studied with as well, I forgot to mention earlier, that we're, you know, meant to, we're expected to do all of this in this hyper individualistic context, you know, causes the shutdown.

[00:13:10] And over time makes it really difficult for us, I think, to respond, unless you're coming from that moralistic place where you're shaming or guiltting yourself or we're doing that to each other into some kind of action. Whereas this opens a space for the love to a world, for the world to arise again. So that.

[00:13:29] We're doing what that action is coming from a place of, well, what else is there? Like how, why would I wanna do anything else with my life than be

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present to life and to respond to the pain and the suffering and the imbalance that I'm seeing here. Right. and there's more I could say, but though that's the beginning.

[00:13:46] **Nate Hagens:** So even a year ago, I, wouldn't have seen the importance or the need for gratitude and, love and trust in figuring out the. Marvin Harris's, cultural materialism, social structure, superstructure infrastructure, the responses that we're gonna have to do. But what Marvin Harris didn't talk about in his cultural materialism book is the milieu, the, ocean of humans that surround that triangle of, different structures.

[00:14:16] And I now see that if, you're not healed and you don't have gratitude and love and community and trust, and you're co-regulating maybe your vagal nerve system, parasympathetic nerve system, that there's no way those facts are gonna land in a place that's actually gonna lead to agency and action.

[00:14:37] So, so John, why do you think, gratitude is, foundational to, this work at, that level of the spiral? building on what, sky and I just shared?

[00:14:49] **John Seed:** Well, it's just important, you're in a circle of people that you haven't met before. And to go around the circle and to hear first, everyone recognizing that in spite of everything that we know, there is so much to be grateful for, to be, you know, just to be alive and to be, you know, for the world still to exist as much as it does.

[00:15:13] The gratitude allows us to be ready to step into the pain of the, the exiled feelings. And that, this is, the incredible thing that I learned from Joanna. But the piece of it that I think speaks to why this is so important is that these feelings, are an incredibly important part of our intelligence.

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[00:15:42] That if we look at our pre-human history, we have to recognize that for 4,000 million years. Every single one of our ancestors was intelligent enough to reach the age of reproducing itself before it was consumed without exception. And. 99.99999% of this preceded, cognition preceded thinking. And so what we call feelings is what remains in us of a very ancient intelligence that allowed every one of our ancestors to make good decisions, to know when to fight and when to flee, to know how to find its way through the world, and that these feelings have been selected for in every single generation.

[00:16:30] That any mammal that runs towards something wagging its tail when it should be running away as fast as it can, doesn't leave its genes in the gene pool. So in every generation, the accuracy of these feelings is selected for, we can call it intuition, we can call it instinct, doesn't matter, but what we call feelings in ourselves is what remains in us of this ancient intelligence that has stood the test of time.

[00:16:56] Cognition is very beautiful, but it's a, recent in intruder upon the scene. So as we suppress these feelings that they're rising with the power of natural selection behind them, trying to point out things about the world to us, and we're suppressing them with an equal and opposite intel. you know, pressure.

[00:17:14] **Nate Hagens:** But it's worse for people who are aware of the metrics because learning all these facts that Skye tries to, keep abreast of, even with her toddler and her shopping, and me and you as well, learning about the facts makes us. More in a state of, seeing a predator, more fight or flight, more, sympathetic nervous system activated.

[00:17:39] So does that mean it's even more important for people who are aware of all these things to feel safety and trust, before and gratitude, before engaging with them?

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[00:17:50] **John Seed:** I believe so that, of course people who, you know, turn the page and refuse to look and, hide away from the truth are kind of perhaps able to hide from the horror of what is coming towards us.

[00:18:08] And so. Those people that are prepared to look at it, and especially those who love the world and wish to, address these things. it's kind of our duty to become as effective as we possibly can. And if we are not, being honest with these feelings, then they are crippling whatever it is, that we are doing.

[00:18:30] **Nate Hagens:** let's, go back in time for each of you. What were the experiences or realizations, that led each of you to become practitioners of the work that reconnects and the broader, philosophy of deep ecology? Was there a moment that sparked your commitment to these practices and values?

[00:18:50] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Definitely. So, yeah, I would say for me there was a, pretty early awareness of something not quite right. And I think in my very early years, I kind of manifested as a deep concern for animal welfare specifically. So really wanting, you know, I became a vegan for a while. I was very much the person who stood by the traffic light with the meat as murder signs.

[00:19:17] And, but it was my understanding of the, metris was quite, narrow, you know? And I think what happened was, upon leaving a, five year apprenticeship in the Peruvian Amazon where I just, before I left actually, there was a, an oil spill from a mining operation up river. I was living in a remote indigenous community dependent on, subsistence fishing.

[00:19:40] And this oil spill completely affected their ability to, yeah, you know. Serve themselves and, you know, feed themselves and their families. And then that caused me to experiment a little bit more and understand and research a bit more. And I, started to see more. The more I looked, the more I saw basically.

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[00:19:59] And when I arrived in Australia, I had really started to dive into all of the research. And I came across Jim Bendell's work and Catherine Ingram's essay on the, you know, detailing the great unraveling in extreme detail. And I was absolutely crippled in grief and fear and uncertainty. And in that moment I saw John's workshop.

[00:20:22] And I didn't know really much about it. I'd heard of Joanna Macy, but I had also hadn't checked her out much yet. And I just, I guess we could, you know, to use John's word, the intuition. I had a feeling of intuition that I needed to sign up to this. And, yeah, it was one of the most powerful experiences I've had and I couldn't have come at a better moment to have an elder who had been fighting for the preservation of the forest and who could stand in front of a group.

[00:20:47] Most of us were quite young. I was only 29 at the time. to stand in front of a group of us and just speak honestly about what's happening and who could tell these stories of, You know, being in Defense of life and then pointing us to a map. Because I think one of the things that happens when you start to take this information in is that you can become flooded and, it can feel like you lose coherence and you don't really know what to do.

