

# FIRST PRINCIPLES & FIRST VALUES

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Toward A Universal  
Grammar of Meaning

In a Time Between  
Worlds

Living in the Tao

Toward a Global  
Ethos for a Global  
Civilization

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Center for Integral Wisdom  
Board Conclave

UNPLUGGED  
PRIVATE  
CONVERSATIONS

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FORTHCOMING BOOK AND SUPPLEMENTARY MEDIA

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KEN WILBER, DANIEL SCHMACHTENBERGER

WITH SPECIAL APPENDIX BY WARREN FARRELL ON THE BOY CRISIS



# Dr. Marc Gafni

## Welcome

### Intellectual, Spiritual Context of Leadership Conclave Center for Integral Wisdom and Foundation for Consious Evolution

It is an insane and crazy delight to welcome everyone. And I just want to gently and fiercely say that if you are not welcome in Kosmos that you are not welcome anywhere. And the fundamental goal of the Center and our mission is to transmit, based on the deepest read of Reality in all of its dimensions, the experience that every human being, indeed every being is WELCOME in Kosmos. Because if we are not welcome in Kosmos, we are not welcome in any local intersubjective context. Whether that be personal, political or economic relationship. We need to change the mood of Kosmos. If I would sum up the work for example of one populist speaking naively for postmodernism, Yuval Harari, in his populist presentations in Homo sapien and Homo Deus, the basic message was, “you are not welcome in Komsos”. We need to change the mood of Kosmos. So that every man, woman and child, from every race, creed, gender or orientation, young and old, rich and poor, every being, knows they are WELCOME in Kosmos. And that is what we mean when we say “Welcome, You are WELCOME.”

This is the 12th year that we’re together, we began as the Center for World Spirituality in 2009 with Sally Kempton. I called Ken Wilber and I cannot fucking believe my eyes, I’m insanely delighted. Ken had written, I’ll be there, but I wrote afterwards to follow up and hadn’t quite heard back. I actually see that my dear friend Ken Wilber, who is the co-founder of the Center is here, which just pours joy right into my body. Ken has not been feeling totally great the last few months so I am beyond delighted to see you giga pandit, dear dear man. So let’s just give Ken a huge fucking hand.

Let me just give everyone a little background here. In some sense, the inception of everything happening here really was in 2002 when I came to Ken’s loft, after someone in Boulder set us up for a conversation. I had just written an article in *Tikkun* magazine on the erotic and the ethical. I came over to the loft to talk, and we spent hours and hours

talking; it was a beautiful conversation. In some deep and real sense, that's the inception of this moment. There's been a lot of lions and tigers and bears along the way, but the aim has never changed. I met Zak a few years later, and Zak joined us. Sally Kempton, who Ken actually introduced me to because he asked us to do a dialogue at the Integral Spiritual Center at a particular moment. So it's been an incredible history, and so many of us have met along the way and come together.

We began this as the Center for World Spirituality. Then at a certain moment, in a conversation with Dave Logan, Roger Walsh, Ken, myself, and Zak, we changed the name to the Center for Integral Wisdom. We've been deeply involved for the last 9–10 years in participating together in the evolution of the source code of consciousness and culture, which is the great moral imperative of this time. We live in an incredibly fractured moment, in a moment of incredible polarity, and yet at a moment of immense and enormous possibility.

The Center for Integral Wisdom plays a pivotal role in this unfolding and this inception, and the work that we're doing, which is scaffolded on Integral Theory—Integral Theory is a kind of source code and premise of everything we do—and then we're taking a series of incredibly exciting and important steps in next directions, and working in a multitude of areas revolving around identity: Unique Self, critical community, narrative of community, narrative of the individual, universe story, narrative of power, narrative of desire; so what are the new narrative frameworks.

Of course, by narrative, we don't mean it in the kind of postmodern sense. We mean, the best integration of premodern, modern, postmodern thought—the validated insights of the wisdom streams across those three great periods of human history—integrated together in a new intimacy. New intimacy means it's a shared identity, in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, much like subatomic particles come together and they share identity and a new whole is created. What draws them together is allurements, what draws them together is Eros, and what draws them together is love. That love that moves the Kosmos, which incepted reality, which drives reality, and is driving us today; it's the same love. It's one love, it's one heart, it's one integrity, and it's one breath.

So we're coming together with a sense of enormous joy and pain. We live in a world of outrageous pain and we live in a world of outrageous beauty, and the only response as we say is Outrageous Love. By Outrageous Love, we mean something very precise, Evolutionary Love; the Eros that *animates* reality that lives in us in this participatory Kosmos. So we're coming together in that context.

