

Mature human nature, The evolved nest (Seminar)

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Darcia Narvaez, Professor Emerita of Notre Dame University will talk live on London on the ‘Evolved Nest’.

She argues, there is something even more than WEIRDness that separates the west from the rest of the world—a mismatch of its modernist-hegemonic-industrialized culture with human species normality. Species normality involves deep nestedness, a factor that affects child raising and child development, human nature, and adult capacities. Earthcentric societies (nomadic foragers and others) over the last hundreds of thousands of years, exist(ed) in nested cooperative companionship. In fact, humans evolved to be deeply nested at multiple levels, horizontally, developmentally and vertically. Horizontal nestedness refers to being attentive to traditions developed across generations, connecting to ancestors, and living responsibility to maintain the group into the future. Developmental nestedness relies on a sense of human potential—what optimal human functioning looks like and how to foster and maintain that optimality through humanity’s evolved developmental niche, applying knowledge of dynamic biosocial plasticity in shaping the nature of the individual in community. Developmental nestedness is the central component of nestedness because it shapes the other forms. Vertical nestedness refers to entangled relationality, honoring one’s interbeing with Earth, Cosmos, and all relations, human and non-human, manifest and unmanifest.

What does nestedness at all these levels do? It cultivates and supports relational consciousness and relational knowhow. Relational consciousness refers to the sense of existing in a web of living, dynamic relations with multiple entities, including the unmanifest—the spiritual, the ancestral, and the future. Relational knowhow for getting along well—respectfully and responsibly with humans and non-humans—is cultivated in a fully nested community. Behavior in real time constitutes holistic cognition, a know-how instead of a know-what, a contextually-situated, embodied enactment of practical knowledge developed via movement, relating, touching.

Humanity’s heritage is to be deeply nested. The dominant culture has unnested itself from humanity’s adaptive heritages, impairing its evolved capacities and potential in a feedback loop of greater disconnection and destruction.

Illustrations of nestedness will be provided from ethnographies and reviews of nomadic foragers and other groups. Sample neurobiological and psychological effects will be briefly mentioned when appropriate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsaxvoNfdMk>

Camilla: Good evening, everybody. For everybody on Zoom and everybody who’s made it to the class tonight, it’s lovely to see you.

We are absolutely delighted to be able to welcome Professor Darsha Navais here tonight.

This is the first time we've been able to meet Darsha live in the flesh.

She is a Professor Emerita of Psychology at Notre Dame University in Indiana and she's been over here to speak at a very notable festival held in Bristol this last weekend, the Local Futures.

She's got a lot of exciting things to say about that.

Dasha's very well known for the idea of the evolved nest and that's what she's going to be telling us about.

Tonight, she's author, co-editor, and co-author of many books, including a recent wonderful penguin collection, Restoring the Kinship World View, which is a collection of indigenous writings and Dasha, have you got the book? Has somebody got her recent book? Yes.

Darcia: Dedicated to Chris and Camilla, this one.

Camilla: So yeah. We're delighted to have Dasha, and please do take over.

Darcia: Well, I must say, it is a thrill to be here with you all.

Virtually and in person, I am a bit nervous because I do transdisciplinary work and rely heavily on anthropology.

But I wasn't trained in anthropology.

So hopefully, you will offer corrections if there are some to be made.

I'm very happy for your help in this integrative work I'm doing.

So please feel free later to offer suggestions.

I this is a the puzzle of my life has been what's wrong with humanity.

I spent half of my childhood in the United States and the other half in other countries and could not understand why things were so different and unfair, the children my age on street corners selling gum in some countries and coming back to an overwhelming amount of materialism in the United States.

100 types of cereal in the aisle.

There's probably 200 types now.

So it's puzzled me all my life and now, I have now, with the help of anthropology, have decided, proposed, that there is a solution.

What went wrong with humanity, and what can we do about it? So that's what I want to talk about today, relying heavily on your brilliance.

So one of the issues, I think, is we've lost our baselines for what we think is normal human nature, normal ways of raising children, normal ways of just being on the planet and we have a non-optimal human nature that we foster today.

We think it's normal, but it's actually led us to the four horsemen of the environmental apocalypse.

This is E.O.

Wilson's term.

Back in '91, he pointed out global warming, massive toxification of soil, water, and air, massive species extinction, and atmospheric degradation.

And, of course, we could add pandemics and all sorts of other things now, but somehow we just adjust.

This is normal.

It's a collateral damage of progress, which, of course, humans are evolving to better and better things, right? So we have all these myths.

that keep us in place and are leading us to death, actually, death culture.

All right, so I want to focus on human nature.

What is it? Well, how do we judge that? Philippa Foot, the philosopher, has given us a little guidance on that.

You have to know what the nature of the organism is and its development, what the qualities needed are to lead a species-typical life, and the capacities that make an individual a proper member of this species.

All right, so what kind of organism are we? Well, we're animals, we're mammals, we're also social mammals, we're apes.

All those have particular basic needs.

The genus **** of course, is over 2 million years old, with our speciation perhaps about 300,000 years ago and our huge social brain evolved, co-evolved, with cooperative child raising.

This is Sarah Hurdy's distinctive contribution, moving us away from ape-like dominance hierarchies to the egalitarian social structures that we see among nomadic foragers and so we see Sarah Hurdy and her colleagues talk about un-ape-like selflessness that humans typically, under species-normal conditions, display hyper-sociality, an eagerness to share information and food, and cooperate in all sorts of contexts, even with strangers and non-relatives.

So it offers, our big social brain offers us increased opportunities for social learning and instruction, mind reading, language, cumulative, cultural evolution.

So that's the kind of organism we are according to our evolved history.

So what are the qualities we need to live a full life? Well, for any animal you need a healthy body, that resists infection, healthy self-regulatory systems, from the immune system to the stress response.

We need species normal intelligence to find our way in the world, to get along, and an effective core, this kind of organismic ability to be active, to self-regulate, to fit socially within our context, to monitor our affect, our emotions, and assimilate the world, our coupling to understand the affordances, the action possibilities that we have in the world and for social mammals, in addition to this kind of animal list, we need a pro-social physiology, one that encourages us to erotically, perhaps, connect to others of our species.

Our brains are actually designed to be addicted to people.

The opioid system is designed to be addicted to our mother, father, caregivers, friends, partners.

But when we don't get the proper development, which I'll talk about, we find other addictions to fill that need.

So people who use heroin often say, it feels like a hug.

What kinds of capacities, then, make a proper member of the species? Well, every organism has characteristic features that are good to have and for us, skillful self-regulation, which I've mentioned, skillful social cooperation and these developed over the course of evolution, and also then interdependence with one another.

and, of course, with the natural world, which we somehow seem to have forgotten, right? So what is it now? This is what I study intensely, is what influences species' normal development and my argument is that we've lost many of these understandings.

So every animal evolved a system of development that supports optimal development of the young, a nest.

It's an extra genetic inheritance.

So it's outside of genes, just like cells and body plans are not genetically transmitted, nor is culture, nor is the ecology.

So this developmental system is characterized by these— I'm not going to read it to you because we're going to go through most of these characteristics of what Melvin Connor has identified in the hunter-gatherer childhoods book by Hewlett and Lamb.

But he lists these things that I'm mostly going to talk about, and he says, Departures for them since the end of the hunting-gatherer era constitute a discordance and may have psychological and biological consequences that merit future study or further study.

I read that and I said, Hah, here I am.

How is it that early childhood experiences matter? Well, it turns out babies self-organize their brain functions around experience, especially human babies, because we are born— we resemble fetuses of other animals till about 18 months of age and so we need to be treated like we're fetuses still, which Fetuses get their needs met very quickly to keep them growing well in the optimal biochemistry.

So this is what I've then pulled out from the anthropology, from clinical sciences, developmental sciences, from ethology, evolutionary systems.

How do you— well, what do we see among nomadic foragers that haven't been disturbed? They follow this wellness-informed pathway.

They don't have— well, I'll talk about it later, maybe.

So these are really baselines for developing our humanity.

They meet basic needs through what I call the evolved nest that fosters normal species, normal thriving and that includes a sense of heart-mindedness, that sense of getting along with the others and wanting to be with others of your species and caring about them and being playful and so on.

So I call those three things developmental nestedness.

Now, my new work, which I need your help with in particular, is the fourth one here, an immersion in other kinds of nestedness, horizontal and vertical, which I'll talk about shortly.

These, I think, are also vital for fostering an earth-centered living know-how, which the modern world has kind of completely abandoned.