[00:21:13] And understandably so many people shut down and, come become apathetic in response to that. I, and as Francis Willis said, bless the numbness because I think so many of us actually don't have, what we need to face that. And so this map, this philosophy to have practices and more than all of that, a community of people who are like, I also give a shit and I wanna do something about this.

[00:21:40] to have that. Was really powerful. And yeah, so that was the moment for me. And just, of course, John's incredible modeling of all of this. And the stories he tells is, was, yeah, it was enough to make me go, this is one of the things I want to be doing with my lives.

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[00:21:55] **Nate Hagens:** And John, how about you? What, how far back does this go, your first realization?

[00:22:00] **John Seed:** Well, it was August of 1979. I.

[00:22:08] A community of Buddhist meditators in Northern New South Wales, Australia built a meditation center, organized meditation retreats. And I was meditating as hard as I could, and one of the neighbors appealed for help saying that the rainforest at the end of Terania Creek Road was going to get logged on Monday, and please come and help stop it.

[00:22:29] And I didn't know there was a rainforest there. I didn't know what a rainforest was, but I wanted to help the neighbors. And I was curious. And so I showed up and something happened to me that this was the moment that turned my whole life around because all of a sudden, the forest was calling me in its defense and I was worried about my, you know, it was this, mental breakdown.

[00:22:52] You know, I didn't have any kind of, cognitive framework that would, hold this. But it was so beautiful and it was so warm. And, I just surrendered to that. And, Ran away with that circus and here 50 years later. That's right, my life, you know, my life changed, from, that moment on.

[00:23:16] And, but it was only like five years after that when I discovered the philosophy of deep ecology. That I had a kind of a conceptual framework within which to hold that, that I, realized that, you know, my ecological identity was of a creature that had spent 95% of the last a hundred million years within that rainforest whose intelligence I had felt that day.

[00:23:46] And that why would I be surprised that it could, speak to me. And I also realized that particular rainforest was an ancient refugium, that the rainforest had been. Expanding and contracting over the hundreds of millions of years. And,

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whenever it contracted due to climatic conditions, there were just certain areas that, it contracted to, and Terania Creek happened to be one of those.

[00:24:14] So this was a, kind of a stronghold of this ancient intelligence that had generated. Well, it's home to more than half of the, species of plants and animals in the world, and had thrown out all of this incredible, diversity, including we humans.

[00:24:36] **Nate Hagens:** Is that forest still intact, the one you mentioned in 1979?

[00:24:41] **John Seed:** Well, yes. It's, it's, it was protected. then as a result of our actions and 200 arrests, it became part of the, nightcap National Park, which became part of the World Heritage List, which is about as protected as anything can be in the world today.

[00:24:59] **Nate Hagens:** Congratulations. Thank you. I know you know my friend Randy Hayes, rainforest Action Network and have lots of stories on that front.

[00:25:11] so, so getting back to the work that reconnects, we are obviously, the viewers of this show are aware that we're living through ecological, unfolding ecological crises that can feel overwhelming, depressing, paralyzing. Why is it important for us to acknowledge difficult emotions like grief, fear, even anger about what's happening instead of distracting ourselves from, these emotions?

[00:25:40] I did, like you both mentioned, I had the conversation with Francis Weller on grief, but generally, why is it so important to, to recognize and embrace and, go through these emotions?

[00:25:52] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Well, there's a few reasons. One of the big reasons is that energy required to hold those back is massive and You know, it really, it ties, it's exhausting.

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[00:26:03] And I, and you know, this is something that Francis Wella mentioned in your conversation with him, but he is of the belief, and I believe this too, Joanna mentions this in her work. John has many times as well that in a way the kind of depression and the apathy can be seen as a result of the life force.

[00:26:20] Being consumed, holding back that tide. And so many people feel this enormous liberation from actually speaking the truth and then allowing the feeling that is already there. It's not like you are not feeling it. This is what so many people say in the grief rituals that we run. Wow. I didn't even know I was feeling that.

[00:26:38] Like when they hear other people speak it, there's this strong resonance of truth and then that unlocks for them what was already there, but even below conscious awareness to a degree.

[00:26:49] **Nate Hagens:** So I have grief, fear, and anger right now that I'm feeling, but I just don't even know that I'm feeling it.

[00:26:54] **Sky Cielita Flor:** I would say.

[00:26:55] So I would feel like everyone does. and if you said no, I would feel like probably you need to do a bit more work to come into contact with, if I'm honest. Yeah. so that would be one reason. And then the other reason is that. In this understanding, the grief is the other side of your love. So in order to be in love with your world, in order to care, in order to feel the empathy, the compassion, and in my particular, way of doing this work, I take it a step further into what we call animus perception.

[00:27:27] Really starting to feel the living sentient of the world itself, which in materialist rationalist culture is very shut down. to do that requires us to pass through the gate of grief because in order to come back into contact with that caring, with that love, we need to be able to feel or have the resource to hold

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what's happening, what's befalling, what we love, and what might not be falling now will later, you know, from the most basic truth of life, that everything is in permanence.

[00:28:01] Death will happen to all, but then also from within the lens of this particular meta crisis and that we're seeing right now. So that's, another thing. And then the very last thing that I see as a really important reason to come into contact with grief is that for many people it is actually the doorway into that ecological identity that John was speaking about, which is in many ways, that's, that is like the, big fruit of this work that we're moving towards.

[00:28:29] You know, it's like the gratitude and the grief are in many ways like the support of the doorway into that. And it's that which resources us, in this kind of non-linear way, beyond the personal individual self to act on behalf of life. But it's not you saving the world, it's earth, it's the, resources of earth moving through you.

[00:28:50] So it's. I guess a slightly mystical spiritual approach to activism, but for me it's, that is where that life sustaining, power arises from. And, you know, for many of us, grief is the doorway to that. As an

[00:29:07] **John Seed:** activist, I felt that, my job was to raise awareness that once people were aware of what was going on, everything would be okay wrong.

