

The Great Simplification

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[00:00:00] **Nora Bateson:** This is the logic of a culture that says, "Don't give too much or people will take advantage of you." So I don't give 'cause I know you're not gonna give, and you don't give 'cause you know I'm not giving, and pretty soon there's nothing there. So moving in another way is radical. To actually have some kind of trust that those relationships that are in another rhythm, in another pattern, will carry that.

[00:00:26] It becomes vivid that all of life is in this ever amonging way. So tending to that amonging is tending to the self.

[00:00:43] **Nate Hagens:** Ahead of an unsettled future, I believe one of the no-regret strategies available in today's world is to find the others and build community. And at the core of community is communing with other humans. But humans in groups are messy. It is not easy. So how do we go about communing and building relationships with all the variety of human personalities and situations and values and temperaments and the like?

[00:01:17] Today, I am welcoming back the founder of Warm Data Labs and my friend, Nora Bateson, along with her colleagues Lucas Jackson and Jonathan Goldsmith, to discuss exactly how to go about all this. Despite this conversation being about Warm Data Labs and experiences, it wasn't really defined, so I'm going to re-share my personal experience of it before I introduce Nora, Jonathan, and Lucas.

[00:01:47] A few years ago, Nora hosted a Warm Data Lab at Bioneers, which I went to. There were a couple hundred people there. She told us to sit down in

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groups of four or five people, and there was a piece of paper on the floor. And Nora said, to everyone, "The topic is gonna be food in a changing world."

[00:02:09] And I'm already thinking, "I have a lot to say about that. I know a lot about that." and then we were in our group of five, and she said, "Turn over your paper." And my first piece of paper said family. and then we discussed, with the people around us in a changing world with respect to family.

[00:02:28] And after about five minutes, you could get up and go to a different group. Well, the different groups had different pieces of paper. It said politics or ecology or technology. and so then you would find other people and talk and share about food in a changing world in the context. and so when I went and talked to politics, I had an opinion on that too.

[00:02:53] And after I'd done, like, four or five of these, each time I was like, "Oh, I didn't think about those things," 'cause it was a different context But what also happened, and maybe it's because I'm a gregarious, loquacious Sasquatch person, I noticed that my impulse to talk actually declined and became subdued.

[00:03:20] And after several of these little sessions, I actually didn't say anything. I started listening, and I guess I'm not the best listener, but I do wonder how that experience is a microcosm of our broader society. So for me, warm data, self-reflection, empathy, listening, and finding common ground were all a part of that experience.

[00:03:47] Okay, to today's episode. Nora Bateson is the founder of the International Bateson Institute, which is leading transcontextual research in ecology, economics, social change, health, education, and art. Rather than focusing on quantitative metrics when looking at all the issues in the world, the institute examines warm data, a term Nora coined that studies what gets lost when we look at problems in isolation.

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[00:04:20] Within Warm Data Labs, the institute holds gatherings designed to facilitate understanding of the global issues we face today. Nora is surrounded by a strong team of facilitators at the institute and Warm Data Labs, two of which she is joined by today. Jonathan Goldsmith is a psychotherapist, hypnotherapist, coach, trainer, and facilitator based in London.

[00:04:45] Additionally, he co-leads Warm Data Labs and works in a leadership position at the Bateson Institute. Lucas Jackson is a biodynamic farmer based in Vermont, where he works on permaculture projects in addition to being a holotropic breathwork instructor. He's also now a Warm Data host after completing training under the International Bateson Institute.

[00:05:09] In this wide-ranging conversation about the role community plays in navigating our more-than-human predicament, we address the urgency and misconceptions surrounding building strong relationships ahead of The Great Simplification. We dig into some foundational concepts that hit at the ancient instincts of our very social natures, such as what it means to be in communion with each other and how to practice radical hospitality in a culture that encourages the prioritization of the self above all.

[00:05:46] I believe this work is at the foundation of what we're trying to do with this channel, and I hope that you'll find this conversation not just informative, but exemplary of these practices. With that, please welcome Nora Bateson, Jonathan Goldsmith, and Lucas Jackson. Nora Bateson, welcome back to The Great Simplification.

[00:06:10] And you today have brought two of your colleagues, Jonathan Goldsmith and Lucas Jackson. Lucas, good to see you. Nice to see you, Nate. Hi, Jonathan. Hey, Nate. Nice to see you. Well, we talked, the four of us, a couple weeks ago, and it was such a great conversation that I invited you posthaste to come on the show.

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[00:06:33] you all work for the International Bateson Institute, and with Warm Data Labs, which have quite a bit of overlap. And one of the recurring themes on this program is that in the coming decades, we're gonna be asked to rebuild our social fabric in the context of lower energy and material throughput and all the other things.

[00:06:55] And a lot of people when they hear that, they imagine they'll get to do that rebuilding with people they already know and trust. But in our conversation a couple weeks ago, you've suggested that may not be the case as we navigate what's to come. Gaza and Lebanon and Ukraine and other places aside, we're still not in the throes of a crisis.

[00:07:20] So when we try to build community ahead of time, we don't get the genuine I- we're in this crisis together. So is it better off to try to build community when we aren't facing that, and then identities and politics and all the other things are more readily seen? Well, I guess the alternative would be to do nothing and not build community, and I don't think that's a good plan either.

[00:07:53] But do you know what I'm saying, Nora? Like true community emerges spontaneously when there are shared hardships. That's a very human thing. So what do you think about that?

[00:08:05] **Nora Bateson:** The way that I think about that is, if you've ever done any improvisational anything, improvisational acting or music or, you know, you're, you, have these conversations, and there's quite a bit of improv in this.

[00:08:22] In order to be able to respond together in a moment of crisis, practice is good, and I don't mean practice being in crisis. I mean practice improvising together, practice learning together. So for me, I think when I'm thinking about w- what, how we can actually help, let's say neighborhoods or, you know, w- people who happen to be clumped together in a moment of crisis, if you want to sort of

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j- juice that ahead of time, the, impulse might be to come up with a formula for what makes a community and, drop that down and try to fit it into the, people.

[00:09:12] I, I would suggest that it is probably a disaster. On the other hand, what I think I'm most interested in is the practice of people who are learning together something about the complexity of who they are, who each other could be, and how they have the possibility to see the world differently together.

[00:09:44] and, that is, I think, a starting place that's interesting, beyond the labels, beyond the categories.

[00:09:51] **Nate Hagens:** Jonathan, what do you have to say to that question? I'm also thinking about

[00:09:57] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** when you've been stuck at an airport or you're in a really bad traffic jam or you've missed a boat or a boat's been delayed.

[00:10:05] You know, you find yourself with the people you find yourself with. And I think, the opportunities to recognize that you can say, hey, I'm going to the shop or I've got some spare water in my car or be in relationship with those around you. I mean, When the lockdown happened in COVID, we had a-- I have a garden, it's got a fence to my neighbor's garden.

[00:10:38] And through that, and actually it was through my son who was, I think he was like four at the time and being young and playing. You know, we just connected and then we were sharing foods, and then we were, you know, sharing recipes and have you got enough, have you, you know, have you got enough, flour?

[00:10:59] Have you got enough of this? And it's kind of that sense, and then we met the neighbors next door. And then, you know, and I think in those, times of

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crisis, it opens up those opportunities because it splits away the social mores or like norms that you might live in, and allows for a deeper kind of connecting outside of scripted

[00:11:27] **Lucas Jackson:** rituals.

[00:11:28] Well, this brings in Nora and Jonathan and the International Bateson Institute and the work that we've been doing with Warm Data. I found the, the, Warm Data training in September of twenty twenty, and that opened me up to all sorts of new ideas and people online and new relationships. And I, you know, once things started opening up, I traveled around and got to go to some in-person trainings and, to Nora's house, to some retreats there.