So basic needs, that's number one there.

What are they? Well, animal needs, right, for nourishment and warmth and protection and safety and competence in the environment.

A lot of adults in the United States forget that that's not enough.

We're mammals.

We're social mammals.

We have specific other needs to grow, fully grow our humanity and that includes affection and play, inclusion in social community life.

extensive bonding and support from others, social enjoyment, all these things we need and that's going to foster brain development for being socially and emotionally intelligent and getting along well and fitting into the environment of our community and then we have specific human needs that go beyond what other animals needs.

such as apprenticeship in adult activities, although that's true for other animals.

But we need that throughout our lives.

We need to have mentors.

We need to make meaning out of our lives and have stories that guide us and have opportunity for healing and self-expansion.

So there are a lot of basic needs that get kind of tossed aside or ignored today in the modern world.

So when you have a species-typical developmental system, which is the evolved expected support provided, you're going to have a species-typical outcome, which is a smart, effective creature and so what does that look like for us? This is the evolved nest, the nine components, which I'm going to briefly go through in a moment.

These are mostly from Melvin Connor's list, although I've added soothing perinatal experiences.

He didn't talk about birth or pregnancy and he did not talk about nature connection, number eight, nature immersion and connection, which, of course, is so obvious.

If you're a nomadic forager, that's what you have and the healing practices were not mentioned.

But the rest of them pretty much are in his list and I think are, of course, important for our human normal species characteristics.

Let's see if I want to say anything else on here.

Mostly these characteristics are actually more than 75 million years old.

So it's like evolution is— they evolved to fixation.

You don't have to keep testing new ways of raising the young, because they work so well and they helped with adaptation and we can call these actually love in action.

You've heard about niche construction.

This is niche provision.

So the evolved nest is niche provision, which is love in action.

It's a biology of love.

Humberto Maturana, the biologist from Chile, talks about needing the biology of love to grow our human nature, which we have been forgetting and when we grow our human nature, he calls us the *Homo sapiens amans*, lovers and when we don't have

the biology of love but a biology of fear, we grow instead Homo sapiens aggressions, aggressive nature, or Homo sapiens arrogans, the arrogant human nature.

We can see that, I think, all over the planet, especially in the United States.

Yes, I am very critical of my country.

So what happens with caregivers then? Why is this so important? Well, caregivers are co-constructing that child's emotion systems, cognitive systems, which are intertwined, their sense of self in the world, self with others, their morality actually, that's my area of study is morality, and their social worldview.

Is it a worthy world? Is it trustworthy? Can I trust people? Can I trust myself? Am I going to make it in this, do I feel safe in the world? All that is being built in those early years, one way or the other.

So brain, body, mind development, as I said, means that the needs of the child, the young baby, should be met quickly to foster, keep that growth DNA synthesis going, keep the biochemistry in a growth state.

Once you distress a baby routinely or extremely, That growth state is diminished, DNA synthesis slows down, growth slows down, things that are supposed to be developing don't develop and you never know, every baby's different about what's developing at a particular time and so baby is organizing self around those experiences.

So if you distress the baby, leaving them to cry, leaving them alone, leaving them, sleep training them, you're now going to have a baby with a different kind of stress response.

an orientation to the self and self-protection instead of being in that communal, relational biology of love, it's a biology of fear.

So there's a constant interaction between nature and nurture.

You cannot separate it because the baby's a different baby every few minutes.

Things are happening so quickly.

Millions of synapses and the brain connections are occurring, are supposed to be occurring in those early years with good support.

So there's epigenetic effects of early experience.

That means genes are being turned on or off based on experience.

If you don't have a high nurturing mother as a rat in the first 10 days of life, one who licks you a lot, which for us would be a lot of affectionate touch, if you don't have it for a rat in the first 10 days of life, you never turn on genes that control anxiety when you face something new, never, unless the experimenter gives you drugs.

So for us, that's one fifth of the rat's lifespan.

One fifth.

They live for 50 days, usually.

For us, that would be 14 years of the 72-year lifespan, right? You need affection and support, the evolved nest, especially during those years.

So we're going to go through those elements of the evolved nest in a moment.

So really, we're biosocial.

Our biology is shaped by our social experience and then our social capacities are built from the biology that was shaped early on.

So we'll talk about that.

So the first one, soothing prenatal, perinatal experiences and the wellness-promoting experiences would be calm and welcoming, following the natural rhythms of mother and child, being sensitive to the signals of the child, But in the United States especially, it's trauma-promoting those early experiences.

A lot of stress for mothers.

A stress pregnancy leads to an irritable baby.

That's what happens because the stress response has been activated in the fetus.

So you end up then with a baby that's more difficult to take care of.

You have to be even more sensitive as a parent.

We coerce babies' birthdays, even though they vary by about 55 days in the womb.

There are labor restrictions that are put on in medicalized birth.

Moms are often restricted for movement.

They can't move, and so pain increases.

You have to be able to move so you can deal with the pain that comes and then the drugs, drug baby, and the baby can't breastfeed because they've had the epidurals for pain, or the labor drugs are filling their body and their livers don't work for weeks.

So then that undermines breastfeeding success, on and on and on.

So and that promotes all these this trauma promotes inflammation in the child, which is linked to depression and all sorts of health problems later.

That's just one, one of the components we are violating.

Breastfeeding, well, it's 80 percent alive.

It has building blocks for every system of the body, especially the brain.

It's of a thin variety.

There's thick and thin kind of breast milk.

For predators, it's a thick variety.

Some mothers can go off and find food and leave the baby alone for a while, and they feel okay.

But ours is thin, so ours is to be ingested frequently and for newborns, it's every few minutes or so, because it's washing the body and brain with the right hormones and biochemistry.

When the baby is able to breastfeed on demand or on request, it empowers the child.

Think about when under naturalistic birth, the baby will crawl up to the mother's breast and stimulate the ***** and start the milk flow.

Think about that for competence self-confidence in the world, whoa.

It's got all sorts of antimicrobial agents and so on, it's linked to larger brain size greater.

intelligence, and various things.

So how long do mothers breastfeed? Well, you see the columns.

On the left are our cousins, the bonobos, chimpanzees, and others, observed to six years or so, and the average weaning age is four years or so.

For humans, in ethnographic studies, it's average age of weaning of four also, but the observed is from two and a half to eight.

I think there's others longer.

In the third column, you can see Detweiler's analysis biologically, what we're looking at when teeth are coming in and so on.

We should be breastfeeding for six years, ideally.

James Prescott did a study of the 400 and some societies in one of the anthropological databases and he looked for what was related to peaceful societies and it was breastfeeding for at least two and a half years and carrying your children and then that explained 80% of the variance and when you looked at premarital sex, if there was no sanctions of that, no punishment, then that explained 100% of the variance of peaceful societies.

WHO, World Health Organization, recommends two years.

the American Academy of Pediatrics in the United States, one year.

Positive moving touch is number three, and no negative touch.

We have lots of evidence against negative touch.

So you can see here, this is E.

Richard Sorensen, the anthropologist who lived with different, what he called pre-conquest societies all over the world, and just took films and had to watch his films over and over to realize what he had experienced and then wrote about it and he says, infants were constantly in bodily contact.

They were never put down.

They had priority.

They were not deprived of constant, ever-ready, interactive body contact, even when everyone's moving down steep slopes, carrying big loads and so on.

So why is it, then, that this touch is so important? Well, we know that mammals need this to grow and synthesize DNA and touch promotes all sorts of good things—healthy sleep cycles and exploratory activities.

It calms the baby.

It prevents excessive stress long-term, prevents hippocampal, the part of the brain that's linked to long-term memory dysfunction there, prevents eventual depression.

Negative touch, we know we have tons of studies in psychology.

suggesting that it's similar spanking is similar to physical and emotional abuse in its long-term effects, makes you less empathic towards others, makes you not be sympathetic to victims, and makes you more aggressive.

Welcoming social climate.

This is, again, for the mother and the child, eliciting delight from one another, being attentive, and lots of tactile interaction and communication in these pre-conquest societies.

So it's not, he was amazed that they could communicate through physical touch and not words and what we know about the welcoming social climate is that it means that there's more positive and negative emotions that you experience.

We've done some studies on this and find that adults who report more of the positive kind of climate at home growing up, they're more secure in their attachment, mentally healthier, they're less distressed and have less, they're less likely to be self-protective towards others and we know now, the Surgeon General of the United States has noted that we have an epidemic of loneliness in the United States, and I think it's actually around the world, and it's lacking the welcoming experiences in your life all the time, or most of the time, right? We think that's normal, right? So, *To Become Human*, this is Gene Leadloff, *The Continuum Concept*, a book that came out in the '70s.