[00:29:20] everyone is aware of what's going on. Things are far from okay. And I believe that's because the knowledge by itself, without the passion of the emotions, the knowledge is sterile. That we feel paralyzed, we feel helpless, we feel hopeless. What can one person do anyway? It's all too late. You know, these things flood us.

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[00:29:43] And, the amazing thing after the, truth Mandala, which is the name of the ceremony that we do at these workshops to honor our pain for the world. People feel this incredible surge of empowerment. Joanna called this work Despair and Empowerment because empowerment is what we feel when the despair has been honestly met, and this empowerment just wells up inside us.

[00:30:12] And those feelings become the passion that's needed. We've got, we know what to do, we just don't know how to find the motivation to find the strengths. To find the, room in our lives for the, you know, and these feelings push us into action. And that's kind of what they're for. That's how our ancestors survived these feelings.

[00:30:35] Showed them, you know, we were in a cave and, we were terrified of the predators that were outside, but our hunger drove us outside. We had to make the right decisions. And it was the feelings that, that, and showed us what to do and gave us the, energy and the passion to do it.

[00:30:56] **Nate Hagens:** So I understand that this works in involves, as you say, community building, but also ritual, including a well-known ritual called the Council of All Beings, which I forget, which frankly, I did that or a, poem about it.

[00:31:13] but I am aware of this, which was co-created, I believe, by you, John and, Joanna Macy. Can you describe this ritual, John, the Council of All Beings?

[00:31:23] **John Seed:** So the Council of All Beings was the first of the experiential deep ecology processes that, came to life. Within a week of meeting Joanna, she and I were talking excitedly about how deep ecology and despair and empowerment needed each other and, the.

[00:31:44] Came up with the council of all beings. And so a week after that workshop where I met her, we, she invited me to a facilitator's training that she

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was doing in Sydney, 500 miles to the South. And we facilitated together the first council of all beings. So in the council of all beings, each of the participants, goes on a, a vision quest to find an ally in the non-human world.

[00:32:11] This could be a plant or an animal, or a feature of the landscape.

Basically anything in the universe except a human in the way that I facilitate it.

Now, you know, you can have humans as part of it, but I find that we hear from humans all the time. This is a chance for all of the other voices, the voiceless ones to be heard.

[00:32:31] And, so we go out into nature, with the, with calling out in our minds, Hey, I'm gonna be in a council of all beings in half an hour. And I don't have an ally yet. Is there anyone there who would like a voice? Because I'm ready to speak for you. And this may be something that we actually happen upon a butterfly, lands on our nose.

[00:32:54] That would be a sign, you know? But, but maybe just a thought that comes to us. But we all come back and we, make a mask, a simple mask, a paper plate with, crayons and so on, to represent our ally. And then we pass through a ceremonial portal into the council of all beings. We're not asked to believe anything.

[00:33:19] We're not asked to believe that this is actually the spirit of eagle or anything like that. But it, could just be an exercise in moral imagination. It doesn't matter. You, basically you just get into a childlike kind of a place and wait. Listening to the voices that you hear. And at a certain moment you'll find that you're called to speak.

[00:33:43] And what I can say is that having done this hundreds and hundreds of times now over 40 years, everyone hears things that they've never heard before, including me in a council of all beings. But what I'd like to add is that soon after,

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Joanna and I put this together, I was doing workshops in the United States and had the privilege to be a witness to a ceremony being conducted by some Hopi people on a Mesa in the Southwest.

[00:34:14] And to my astonishment, I saw that they were doing the Council of All Beings, which I thought that Joanna and I had invented a couple of years ago, but, which they assured me they'd been doing for 10 million, 10,000 years without a pause. And, Studying it later, I realized that I couldn't find a single example of an indigenous society that had maintained its ceremonial life that didn't regularly meet.

[00:34:41] Putting aside the day to day, putting aside the social identity and those things to honor our connection with the earth, to honor all our relations, to allow ourselves to sink our roots back into the matrix from which we have emerged. And that, I realized that we modern people are perhaps the first humans in a quarter of a million years that have relegated these things to sort of woowoo mumbo jumbo, you know, me empty ritual and so on.

[00:35:12] And that. so that, you know. In your conversation with the French, guy about the shift not long ago. Yeah. Kochi. Yeah. you said, it's a cultural shift that's needed and, that's what, sky was referring to. And that's what I've recognized that these workshops. They're a move in the direction of reclaiming a culture because all our ancestors too were, pagan.

[00:35:40] All our ancestors were animist and connected to the living earth. And so these workshops are a step back in the direction of a culture of connection.

[00:35:51] **Nate Hagens:** So what, what actually happens? I, presumably, you've done hundreds and hundreds, Skye, you may by now have done dozens of these. What happens, during or and after these council of all beings, little experiences.

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[00:36:08] What, happens to the participants? what is the shift that you've observed?

[00:36:12] **Sky Cielita Flor:** What I'd say is that for me, the council beings is of all beings, is really inseparable from a lot of the other practices. So it's something that we'll do after, for example, the grief ritual, and there's all kinds of other rituals on either side of it.

[00:36:26] So really what happens is kind of part of that whole process. But the council of all beings in particular, I, I feel that some people, you know, are, have a hard time dropping into the process and maybe hold themselves apart. I've seen that a little bit, but more often than not, once the field, the group ritual field kind of takes off and more and more of each other reflect, that permission to kind of drop their, the human face and enter into this, other being.

[00:37:00] There's like a suspension of the human mind and, frame for a time. And people are, as John said, able to say things or express things that often surprise them. So that's one of the few, responses we often hear is, I didn't even know I was gonna say that, or I couldn't believe that came out of my mouth.