[00:12:05] And all of these relationships continue now, and this is where I'm tending, this is what I'm focusing on. So

[00:12:13] **Nate Hagens:** On our call a couple weeks ago, you said something, Nora, interesting. You said that the foundation of, or even the etymology of community is commune and communion, and that communion has to precede the community part.

[00:12:30] And as you just suggested, a lot of community building efforts skip that step entirely, and they go to organizing and logistics and projects. So what gets lost when we try to build community without the step of communing, and how does your work fit into that? What have you learned about that step?

[00:12:52] **Nora Bateson:** It's that question of What's it possible to communicate together? Who can I be when I'm with you? And if the world is made of relationships, and relationships are made of communication, the need for being able to communicate in ways that are unscripted, unrehearsed, unpracticed, that are another kind of communing, where we're meeting each other in another way.

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[00:13:25] And that thing is hijacked right now, largely by algorithms, by the, sort of the various, flags, if you will, of discourse and, discussion that say, "I'm part of this group of people—" Yeah "... and you're part of that group of people." And each time that happens, there's an othering, there's a splitting, there's a polarization that can happen that's tearing us apart from one another.

[00:13:53] So, what I'm looking for in this term communicating is actually beyond communication. It's something that might be beyond language even, of us as human beings being analog, being in analog communication face to face. I want to, s- to meet you, see you, and be with you.

[00:14:19] **Nate Hagens:** Sometimes I think with algorithms and everything that's happening, that podcasts are gonna be a thing of the past.

[00:14:26] and then other times I think actually this is in many ways an improv conversation among like-minded colleagues where we have a real human conversation. AI cannot replicate whatever we're gonna say the next hour. So Lucas, before Nora and Jonathan came on, you and I were talking about the bifurcation of the online community and what does it even mean to have a like-minded group of people.

[00:14:59] Can you expand on your thoughts on that?

[00:15:01] **Lucas Jackson:** Yeah. I mean, the more I thought about it, and the more that Nora and Jonathan and I were talking the last few days, I wondered, what does it even mean to be like-minded? I, know-- I guess in the groups that I've been in when people say, "It's so nice to be with like-minded people," I think to myself, if we talk long enough, I guarantee there's some issue, some thing that we are not like-minded on And what matters, I think in, a lot of the relationships that I, really care about and tend is that we are doing something together.

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[00:15:41] And it doesn't m- it's not the like-mindedness that I care about, it's the doing something together.

[00:15:46] **Nate Hagens:** If I were to say that myself, I would say people that see the deep time ecol- ecological, aspect of our situation, and they see that and they feel that, that's what I would define as like-minded, and all the other political stripes and flavors are less important.

[00:16:03] But like-minded people are just going through an experience together. That's interesting. Jonathan, what are your thoughts there? I think one of the

[00:16:11] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** things that really attracted me to this work, the Warm Data people and, you know, the community, is just how varied and different we are as a group. You know, I mean, we joke when we travel together, you'd never know that we're a group.

[00:16:29] We look different, we come from different parts of the world, different ages. You know, there's very few things that you could externally identify that would put us together as a group. And I think when I you know, s- joined and there were lots of conversations and there were lots of opportunities to be together, you know, what was really interesting was how we gathered and celebrated differences.

[00:16:53] You know, we learned from each other, from our differing perspectives, from our stories. You know, someone would, you know, it was transgenerational, it was global, and when someone told a story about how they're viewing their sense of home or their relationship to care, you know, we could-- I could identify something that was very human in it, but also hear for difference.

[00:17:22] So when we're talking about this sense of like-mindedness, you know, it's almost the opposite of an echo chamber. While of course there are things that

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will, you know, w- we probably share on a spectrum together in certain ways of outlooks, it's-- I really wouldn't say that we're like-minded. And it is in that learning and that difference that some really interesting things happen.

[00:17:46] It's that, "Oh, I've never seen it from that perspective," or, "I've never heard it said in that way," which makes you reflect on your own

[00:17:52] **Nate Hagens:** position. Let me put both of you on the spot, Jonathan and Lucas. So you're obviously both professional, ecological systems aware adult humans, but now you've been working with Nora and learning warm data and teaching it and doing all the things.

[00:18:13] Has the experience of trying to commune and teach and hold warm data labs and all those things, has that changed you in your other relationships in your life? I mean, for me, the answer is yeah, 100%.

[00:18:32] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** And th- that's why I'm looking for places to learn and places to grow and change. And I would hope that if I'm spending this much time tending to something, it absolutely has.

[00:18:47] It's shaped me as a father, it's shaped me as a husband, as a family member. It's certainly shaped me as a therapist. In what ways? Because we're in a space of mutual learning. Because it's not, you know, what we do often in the warm data practices is we're not there to learn a doctrine. We're not there to learn a certain type of philosophy or a certain way of being in the world.

[00:19:16] You know, we're there to learn from each other. So it is that mutual learning and that opportunity to be in, you know, hours of practice of mutual learning, both within the warm data labs, but also together as a group. You know, the group that has coalesced to, you know, organize the International Bateson Institute.

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[00:19:36] We're learning from each other. We're eating together. We're, you know, communing in that way together. The conversations aren't limited to what are we gonna do today? In fact, I don't think we ever have those kinds of conversations at all. You know, we're not-- we don't have flip charts. We avoid Post-it notes, but we're often just in relationship with each other, and that opportunity to learn and just be together is really radical, and it's really refreshing, and it's, you know, the opposite of so much of, hierarchical systems that you come through when you learn to be in the world.

[00:20:20] **Lucas Jackson:** Yeah. I'm thinking about, even the many meals that we've shared together as a group, and how, you know, learning different, I guess, call it forms of etiquette. You know, in some places people feel like it's rude to ask for something to be passed to them, and in other places it's rude not to.

[00:20:48] And these are things that I feel like a lot of us take for granted as, like, the normal way or the way things are. And bringing that into my personal life and noticing that we all have different ways of entering relationship and different family history, different ancestral background, different environment, you know, different foods that we eat, all of these things that, there's this relaxing of the judgmental mind or something, this generosity of, openness to people and backgrounds and, I find myself more often now just noticing difference and saying, "Huh, that's interesting."

[00:21:47] **Nate Hagens:** Okay. So Nora, here's the deal. So I have concluded, and I'm not entirely sure, but I am strongly inclined to see the tea leaves of the future and the politics and all the things that are going on, and the one no regret thing that I think we can do, I've been labeling it rocks in the river, which is local, systems informed, pro-social individual humans to act as leaders in their local communities and then meet the others.

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[00:22:22] and hopefully there's a whole quiver full of arrows of, you know, staying human and being grounded and having healthy nervous systems and all that. But then at a layer above that, we meet the others, and a layer above that we might be able to create islands of coherence. So there's a lot of individual recommendations that I'm a kindergartner on that I'm learning about.

[00:22:48] But for all that to happen, the holy grail is how to build community and how to relate to other humans in a totally different world that is different from the assumptions that we grew up with. So with that question in mind, I know this is at the core of your work, like, what have you learned in the last decade?

[00:23:11] What doesn't work and what does work? It's a big question. I'll just stop there.

[00:23:17] **Nora Bateson:** Okay. I'll see what I can do. The first thing I can say that does not work is, having a predetermined idea of what's gonna work. Okay. Okay, that's the first thing I can say.

[00:23:34] **Nate Hagens:** Which is a polite way of saying I didn't ask the right question.

[00:23:37] **Nora Bateson:** No, you did. You did ask the right question because, because the impulse is to imagine a utopia and then back up from that into some sort of organization of how we get there. And the minute that happens, that utopia is kind of like a thief because it robs us of all of the possible complex, emergent, relational chaos that actually is filled with possibility.

[00:24:13] And, this is the thing that I have learned again and again, is that the tone matters, but the objective doesn't.

[00:24:21] **Nate Hagens:** So the, it's the journey, not the destination.

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[00:24:24] **Nora Bateson:** It's a kind of being in the emergence that allows for, Pivots that are unexpected. And, that is, I think, quite critical. And, the problem is that when you think, oh, we have this idea, and this is the idea we're gonna work toward.

