Radical Simplicity: The Opportunities of a World in Collapse

with Sarah Wilson | Episode 234

Show Notes and Links to Learn More

The TGS team puts together these brief references and show notes for the learning and convenience of our listeners. However, most of the points made in episodes hold more nuance than one link can address, and we encourage you to dig deeper into any of these topics and come to your own informed conclusions.

Guest:

Sarah Wilson, Substack: *This is Precious*

- Books: *I Eat the Stars*, *This One Wild and Precious Life*, *First, We Make the Beast Beautiful*, *I Quit Sugar*

Grab-and-Go Resources:

New? Start here:

- What to Do as the World Falls Apart: A Framework for Action (Frankly #132)
- *The Great Simplification* (32-minute film)

From the Archive:

- *The Great Simplification* Ep 199: Sheldon Solomon on terror management theory
- *The Great Simplification* Ep 167: Francis Weller on grief

Episode Foundations:

- Sarah Wilson's book *I Eat the Stars*
- Sebastian Junger, *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging*
- Consume Less, Live Well (2025 study on simpler consumption and wellbeing)

Next Steps:

- Build an emergency supply kit (More info)
- Community Tool Box: building community capacity
- Guide to talking across the political divide
- Elders and eldership, Building intergenerational programs
- Ritual Design Toolkit, Create a Sacred Place

Resources by Timestamp:

03:49 - Metacrisis
03:56 - Crises composing the Metacrisis: Nuclear crisis, Artificial intelligence singularity, Climate crisis, Food and water scarcity, Trade-route disruption

04:41 – Mindsets behind the Metacrisis: Growth imperative, Infinite growth on a finite planet, Individualism
06:36 – Complexity
06:51 – *I Eat the Stars*, Degrowth
08:30 – Left-brain and right-brain thinking (*The Great Simplification* Ep highlighting such)
09:49 – Embodied understanding
10:46 – Systems thinking
11:25 – Climate movement
12:09 – Paris Agreement
12:23 – Planetary boundaries
12:36 – UN Secretary-General's code red for humanity
12:43 – Mounting threats: Democratic backsliding, Artificial intelligence singularity, Nuclear threat
12:48 – Doomsday Clock at 85 seconds to midnight
12:58 – Climate activist burnout
13:18 – Complex systems collapse
13:51 – *I Eat the Stars* serialised on Substack
14:17 – Václav Havel (referenced quote)
14:49 – Cognitive dissonance
15:31 – Neoliberalism
16:07 – Loss of certainty, Intolerance of uncertainty
17:00 – Human awareness of mortality
17:24 – Existentialism
18:33 – Sheldon Solomon (*The Great Simplification* appearance), Terror management theory
19:09 – Grief (*The Great Simplification* episodes on such)
20:55 – Collapse as a homecoming
21:28 – Bill Plotkin (*The Great Simplification* appearance), Ecological adulthood
24:24 – Hopium, Reverend Michael Dowd
24:37 – Green economy
24:48 – Tech bros, Artificial intelligence as a climate solution
25:22 – Toby Ord, Existential risk (related *The Great Simplification* episode), Humanity in its adolescence
25:43 – *Average mammalian species lifespan of 1–2 million years
26:30 – Psychopathic instrumentality of institutions (Frankly on such)
26:40 – Market fundamentalism, Techno-solutionism
27:08 – Sarah Wilson on choosing truth over hope
30:04 – Margaret Wheatley, Islands of Sanity
31:01 – Nervous system co-regulation
32:10 – Liminality
32:25 – Antonio Gramsci (referenced quote)
32:53 – Nefarious forces in the interregnum: Fascism, Bad-faith actors
33:22 – Milton Friedman (referenced quote)