[00:37:17] Like it's words like that are really common. and so for me that signifies that they've moved out of the everyday mind and are able, when they get into it, they're able to access something else, a different kind of intelligence perhaps. that's my feeling

[00:37:32] **Nate Hagens:** of it. And it, may just. Call up our deeply, hidden love for other species in the natural world, which our culture kind of paves over.

[00:37:46] because I'm just thinking my, own self, 10 years ago looking at oil and finance and all the things, if I would've went to a group and tried to, defend, an

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owl or an otter or a dolphin and talk about their, you know, what's happening in their world from an imagination, I, would've felt embarrassed.

[00:38:07] But now I'm like, yeah, let's do that. I'll only get together with people and see what comes outta my mind and my heart. So this all kind of is, like you said, John, a a change in consciousness and almost a remembering. I, yeah, I don't know how to describe it. Maybe you can help me describe it.

[00:38:26] **John Seed:** Well, I, think remembering is a, you know, is a, good, place to start because.

[00:38:32] The truth is that we understand intellectually that every cell in our bodies are descended in an unbroken chain from the first cell of life on earth. Yep. Every atom in our bodies has grown through the, emerging evolution of the cosmos, of the universe. And that, we are suffering from amnesia that we, one of the processes that we do that actually my favorite process at the moment, which we often do on Saturday night in the workshop, is Called a cosmic walk where we, create a spiral, that's, 50 meters long to represent the 13.7 billion year story of the universe. And there are 33 candles placed around the spiral, appropriately spaced, to represent different stories in the emerging of the universe. And we learn a chant called Child of the Universe.

[00:39:34] it goes, I'm as old as the universe. I've been here before and I'll be here again. I'm a child of the universe, part of all women and part of all men. And this, process was created by Sister Miriam Therese McGillis, a Catholic nun from Genesis Farm in New Jersey, and a student of Thomas Berry, the great, Catholic theologian who became a theologian later in his life when he realized that, All our stories about God, about religion, it's all coming from the earth. And that, you know, that the story that he had grown up with, and that he had professed all of his life was just one of 10,000 creation myths that humans had created and that he called, for, us to find ways of telling the story, that unites humans, you know,

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rather than, separates us that, you know, the stories of, you know, the Catholic story is at war with the Muslim story and, but the Catholic story is at war with the Protestant and the Sunni story is at war with the Shia.

[00:40:46] We need a story that unites humans of our, of our creation, of, our emerging. And so this, ceremony was created by Sister Miriam and, but so this is the story, the human. Becomes that moment when the universe has become conscious in a certain kind of a way and has become conscious of its own story that, this incredible, Evolution of the, periodic table. At first there was nothing but hydrogen and helium, and then in the death throws, of stars, the other elements emerged, and these are the elements of our bodies. These are the elements of the earth that we are the universe looking back upon itself and, of its own emergence.

[00:41:36] And this creates the deepest level of ecological identity where we realize. That we are the universe itself and that we are also the earth. We are also the mammal. We are also the human, and we are also this person, this personality. And there's just a tremendous liberation there from, being restricted to merely being the human and to remembering the vast story that underpins that.

[00:42:04] **Nate Hagens:** So the council of all beings is, a ritual, that you do. What, is the importance of ritual and community? Why is ritual so important to these times and to this work

[00:42:17] **Sky Cielita Flor:** ritual is. Something that humans have enacted since, for as long as we know. I'm not really sure. I, suspect that our culture is one of the few that isn't actively in ritual all the time.

[00:42:29] Ex, besides ritual? Well,

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[00:42:30] **Nate Hagens:** we have ritual. We have, we have Halloween and 4th of July. Yeah. And that's true.

[00:42:36] **Sky Cielita Flor:** I we don't really have that so much here, but that's true. Americans have Halloween.

[00:42:41] **Nate Hagens:** But is that, really what we mean by ritual though? No, it's, so, it's more like distraction.

[00:42:46] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Ritual is a way of kind of signifying to the psyche that we're entering into a different kind of space.

[00:42:54] Right. And so we're kind of come, you can do a personal ritual or you can do communal ritual. Although in my experience, the resonance built through communal ritual can take us to places that we can't always access in personal ritual. But it's a, way of really signifying that we're entering into another kind of space.

[00:43:12] We might call it sacred space, for those who aren't scared of a word like sacred. and it's, a way to allow. inner resources and outer resources to pour through us that we wouldn't really have access to necessarily in our, waking regular consciousness. that's my experience. That's one of the ways I would answer that.

[00:43:34] **Nate Hagens:** So what kind of, transformations have both of you seen from the participants who've gone through this work? Do you find that they do reconnect, with the Web of life around them? And if so, are they able to maintain that connection once they go back to their daily lives?

[00:43:50] **John Seed:** Well, I would say that, without exception, everyone who participates in the workshop reaches that experience of connection.

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[00:44:00] And it's kind of a miracle where people just express this feeling of finally coming home. And the gratitude at the end of the spiral is a deep, gratitude for the experience that we've had together. But I always warn people in the going forth section that this is very short-lived, that, we have to think of it like some sumptuous feast, but no matter how good it is, we're gonna be hungry again, the, you know, tomorrow.

[00:44:31] And that's just the way that it is. And that's how I found it. So I've done these, workshops myself, like I'm the facilitator, but the facil facilitator just introduces the process and then becomes a participant. So I've participated hundreds of times and. That doesn't mean that I'm now connected, that I'm now living in my ecological identity, but I know where to find it and I know, and I come back to it again and again.

[00:45:01] And I believe that's the reason why indigenous people, include these ceremonies as a regular part of every month, of every year, of every season, of every Equinox and solstice and Full Moon, and New Moon and all of these things. Because we, as humans, it seems we have this tendency to slip away into merely social, Ways of identifying ourself. And every culture appears to have created these ceremonies as part of their culture, as a way of correcting for that, as a way of making sure that we remind ourselves again and again, of the matrix from which we've come and to which we will return, and which we must protect and defend in order for our lives

[00:45:52] **Nate Hagens:** to be supported.