Based on her experience with the Yaquana and Amazon during the '50s, she was astounded by how happy and healthy the community was and she saw how they were so responsive to babies, much like the Sorensen commentary.

She says, Without the conviction of feeling right, good, and welcome, a human being of any age is crippled by a lack of confidence, a full sense of self, a spontaneity, of grace.

When the Dalai Lama came to the United States for the first time, he asked, What's wrong with everybody? Because the low self-esteem is just apparent, and the inability to connect and be warm and welcoming.

Self-directed social plays, number five.

So in these, this is Endicott and Endicott on the Bad Tek.

This is the common experience, free-flowing.

play that's inclusive, cooperative.

There's no rules for the games.

Children are just shaping their activities as they go along.

They just drop in, join in at will.

No one's excluded.

It's cooperative rather than competitive.

No winners and losers and they had a great time doing things together, much like the non-competitive adult activities in which most play was modeled.

Why is this important? Well, it fosters social capacities throughout life.

We have all sorts of brain studies, in animal studies often, but also in children, human children and it facilitates emotion regulation, helps control aggressive urges, develops leadership skills, all sorts of things developing from play and in the last decades, play's activities Opportunities have been reduced for kids, probably here as well.

But in the United States, schools have taken out recess time, free time.

Parents are afraid to let their children out of the house.

They're focused on screens too, or even young children to read and do studying instead of playing.

So this is the opposite of what our children need to be happy and build their well-being.

Number six, ala mothers or other nurturers.

This is from Colin Turnbull's study of the Mbuti at the age of three days.

The infant boy is learning.

There's a plurality of warm bodies, similar in warmth, which is comforting, but dissimilar in smells and rhythmic movements, a plurality of non-aggressive models.

This is allowing then the child to learn a flexible, relational world of capacities.

Because if you're just stuck with mothers, Sarah Hurdy has pointed out, you tend to be more conservative and we find that in other studies, too.

You're less flexible because you only have one model to relate to, the same person with the same movements and smells and all.

You want a variety.

So we know allomothers are really important for mothers to be responsive to their young, as Sarah Hurdy has pointed out and children do best in societies where childrearing is considered too important to be left entirely to parents, right? That's Stephanie Koontz.

Whew and we know that perceived social support is correlated positively with positive outcomes in young children.

In the psychology studies that they've found, they suggest that three adults in love with a child is ideal, but the head of the local futures organization, she's Helena, Norberg Hodge, who lived with the Ladakhs decades ago.

She thinks it's five or six people, because that's what she observed there, and this is a more subtle society.

So there's a little disagreement on how many, but you certainly need at least three and how many do children get? Maybe half of one, right, because adults are so distracted.

Number seven, responsive relationships.

We need to distinguish between babies and children, as Bird-David has pointed out.

This happens in the Nayaka and other societies where babies are until about age four, and then age four-year-olds or so, they're ready to just pitch in and act like everyone else.

They don't have to be monitored so much.

So babies are different and I have to keep saying that to everyone.

Babies are very vulnerable.

They're very malleable.

We need to meet their needs immediately as much as possible and support them with the nest, or else you pay lifelong consequences, the parents, from having a dysregulated child or the society from having an uncooperative member.

Let's see, so Gilda Morelli talks about FA baby cries and when she observed the FA communities, adults, if they heard a peep from a baby, they assumed it wasn't in someone's arms, and they would say, oh, pick up the baby, pick up the baby and it seems to be that babies just like they learn to grasp things at a certain time, six months or so, it takes them weeks to be able to let go.

So there's something about But weeks later, they learn that capacity, right? So you see at 12 months, they're dropping things all the time.

Oh, it's so fun.

I can do this, right? Seems to be something similar here with crying, that crying, they don't know how to stop once they start and the nomadic foragers seem to know this, right? OK.

Let's keep going.

So responsive relationships then are filled with the synchronized coordination, the interbeing of sharing emotions and mind reading, right? And babies who do best, young children who do best, are those who have parents or caregivers that allow them to mutually influence and co-regulate one another instead of the domination orientation of some parents who want to control their children know you let the child, you follow the child's interests and needs and those needs met in the moment and of course, this is going to establish good emotion regulation and other wonderful habitual patterns and the dominant culture, of course, in the States in particular, encourages unresponsiveness.

What you want to do is maintain baby's optimal arousal level.

There's a sweet spot there.

You don't want to get them over-aroused or they're uncomfortable, panicking, angry, or afraid.

Or under aroused, where they're just kind of duh, unable to activate themselves.

You've got to help them.

For babies who are under activated, you bring them up, and you have to calm down the overactive babies, and you kind of forget that.

Takes some skill.

So John Bowlby, a British citizen who's known for attachment theory, attachment being central to healthy development.

It's a signal that the neurobiology has gone well in the development.

He has this quote at the top, though, taboo on tenderness.

Ian Sati, a psychotherapist, pointed out that the United States has taboo on tenderness across every age, especially affecting the young, right? So Bowlby says, Although the overriding need of an infant or child is for love and security, People say, what's in yellow here, why should an infant make such demands? Why can't he be satisfied with less care and attention? How can we arrange things so that parents have an easier time? And he warns, in the meanwhile, we should be wise to respect children's needs and to realize that to deny them is often degenerating them powerful forces of demanding affection and attachment, where they go off the rail and do other things, right, and a propensity to hatred.

if they don't get those needs met, which can cause us great difficulties for both of them and us.

Yes, indeed.

Is nature connection highly integrated with the rest of the natural world and ecological fittedness? Nomadic foragers, of course, feel at home on the earth.

They don't want to go inside four walls.
They get sick when they go inside four walls.
They don't want to sleep in a bed.
They want to sleep on the ground.

I mean, they're so connected and they treat the natural world with respect compared to us as part of their web of relationships and we know nature immersion and connection fosters all sorts of good things for us, receptive intelligence, caring relationships, calmness, mental health.

Across the United States and elsewhere, we have the increase in nature deficit disorder, so the inability to feel comfortable in the natural world, to know how to relate to the natural world.

At EvolveNest.org, my website, we have tools for building nature connection.

It's ecoattachment.dance and we have other tools for these nesting components for children and adults.

Number nine, routine healing practices.

So this is from Maybe I should ask you, where is this from? I see I forgot to put the names of the authors of this statement.

Maybe the anthropologists know.

Indigenous healing approaches stress that healing occurs through this power, nam, or wakan, which is the North American term.

Beyond the self, spiritual power with a healer being only a vehicle, a clear and clean vehicle and the entire, I don't know how to say, a community is involved in sustaining the healing tradition, which sees the stresses egalitarianism, counteracting healers being seen as special. "Community as healer becomes an important overarching principle of indigenous approaches generally."

9. Routine *Healing* Practices

So routine healing practices refer to trance dancing, and circle healing, and singing, and singing and dancing, which go together often for these groups, Central African groups, to promote respect for nature, community bonding, to heal relationships, healing an individual's body or mind, and so on.

It's just something you do.

The San Bushmen, when they were asked how many times they have grieving ceremonies, grieving ceremonies.

Think of how many we need.

They said, Well, it depends.

Once a week, maybe, or maybe every day are role models.

Developmental Nestedness

So developmental nestedness, these nine components.

I'm sure there are more of them, more components, but these are the ones we've been looking at are what every child and every human being needs to thrive, to develop resilience, and reach their potential.

These are the ones for all throughout life.

So I just took off breastfeeding and birth unless they know there used to be a breast milk ice cream shop in London, wasn't there? Yeah, maybe.

Well, I didn't put that on there, though.

Your business plan? Yeah, a business plan.

They were shut down.

All right, so what then? We have developmental nestedness.

What does that lead to? Well, this is mature human nature, what I'm calling mature human nature.

This list, these lists, thriving individual, thriving in relationship, are built from Sorensen's lists, Richard Lee's lists, my compilation, John Young, and this is what we find that you are able to do.

You have a quiet mind, you're cleaful, you're like a child, you're honest, sense of humor.

able to build habits at will and how to get along wherever you are and you feel attached to the ecology, the landscape.

You're connected to spirit and you enjoy being with others.

You enhance their well-being of empathy and unconditionally listen to others.

You're not caught up in your own self, right, because you have a small ego.

You're able to be with others in this relational attunement and so on.

So you can read the list later.