34:16 – Simone de Beauvoir, *What Is Existentialism?*, Fascism in Europe, Communism
34:38 – Axial Age, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism
35:41 – Stock markets at all-time highs
36:20 – European natural gas prices (Dutch TTF), U.S. Henry Hub natural gas spot price
37:04 – French Revolution, *How the French Think*
37:49 – Anti-intellectualism
38:47 – Collapsology
39:18 – European Union preparedness strategy, 72-hour emergency kit guidance
39:43 – Talk of a third world war in Europe, French hospitals preparing for war
40:23 – Prepping and stockpiling
42:11 – Intentional communities
42:34 – Minimum viable community size, Dunbar's number
43:18 – Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*
44:31 – Community cohesion after disaster, Mutual aid
45:13 – Nate's four responses to the predicament: (Frankly on such)
- Bend-not-break deflationary depression
- Avoiding strategic thermonuclear war
- Protecting the web of life
- Inculcating a sense of the sacred

46:13 – Species-level rite of passage
46:43 – *Mad Max*
47:26 – Pro-social prepping
49:15 – 72-hour emergency kit checklist
49:30 – Grid blackouts, Internet outages
49:40 – European heat waves
50:03 – *I Quit Sugar* (*The Great Simplification* Ep on processed foods)
52:22 – Self-help industry
55:26 – *2.1 billion people cook with polluting fuels
55:48 – Global South
55:58 – Collapse already underway: Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza
56:20 – Peter Turchin (*The Great Simplification* appearance), *End Times*
56:29 – Political polarization, Economic inequality
57:52 – Mass civil unrest
58:10 – Acedia, Loneliness crisis
58:37 – Post-apocalyptic fiction
58:59 – *The Great Simplification*
59:36 – Simple living
1:00:23 – Consumerism (Nate and DJ's book covering such)
1:00:59 – Consume Less, Live Well (2025 study)
1:01:40 – What the death of the system takes with it: Unboxing videos, Golf courses, Weekend youth sports, The LinkedIn self
1:02:29 – Deferred-life plan

1:03:07 – Parable of the fisherman
1:04:17 – Collective action
1:04:48 – Human ultrasociality, Cooperation as our superpower (Nate and DJ's book covering such)
1:05:16 – Contagious kindness
1:05:40 – Duty
1:06:22 – Hedonic treadmill, Lottery winners and accident victims study
1:07:17 – *Commitment, Conflict, and Caring*
1:08:26 – Abraham Maslow, Self-transcendence beyond self-actualization
1:08:47 – Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*
1:09:42 – Choosing whether to have children
1:10:21 – *This One Wild and Precious Life*
1:10:40 – Paul Ehrlich (*The Great Simplification* appearance), *The Population Bomb*
1:11:07 – *Global population is projected to peak just under 10.3 billion in 2084 (Estimates vary substantially by methodology; the IHME model projects a peak of ~9.7 billion in 2064)
1:12:14 – Pronatalism, Abortion restrictions, China's three-child policy
1:12:38 – Depopulation and crumbling infrastructure
1:13:04 – Taiwan's colleges closing on falling births, *South Korea's total fertility rate of 0.80
1:13:40 – Net zero by 2050
1:14:19 – Margaret Mead, Jeremy Steig
1:15:30 – Post-traumatic growth
1:15:52 – Sebastian Junger, *Tribe*
1:16:13 – The Blitz, Mental hospitals during the Blitz
1:17:01 – Rationing in wartime Britain
1:19:05 – Meditation
1:19:37 – Movement in nature
1:20:00 – Minor-key music
1:20:21 – Crying and self-soothing
1:20:35 – Psychedelic-assisted emotional release
1:20:52 – Soul nerding
1:21:12 – Type A personality
1:22:59 – Looking into strangers' faces
1:24:06 – Humility
1:25:13 – Ecological grief
1:26:26 – *First, We Make the Beast Beautiful*
1:27:06 – Pattern recognition in autism
1:28:24 – Tangible responses: Simplify now, Reclaiming attention from your devices, Repair Café, Building community
1:28:54 – Nervous system regulation
1:29:36 – Memento mori
1:30:33 – Studying the humanities, Philosophy, Tech companies hiring philosophers
1:31:53 – Trusting intuition

1:33:29 – Indigenous knowledge systems
1:34:18 – Elders and eldership, Building intergenerational programs
1:36:36 – Techno-authoritarianism