[00:45:53] So how can people listening to this, find places to do this work? Do they have to go to a formal workshop or ritual, or can they start the, this process, the council of all beings and some of these other things, by themselves with the people around them?

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[00:46:08] **John Seed:** Well, one of the things that I've learned from Joanna is that, she explained to me that, Whatever separation exists between humans and the rest of the natural world is all coming from us. The earth never pushed us away, and that what we found is that whenever a group of people gets together with the shared intention to heal that illusion of separation, the earth comes rushing back in. And what that means is that the particular processes that we use in our workshops are pretty interchangeable.

[00:46:42] That. Anything, almost anything that you could do that was congruent with that intention would serve as a vehicle. And what that means is that anyone can do this, in my opinion, without any training whatsoever. I think Francis Wallis said something similar. Just find a group of people who share these values and begin to explore it.

[00:47:02] So the book that Joanna and I, wrote together with Arnie Ness and Pat Fleming back in the late eighties, thinking like a mountain towards the Council of all beings. It's written like a recipe book and you don't even need to have tasted the meal. In order to follow the recipe. Lots of people have facilitated this work without even having participated in a workshop before, and they all report that it

[00:47:29] **Nate Hagens:** works just fine.

[00:47:30] So, given that this work, involves group exercises and even spiritual elements that might be unfamiliar or uncomfortable for newcomers, have you both encountered resistance in bringing the work that reconnects into communities? And what have you learned about making these practices accessible and relevant to, people who might initially, be hesitant?

[00:47:55] Like. Younger Nate,

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[00:47:57] **Sky Cielita Flor:** well, I might just hop in and I just wanted to add a couple things to what John just said and to say that there's the work that Reconnects network, which has a, inventory of, facilitators that you can find who are all over the world, who are kind of generally to be registered as a facilitator for through their network.

[00:48:14] They want, you have to have participated in at least a few workshops. but as John just said, anyone can do it. And so there's thinking like a mountain. But Joanna also wrote a book called Act of Hope with Chris Johnson, and that's designed to be a self-guided study group so that, you know, it's kind of written with the intention that people come together and they create their own groups.

[00:48:36] That's what I did right at the beginning of the journey. After doing my workshop with John, I got that book, I called a group of people together and that was my first step in the, journey of, offering this work. And, it's such a simple, beautiful, easy way to do it. And then there's also beautiful books like Joanna's written many books.

[00:48:55] John, the Thinking like the mountain book is gorgeous, but Joanna's books, A Wild Love For a World For the World, which is like an anthology of all these practitioners from around the world sharing their experiences of this work and the impact that the work has made and the way it's rippled out and empowered activists.

[00:49:14] Just to also link it back to that other question of yours. I cannot rec, I wept my way through that book, feeling the tendrils of this work and the way it's wrapped around the globe and influenced so many activists around the world. So I just wanted to name those things. Before I answer,

[00:49:30] **Nate Hagens:** after you wept your way through the book, what happened then after you finished the book and you're weeping out of curiosity.

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[00:49:36] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Oh, just feeling That was tears of joy. So they were tears of joy. He's understanding how this work has moved out into the world and how, John and Joanna, two people just following their inner intuition and hearts could light a fire that has spread across the globe. The impact is incredible actually.

[00:49:56] So that book was a, really beautiful collection of stories illustrating the impact of people taking it into like refugee camps in Africa and like helping to know. With the negotiations of the, you know, the, Berlin War, like all of these things around the world across time. beautiful stories.

[00:50:16] So, yeah, for me that was just inspiring tears more, you know, those particular tears.

[00:50:22] **Nate Hagens:** And what happens if there are curmudgeonly people that just want more facts and are, using facts as, shields and, weapons and, don't want to drop into the embodied spiritual, perceived as woo aspects of these.

[00:50:41] What, has been your experience with all that? Well,

[00:50:43] **John Seed:** that, that's the reason why I think it's really important to frame this very. Honestly, you know, that I have been invited. Sometimes someone will come up after a workshop and say, Hey, I'm the marketing manager for so and so, and I want you to bring this to my team.

[00:50:59] You know, and I agree. And then just before that, they say, actually, could you call it something different than the council of all beings? Because, and I say, what would you like me to call it? And, they say, well, could you call it a team building exercise? Because it clearly does that. But whenever I've tried that, it's failed.

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[00:51:19] That's the only time that it's failed because it's the intention that allows it to succeed. And it only needs one person secretly groaning, oh, gimme a break. And it destroys it for everyone. And so unfortunately, we have to wait for people to be ready. I don't think that there's anything that you can do to create this experience for anyone until they are reaching towards it

[00:51:44] **Nate Hagens:** and that.

[00:51:45] Is my current experience, and I might be biased because of the a hundred some thousand followers of this podcast, but it sure feels to me that lots of humans are ready for this change in consciousness and, to propel the, culture in something better than the default. I mean, I'm feeling it more by the month

[00:52:06] **John Seed:** indeed.

[00:52:07] And, you know, for myself having been doing exactly the same thing for 40 years, you know, I. You know, I mean, different processes have come along, but nothing has changed. I can't help but notice that, whereas early on in the piece, there was a great enthusiastic response from hippies and pagans and witches, and then the environmentalists came on board.

[00:52:34] But now it's like ordinary people, it's it professionals, it's public servants, and now it's university professors. And even a senator from the, Australian Senate participated recently. And so I'm very encouraged to see that because the dominant paradigm is so clearly failing. More and more people are looking for somewhere to jump and are ready to try things that they wouldn't have been ready for.

[00:53:03] Quite a short while ago.

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[00:53:04] **Nate Hagens:** So I've seen you both express that one must not simply just know of these values, these values, and our connection to the web of life and all beings, but come to embody them. So what does it mean to fully embody something and why is that important?