I'll keep going.

So why, why does that mature human nature occur from nestedness? Well, turns out we know from clinical neuroscience and effective neuroscience that the right hemisphere of the brain is growing more rapidly in early life, is scheduled to grow then more rapidly, but needs nested care to grow.

If you don't have that caring, loving, responsive relationship in play, and so on, in those first years, these things do not grow.

So you get dysregulated in various systems.

There's all sorts of systems.

Emotional intelligence is decreased, empathy, and so on, are impaired.

But the good news is that the right hemisphere can grow throughout life.

So what you need to do is do something that keeps you in the present moment.

Playing with a child zero to six years old.

Best thing.

They make you stay in the present moment, or else they'll stop playing with you, right? Or other things like dance, creative dance, creative arts, and so on.

Whatever keeps you in that state of having to react and be now and present and not preoccupied with other things, that's going to grow your right hemisphere.

So this is the moral part, my area.

It also leads to relational engagement, relational attunements.

You've got the well-educated intuitions for getting along with others.

You're able to be present and resonate with the others, a small ego, an I-thou relationship instead of treating people like it's.

Instead of being utilitarian, you are co-creating the moment with others and then your abstract capacities when you're not in the face-to-face, use your imagination for compassionate action, inclusive ways of constructing the world, right? So it's, this is what we see is related to all these things I've been talking about.

Now this is the film we have.

We have several films.

This one's six minutes, *Breaking the Cycle*, which is sort of some of what I'm telling you.

There's an eight-minute film on the *Evolved Nest*, and a 12-minute film, only 12 minutes, *Reimagining Humanity*.

in 12 minutes.

OK.

All right.

So what happens when a developmental system is degraded or missing? You've got a species atypical developmental system.

No surprise, you're going to have a species atypical outcome outside the evolved range of intelligence and effectiveness and so when you move from early childhood experiences like these, of lots of touching and breastfeeding and caring and responsiveness to societies and experiences like these, lots of isolation and being trapped and not attended to, you're going to be unnested here.

So the more unnestedness you have, the higher the risk for all sorts of things going wrong.

Dysregulation, ill health of various kinds, mental health, anxiety, depression, being reactive, threat reactive.

If you're stress responsive, you were left to cry a lot as a baby and no one Well, and some of them finally came after, well, even if they didn't come.

If you screamed a lot, you learned that that's how you get your needs met.

So you're more easily go into a rage as lifelong, right? Because that's what you learned.

If they never showed up, then you had to shut down or you'd die because you'd lose up your energy.

You go into dissociation, you just freeze, and you can't think or or act and you do that routinely, right? So these things are established in those early years.

Your physical health, social health, and your moral health as well.

You can be affected and you feel disconnected from yourself, from others.

You don't know who you are really.

You don't know how to get along.

You don't know the community.

You don't care about the community or the world.

You're just trying to survive.

So physiologically, early life stress undermines all sorts of systems.

Stress, immune, endocrine system, oxytocin.

neurotransmitters, how many you have, how well they function, function systems, etc.

I had earlier on a slide and I forgot to say something.

Boys are affected more by the lack of nestedness than girls.

Why? Because they have less built-in resilience and because they mature more slowly.

In patriarchal societies, boys tend to get less nestedness even than girls.

So we're setting ourselves up for the kind of dysregulation that I'm going to talk about.

So what happens psychologically? You're going to distrust your body, impaired sense of self.

You live against others because they lived against you.

They weren't cooperating with you as a baby, so why should you cooperate with them, right? You're oppositional, disagreeable, distrusting, and your brain function.

Oh, I guess that doesn't work.

This is pdf, so the my all my little actions, animations don't work.

So I'll explain it.

So we're born with survival systems, mammalian systems that are ready to be grown after birth, and our executive functions in neocortex that are also shaped after birth.

When we are well nested, all this works and the human executive functions control those survival systems.

If you suddenly panic over something that's actually nothing, you're able to then shut down quickly and you grow the emotion systems of care and play.

These are mammal systems, right, for your sociality.

But if you have a lot of toxic stress in your early life, you're going to have that be more activated, and when the stress response kicks in, it actually changes the blood flow.

You can't think very well because the blood flow has left your brain to your muscles to prepare you to fight or flight, right? And so you're not going to be open-minded, open-hearted, not very thoughtful.

So you move then away from the heart-centered way of living your life, which is species typical and you go into these modes, social opposition or withdrawal, or disso-

ciation, depending on what happened to you at what time and you use your imagination instead of for communal well-being.

No, it's viciousness to control others, dominate, manipulate.

Or you detach like we professors often do and go into their ivory tower and make up models and just apply them, even though we don't know if they work or not, but boy, I got a publication, right? So detached imagination then is what we encourage with schooling in the Western world and it's also something that forgers distrust.

So Luria, Alexander Luria went and asked village, even peasants, what they thought about a moral dilemma and Heinz and the Drug, anybody know that one? Heinz's wife is dying from a disease.

This druggist has invented a drug that could save her.

He refuses to sell it at a reasonable price.

Should Heinz steal the drug? And so there's all sorts of tests, and it's been used all over the world, this test, to measure moral judgment development and what happens when you ask the villagers or the peasants or the forgers about hypothetical issues like this, they say, Heinz? Do Heinz? I don't know Heinz.

How should I know what he should do? So they refuse to go to that detachment that we think is so normal.

We're human beings, right? So this is just another illustration of what happens in every situation.

We have a bottom-up quick assessment of whether we feel safe or unsafe.

That's neuralception, Stephen Porges' term and if we feel unsafe, we go over here.

We go into defensive mode.

We are going to be in the fight, flight, freeze, faint, hiding, bracing against life one way or the other.

If we feel safe, we're going to be over on the left side and attuned to the others and flexible and relaxed and so on.

That's the bottom-up part.

So if you're stressed a lot in early life, you're going to be on the right side a lot and we encourage this in the Western world.

Top-down shifting.

If you've been told over and over that green people are scary, and you see a green person, you're going to go on the right side, right? So There are ways, then, that we control our well-being from the bottom up and from the top down.

Trauma-informed practices worry about all this stuff on the right side triggering people and I'm saying that's not enough.

We have to know what optimal human beings are like.

We have to know what wellness is.

We don't really know that and I'm trying to argue that we can identify it from the great work of the anthropologists and others and follow a wellness-informed pathway.

So we've got all these root metaphors that are straitjacketing us, that have been around for the last, well, certainly last millennia, but even have roots before that and

patriarchy, dualism, anthropocentrism, individual, all this stuff, I think, are due to underdeveloped right brain, right hemisphere in early life, which enhances those pre-human survival systems and encourages through schooling left brain ego consciousness.

This is all left brain stuff, the models, the detachment from life and presence and what happens? We become clever chimpanzees and that's what the dominant culture tells us we are.

We are aggressive and violent and self-centered.

Well, why? Because we forgot.

We forgot the wellness-informed pathway.

Our fullness gives us all sorts of good things.

These are the four E's of cognition and cognitive science today and embedded, embodied, enacted, extended.

All sorts of wonderful things that our species' normal way of being includes.

I'm not going to read it.

But industrial society puts us in a different mood.

You can read it if you look at it again.

So right now, we are on the trauma-inducing pathway, and it's a recent pathway.

It's only the last 1% of our existence, only one part of 1%, that put us on this pathway.

In the United States, we have extreme social poverty.

We think we're so wealthy, the wealthiest country in the world, woo.

Not socially and not ecologically.

Because we undercare for our children, we have developmentally inappropriate child raising, which plants feelings of insecurity. And scarcity, you never have enough because you didn't get enough in those sensitive periods and then you become a dysregulated psychosocial, have a dysregulated psychosocial neurobiology and underdeveloped capacities, the ones that I was mentioning, and you're traumatized at some level in certain situations, maybe not every situation, but certain ones will trigger you, and you go into one of those modes of dissociation or aggressiveness, I'm going to be better than this guy, I'm smarter.

You know? Or you hide, Oh, they're too big for me.

I'm going to just pretend not to be here.

So you're threat reactive and you've become then an adult with ill-being of various kinds, limited social moral capacities.

Again, I'm aiming for compassion and flexible attunement to others, right? And then you're, instead you have an exclusionary morality, us against them orientation, which we see all over the place in the United States and so this is a cycle of competitive detachment.

My six-minute film goes through this cycle and the contrasting cycle, which is our heritage, the cycle of connected cooperative companionship, where you provide nested companionship care from conception, build healthy psychosocial neurobiology, build

adults who are well and wise, who attend to the basic needs of the community and keep the cycle going.