[00:24:49] We're gonna be an eco-village. And there's a lot of beautiful eco-villages, but pretty soon everybody has a different idea of what that eco-village is, and the differences in those ideas become caustic to the relationship and the communication. So I think the first thing that I've really learned is, one, I think in the warm data world, there's a lot of warm data hosts in the world, and 1,500, 2,000 something.

[00:25:19] And we don't really keep track of everybody. Everybody kinda comes and goes. There's no-- Everyone's very different. There's, you know, all ages, all cultures, all different, you know, interests, et cetera. and there's no-- There, you know, the interesting word is that the thing that is cohering is a curiosity and, an engagement with something that is yet to be found.

[00:25:56] And, that's good because it keeps it loose. And, so people come and go. They disappear for a couple years. They come back. They bring their warm data into whatever it is they're doing. They learn new things. They come back. They go. So that openness, I think, is-- creates a really different, a really different way of being-- a, an approach to community, rather than saying you have to be in some sort of loyal, committed relationship that immediately attempts to shut a back door that never really shuts.

[00:26:32] So I've been in a lot of intentional communities that were disastrous.

[00:26:37] **Nate Hagens:** And why?

[00:26:38] **Nora Bateson:** Because of exactly that. Eventually, people wanna leave.

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[00:26:42] **Nate Hagens:** So if you had to predict, given your expert experience on this, what would be three or four traits of someone that would be likely to, yeah, th-they-- there's a community that's gonna build here.

[00:26:58] You mentioned openness. You mentioned curiosity. What, other traits?

[00:27:03] **Nora Bateson:** Generosity, a- and, also integrity. I mean, I think we're here to really talk about this thing that we're t- calling, radical hospitality. and that is something that I see coming out of the warm data practice is this different kind of integrity and generosity.

[00:27:24] And sometimes we, y- you know, integrity is described as something where you say the same thing yesterday that you said today, and therefore you have integrity. But I'm using the word a little bit differently to, to address what it means to actually be able to, show up in a world where you don't know what's coming, and to be there with all you can muster, and to keep trying, stay in the rigor, stay in the, possibilities.

[00:27:59] Keep, keep studying life. So that type of integrity. And then the generosity is not the generosity of, "I have two apples, I'll give you one." Right? That's not the generosity I'm talking about. I'm talking about the generosity that's-- I sometimes describe it as the generosity that your heart has when it's pumping blood to your toes.

[00:28:26] Okay? It's pumping blood to your toes because that is what the aliveness of the system requires. Imagine, you know, when you sit on your leg for three hours and you get up and it's asleep and no blood has gone to it. And how many aspects of our families, our systems, our local communities are in exactly that place where there hasn't been circulation, there hasn't been the oxygen, the tending, the care that has gone to them.

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[00:28:57] And but, once there is the possibility of perceiving the intense necessity of an interdependent process, then it becomes really painful to not tend to it. So the generosity isn't a generosity of I have extra, I'll give you some. It's a generosity of we're alive together, and that means that o- our aliving is I- locked in.

[00:29:28] **Nate Hagens:** Let me ask you this, and whoever wants to answer can. We had some podcasts, and I did a Frankly last year on dark triad traits, and then I had a Frankly that said that humans are better than we think. Not humanity, because humanity has 1% or 2% dark triad, and they are steering our institutions and the Superorganism, et cetera.

[00:29:55] But in a community or a fledgling community, if someone has the traits of openness and curiosity and integrity and generosity, almost by definition they would be outcompeted by someone in that community with dark triad traits or not. Like how do you all navigate that? Because I'm sure you've witnessed it in your labs and other things.

[00:30:24] What are your thoughts on that? Any- anyone? You know,

[00:30:26] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** we also describe the work of Warm Data, it can be described as an aesthetic practice. So we're there to gather together to be in an aesthetic practice. So in some ways, The challenge of, and it happens, and you know, there are times where, we-- people come in as bad faith actors and but it doesn't have a, grip on because there's a lattice work that it doesn't, it just doesn't have that place where you...

[00:31:03] **Nate Hagens:** It's hard to extract from there. It was kind of a leading question because in my mind, and I'm just connecting this now, the concept of warm data or whatever it is you all are, trying to, breathe life into is actually the antidote to dark triad because it can't latch hold, like you're saying. If we have

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hundreds of people or thousands or millions, then the math kind of progresses like it has.

[00:31:28] But in a small group starting out with this authenticity and vulnerability and curiosity and those things, I don't know. I... W- Lucas, Nora, you have thoughts on that?

[00:31:40] **Lucas Jackson:** I like what Jonathan was saying about this lattice work, and I think that's, that's, part of the practice of the Warm Data Lab itself is, kind of cr- mmm, tending that lattice work.

[00:31:55] And in a lab, you know, there's movement, there's the question, there's multiple contexts, and then there's the ability to move between contexts. And you sit down at a group and someone maybe is exhibiting some of the traits that you're talking about, and you can leave. You can go to another group. And there's something in that movement over time that also is what Jonathan said, it's not able to take hold.

[00:32:26] It's not able to kind of take over

[00:32:29] **Nate Hagens:** I'm gonna call something out here that I noticed on our first call together, and I noticed it, and I'm noticing it again now, that when I ask a question, none of you, like, give me an immediate answer, which I'm so used to. Like, w- in conversations with four people, there are people talking over each other.

[00:32:51] You, you actually think about what I've asked, and you don't speak up. And clearly that's part of, like, real communication, if you're not already thinking how you're gonna respond to a question. You're actually honestly sitting with it, and maybe that's something that you've learned or Nora has, like, infused in you.

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[00:33:14] But it's quite refreshing and interesting. Any thoughts on that? Nora?

[00:33:20] **Nora Bateson:** One of the things that I feel is important to notice right now is the way that so much of our dialogue and conversation is actually, just, a rehash of other scripts-- that we are carrying.

[00:33:43] **Nate Hagens:** You mean this conversation today or all of our conversations?

[00:33:47] **Nora Bateson:** Not really here today. I think we're, you know, we're off s-- we're, moving off script and, that's what I, have been really trying to produce the conditions to scramble the scripts. So when people are asked a question, you know, what is home in a changing world, and then they get-- they're given a context through the context of, I don't know, technology or family or something, and then they go to another context, the, thing that's happening is they're having to pull together multiple contexts and ideas and pull them through their own personal memories, their intimate memories.

[00:34:32] by that I mean close relations. not inner, but intimate, and I think it's an important difference. and in doing so, what we're doing-- 'cause usually if you say, "Okay, Nate, what-- to you, what is home?" You're gonna start spewing a particular kind of script that you've been, you know, piecing together through the years, and y-- you're gonna p-- provide a kind of, distanced, abstracted aboutness in that description.

[00:35:07] Home is where the heart is. Home is yada, yada, de. Home is yada. And what we're doing is pulling the conversation down into story and mixing context so that scripting thing gets wiggled and you don't have immediate access to your script And so what happens is people actually show up in ways they didn't mean to.

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[00:35:34] **Nate Hagens:** So if you think of lifting weights as creating micro tears in your muscles so they grow back stronger, what does this sort of, changing context, and the humility and open-mindedness and curiosity of, these warm data conversations, what, muscle is that exercising metaphorically in our minds and our behaviors?

[00:35:55] **Lucas Jackson:** I love it in a lab when somebody says, "I don't know why I'm saying this." Yeah. Or they say, "I haven't thought of this story in 10 years." And then they say the thing, and immediately somebody else is like, "That's, that, that met me in this way that's really important." And it's, it, I don't know, it feels almost magical in a way when that happens, and it's fairly common.

[00:36:24] **Nate Hagens:** Maybe at the core of it, it's authenticity. and I question what AI is doing now, where a lot of people are having their scripts written for them, not so metaphorically. And so it's going to make the need for this sort of authenticity even greater than it was. I'm just speculating. Jonathan.