[00:53:22] **Sky Cielita Flor:** I feel like embodying these values and particularly the feeling of, ecological identity and awakening on a, permanent basis is a, kind of unrealistic goal for most people.

[00:53:34] Re reason being, I feel like because of the way that we are being, attuned by the systems and the kind of over story of our culture that pushes us in the opposite direction constantly. You know, even if your personal belief system differs from that, you know, the. The anthropocentric, materialist, hyper rationalist, individualist, blah, blah, blah.

[00:53:55] Worldview is constantly coming towards us. Right? And also that is the over culture. And I feel like we are, as humans, we are wired to resonate with the, culture for safety reasons. On some level. That's, my kind of personal, way of understanding why it is so challenging because I lived in an indigenous culture in the Peruvian Amazon whose way of seeing was very different from what I experienced back here in Australia.

[00:54:22] And, that cultural holding did feel like it allowed for something for those values to be, expressed and held and experienced on a more consistent level, on a day-to-day basis. And I think that's partly why. So I just wanna say that first of all. And so for me, living these values and really embodying them.

[00:54:44] Means kind of understanding the maps? Well, firstly, for me, it's meant understanding the wound actually in the psyche that has allowed us to come to this particular way of seeing and being, and the many systems that it has forgotten in our culture. I. And really getting intimate with that wound. And then

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the second flip side of that in embodiment is creating these small communities and practices and inviting the people in your life along for the ride.

[00:55:10] and that take can take time and it can mean that you really get, clear with this, map yourself, the language, why you believe it's important, and then start to kind of express it more and more. And the people that resonate, as John said, they're people who are becoming ready more and more who might not have been five years ago and suddenly they're being pulled towards you 'cause you are expressing it a little bit.

[00:55:35] And then through the gathering of your people, it becomes easier to hold and embody this shift in a day-to-day way. And I'm noticing that in my community, I feel really fortunate that there are more and more people around me who want to live this way. They want this change. They are longing for the shift that this work speaks to.

[00:55:56] And so. We're tending that in the smallest ways that we can. and that's where, for me, where it starts and just these tiny little shifts in your day to day life and your intimate relationships with land, with people, with the other than humans.

[00:56:09] **John Seed:** One good way of understanding what it means to have an illusion of separation.

[00:56:22] You know, there are the words, you know, and we kind of think that we understand the words, but if you really wanna understand what it means to have an illusion of separation, then I. I'd recommend that, you think about it while holding your breath and do this very seriously as if your life depended on it.

[00:56:43] To see how long can you hold your breath while you're thinking about the illusion of being separate from the rest of the natural world and thinking, who

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am I and what is my relationship to the world? What is my relationship to the cosmos? So this is kind of interesting as a thought experiment, but it's far more interesting to actually do this because you notice the difference between the thought experiment and the reality of the impossibility of.

[00:57:13] Separation. It's not possible. It can't be done, you know, so the, reality is that every breath that I take and every morsel of food that I put into my mouth, and every time I take a shit, do you know, we, it's cycling through the world. You know, the idea of this skin encapsulated ego as being the reality, do you know, that grips us and that holds us.

[00:57:40] But it's an illusion. It doesn't exist. It can't exist. And so I just recommend that to anybody viewing this, you know, later on sometime. Just try that and notice. This is embodiment. This is embodying this knowledge so that the ideas of deep ecology are very, beautiful and they swept me away when I heard them, and I highly recommend them.

[00:58:05] But it's embodying these ideas through ceremonies, through rituals, through the body that, actually shifts us, that moves us, into the culture of connection that we need to find.

[00:58:19] **Nate Hagens:** So in all of this work, and it's a huge body of work, the work that reconnects. Can each of you share some of the rituals or practices from this work that are particularly significant to each of you?

[00:58:31] And which ones do each facilitate most today?

[00:58:35] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Yeah, so some of the other practices, well, I think, one of the key practices for many people rituals is the, truth mandala, which is our grief ritual, which happens after the gratitude. And that was definitely one of the more significant ones for me in the beginning.

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[00:58:53] And I think that for the reason for that was because I was just carrying so much grief that I didn't know what to do with, as I shared earlier. so early on in my journey, I feel like there was a really strong focus on grief and I wanted even more resources. And that's when I, went to go and study with Francis Weller and I incorporate his five gates of grief framework into the work that reconnects way of facilitating grief ritual.

[00:59:20] And that has been and continues to be a really significant practice, both in the group work that I facilitate, but also in my personal practice. My husband is also a facilitator of this work, and we have our own personal grief. Check-ins where we use the framework of the gates of grief and just our overall kind of understanding of, you know, the transmission from John and Joanna about why this is important and where it leads.

[00:59:48] yeah. And so that's something that we, just integrate into our, lives. But we also do that with gratitude. And, you know, I, came to this work really skeptical about gratitude. I saw it as kind of like a, you know, a wishful thinking. Practice that could probably skip be skipped over so you can get to the real stuff, like the seeing with new eyes and the gr and the grief.

[01:00:11] And now I really feel the opposite. It is one of my favorite, and I now believe one of the most important things to be doing. And, the, change in state the, way that I feel resourced to go forward into my day, and not just my day, but my personal relationships with the people around me really has shifted as a result of being very much, gratitude oriented.

[01:00:37] So my partner and I, again, we have a ritual every week where we do gr gratitude practice with each other. And, it's not just surface. It's like we really savor what it is that is so beautiful about being alive and then leave space for what hurts and the two things together. so those are two that I, weave a lot.

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[01:01:00] And then having said that, my big passion, I'm basically just talking about the whole spiral now, but my big passion is the reclamation of the living earth perception, the animus perception. And yeah, that's something that I focus probably more on at this moment than a lot of the other areas of the spiral.

[01:01:19] It's currently the part that I feel the most natural fire for, possibly because I did a lot of grieving earlier in, you know, a few years ago Now I feel this freedom to be able to really. Stay with and want to deepen into my experience of ecological identity, and I really want other people in my world to come along that ride with me.