This is the cycle we want to get back to.

So our wellness-informed pathway then is this.

I just talked about the first three.

The next two, which I probably will, I'm not sure how far to go.

I've been about 50 minutes.

50 minutes.

Okay, let me just quickly show you what I'm thinking about.

This is the big picture.

So what I've been talking about is this part, the developmental nessness.

I also see from the anthropology that we have to attend to what I call vertical nestedness, that connectedness to the cosmic realm, the spiritual realm, and being embedded in Earth nestedness, Earth cycles, Earth seasons, Earth's ways of being, right? So I'm working on that now.

But we also need a horizontal nestedness, an honoring of our ancestral knowledge, of our traditions, and concern for future generations and in the moment, to be able to be fully present to the Earth and our responsibilities to it.

So this is Earth-centered living know-how.

This is what I think we should be aiming for, which is our heritage, where we have a sense that all our relatives deserving of respect, having a sense that a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community, and wrong when it tends otherwise.

Horizontal nestedness then is about immersion and community across time and place, as well as honoring ancestors and future generation, aiming for cultural perpetuity.

Can you imagine if we were doing that today? This is what Native Americans are doing.

So Maslow, Abraham Maslow, hierarchy of basic needs, compared to that.

How many people have none? Okay, yes, all right he got his ideas from the Blackfoot Nation, but he got it upside down.

He said that there's you get your safety needs first, then your love, self-esteem, and such, and eventually self-actualization.

For the Blackfoot, self-actualization is primary.

That's where you start.

You help the child self-actualize their gifts, who they are, unfold and the aim is cultural community perpetuity.

It's not individualistic, it's us.

So we forgot that too and these capacities, and I'll stop in a moment, to be able to be in a flow state where we are able to take multiple perspectives of the animals, the plants, the other people in our vicinity, and be transpersonal, to be able to merge the shape-shiftingness, like, oh my god, that sounds so scary, it sounds crazy, right? But

the de-differentiation, to find oneness with others, to see how we're the same, rather than differentiation.

Our dominant culture wants us to be differentiated, wants us to split up so they can control us, right? This is contrary to our human wellness pathway.

So the now is fullness.

You're full because everything is connected, and you're alive, and it's dynamic, and there's a flow, and you don't worry about the future.

You're not worried about the past so much, right? It's here and now.

Daniel Everett wrote the book *Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes* about the Paraha in the Amazon.

He was a missionary for 23 years and he wrote their language down, translated the Book of Mark for them, had it recorded into a tape recorder at the time, and played it for some elders.

the book of Mark, and at the end asked them what they thought and they said, Do this Jesus? No.

Well, why should we believe any of it? Because they only believe in eyewitnesses, right? And then he said, this is a shocker, Well, when I found Jesus as an adolescent, it kept me from committing suicide and they said, Committing suicide? Ha ha ha! They laughed.

They couldn't imagine it because they're in the fullness of now, right? We have forgotten that.

Let's see and then what we have instead is univosity.

This problem-solving thinking is left-brain stuff, linear, logical thinking, differentiation, hierarchy, order and precision and then we worry about the future.

We're sick about the past and we just can't be present.

This is Marvin Graham, the historian's terms.

All right, so I think I'll stop.

Thank you and what I'll do is give you the last slide with connections website stuff, books, links, we got a lot of, there's films, there's films I mentioned, and a lot of tools at evolvemass.org in my academic works too.

Camilla: Thank you, fantastic. Any questions?

Audience Questions

Audience member #1: Yeah, so I work for Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service, literally everything you've said is about what I see in children here in London.

It's just about this individualism and creating so much anxiety in children we see all the time.

Darcia: Yeah.

Audience member #1: So it made me think from your trauma, particularly what you said, this kind of orientation towards the self rather than others.

So at most of the time I'm seeing so much stress from examinations, grades, and all this kind of stuff from a very young age.

But then the work that I do to try and help is a lot based on this kind of self-help guided self-help.

I think it helps to a point, but sometimes I do wonder if I'm contributing to the problem as well, whether that's skill or intends itself or not collective.

Darcia: Yeah, so the question is, you work with adolescent mental health and find a lot of adolescents and younger ages, too, very distressed and anxious from testing and all sorts of other life challenges and you're wondering about— you're typically focused on self-help techniques, wondering if that's the best thing and I agree it would not be the best thing, especially for that age.

The brain development— I focus in on babies because people forget about babies so much, because it's the foundation for who we are.

But there are other sensitive periods for the brain to develop and in early adolescence, the brain kind of dismantles itself and redevelops itself.

So you can really intervene then with friendship and play and welcoming relationships and all sorts of things I talked about and then they can actually readjust for a better trajectory.

Also, the college years, late teens, early 20s, is another sensitive period.
for especially executive functions.

So it's important not to play violent video games, for example, because that's actually encouraging those older survival systems to be growing instead of the stuff that's supposed to be finishing, which is how to get along with others, foresight and empathy and things.

So I would encourage having playgroups of some kind, art and togetherness.

So having John Young, who's a deep nature connection educator, works all over the world, he has worked with distressed teens who every other method didn't work and he uses nature connection, deep nature connection, where you find a sit spot, someplace in a semi-wild space where you're not disturbed by people, and you sit there and you go there routinely.

for five, 10, 15, 20 minutes every day, maybe, as often as you can, always the same place and over time, your senses start to open up and you start to feel more aware.

The other thing is to earth, lie on the earth.

Earthing lowers cortisol, increases oxytocin, makes you feel, oh, Mother Earth loves me, right? So to have many more, again, this is alone time I'm talking about, right? But there's a lot of nature connection you can do and I would actually bring together teens and John Young also does like talking groups where you just, what do you want to talk about today? And I have an agenda.

Let them make the agenda and listen and have an agreement that no one's going to share with what's shared in the circle, outside the circle and then they start to open up towards one, to each other and they can start to let go of those terrible things.

But again, if they have demands on them, that's the adults doing that to them, right? Tests and requirements.

So that's a whole other issue.

Camilla: On Zoom, I saw your hand up, Carolina.

Did you want to say anything? And then Leticia.

Carolina: Thank you.

Hi, Dena, yes.

Dena: Hi, hopefully this will make sense. So I'm a Peruvian migrant. So for me, a lot of this it's beautiful to think about my ancestral roots. But I wonder about, I wanted to ask you about countries that perhaps don't still have surviving native communities, indigenous communities.

I just, I guess I'm imagining that in the States or in Australia or New Zealand, it's something that's still, very, very real for them as a nation and I just wonder how, I don't know what the narrative is or whether you've struggled or what the challenges are in trying to discuss the dominant worldview with the kinship worldview in countries that have lost those communities and yeah, just hopefully that makes sense. I'm just wanting to ask your thoughts about that.

Darcia: So are you asking about the indigenous communities and their reaction, or are you asking about the countries where the indigenous communities have been?

Carolina: The countries, yes, thank you. The countries where indigenous communities have been and then, yeah, no longer perhaps, yeah, present, like in the UK, for example. So for comparing the US and the UK, where Native American people and communities and cultures still, of course, is alive and living.

So just, wanting to know, I don't know how, when trying to share this worldview, how perhaps we could link that to us. But, we don't have indigenous communities here. I don't know if I'm making sense.

Darcia: No, you are. Well, we're all indigenous to the earth and our ancestors were all indigenous.

So we can all examine, find our roots, right? Move, examine and study what those are and readopt perhaps some of those ways.

But we've also moved a lot, right? A lot of us have been transported from our original ancestral lands and so what I do is I listen to the landscape where I am and try to connect there and the Native American way is to honor the four directions and the seven directions, really, because it's also the stars and the Earth and you are the center of the Earth.

Everyone is the center of the universe and so to make sure that you are understanding that you are on this web You are the spider in the middle, the web is going out, and what you are doing is affecting everyone.

So in the wisdom traditions of the world, you want to clarify your being.

So let go of resentment, and anger, and distraction, and be present.

So even if you do it for a couple minutes a day, be right here, right now, and understand that you are connected in every direction and for me, I have spirit animals in every direction and virtues that go with each spirit animal and actions that go with each one and I try every day to start the day that way and then I am humbled because they help me figure out how to move forward in whatever situation.

Sounds very unscientific, right? But this is native science.

Native science is holistic.

It includes the arts.

It includes spirituality.

It includes wholeness of being part of the Earth community.

What does that mean, right? It's being connected to where we came from.