The overarching moral imperative of this time is to articulate a new story; not a fanciful story, not a conjectured story, not a declared story, not a story we made up. But a story rooted in the best integration of all the partial insights of the multiple wisdom streams—the validated insights, again, across premodern, modern, and postmodern—in this post-postmodern moment, in this integral moment, in this meta moment, in this moment in which something new is desperate to emerge; it's Eros, and it's love that drives us.

So we're going to be talking a lot today and tomorrow on multiple levels, but I want to just break for a second. Because I'm beyond delighted, Ken, to see you. It's been a long time. Ken has been doing some health challenges. Actually, for the first time in almost 9–10 years, we haven't talked every Monday. So it's kind of a big deal for me to see Ken now. It could be you just want to listen today and join tomorrow, but I just want to turn to you, and it'd be delightful just to get your blessing and introduction into this moment.



# Ken Wilber

## Setting The Integral Context and Why It Matters So Much

I'll just say a few words of Hello. Because I see by looking on the gallery, a lot of my very best friends, and a lot of people that I have a great deal of respect and admiration for. So I'm delighted to see **our organization** take some generally integral ideas, and start to really adapt them in an extraordinarily impressive and functional way. I agree, as I almost always do, with pretty much everything Marc just said.

I would just point out that in the integral framework, because I've suggested it anyway, there are several different areas to it, or several different dimensions that we consider to be important. So when we talk about the quadrants or the zones, we're talking about things that underlies stuff like first, second, and third-person pronouns, which we find in most of the world's mature languages. They actually represent three different types of perspectives that we can take on pretty much anything.

We can take a first-person perspective, which is the person that's speaking; I, me, or mine. We can take a second-person perspective, which is the person being spoken to; you, or you all. We don't have many great second-person plural pronouns in English. Southerners say 'you all,' and Northerners, if you're from New Jersey, you'll say 'yous guys.' But you get the general point. Third-person, of course, is a person or thing being spoken about, and it includes essentially what we would call objective realities. Each of those undergoes a type of its own evolution or its own unfolding or its own development over time, in part because everything is touched by Eros; this drive to unfolding of greater sense of love. Love means—in its deepest sense—the sense of wholeness or connectedness or union. So understanding that human beings have certain developmental stages that they generally go through was a big realization on my part.

Of course, you can include any number of different models. In my book, *Integral Psychology*, I actually included over a hundred different developmental models, because there are that many different approaches to this extraordinary unfolding that we all go through. But when you look at all 100 of them, you can see that there are a certain number of developmental stages that most of the models agree with. Some of them give fewer stages, some of them give more stages; but the general number for conventional stages

is, it's around six to eight major stages. For people that include the overall spectrum of development, it can get up to 16 stages.

But the point that I was going to raise about that is those stages go through all of the quadrants, and what that means is that there are certain things that come online in an emergent or new fashion for everything that comes into being. Then there are other aspects that represent perhaps quadrants—or lines, or states, or types, which are other dimensions that I think are important—and some of those will tend to stay constant for each stage of development. One of the things that you tend to find—for example, if you look at Marc's work—is that the Unique Self tends to come online fairly early, and it's something you can plug into in fairly early stages of development and keep it as a constant, but it's also going to unfold, driven as it is by Eros. So you can track both of those developments.

One of the things that I'm particularly interested in is, if you look at the vertical development in the I-Quadrant—in other words, in the first-person—these are models of development where researchers actually study how a person describes their sense of I-ness, and that includes, in a big way, their sense of identity. So what you find is as you track identity over the increasing levels of development that humans have available to them—and I'll take all 16 or 20 stages down to just four major stages when I'm talking about identity—identity goes from egocentric or identified with just me, to ethnocentric or identified with the clan, a tribe, a particular group of people, to Worldcentric, which is this is identified not with just a particular group of people, but with all people.

An integral, by the way, is a term that probably the largest number of experts on the field, if they have a highest stage, every developmentalist agrees that there is no highest stage. We can track stages the way they unfold over time, and see that there are what you could call sort of leading edges of development. Now, when you're at that leading edge in a particular level of development, it's just what it sounds like; it's the leading edge. So with the Enlightenment came the emergence of what's often called a rational level, and then with postmodernism came what's often called the pluralistic or a multicultural level. When we get to multiculturalism, for example, that stage can easily look at universal system and divide them up into multiple diversities or multicultural approaches, but they can't really integrate them; it can't pull them together very well.

But what developmentalists have found is that the leading edge of development now—about 7–10% of the population are at some of these stages—they can indeed integrate all of the partial divisions and partial stages that have come before. So one of the things that interests me is, right now, the leading edge that's starting to develop is a stage that's referred to as integral or integrated. That's very, I'm going to say, perplexing to me, but it's

also very hopeful. I find it a bit perplexing because it is a higher stage of development in those models, where I was giving the number of stages, and I said that the conventional stages were somewhere between six and eight stages.