[01:01:42] So I create other kinds of groups for people to do that. Yeah.

[01:01:45] **Nate Hagens:** What does that work look like then? What? What are you actually doing?

[01:01:49] **Sky Cielita Flor:** so I facilitate another body of work, which is very coherent with the work that reconnects. It's based on the work of Stephen Harod Bura called Plant Intelligence in the imaginal realm.

[01:01:58] And it, covers a lot of the same, core principles. So we study systems theory and Gaia theory and geo microbiology and all these are beautiful kind of biological lenses that enable us to understand that we are in a living earth, a living sentient earth essentially. And it's these, I guess, more, science, holistic science-based lenses to that because I feel many people struggle with going straight to the mystic perception of, animism.

[01:02:28] And so we ground in that, and then we move from that place. We, jump off into the more mystical perception of animism, which is the ritual and the imagination and dream work. And we do a practice called the exact sensorial

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imagination. Which was originally taught by Gier, and it's similar to Yung J's active imagination.

[01:02:50] And it, just basically allows us to feel a deep resonance with any being in the natural landscape. It could be a plant or a stone, it could be a body of water, a place at large. And it takes you through these particular steps that help you connect to it in a somatic sensory way. And then we invite that sensory connection into our imaginal perception and we enter into dialogue, which is, as far as I'm aware from my own study, that is a, perceptual organ, this imaginal somatically connected perceptual.

[01:03:26] space. That is what allows us to come into that felt sense, relationship and communication with other than humans. And that is like one of the greatest passions of my life is that, and inviting other people into that. And I feel like the deep ecology framework and the work that reconnects is a jumping off point to that.

[01:03:45] And I'll say it's not for everyone. You know, there might be many listeners here that who, feel like that's too many steps down the mystical path and yet, and so there really is a readiness required for that particular area of the work. It's not, and it's not commonly taught in the work that reconnects, but it's something that I feel.

[01:04:05] Passionate about.

[01:04:06] **Nate Hagens:** And John, what are you working on right now? Are you still leading these, workshops and such?

[01:04:11] **John Seed:** I am. I've got, one coming up, in 10 days time here at the NRA Eco Village, where I live, and, where I've conducted six such workshops at home in the last 12 months, as well as traveling elsewhere in Australia.

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[01:04:28] I've stopped traveling around the world. I've used up all that carbon. I can't do that anymore. But, you know, doing stuff on Zoom and so on and, I guess, the part that we haven't spoken about much, yet is the part of the spiral going forth, how we take this out into our lives and into the world.

[01:04:51] And it's a really important piece because, you know, people feel this, change that has taken place, but how are we to, how are we to move this into our lives? And there's a beautiful process that, we learned from Joanna, called, Corbett, named after, I think it's a town in Canada where she first did it, where, Joanna speaks of the great turning, away from the Industrial Growth Society and towards the life affirming society.

[01:05:27] And she sees three different, modes of being part of the great turning. There are the holding actions where we're, defending. The rainforest, defending the oceans, defending the indigenous, and so on. There is the, structural change, creating the new structures, even while the old ones continue to dominate the world around us.

[01:05:55] And finally, there's the work on consciousness itself, facilitating these workshops, meditation and so on. And, Joanna, says in this, in Corbit, each of the participants, we gather in groups of four, and each of us, thinks of something that we wish to offer to the great turning in our lives.

[01:06:18] It may be something that we're already doing, but we want to do more of. Or it may be something new. It's got to be a stretch, but it's got to be possible. And then in these groups of four, each of us takes it in turn to share. What it is that we wish to offer. And then the other three become the voice of doubt.

[01:06:39] That's the first one. It's like the voice of doubt that each of us carries in our own heads. This person is encouraged to really lay it on thick. You know, the

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more that the voice of doubt can be disparaging and corrosive, the better it's gonna be for the person. Then there is the voice of the ancestors.

[01:06:58] How do the ancestors feel about what it is that you've proposed? And then there's the voice of the unborn, the future generations, how do they feel? And then finally, the person gets to reflect upon what they've heard, and then two minutes each and it moves around the circle and the next person shares. So everyone has each of these voices, and it's a very powerful experience for everyone.

[01:07:21] and, people, commonly report that what it is that they have, Presented in, this process that they are able to create something new in their lives or add energy to something that they're already doing.

[01:07:39] **Nate Hagens:** Well, let's, let's build on that and, I will ask you, John, and, then, Skye, some closing questions that I ask all, my guests.

[01:07:51] building on what you just said, John, do you have any personal advice? you're a listener of the show, but to the other listeners of the show who are aware of our ecological economic, civilizational predicament, what you call the great turning, what kind of advice do you have? for people?

[01:08:10] **John Seed:** Well, just, I would say the importance, especially at this time when, you know, we are being so captured by social media and disinformation galore and all of these silos that. To find like-minded people within reach, physically, within reach, and to, to make connections as, as close to home as possible with people like ourselves and to work together.

[01:08:44] I read a really interesting, Study that, where a really difficult problem was given to a large number of individuals, and it was so difficult that only 10% of them were able to come up with the correct solution. But when the same problem

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was given to a small group of individuals and they worked on it together, 80% of those groups came up with the answer because we're social mammals and we weren't supposed to solve these problems by ourselves.

[01:09:13] **Nate Hagens:** I wonder if they gave it to groups of a hundred or a thousand? If, the percent would go back down.

[01:09:20] **John Seed:** Yes. Another study.

[01:09:22] **Sky Cielita Flor:** I would echo that. I really feel like the community piece is massive and so. Part of that for me would be just to be really honest. And, sometimes it just takes one or two people being brave and going, pushing past the social conventions of keeping it all together in the face of what's going on and, you know, not showing how much we need each other.