We're stardust.

We have dinosaur DNA in us, right? I mean, we're just all connected and we'll be here forever.

We're not going anywhere, really.

Just this form of us is here now and then we'll come back again, even if we destroy this.

this current set of lives on the planet, we'll be back somehow.

We'll be dust, earth dust.

It's about maintaining the flow of being and enhancing one another.

However you want to do that, find some ways for you that work to help you be centered in that flow.

Camilla: Thank you.

Lawrence.

Audience member #1: Yeah.

No, I wanted to ask you in relation to the beautiful final slide, the nice schematic slides, where you have the horizontal and the vertical and just the question for you, maybe a Native American concrete example of a myth or a story, or maybe other anthropologists in the room that relates that to future generations because it's about indeed being aware of what's coming after you is that, yeah, just a nice example of some myths of stories for you and for other anthropologists.

Darcia: I'm not tuned into the myths like Chris and Camilla.

Yeah, I know.

Camilla: Can we just say for Zoom, did Zoom hear Lawrence spare or not too well? Yes, I did.

You did hear.

You heard.

Okay.

He was quite close.

So he wants us on the spot to think of some future generations.

Maybe we'll put a chat.

Well, can we say it? Can we think of anything?

Darcia: Joanna Macy, who's a Buddhist therapist ecologist, has talked about the— what's the name of it?

Audience member #1: I mean, we hear there's a lot of in the myths about that we hear with the purpose to care for Mother Earth, so to speak, so maybe in relationship of.

Darcia: That — Yes, so she has I'm forgetting the name of what she calls it.

But she has, in her circles of healing and regeneration, she has people take the voices of different animals and different the mountains or rivers and speak for them and this is the— I think Luther Standing Bear, also a native chief— talked about that's what we need to do and other indigenous leaders have mentioned this.

That's the voices that are always missing at the United Nations.

Who's speaking up for the mountains? Who's speaking up for the rivers? Who's speaking up for the bears, et cetera? So to make sure that we're doing that, we're always taking those— again, it's that multi-perspective-taking ability that we don't practice very much and that we could tune up.

So I'm a very practical kind of person because I was a classroom teacher.

What am I going to do on Monday with this information, right? So that's how I work.

It's like, what are we going to do now? We have this information.

How do we apply it?

Camilla: But the stories— OK.

Darcia: I gave you some time there.

Come on.

Camilla: Wow.

The trouble is, though, the stories are about tricksters.

They're about people playing tricks on each other and about the moon having sex with his sister and they're not about they're about pretty naughty things, not necessarily about— After.

Audience member #1: You analyze them, then they are about a lot of things.

Camilla: They'll be about a lot of cyclicity, which implies that kind of cycle of life and restoration.

But yeah, I mean, there would be a whole lecture to be discussed on this kind of thing and I've got a few people on Zoom.

Darcia: Can I just say something else? Yeah, first, sorry.

Many communities assume that the new child is the grandparent.

It's the— Oh, yes.

-holds the spirit of the grandparent and grandmother.

Yeah and so they call them grandfather or whatever in the son and all the kinship. Terms get very complicated for us.

Camilla: Well, it's actually dead simple.

The grandmother and the granddaughter have the same, they're like called the same name, and they just are each other in some sense.

They identify to each other, the grandfather and the grandson and it's actually very simple.

It feels complicated to us because we're so atomized.

Darcia: So that's an immediate kind of future generation, but there's also the native tradition of being concerned for seven generations ahead.

Any decision, any big decision you make, how is that going to affect seven generations ahead? Yeah, no, I know, I recorded that.

Camilla: With the stories, yeah.

There are two people, you and you, but I have Leticia, do you want to go? And there's a couple of good questions on the Zoom chat.

Leticia: Hi, I raised my daughter with what people call the continue method or the tribal method.

It was instinctual to me and also I was raised by a huge, massive Basque extended family. My father has eight brothers and sisters. They were all my parents, really.

But I was a single mom and I raised her here in London away from my actual blood family. So I created a network, a social network that was chosen family. I think I did the best I could.

I breastfed till she was three and a half, carried her till she was four and a half, and she didn't want to be carried anymore. Basically, it was all child led.

I was criticized right, left, and center for it, even by family members who had been very communal in the way they raised me. They thought I was extra. I think I've raised, she's 24 now. She's just now left the nest at 24, also got criticized for that. She's a very together young woman, very empathetic, very caring, nature forward.

My question is, even when you do it like I did, we live in this society that doesn't do it that way and the trauma that she experienced as a teenager, especially, was because she came from a family like ours not a traditional nuclear family with mom and dad.

Her dad and I weren't together. He's Ojibwe, so I also followed the seventh generation thing on his behalf as a single parent. I wanted her to be raised in the Ojibwe ways as well and everywhere, society kicked back at us and we persevered.

I think she has also, but that anxiety is still there, maybe in a different format.

Do what I mean? The things that you talk about, are still there because of the world that we live in, not the way I raised her.

Do you understand where my question is? How do we do this collectively in a way that those of us who are following this way of raising children, we're not isolated? Because that's how I felt.

I felt isolated, like I was the only one doing it and that's not helpful, it makes your life more difficult, right? So if raising young to be prepared for whatever environment they're going to have to survive in later on is the goal of child rearing, I basically failed, is the way I saw it, because I wasn't raising her to survive in a capitalistic left brain society.

Do what I mean? I was raising her like a hunter gatherer would have to survive in a hunter gatherer community.

Darcia: Yes, this is a challenge dilemma.

But the you're reminding me, though, of people who say, and I don't don't take this as a negative reaction, but it just reminds me that of people who say, Well.

If I don't force my baby to sleep alone, to listen, to be on a schedule, isn't that going to make them susceptible to whatever later?

Leticia: Yeah.

Darcia: It's bullying the baby.

Leticia: Yes, of course.

I would never do that.

Yeah.

Darcia: No, you wouldn't.

Leticia: I didn't and I didn't.

Darcia: But it's reminded me that, yeah, that, well, should we prepare them for the society we're in?

Leticia: I prepared her for the society I wanted.

Darcia: Yes.

Leticia: And the one that I want her to create when she has children.

The 7th generation mindset.

Yes and it makes me want to cry because it it took an extra amount of effort and I felt like that was my duty as somebody bringing a being into the world that I had to do it, even if it was going to be difficult and now I just have to hope that I can now be wherever she is when she has children so I can be part of that because that's what you were talking about as well, is it like we're separated from each other and we move.

We're much more transient even amongst our own families.

We don't move as a family we don't emigrate as families often.

You know, we get torn apart as families, so it's complicated.

to adapt this very ancient way of being to this very modern lifestyle.

That's the thing, isn't it? But thank you so much.

I really appreciate your chat.

Darcia: Well, you're very brave to have done that.

Leticia: I felt there was a duty.

I know people think it was brave because there's like choice.

But for me, there was no choice.

Like that was the only way, ?

Darcia: Yeah, you're following your heart's instincts.

Leticia: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Yeah.

Right.

Darcia: Well, I think that we need more people like you, because we have to, if we don't go in this direction, we're going to, the species will disappear with many others, right? We just can't go on like this anymore.

That's the, the we're in a crisis moment.

Leticia: I mean, the world will stay that this is what how the way The planet will be all right.

The planet's going to change and adapt and evolve.

We're the ones that aren't going to be here and we'll take some species with us.

Camilla: Thank you very much. Thank you for telling us about that.

Did you have a question over there?

Audience member #2: Yes, it's actually, I realized it's, in a way, it's very similar to what the question that we just asked.

For me, the question is more.

On a macro level, much as she says, I find a lot of the abilities and skills you mentioned that we, in our society, do things like future planning or not living in the present, and a lot of these abstract conceptual thinking are a kind of required skill to live in and function in our society and I think there's a good question to be asked about chicken and egg, are we Do we build a society this way because we're traumatized? Or is this society this way ? I think that's very .

But the question we're able to dig into is, I do see kind of recent ongoing things shift culturally in the West, at least, towards the kind of ideas that you're promoting.

It is not just now.

I do find within the past 20 years-ish, it's becoming much more widespread.

However, I do also see this kind of widespread dissemination that the best vehicle of this recently has been the mainstream commercial channels.

So the rise of the self-help industry, the mental health industry, all these kind of things is, on one hand, promoting some of the things that I think you probably want to see.

But at the same time, it's also co-opting this idea into part of the system that perpetuates itself.

So part of my question is, do you see a change happening, and how do you think that will take place?