[00:36:45] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** Right. And this is where it goes back to the communing, 'cause you can't game a warm data practice. There's no- Right ... quick or clever answer that makes it, that wins it. So it actually asks you to be in, it's, you know, there are a lot of spaces where we're trained, where it's the right comment with the right knowledge, with the right answer is the clever thing.

[00:37:08] But when we're coming from this place, when we're coming from our stories, it's a very different way of being, and it does ask for a moment of reflection to actually think about what it is we wanna say, and be affected by

[00:37:19] **Nate Hagens:** those around us. So not only is there not a correct answer that wins it, but there is no winning.

[00:37:26] **Nora Bateson:** Exactly.

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[00:37:27] **Nate Hagens:** Right.

[00:37:27] **Lucas Jackson:** Yeah. And the movement almost reveals that s- the correct answer or the witty th- thing, the sharp thing is kind of boring. You know, that the- 'Cause it doesn't have

[00:37:39] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** anywhere to land, 'cause it doesn't bounce off, 'cause someone's not then coming back and going, "Yes, and I'm gonna outdo

[00:37:47] **Nate Hagens:** you."

[00:37:47] I've only done a mini warm data lab once in California, Nora. and I remember the first group I sat in, I was doing the clever, witty response, and by the fifth group, I just had my mouth shut and I was listening. So Nora, I know in the past that you've made the case that quality of connection matters far more than quantity, a lesson I've been learning on this podcast in many different realms.

[00:38:15] and that a small number of deeply tended relationships is more valuable, worth more than a vast but shallow network. and so given how much our institutions, our technology, and our cultures push us toward this breadth over depth, how do we actually protect the time and care that starting, building, and maintaining a real community would require?

[00:38:45] **Nora Bateson:** I think that, if we're talking about the time, I think it takes less time to actually tend to the tiny, than it does to create a big at scale project and then deal with all the problems that it causes. So there's that. But also what we're looking for is, I think, relationships that have the possibility of shifting, that are premised on...

[00:39:22] When we say that there's mutual learning, which is a phrase that's come up several times here, what we're talking about is that there are

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relationships that move, that can shift. You know, when you get in a relationship with somebody, a friend, a family member, a teacher, whatever, very often there is a, an assumption of roles, an assumption of labels, an assumption of, positionalities and, that is gonna limit what, who it's possible to be in that relationship.

[00:39:54] And I think what we really are trying to do here is, find a way to be together human to human, e- even if it's online human to human, 'cause I agree we are human to human right now, that allows for shifting. I'm allowed to learn something. I don't have to be the wrongest person in the world and get canceled.

[00:40:19] I'm learning. You're learning. And, if we're going into the type of shifts that I think we're going into right now, and I- we already are there, most people I know are in not one kind of crisis, but already several. Economic crisis- Mm-hmm ... health crisis, Mm-hmm ... you know, crisis with their family, crisis in the community, crisis all over the place, mental health crisis, et cetera.

[00:40:49] So, we're already there. So how do we find each other in these moments when we're already upside down and sideways, and allow for the relationships that we're in to hold that kind of movement? so that's why it, you know, small is good and it's a different kind of scaling. It's scaling more like mycelia and less like McDonald's.

[00:41:22] And so you're not trying to create the same thing everywhere. You're trying to allow relationships that make relationships that make relationships And every iteration of that, every order of that is gonna be in completely nuanced, unique configurations then it's alive

[00:41:45] **Nate Hagens:** So as I've mentioned, the three of you are all deeply involved in Warm Data Labs, including you as the founder, Nora.

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[00:41:54] And we've briefly covered that on the show before. We had one, frankly, you were my only guest, frankly, I've ever done on Warm Data, but it was a double entendre because the power was out in the middle of January in Sweden and you were trying to stay warm. But one of the angles we haven't previously discussed is Warm Data Labs' ability to temporarily suspend many of the categories and labels that we use to shape our identities.

[00:42:26] So maybe you could give one of you a brief overview of a Warm Data Lab and tell us how that experience creates a different kind of encounter between people and is able to somehow get underneath people's identities that they bring with them to the group. The structure is

[00:42:48] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** wonderfully and deceptively simple.

[00:42:52] You know, I'm thinking back to my, you know, my entrance into this to think about, you know, that we gather in a place or there's a physical location or online. There is a very brief introduction and it's simply, you know, this is we're going to tell a story. It's some consideration about how to move between different contexts in the in-person one or what's going to happen in the breakout rooms.

[00:43:23] Then a story is told. A question is posed and you move into these different contextual spaces. So it appears to be

[00:43:40] deceptively simple is not quite what I wanna say. It appears to be very clear where you have to be, and I'm remembering my own experience in that It was so wonderfully disorientating because, you know, I was coding when I met Nora and, you know, was kind of finding my way into the community. I'd been in a lot of hierarchical, you know, roles-based communities before because that's how often teaching was done.

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[00:44:12] And I was looking for the codes. I was looking for the hierarchy. I remember being so confused by not being able to see what I was so, you know, trained to see before. How-- who do I talk to? Who is the person who has the seniority in the room? How do I show up? How do I mask? And I was like, "What is this?" And I remember my first ever breakout room, and I was like, "They are so good.

[00:44:40] They are absolutely brilliant. They're hiding it so well because I can't see this." And for, you know, it was almost like being paranoid. I was like, "There's a test, and I can't see the test 'cause they're so good at it." And eventually, your-- my nervous system kind of just relaxed 'cause I was like, "Oh my God, this is not that.

[00:45:00] This is something else. I can just be myself. It doesn't matter how many hours I've done. It doesn't matter that I'm new to the course. It doesn't matter..." You know, I'm just being myself, and I'm being myself without roles, without identity. There's no name badge. There's no, you know, "I'm Jonathan, and this is who I am, and this is my..."

[00:45:18] It-- and it's just wonderfully allows us to, or allows us to be wonderfully human.

[00:45:22] **Nate Hagens:** That's really it in a nutshell. How do we find a safe space in today's world with other humans where we can just be ourselves? And those places don't really exist. I mean, if you think about it, it's very difficult 'cause everything is performance or there's metrics or your status is at risk.

[00:45:42] So to have those safe spaces, that's pretty important. Lucas, anything you wanna add to that?

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[00:45:48] **Lucas Jackson:** Yeah. I'll just say that I found it incredibly refreshing. The-- I mean, I met Nora and Warm Data through the training, through the host training, and, I noticed almost immediately that we didn't go around and introduce ourselves and say where we're from and one unique thing about us or something.

[00:46:09] And it was maybe day three that Nora pointed that out, and I hadn't quite made the connection that it was, you know, by design, so to speak. But for me, it immediately relaxed me. I mean, when I've been to these events where you go around the circle and you introduce yourself, that's anxiety-inducing for me.

[00:46:30] It's what, can I say in two sentences that's going to, you know, impress or not confine myself or, you know, later on I'm thinking I should've said this thing But just tell, starting with a story is, it just opens up possibilities And if

[00:46:49] **Nate Hagens:** there's 20 people in the group and you have to, while the other 15 are speaking, you're sitting there thinking about what it is you're gonna say, instead of paying attention to the person that is speaking at the time.

[00:47:02] Yeah, there's all sorts of those things. So, I mean, viewers up to this point, some viewers might be thinking this is pretty esoteric, to the more than human predicament. I think it's central. I really do. So let me ask you this, Nora. In our prior conversation, I think you've mentioned it once today already, you mentioned radical hospitality is a central theme.

[00:47:30] So first of all, could you define that and how is that different from community? and why is radical hospitality so critical for helping people make deeper relationship bonds and collaborating with each other?

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[00:47:45] **Nora Bateson:** We were talking about this. How are we gonna define this radical hospitality? And the radicalness I think has to do with the fact that it is, to, to our familiar habits, it is not practical. It's not practical to be in...