[01:09:43] It sometimes it just takes one or two people to, be that and maybe, you know, you are that person, whoever's listening, to put the call out. So many people are looking for others and are afraid to be the one to reach out.

[01:09:57] **Nate Hagens:** And how would you change this advice, or what advice do you have for young humans, sky in this case, younger than yourself even, knowing and being aware of all these things,

[01:10:07] **Sky Cielita Flor:** I don't know if I would change it.

[01:10:09] I feel, that would be the same thing I would share. I feel like that's one of the most essential pieces. Yeah,

[01:10:15] **Nate Hagens:** John? Yeah,

[01:10:17] **John Seed:** likewise.

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[01:10:18] **Nate Hagens:** Yeah. So, I, I. Could guess what, how John might answer this question, but, what do you care most about in the world, John, and then Skye?

[01:10:30] **John Seed:** Well, I care most about doing whatever I can possibly do to express my gratitude for this incredible opportunity of being alive.

[01:10:45] And at the moment when the universe is becoming aware of itself in this extraordinary way where the universe is revealing itself to us at the same moment as we may be approaching the end of this particular line. Do you know like, something is ending right now? The Zoic era is ending. It could be that human beings are ending.

[01:11:11] It could be that mammals are ending or vertebrates. We don't know how far back this thing is going to break, and so I feel like. Of course it's not over till it's over. And I will do everything that I can to protect this beauty, but at the same time, I just want to leave plenty of space for the gratitude for, you know, what an amazing trip it's been.

[01:11:38] Everything dies. You know, humans will die. Every species dies eventually. And it could be that the time has come right now for humans to die. And so how if, that should be so what kind of farewells are called for? How can we express our gratitude and our joy for having been here and our love? And at the same time, work as hard as we can to change the consciousness so that other people also just find the value of this and are prepared to drop the.

[01:12:14] All the acquisitiveness and all of the, you know, the greed and the violence and the rest of it and all, you know, just facing the direction of I'm absolutely convinced that if we as a species decided that we were gonna solve the problems that were necessary in order for us and the other mammals and the other vertebrates and the other species to keep going, that we could do that.

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[01:12:37] There's no doubt in my mind that all that's lacking is the intention and the will and somehow, I want to communicate that

[01:12:47] **Nate Hagens:** you're the second podcast I've done today and someone on a completely different topic today said the exact same thing, which gives me hope. What about you, Skye? what do you care most about in the world?

[01:13:00] **Sky Cielita Flor:** I feel like I care most about creating the conditions both for myself and my family and the people in my community for reentering back into the conversation, for coming back into that felt sense of experience of living in a, sentient alive living. World that I am just one strand in a, you know, in a web of, and that is constantly talking to me.

[01:13:25] And that is available for relationship and, learning how to listen and be in that relationship again. And I, feel like all the changes that we are longing for, that we wanna see come from that sea, like emanate from that seed, that shift, that's my feeling. And so that's what I care

[01:13:41] **Nate Hagens:** most about. And a and some of them emanate from that seed who's, on the screen with us.

[01:13:47] That's right. so if you could wave a magic wand sky and there was no personal recourse to your decision, what is one thing you would do to improve human and planetary futures?

[01:13:58] **Sky Cielita Flor:** That what I just said. I would just, I would wave that wand and I would want every single human on this planet to have a very clear experience of that, which I just named that, feeling of a living sentient, alive, breathing universe.

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[01:14:12] And to hear the voice of that world and to know how to speak back and enter into that conversation again. if everyone could have that experience, I believe we would have a very different world. To what we have now.

[01:14:25] **Nate Hagens:** John, how would you answer that question?

[01:14:27] **John Seed:** Well, I guess I'd, wave a magic wand and I would make the kind of space that people are in at the end of a 48 hour immersion in the work that reconnects d ecology make that an enduring experience so that it became an initiation into, a permanent change rather than a temporary one.

[01:14:54] **Nate Hagens:** So thank you both for your time, and today given our, time difference. And thank you for your important work in the world, the work that reconnects, we will put links to, your websites and where people can learn more. do you, have any closing words for our viewers today? John, we'll start with you and, give Sky the last word.

[01:15:17] **John Seed:** No, I think I've said it. enough.

[01:15:23] **Sky Cielita Flor:** Just gratitude. Gratitude. Here, you, Nate, and all the folks listening, and the fact that there is so many people who care enough to take the time to listen to these kinds of things and consider the questions that we're throwing around here together. Yeah.

[01:15:37] **John Seed:** Maybe I will say something, Nate, which is that, I've been, really interested in podcasts as a way of moving DB ecology into the mainstream.

[01:15:49] and, so I've been listening to a lot of podcasts and I so appreciate the work that you do and the people that you have brought into my life, and especially, Daniel Schmuck Berger, but many others as well. And, so just, you

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know, all power to you and, and, and. You know, may your, listeners, grow in numbers and your influence spread

[01:16:16] **Nate Hagens:** far and wide.

[01:16:17] Thank you for that. John. I have no real plans. I'm just following kind of my curiosity and, some path, on, this all. And I'm really continue to be surprised that people have, such an attention span for these complex, kind of scary issues. but I do feel the unfolding of, the love and the connection and the gratitude and the grief and the anger and the fear and all that is part of the process to come to terms with The Great Simplification or the, great turning or whatever you call it.

[01:16:55] so there's, convergence here, and I think your work, and the work of others like Francis Weller that are satellites to your work is. More important than I would've originally imagined. So thank you both and to be continued. If you enjoyed or learned from this episode of The Great Simplification, please follow us on your favorite podcast platform.

[01:17:20] You can also visit The Great Simplification dot com for references and show notes from today's conversation. And to connect with fellow listeners of this podcast, check out our Discord channel. This show is hosted by me, Nate Hagens, edited by No Troublemakers Media, and produced by Misty Stinnett. Leslie Bat Lutz Brady Hayan.

[01:17:44] And Lizzie Sir.