Camilla: Yeah, I think– Did Zoom here back? Could you just do it slightly with a pink?

Darcia: Yeah.

Is there a change happening in this direction? And you think there is, right, in the last 20 years? And I think around the edges, yes.

At the Local Futures Summit that we had in Bristol in the last few days, there are so many people who presented all the things they are doing to try to reverse the destructive civilization that we're in and so it was very heartening.

Now, in terms of parenting, in the United States, there's a lot of pushback against these things, too.

There are a lot of people doing it, but they have to be quiet, just like Leticia was talking about the you can't openly breastfeed a three-year-old, right? It's like these people can't take it.

So there are a lot of covert ways of raising children that are happening and I hear from people all the time about that.

So I think it is happening around the edges.

It's just the mainstream media and corporations don't want to go in that direction.

They want to keep us isolated and individualistic, I think.

Or co-opted, right, from moneymaking.

Yeah.

Did I answer that well enough?

Audience member #2: I was really focused on the very last part because I do think a lot of things breastfeeding or whatever, the major media are beginning to promote it and the question is co-opting whether that's the way to help or not.

Darcia: Well, I don't know.

The states, usually it doesn't help and they're not promoting breastfeeding.

So they promote cribs and ways to undermine breastfeeding.

So maybe it's different here because you have national health care in the states the incentives are all wrong you make people sick so you make more money.

Chris: Chris that was an absolutely marvelous presentation it's just so thought-provoking I just wish all this was out there much more um one of one of the lovely things is the idea of heart-centered thinking and thinking of the hearts and of course we've had sessions on Amazonian thought in that one of our colleagues says that one of the things that we found right across the Amazon is the idea that we people think with the heart.

We don't even think with the brain and so the idea that real thought is thoughtfulness and thoughtfulness involves the heart and the idea that sort of anything being thoughtful, but without connecting with the heart, it just does a huge kind of error.

But on sort of issues about sort of binary us and them and all that, I was just thinking you were kind of reminding us that the Industrial Revolution, colonialism, all these things, you said that they kind of make us resemble clever chimpanzees and I was just thinking that whenever anyone speaks sense, I was thinking, what would be the argument against it? And of course I can just immediately think, well, an argument against you would be, well, hang on a bit, chimpanzees, surely they are part of nature.

Surely chimpanzees are...

evolved, surely chimp disease have a species way of doing things.

So what's wrong with chimp disease? And if there is anything wrong with chimp disease, some descendants of common ancestors of humans and chimp disease must have sorted things out.

Was it just by looking after children better or was it some more profound social thing? Now, I know that question is not your field.

But because you asked us to be anthropologists and respond, I'm sort of interested in how you feel about the fact that we're sort of demonizing chimpanzees to an extent and saying that human nature is lovely.

But of course, we are great apes.

We're more closely related to chimpanzees than we are to dolphins, elephants, all the pitas that you've celebrated.

So how do you feel about that relationship?

Darcia: So the question is, I kind of demonize chimpanzees by saying we become clever chimpanzees when we don't foster our species' typical human nature.

So am I demonizing them? Is that what I think, and so on? Well, Brian Ferguson has his new book.

I forget the first part of the title, right, which is Are Men Violent, Chimpanzees War, and something— some combination of those words.

It took him 20 years to write the book, and he goes through chimpanzee the violence.

Chimpanzee is naturally violent and he shows through the analysis of the data, no, it's from interference, from killing, interference of humans feeding bananas and killing off relatives, and all sorts of things that He goes through, anyway, I'm sorry.

Camilla: The person who can really answer this question will be speaking here next week with Kirsty.

She's going to tell us about Fongoli chimps, so you, I mean, yeah.

Darcia: Have you read his book, though? I mean, it's really very, very big.

Camilla: I've read plenty of Richard Brangham's.

Darcia: Oh, yeah, but he counters all that, yeah.

Camilla: Well, exactly.

But Richard Brangham has probably been much more up close and personal to chimps than Brian Ferguson.

Darcia: Yeah.

Camilla: For sure.

Oh, Richard Franklin.

Chris: Yeah, yeah.

Camilla: Yeah.

I know, but...

Right.

So, I mean, and Wrangham makes a pretty strong case that there's orders, an order of magnitude, or orders of magnitude with chimps, more frequency of violence and with bonobos compared to with us.

Darcia: Yeah.

Camilla: Even traumatized as we are still.

Darcia: Right, we're still more cooperative still.

Camilla: We're just shut down instead.

Who argues? So I would follow —.

Chris: Sarah Hurley.

Sarah Hurley has opened the book with Imagine your own aeroplane — Yes.
— with a bunch of chimpanzees.

You can have your hand bitten off and you — Or with tents.

Darcia: And you won't get out.

The whole place would be bloody, right.

Well, you guys know things better than I do.

But what I'm trying to do is what is species' typical human nature? Now, chimpanzee nature, I mean, I am relying on Sarah Hurdy and her colleagues distinction between chimpanzees and humans and so we have mind reading.

We are really interested in sharing.

We are interested in the social community, right? Much more than chimps.

So we are different.

So maybe I shouldn't demonize them so much, but the dominant culture tells us we're like chimpanzees and that's why we're violent.

So there's a lot, maybe that's a lot of mythical stuff.

Yeah.

So maybe you can tell me how to talk about it better.

Camilla: But it's, yeah, that sort of discrepancy of the mind reading with chimps and ourselves is really from Thomas Sallo's and his colleagues and so on observations.

It was striking me when you were saying, that these evolved nestiness development or nestiness characteristics were actually 75 million like right to the source of the primates as social mammals.

Well, yeah, monkeys have a lot of it and then kind of the great apes lose a lot, partly because monkeys maintain, tend to maintain female kin, allomothering.

Whereas, just as Sarah Hurley argues, and they have these female kin bonds, but great apes tend to lose those bonds because the females, if anyone watched that amazing Netflix with Chimp Empire, I don't know if you've watched that, the incredible Netflix series, Chimp Empire.

You should definitely watch Chimp Empire, which is the involved chimps.

A fantastic film following, they learn stuff about the chimp.

behavior in making that film because they could see the chimps reacting to the other chimps instead of what Kirsty will tell us about it's like one observer watching one chimp at a time they could watch um and you the ending of the is is an extraordinary ending with the young pre-pubertal nearly reaching puberty female setting off over the horizon, leaving behind everything she knew, everyone she knew, she's going to as total.

It's like a sort of an adventure story of this female chin and that is the huge difference between the monkeys and the great apes, that the females leave their nest.

Darcia: Except for humans.

Camilla: But humans brought it back somehow, or in **** in genus **** we brought it back.

Yeah.

It's part of it.

Is there a question there? Anymore.

Darcia: Daniel.

He was at the local futures center.

Oh, you were there.

Camilla: Yes.

Well done.

Darcia: So I talked about this.

It's fantastic.

Camilla: It's so nice to.

Audience member #1: Kind of have time to explore it more deeply and it's— yeah, it's really—.

Darcia: I had 10 minutes there.

Audience member #1: Yeah, 10 minutes.

So we covered some of it, but this was amazing, and really expanded my— perspective on some of the ideas that I was developing during the conference as well, just in terms of what kind of education can look like going forward in, especially what we do in Westernized societies.

How can we reconnect with these indigenous ways of learning? We had, there was an anthropologist, Peter Sutoris, who wrote his book.

Camilla: We had him speaking here.

Audience member #1: And I just wonder, what is your— what would be your— in your imagination, what would this look like? What would education going forward? Because I've always been imagining it in terms of a school.

But over the past few days and now, I'm thinking more and more that it needs to just be in community and connected with the natural world and so I'm just imagine— how would you see it kind of— if you could try and envision this kind of education, what?

Darcia: Would it look like? Well, I am also oriented to the community education, rather than being in a— excuse me— school building, classroom, et cetera.

I think that's quite deadening, unless you're trying to make a bureaucrat.

So the Ladakhis, they were a settled community.

They still are, but they've been influenced by globalization extensively and they had these characteristics, even though they weren't nomadic foragers.

So I think if we have communities that are locally focused, localization, which is local futures focus, bringing back our self-sufficiency, growing our own food, having a few animals for eggs or whatever, and having a sense of connection to that landscape, to these trees, and this river, and being a steward of that area.

I think that's what we need, is just pockets of communities, communities everywhere and then if you disagree, though, we should have the fission option of leaving and being able to join another community, as nomadic foragers have.

Because I think that's a release valve for when When things don't go well for whatever reason, they can come back later.