[00:48:08] Y- you know, it's not... W- what's practical about spending two hours h- telling stories with each other about a s- a question you can't really answer anyway, with absolutely no outcome, no agenda, no... There's nothing... What are we optimizing here? What are we... What's happening? Why would we do this? And, that in itself is part of the, I think, the birthright of being alive together.

[00:48:36] **Nate Hagens:** I would argue that what you're optimizing is the exact neurotransmitter mix of our ancestors around the campfire.

[00:48:43] **Nora Bateson:** Exactly. And that that should seem like an impractical thing to do is something I think we might wanna consider. The hospitality of this is that it is always a gift to hear someone's story or to invite a story.

[00:49:07] You know, one of the things that happens when you try to sound clever is that it doesn't light up people's stories. If I tell you a story, you're gonna start thinking about your stories in your life. Stories remind us of stories. You know, there's that old story that my dad told about the computer and where he...

[00:49:28] You know, you ask the computer, "Do you ever think like a human being?" And the computer bumps, and it thumps, and finally it says, "That reminds me of a story." That, there is something about that process that is going to l- light us up inside. M- most of the things that happen in a warm data lab aren't even articulated.

[00:49:51] So what comes of this when you're moving through the context and really noticing your own complexity, the way that a story you told, thinking it was about, you know, your grandmother, turns out to be about how you're feeling

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about your experience in school, which is actually manifesting in your new project, which is in the way of your marriage or...

[00:50:18] You know, like, these things, they get all tangled up. And to notice everybody else is in that too. And suddenly it becomes vivid that the difficulties, and the struggles, and the successes are not mine or yours, but they're in something that we have been sharing. They're in a larger systemic set of movements.

[00:50:48] And so the tending to that is-- comes from this generosity that comes out of that. Why would I not be generous when I notice that my struggles are your struggles? They-- yours might look different, they come in different packaging, but they're coming out of the same configurations. So the generosity is sort of like the opposite of the Machiavellian-

[00:51:19] you know, basis. it's not what's in it for me. It's how am I not only in this, but among it? How am I? And, you're here with me.

[00:51:33] **Lucas Jackson:** I was at a gathering last week in Ver- here in Vermont, and people were talking about alternative economies and things like that. And at one point, someone asked a question like, "What's the neighborly thing that we all know how to do?"

[00:51:50] And about half the room said, "Pull somebody out of the ditch." And immediately that-- Well, first of all, that spurred a bunch of stories. People talked about when they were stuck in a ditch or when they helped someone else out of the ditch. But I'm thinking about this in the radical hospitality sense, and it's not practical for me, you know, in a rush to some appointment and I see someone off the side of the road because of the snow or the mud, to stop and get out some chains and pull them out or to go to the next person down the road and, you know...

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[00:52:28] But it is, in a different sense, I mean, w- we talked about what goes around comes around, and this question of do I want to live in a world where if I'm in a ditch, someone will stop and pull me out? I think that's-- there's like a zooming out question there that's not just like a one-to-one, is this practical for me?

[00:52:51] Or that question of like, what's in it for me?

[00:52:54] **Nate Hagens:** So it sounds like some of, this is not only a safe place, and not only where we can sit around the campfire, but it's also quieting the ego and a way to widen the aperture of our experience away from our culture has, steered us towards individualism and conquest.

[00:53:17] and this is like a reminder that we're incredibly social creatures, and that your little warm data experiences kinda rekindle that flame a little bit. When

[00:53:30] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** thinking about radical hospitality, there's an absolute joy in giving for the sake of giving because it's something that, you know, is shared and is enjoyed.

[00:53:40] You, you know, we were talking earlier and my, reflection is, you know, not to oversimplify it, but, you know, when you've got something to give, it's so, like, human to share it because the joy of being in community with someone else, sharing something together is just

[00:54:02] **Nate Hagens:** inherently life-affirming. So where do we see radical hospitality alive in the world today, specifically?

[00:54:10] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** I think we see it in subcultures. I think we see it-- I think it's h- I think it's really important to not put it in any one place. I think we see it in places where there are relationships, where there already are... You know.

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So I'm thinking about my son's-- My son is nine, and he's been learning to skate over the last years, and he's being, introduced into a skating community, and they are so generous and kind and nice, and they do it for the sheer love of skating.

[00:54:43] You know, it's almost, you know, they're-- it's almost like an artisanal community of people who are interested in sharing knowledge and being together for the love of something. And it, and I witnessed it there. I witnessed it in a restaurant that I particularly love with a chef that I particularly love.

[00:55:06] I witness it in his spirit in the way that he individually bends pieces of sushi depending on whether you're left or right-handed. No. Not because you notice, but because you don't notice. Right. And it's because he does it in such a way because it matters to him. And th- you know, in these places, that's where I see it.

[00:55:31] **Nora Bateson:** I think you can find it everywhere, and also nowhere. So I would be loath to think, okay, in this context is where you're gonna find radical hospitality. You were talking, Jonathan, yesterday about how when you know, when you make food to put on an altar or something, you don't just make a little something.

[00:55:52] You actually m- do it for real, and because you know what you did, and it matters. So there's something that matters, a way that goes beyond the, okay, done, check, move on. This is the edge of my role. It's not my responsibility. I'm going somewhere else, for me.

[00:56:18] **Nate Hagens:** Let me ask you this, Nora. I assume you've done Warm Data labs with wildly different demographics.

[00:56:25] It's not just all melting pots. There's some that are conservatives or a certain religion or whatever, but it really is, by definition, completely transpartisan,

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and it almost doesn't matter who's in the original 100 people that convene. Is that correct?

[00:56:44] **Nora Bateson:** It's fine, yeah. I mean, I've been in, in really violent situations, with people who came into the room more than polarized in, in full volatile conflict.

[00:56:59] **Nate Hagens:** What is your grandest hope for— Well, for International Bateson Institute and for the Warm Data labs, around the world, like if you swing for the fences, what do you hope to accomplish?

[00:57:14] **Nora Bateson:** That's a really tricky question, Nate, because the thing that I don't wanna do is lose the integrity of what all of us have worked for.

[00:57:28] So I wanna say, you know, I wanna be there for all the communities. I'd like to see this be available for everybody, and I would. I really would love to see that. I have always felt like, yeah, but we're readying. We're not ready yet, we're readying. and, but I have to tell you that I'm starting to feel that the readying is ripe.

[00:57:56] and I-- if, you know, if this were four years ago or two years ago, or maybe even six months ago, I might not say that. But I'm feeling now like the communities that have been mo- using warm data and that are all over the world in various spots, are, are-- they have enough depth in their practice now that they can actually be able to be in high water in a different kinda way.

[00:58:31] **Nate Hagens:** It just seems to me that if there were some people that have had this experience in ev- just a few people in every community around the world, that it just is more resilient to high water. So I wish you all the success on that, and I kinda feel the same as I hear you with the integrity part.

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[00:58:55] I learned, not to get too nerdy, that the CTR, which stands for click-through rate, of a video when you advertise it, if it goes from five to 5.5%, so 55 out of 1,000 people clicked on it instead of 50, that the viewership goes up like 10 times. So the goal is to make really sensational, clickable titles.

[00:59:21] I just can't, I can't do it. So I think quality is more important, and integrity is more important than quantity. But it's a quandary, right? Because we are at the 11th hour culturally, and to scale- Mm-hmm ... this stuff is important. So I feel you on that.

[00:59:41] **Nora Bateson:** I am so glad to hear you say that because in the media world that we are in, and also in the changemaker world, everyone's looking for a formula.

[00:59:54] And that quest for the formula is actually the same quest that gets us into the mechanistic mindset of how to do things. So m- moving in another way is radical and, it is radical. And to actually have some kind of trust that those relationships that are made in another rhythm, in another pattern will carry that.

[01:00:33] in, when all odds are against it, the whole tsunami of media culture is against it, and yet it prevails because, you know, you said it earlier, it's ancient. This is the most ancient form. This is not some new thing. the configuration is definitely built for, a fragmented, a f- and a broken system.

[01:01:02] But the storytelling is ancient. Coming together is ancient.

[01:01:07] **Nate Hagens:** Speaking of the broken system, your father, Gregory Bateson, coined the term schismogenesis, which you and Rex Wyler briefly talked about, way back in the day, which is a way to describe how relationships and entire cultures can get locked into escalating patterns of competition or withdrawal.

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[01:01:30] how do you apply schismogenesis to our present culture? And can it help us identify the places we might be stuck in, those negative loops?

[01:01:42] **Nora Bateson:** It's a big topic, but basically a schismogenesis is a pattern of relationship that breaks relationship. and sometimes that happens because there's too much, too much distance in a complimentary relationship.

[01:02:02] Somebody gets too dominant and somebody gets too supportive. and that's nice at first, and then it becomes a place there's no relationship to make anymore. Other times it becomes a symmetrical issue, and you get a competition like an arms race or like people who are in competition, and that competition is at first generative, and then it ruins the relationship.

[01:02:24] It's the third one that I wanted to speak with you about, which is something called systems hold back. And in systems hold back, you get this pattern where I am not going to give to this relationship what I could give because I know you're not giving what you could give So I don't give 'cause I know you're not gonna give, and you don't give 'cause you know I'm not giving, and pretty soon there's nothing there.

[01:02:53] Our relationship has been dehumanized, devitalized. We have nothing to, to tissue, to soil, to grow in. And this is the logic of a culture that says, "Don't give too much or people will take advantage of you. Don't stick your neck out. You'll get your head cut off. Don't be too generous. You will be, you'll be robbed."

[01:03:18] And everything about that is actually anti-ecology

[01:03:25] **Nate Hagens:** How so?

[01:03:26] **Nora Bateson:** Because in a meadow, the organisms don't hold back. The organisms are doing what they-- The flowers are blooming, the pollinators

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are coming. The organisms are doing as they do. But to say, "I'm not gonna be in relationship with you, I'm not gonna give what I could give to this relationship," basically starves out the vitality of the relationship.

[01:03:52] And, this is something that has become just part of the logic of being alive now. And how many, you know, don't call them unless they call you first, and, you know, I did the dishes on Tuesday, so it's your turn to do the dishes on Wednesday, and we're in this constant scorekeeping hold back with each other that prohibits the possibility of perceiving and sensitizing to what's happening in the actual relationship, which is the practice as far as I'm concerned.

[01:04:22] **Nate Hagens:** I was following you until you said the dish thing, because that's actually what I'm doing exactly right now. So what would be a different way to do the dishes in a relationship or any of the other things you said?

[01:04:37] **Nora Bateson:** I can speak to this. Jonathan might have a good time speaking to it also.

[01:04:41] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** I think this is so much of what we explore and where our learnings certainly as a group are, is how to be together, how to care for each other without it becoming operationalized, without it becoming, "Okay, what's fair?"

[01:04:57] And that's not a question that we ask in, in that way, which is like, "Okay, so there's four of us and we're gonna be together for three days. I'll have lunch on this day." It doesn't-- We don't operate in that way because there is a level of holdback. I only do what I do because it's fair. So the holdback is at the level of equality.

[01:05:19] And, some days I'm gonna be up early, and if I'm up early every day, I'm just gonna stick the coffee on. And you know what? Some days I might also go to

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bed late. So if I'm gonna go b-bed late, I'm gonna tidy up the cups because I'm up early and I go to bed late. It doesn't matter what someone else does.

[01:05:37] It's like th- you ask about radical hospitality. It starts within us. It's like I can give what I can give. I'm not giving because I'm holding back on myself what I think is equitable or fair.

[01:05:50] **Lucas Jackson:** Well, I, just wanted to say something that I've heard Nora say m-many times, is that perception can be action or perception is action, and that for as many times as I've talked about, learned about discussed schismogenesis and this systems holdback, it creeps into my life and into my relationships, and there's a moment when I notice it that can almost immediately shift it.

[01:06:19] I notice that I'm holding back because I'm afraid that you're holding back. And in that, pers- perceiving it, my actions, my way of being in the relationship can change.

[01:06:33] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** Absolutely. And that's the n- and that's the thing is, that it's not a solution, it's not a cure, it doesn't stop it. But if you become aware of what you're doing, then you start to be at choice.

[01:06:43] If you stop believing that you're going, "This is so unfair because I've done this and you haven't done that," but if you're going, "Oh, this is the pattern of holdback I'm in and I am contributing to it," and it's not about fairness, it's about actually this, is this how I wanna be in the world? Right. And is this how I wanna be in my relationships?

[01:07:04] **Nate Hagens:** I couldn't help but imagine that if Nora and I were in a relationship, it might either be totally blissful or there would be four or five weeks of unwashed dishes stacked in the kitchen.

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[01:07:19] **Nora Bateson:** I mean, the thing is, that, you know, I have a lot of kids and so this chore wheel thing is real, of this thing of, okay, who's gonna do the dishes? Which, speaking of things that break up communities, this is another one. and the thing is you want to have some kind of control of it and then you lose it.

[01:07:43] Because if I say, "Okay, Nate's doing the dishes on Wednesday and Jonathan's on Tuesday and Lucas is on Thursday and I'm on Friday," and then pretty soon something happens on Friday and I'm like, "Oh, you know guys, I'm not gonna be around on Friday. I gotta go do-- Nate's got a podcast on Thursday and he's not gonna be around on Friday.

[01:08:04] Lucas, he did the dishes already on Wednesday and Thursday, but Lucas, can you do the dishes?" and somehow we have to start negotiating beyond the chore wheel And, what instead of having to begin with, become sensitized to what's happening in the room in the relational contextual process and operating within that.

[01:08:29] That's that, that, openness we've been talking about.

[01:08:32] **Lucas Jackson:** You also get into that's not my job space. Right. The floor is dirty and needs to be swept, but I'm doing dishes tonight, so the floor is not my job.

[01:08:43] **Nate Hagens:** My first question was gonna be, is radical hospitality the antidote to schismogenesis?

[01:08:49] But then I wondered, in a group of 10 people, if there's one of them practicing radical hospitality, they might end up with all the chores.

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[01:08:59] **Nora Bateson:** For a while. And then, there is a need to actually e-expand the perception of what's happening to the relationships, not to the chores. That's the key. The key is, "Hey, Jonathan's super tired 'cause he's been doing this.

[01:09:18] Nate, let's kick in."

[01:09:20] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** Mm-hmm.

[01:09:21] **Nora Bateson:** Right? Which is really different from, "It's Wednesday."

[01:09:24] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** But then, you know, I love to cook. I get absolute sheer pleasure from cooking. And, you know, there's something about, I also love to be cooked for. But, you know, I've met people who love, who get satisfaction from cleaning and doing the dishes.

[01:09:40] It's not the question of... Again, it's like the question of like, I'm, I have no problem cooking because it's, there's a joy of cooking. There's a joy of h- of being there in a hospitable way to each other. And it's, that's a very different way of perceiving things when you're like, "This is the joy of communing together."

[01:10:05] **Nate Hagens:** Well, this is a little bit of a window into the care economy, for people living in the consumptive Superorganism economy. If you can spend a couple hours in a real relationship with people and you're working on different things, you're getting paid in things other than dollars. Mm-hmm. So for people who have grown up in a culture of predominantly transactional relationships, which is probably the majority of people watching this program, what are some concrete actions people can take right now to start shifting more towards this orientation we've been outlining?

[01:10:43] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** I think there's something about practicing hospitality with yourself and radical hospitality with yourself. You know, it's easy to

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say self-love or self-care or self-kindness. But what's it like to be hospitable with self and see how that feels, and notice, you know, the doing something for yourself for the sheer joy or the sheer life-affirmingness of it.