So I think parents, adults, need to be educated about the needs of babies and how they have to step back.

They give all the support I was talking about, but you step back and let that child unfold as they will.

You don't coerce them.

That's part of the non-nest spanking or force and there's very little if the baby rolls in the fire, of course.

do something about that.

But otherwise, there's a little coercion.

I think we have to get back to understanding ourselves as agents.

Each person, each tree, each river, everything's its own agency.

We get back to that understanding, the feeling, and that's all right hemisphere stuff, developing in the natural world.

So a community-based where the children observe and pitch in, learn from observation and pitch in, and There seems to be a sensitive period for helping with the community work, the family work.

One-year-olds, two-year-olds want to help.

They want to fold the clothes, the laundry.

They want to sweep the floor.

They do a terrible job because they don't have the skills yet.

They don't have the know-how.

But in traditional communities, they allow them to do that and then forever after, they get better at it, and they stay just pitch in without being asked.

Whereas we kind of prevent the young kids, oh, you're making a mess, oh, you criticize them and then we want them to do chores later when they're 10 or 12 or whatever and it's like pulling teeth, right? So you have to pay attention to the developmental interests of the child.

You have to be much more relationally attuned to those things.

Camilla: Can I come in as an anthropologist again, because I'm very- I'm very interested in what you're saying about the life history.

In fact, this change through time and life history and different life history stages, the idea that what matters is in the first place, the responsiveness to babies, that you set them up and then kind of let them free, if you like, as a child and that corresponds a great deal to what I know about the Hadza or Central African foragers.

But this thing about no coercion, I mean, what happens in so many, we're bundling together indigenous or earth-centric societies, and of course, at adolescence, both males and girls are boys and girls going through...

really intensive, actual, sometimes torturous and traumatic initiation and this is meant to be setting them on the path for these horizontal, whatever, un-nestedness issues of connection and they may also, in many cases, in many societies, P&G, Amazon

and other places, be setting them up into this distinctive gender hierarchy as well and that fits into this adolescence time period, which I've heard from other psychologists as being such a malleable, such an extraordinary, flexible, potentially kind of explosive.

But yeah, that is an anthropological observation, that there is a wide variety of potential in so-called earth-centric societies.

They're not all coming up with this, necessarily, this perfect sweet spot cycle.

Darcia: Yeah.

So I'm speaking more ideally, I suppose, and from a Native American perspective, where you follow the interests of that child and propose and prepare them for a vision quest, for example, when they're ready, and maybe it's when they're six, maybe it's when they're ten, and so you're more attuned to it.

You don't have group rituals so much in the Native American communities, so it's a little different, yeah, so I'll have to think about how to integrate it.

Chris: I was just very quickly I was thinking of the same thing when you came when you told us about the where the child is treated as an adult and the babies are different and of course all egalitarian hunter-galivers make a very big distinction between somebody who's not been initiated as an adult as a woman or a man and somebody who's not initiated and in the way if you haven't been initiated you're kind of in a category of you're not an adult your words are can't be taken so seriously, there's all sorts of things about it and I really think it's important to realise there's the enormous value of going through an initiation.

I mean, you're talking about school.

It is not right to say that hunter gatherers just sort of pass on knowledge and if people sort of learn things informally.

No, no, no.

Insofar as there's a schooling, it's initiation, and it's a schooling in sex, like It's not exactly a school, you're not taught all sorts of things like how to make an arrow sharp and how to swing a bow and how to sew and all that stuff.

But it's essentially how to avoid sex leading to conflict and violence, how to make sure that sex could be playful.

Without these initiation rites, sex would have the effects that it does in other primates.

Sex can lead to violence and if others know how to stop that, initiation is part of it.

Camilla: But of course, initiation in other societies doesn't make the conflict work very much on male terms.

Right.

So we kind of need an understanding of the variety there.

Darcia: So my primary focus has been on the early childhood, zero to six, because the brain is so affected then.

So the adolescent stuff, that's my husband's area.

Camilla: We need to invite him back. OK. We've got a question in the room here.

Audience member #3: I was just wondering, this is really interesting thinking, but how do we protect this ideology or this way of thinking from people who encourage patriarchal structures and gender roles and things like that? How do we protect women in this kind of community? Obviously, there's a big focus on breastfeeding and child rearing.

Obviously very important.

I agree with that.

But how do we protect women within this sphere from patriarchal structures? Because I think this thinking could be quite vulnerable to patriarchal structures and people who would sort of enforce that thinking.

So how do we protect that? How do we protect women in this sphere?

Darcia: How do we protect women from the patriarchal– structures that go against these practices, essentially, right? Well, I think we have to band together, and I bet you have some ideas too.

Yeah.

Camilla: I was wondering, were you meaning that these ideas could be co-opted by patriarchal structures?

Audience member #3: That's what I thought, well, actually talking about — Obviously, this focus on breastfeeding and child-rearing and how we can improve general thinking, but you can see how this way of thinking can be taken.

Yeah.

You know.

Camilla: The Tory conference had Tories standing up and talking about how women in the home doing mothering and it could go into it.

Darcia: Yeah, not.

Audience member #3: Yeah.

Darcia: Yeah.

Audience member #3: Yeah.

Chris: And it could.

Darcia: Of course, like, and.

Audience member #3: I'd not completely bother some indigenous groups, but. How do gender roles– how do gender roles play a part in this, and how do we protect women? If we were to move forward with this thinking, how do we go about protecting women?

Darcia: From– I forgot to say that the nest is provided by the community, not just by mothers.

Mothers have the baby, and then they're the bridge to everything else, to the allo-parenting from others.

The attachment is to mom at first, but then it's to all the communities.

So you don't have just this singular focus on one relationship and so all these things, the play, the touch, is a communal provision, helping with nature, connection, and healing practices, and responsiveness.

It's all about the community.

So I should have emphasized that.

I usually do.

So not mom, no? So get those dads there.

So Latori should be standing up and saying, Hey, we should go home.

We didn't help our kids.

Camilla: Chris, do you want to say— We need to wind up.

Chris: One quick point.

Again, with the.

Darcia: Can they hear us?

Chris: There's no rivalry between the different gender groups and actually, Morda Binick has written about this.

Rivalry between the gender groups can be absolutely wonderful healing medicine.

It can be playful, marvelous.

You know, Morna Finnegan talks about is relating to the forest people in the Congo area.

It's like the women rule, and then they let the men rule, and then the women rule.

We have this what he calls communism in motion.

It's based on sort of just kind of playful gender antagonism and it's a good thing.

It's not a bad thing.

It's really part of how gender egalitarianism works.

So I'm never too keen on people sort of saying a kind of unisex model, everyone's all the same.

I'm not sure that ever really works.

I think it's a huge value in the Hunter Gathers Act, that women being able to band together and make sure that men behave.

Because women do get pregnant, men don't, and all kinds of .

Women might have separate interests and it's great if they have a chance to make their collective gender point to the men.

Darcia: Can I ask a question about transgender people? Two-spirit people, as the Native Americans call them. How are they treated?

Chris: The point is that because you have a ritual period when heterosexual sex isn't allowed, so what happens is that when you've got a new moon gendered ritual, everybody becomes, if you like, third sex.

The men become women, the women become men and it's only after this when you have a collapse around full moon and everyone can have whatever kind.

Chris: So everyone, nobody, nobody needs to be fixed as either gay or straight, heterosexual, whatever. Everyone has a chance to have both sides of these.

Camilla: Plurality.

Chris: That's so much better.

Camilla: There's been a lovely conversation with lots of contributions on Zoom here regarding Leticia's work with her children and Mary or her daughter, and lots of lovely suggestions.

I think we're going to have to, unless there's anybody on Zoom who wants to make another contribution, we're probably going to need to wind up, because we're already quarter past eight here.

Does anybody want to chip in? Should we have any more to say? Or Mary or Vesna also, you had lovely points and Emily.

I think most questions on Zoom have been: What should we then do? So do you want to say anything to that sort of question?

Darcia: Well, that's the next challenge, right? I'm just trying to identify the problem and the pathway to the solution, not the actual structural changes.

That's the next step the local futures people are actually having.

Some of the answers, I think, is going back to community and going back to local ways of being instead of relying on apples shipped from New Zealand or whatever and all the strange behaviors we are involved in as industrialized civilizations.

So we have to get back to simplifying our lives, to prioritizing mothers and children and family and community relations and nature connection and nature respect, respect for nature.

Camilla: Thank you so much.

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Darcia Narvaez
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