[01:11:08] I'm thinking of, you know, the Frankl quote, you know, s- say yes to life in spite of everything. And it's that, you know, moving towards that vitality of life. And I think if you're experiencing that, then it's seductive and it's, you want more of it. There's something about being in, you know, the joy of living that is inherently, Ah, I, if we use the word addictive, and I probably shouldn't be using that, but it-- you want more of it.

[01:11:44] It's a taste, and you go, "I want more of that, and I want more of that." And then you're switching from not what am I doing to get back, but it's like, what am I doing to receive?

[01:11:56] **Nate Hagens:** But does it require you being around other people that are practicing the same thing or not? No, I don't think it does. Because

[01:12:06] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** then...

[01:12:06] I mean, I think it's brilliant to be doing it in relationship. I don't think inherently you-- Because then again, you're, limiting it and you're putting it round. You say, "This only exists if I'm- practicing it with someone who's doing the same." You know, in some ways, real radical hospitality, you could say, is practicing it to someone who's gonna come and take from you, who's gonna come.

[01:12:30] And it, you know, you used the word safety. I don't think it is safe in h- because it's not, you're not saying, "Oh, I'll only give when I know that someone's gonna give in the same way," 'cause then you're moving it down to a transactional space.

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[01:12:44] **Lucas Jackson:** There's also something about looking at longer timelines.

[01:12:48] There's, you know... A- and not keeping score. You know, if you're thinking about a relationship and, you're doing, I don't, like we keep c- I keep coming back to the dishes, but you're doing the dishes every, day for two weeks and, you know, maybe something shifts, and now that changes in the, group and somebody else is doing it.

[01:13:10] And, but if you stop yourself after week one, there's no opening for that to move. and I think we do that all the time. There's this like, there's the expectation even when we think about people who revere like a barter system, there's like a one-to-one exchange rather than the zooming out, not just to the group, but in time as well, and thinking about how everything feeds everything.

[01:13:43] **Nate Hagens:** I'm gonna have to think more about that. It almost seems like warm data is thawing out, this frozen chunk of selfishness that our culture has kind of built up in, in each of us.

[01:13:54] **Nora Bateson:** One of the ways to get to that question is to ask where is the edge of the self?

[01:13:59] **Nate Hagens:** Where, what do you mean?

[01:14:01] **Nora Bateson:** Exactly.

[01:14:03] Where, i- yeah. Where's the edge? Where's the edge of Nate? Are you just in your skin? Are you your ideas? Are you your house? Are you your friends? Are you your family? Are you your microbiome? Are you your culture? Are you your work? And pretty soon, you know, when you are engaging in self-care, where's the edge of self?

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[01:14:37] And if we think of the self as being an isolated unit then we get into some trouble, but because the self is not isolated. All of life is in this ever amonging way. so, so it tending to that amonging is tending to the self.

[01:15:01] **Nate Hagens:** Let me ask you this, Nora, and I will preface this question, with a self-reflection of the last hour or so.

[01:15:09] The best parts of this conversation were when I forgot that I was a podcast host and that this was being recorded and that I'm responsible for steering the conversation, and I was just temporarily lost in what the three of you were saying as part of like a conversation, forgetting that the cameras are rolling and all that.

[01:15:30] so I, like those parts. and so, building on that, I wanna ask you about the distinction between doing something in order to get a response and doing something and some sort of a response emerging. And, we've talked about this, variously in the past, but can you, starting with you, Nora, can you unpack that distinction and why it matters so much for how we try to build anything together?

[01:16:01] **Nora Bateson:** This is something that we talk about a lot, is the difference between, you know, I'm going to market to buy bread-

[01:16:10] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** Mm-hmm ...

[01:16:10] **Nora Bateson:** is really different from going to market and buying bread.

[01:16:14] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** Oh.

[01:16:16] **Nora Bateson:** I'm going outside to pick peaches is really different than I'm going outside and picking peaches. And this is actually a little grammatical thing that happened when the factories came alongside the school systems.

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[01:16:32] And early English prior to that used that, that grammatical format of and. I'm going to school and learning to read. Mm-hmm. And that makes room for a beautiful, unpredictable experience of going to market and then buying, I'm gonna buy bread. What will happen? What kind of bread will they have? Maybe there's no bread.

[01:16:56] But if I go to market to buy bread, I'm immediately caught in a linear transactional, how much bread can you get? How cheap is it? How fast can you get it? And if you come back with none, you failed.

[01:17:09] **Nate Hagens:** So that's a whole microcosm for everything in our world. Right. Just that little shift. 'Cause if we use the word I'm going to do this to...

[01:17:18] with this goal in mind, it narrows the aperture of how we have the experience and our perception of that day even.

[01:17:29] **Nora Bateson:** Exactly. It hijacks the complexity.

[01:17:32] **Nate Hagens:** So what's the specific recommendation to change t-- I wanna do I'm going to do this to do, achieve that and change it to and

[01:17:42] **Nora Bateson:** If you change it to and, there's room.

[01:17:45] I'm going outside, and that's a whole experience to go outside, and I'm gonna pick peaches. And maybe I get to the peach tree and there's spiders and I meet a spider, and maybe there's no peaches, and maybe there's lots of peaches, maybe there's other people there. And I came back, and how did it go? Well, I met a spider and there were people, but I didn't have any peaches.

[01:18:06] So It's a whole... Th- is th- does that mean that nothing happened? A lot of things happened. It just wasn't the thing that was on the goal list. And so those

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things that aren't in that, in the to, right, in the linear description, get negated, get obscured.

[01:18:25] **Nate Hagens:** And the larger problem is that usually in our culture ends up with something monetary or, financially denominated.

[01:18:35] **Nora Bateson:** Mm-hmm. Or, you know, I'm going to school to learn to read. How fast did you learn to read? How good are you at reading? What level are you at? Yeah.

[01:18:42] **Nate Hagens:** Right. So then it's all, like our, it... This, the second order effect of it is it changes our internal validation of success or, and it narrows the boundary there as well.

[01:18:56] **Nora Bateson:** And so identity itself gets shifted into, you know, accomplishment or shame or-

[01:19:03] **Nate Hagens:** Did you read this somewhere, or did you, were you just sitting in a meadow when you thought of this? When did you think of this, the difference between to and? That's, like, some deep philosophy there.

[01:19:12] **Nora Bateson:** It's really great, isn't it?

[01:19:14] I found that through the General Semantics Institute. We were talking about old grammar, and it came up as a, just an example of old grammar, and I was like you, you know, sort of, "Wait, what?" Yeah. You know? And that opening, I, just, you know, it... The other thing that I find about that example is that it, it really shows the way there's enormous ghosts hiding in the itsy-bitsy nuances of our lives, and that ghost of industrialism is a nasty one, and it's in the t- tiny little tos and ands.

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[01:19:58] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** There's also something in the, you know, the tending to an aesthetic practice and, you know, obviously warm data being an example of that. You know, I might find myself in conversation with my son three weeks later, and he'll do something, and I'll notice that I'll think of something that happened in a lab, and my response might be different, or I'll be able to tell him a story, or I'll be able to relate to him in a different way.

[01:20:27] I could never predict that. I would never go to a lab to get a response three weeks later because, you know... but if I'm tending to these practices, and I think warm data is one of many different types of aesthetic practice you can tend to, for the sake of its own practice, that's where you may find things emerging from because you're not checking it with the to-ness

[01:20:55] **Nate Hagens:** of it.

[01:20:55] Now I am wearing my podcast hat 'cause I'm sensitive to the time, but I was just thinking, I do look forward to the next time that the group, four of us, are able to speak. that was going through my mind, and then I wondered why. and I think partially I can be myself, but partially because I know if I ask a question, you are just gonna not perform, but you're gonna think and then just honest answer reflection.

[01:21:28] And then I asked myself, well, obviously, well, why is that so special? And the answer is that most people don't do that. And I think our culture needs more of that sort of reflection, authenticity, curiosity, learning, open-mindedness, and, well, you've modeled it here today, in a brief way, so thank you for that.

[01:21:56] Nora, you are a oft return-- I think other than Daniel Schmachtenberger, you've been on this podcast more than anyone. So with my closing questions, I'm gonna let you take a little pause and ask your two colleagues, if you don't mind. Perfect. Lucas and Jonathan, what can someone listening to this podcast today

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do this week, this month, to help address the things discussed generally on the more than human predicament, the meta-crisis, or is it all up to politicians and

[01:22:26] **Lucas Jackson:** leaders?

[01:22:27] There's something that I've been thinking about throughout this conversation that I haven't spoken yet, I believe. and it comes up in the training, in, in Nora's training, of observing the observer. And that, to me, that, that landed for me in the first training I went to, and I keep practicing it, and it's something around Yeah, this question of who can I be when I'm with you and, kind of witnessing that, but also who can you be when you're with me?

[01:23:02] These are questions that Nora asks. and also what am I noticing? What am I noticing that I'm noticing? These are all questions that Nora asks regularly. But I bring that into my personal life, into my relationships and into, yeah, how am I in this group? How can I be, Or what are the possibilities here?

[01:23:32] And what do I have to offer? Am I holding back? Am I-- how am I maybe en- entering into a schismogenic relationship? what-- you know, you just said it as well, Nate, like, why am I enjoying this conversation? Or what's curious to me here? What's interesting to me? And I think just by paying attention to that, noticing, perceiving, that's a practice, and then new things open up through that.

[01:24:03] Thank you.

[01:24:03] **Nate Hagens:** So observing the observer is a form of metacognition, and we're the observer. And then to kind of observe and why did you do that? Why are you doing this? H- who can I be with you? All those sorts of

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[01:24:14] **Lucas Jackson:** questions. There's also observing the other person as an observer as well, and, you know, they have their own context and process and thing unfolding there.

[01:24:26] Jonathan.

[01:24:27] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** Yeah, I'm gonna, be very British and stereotypical and go to tea making. You know, if you're a tea drinker or if you're a coffee drinker, I think there's something about taking some time to enjoy the process of the aesthetic of making tea, and maybe not just make tea for yourself, but make tea for somebody else.

[01:24:51] But don't... You know, find a really good cup. Find a, if you make it in a pot, make it in a pot. But take a little bit of extra time to enjoy the actual aesthetic ritual that can be done in the act of giving and in the act of hospitality.

[01:25:09] **Nate Hagens:** That is a practical, pragmatic micro version of quality over quantity.

[01:25:18] So I'm sure in all the thousands of people that have done Warm Data Lab experiences, you guys have come across a lot of young people, or I would hope that you have. What specific recommendations do you have for young humans in their teens or 20s who are becoming aware of all the economic, environmental constraints to our current global economy?

[01:25:41] **Jonathan Goldsmith:** I'm thinking about my son. I'm thinking about his relationship with his friends, and I think about what I would say to him. And I would say, "Be with your friends. You know, be with each other." You know, there's something about it's really easy to get lost, and I recognize it from my own childhood, in isolation and feeling, you know, that kind of hopelessness and what can I do?

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[01:26:04] And there's something about being in community with other people, relating to your peers, hanging out, being kind. You know, because in, it's in that, again, it's in that latticework of communing, of being together, where that it's not on you to find any answer, but it's practicing that relating, practicing that communing with each other And s- you know, doing it because it feels good.

[01:26:34] You know, again, it's that I- say yes to life in spite of everything, and that I think is the most important thing we can do.

[01:26:42] **Lucas Jackson:** What immediately came to my mind was, what was I doing in high school. And I had, I don't know how long this period lasted, maybe a year, where a friend and I decided that we would do things that we wouldn't normally do or enter spaces that we wouldn't normally find ourselves in.

[01:27:04] And this was, like, going to the church dinner or the small event at the library, or at one time we took a trip to see the Dalai Lama in Central Park, and this was, like, you know, four punk high school kids going to see the Dalai Lama, who we knew nothing about at the time. But we learned so much in those-- in, in that, like, stretching of what we thought we were interested in our i- stretching of our identities.

[01:27:39] And I'm thinking about how all of us, but young people especially, are so algorithmically driven toward interests and, you know, the narrowing of spaces that they w-will show up in that it's kind of a radical act to just do a 180 and go to the thing that you would never find yourself- you know, in or...

[01:28:05] I loved going to a place and people being like, "Why are these kids here?" Like, it just-- That was fun to me. So I don't know. That might be a way out of the constraints. That's a good idea.

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[01:28:18] **Nate Hagens:** Nora, do you have any updated, follow-ups to your thinking to add here?

[01:28:23] **Nora Bateson:** What I would just like to add is that there is a lot that can happen in the minutiae.

[01:28:31] I have a new book coming out called Belly, and it's about everything belly: food, microbiome. My kids want- Laughter. Laughter. My kids wanted me to write a recipe book, and I realized that if I wrote them a recipe book, it wouldn't teach them how to cook. That learning how to cook is somewhere else, that's another thing that is way beyond a recipe.

[01:28:57] Recipes are lovely, but they don't teach you how to cook. You first have to, like Carl Sagan said, "First you have to underst- make a universe before you make apple pie." So I think there is something to be said for, noticing the small things in a day, because right now the big things are really overwhelming and it's hard to keep your morale up.

[01:29:27] It's hard to keep your fire in your belly right now. it, I know, you know, all of us who are out here trying, you know, we fall down every once in a while. There are days when it's like, "Ugh, I can't do this anymore." And then, and then there it is in the slightest thing, the smile of someone when you walk in the room that says, "Hey, I'm glad you're here."

[01:30:01] Or bringing a cup of coffee to my husband in the morning, or, you know, that one gesture that says, "I just wanna offer you a little bit of the grace of life."

[01:30:14] **Nate Hagens:** This conversation has been that way for me. This is Wednesday, April 22nd, and the news, and stuff I've been working on this morning, pulled me in a totally different direction and you've, like, breathed spirit back into my body with this conversation.

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[01:30:33] and hopefully we'll be able to redo this in various forms. I have to sit with what I've learned and felt here because I really do think something like warm data that's not formulaic, that's the problem. With trying to scale building community at these times, inevitably, there are formulas and metrics, and that's not gonna work.

[01:30:59] But just something loose that allows people to exhale and trust and leave the ego at the door and be curious and share other people's perspectives and empathy and all that is vital, I think. So I wish you all the best, Gaia, tailwind in, in your efforts. Thank you. Do you each have any closing words, closing comments for people watching and listening here today who are curious about all this or agree or?

[01:31:34] **Nora Bateson:** I actually, Nate, I just wanna say that when I'm thinking of radical hospitality, that you come to mind. That what you do with the podcast and the work that you're doing is such an offering. So I just wanna Be grateful for that

[01:31:55] **Nate Hagens:** Thank you. I'm just showing up every day. Some days it feels like Groundhog Day, but this feels important.

[01:32:04] Thanks for saying that.

[01:32:05] **Nora Bateson:** That's what it feels like, though- Yeah ... is just showing up every day. Yeah.

[01:32:11] **Nate Hagens:** Yeah. Thank you so much, all of you, Nora Bateson, Lucas Jackson, Jonathan Goldsmith. most definitely to be continued, my friends.

[01:32:21] **Nora Bateson:** Thank you, Nate.

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[01:32:23] **Nate Hagens:** Thanks, Nate. Thank you. If you'd like to learn more about this episode, please visit thegreatsimplification.com for references and show notes.

[01:32:32] From there, you can also join our Hilo community and subscribe to our Substack newsletter. This show is hosted by me, Nate Hagens, edited by No Troublemakers Media, and produced by Misty Stinnett and Lizzi Sirianni. Our production team also includes Leslie Batt-Lutz, Brady Heyen, Julia Maxwell, Gabriella Sleiman, and Grace Brunfelt.

[01:32:56] Thank you for listening, and we'll see you on the next episode