These integral stages—to the extent that researchers have discovered them and talked about them—represent the top two stages of the six to eight stages. So if you're going to number them, they would be Stage 7 and Stage 8. But the point is, we're starting with at least Stage 7 to see a genuine presence of its integral, integrated, systemic, or meta systemic—I'm using different words from different researchers—and we are starting to see the emergence of these systemic integrated stages of development.

Now what's so curious about that is somebody at an integral stage of development would immediately, for example, recognize everything that **we as an organization** are doing, because that's simply the way a person at an integrated stage tends to think. So if they hear about the good, the true, and the beautiful, they won't just latch onto one—like a study of morals with the good, or a study of a particular science with the true, or the study of aesthetics with the beautiful—they'll want to know how all three of these fit together. That's what's going to be their driving interest, that's what's going to compel them to pay attention; not just the individual groups, but how they all fit together into a genuine wholeness, a genuine oneness—in a metaphoric sense. At any event, all three drawn together.

That's why *organizations* like ours, they're still fairly rare. Because it's still a leading edge; it's just coming to be. The percentage of the population at an integral stage in America in 1959 was less than 2%. Recent studies—depending on which model you use—show between 5–6%, and some even up to 7%. So what that means is that because a vertical development is one of the half dozen to a dozen or so factors that the integral framework pays a lot of attention to, it is helpful to simply track where the leading edge of our culture is.

Because it started fairly low—as all leading edges do—with about 2% of the population at it, the type of work we're all trying to do has one drawback, and that's that it depends upon the level of development that a person is at. Because if they're at say Stage—just to use those eight stages for now—4 or even 5, they're just not going to find the way that we think very interesting. But as they get up into Stage 6, and then Stage 7, let alone Stage 8, they increasingly start to think in terms of holistic systems.

***That does mean that we at least have the general direction of evolution on our side, and I think that's very good to know. Because it means that the more people will actually develop into Stage 7 and Stage 8 or even higher, into genuinely integral stages of development, then the more they're going to find the work that we're doing important.***

It's just that that's an item that is still not well-known enough that it's going to be discussed that much. So when we've had problems in the last four years, when Trump dominated everything, I'd always get questions about what Trump is doing, what he means, and so on. But it was hard to discuss because I couldn't just mention, *Oh, well, if you use this model of development, I'd say he's at Stage 4. A lot of people at Stage 6 are attracted to what he's doing, but Stage 7 people can't stand him, and Stage 8 people get very upset with him as well.* Because it's not something that we can fall back on yet as a current knowledge.

But the very direction that evolution is headed is generally towards more integral stages of development. I mean, from the beginning, it went from quarks to atoms, to molecules to cells, to the tree of life; each one of those stages transcends and includes its predecessor. So each one gets more and more holistic, more whole, and more systemic, in a way.

So when I see a group like ours, what it brings up for me is, in part, this overall Integral Development that evolution is itself undergoing. It makes me feel just terrific, from the theoretical side, to see all of you there smiling so wonderfully, and I'm assuming, agreeing with or at least understanding the general points that I'm throwing out. It's wonderful to be here with you all, and it's great to see all of you sitting there smiling. That's what I'd like to say, for an opening.

# Dr. Marc Gafni

## Highlights

- Universal Grammar of Value
- First Principles and First Values
- Intimacy Equation
- Da Vinci Moment
- First Principles and First Values
- Two Strains of Modernity
- The Tragedy of Harari's Homo sapiens
- Generator Functions for Existential Risk
- Global Intimacy Disorder
- Need Drives Evolution
- The Eternal Tao is the Evolving Tao
- There Is No Political Will Without First Principles and First Values

That's awesome! Ken, it's great to see you. Ken, of course, totally just laid out this big framework, so a big thank you. Through the course of this weekend, we're going to engage on multiple levels, but I want to pick up a particular dimension here, which is wildly important and wildly significant. I want to see if I can unpack where we are in a particular focus and in a particular next dimension of thought.

I'm going to start kind of in the middle and go backwards. I'm going to talk about it for a little bit, then I'm going to turn to Zak, and Zak is going to talk about it from another perspective. Then, at some point, we'll take some questions. Then, Howard Bloom is going to join us. Ken said to me once in one of our Monday calls, "Reading our friend Howard is like reading *Postcards from the Edge*." So Howard's a wild thinker. He's a senior scholar at our Center for Integral Wisdom and has been involved in a deep way for a couple of years. Depending how Ken's feeling if he's here, then we'll all kind of engage in a dialogue. If not, we'll catch up tomorrow.

I'm going to dive into a topic. But before I do it, I want to just find us in a different way. There's a great passage in a 13th century mystical text that talks about the three perspectives of reality—of course, it doesn't use the word perspectives, it's the three pronouns of reality—*ani*: I, *ata*: you, and *hu*: he, which is him/her, meaning third-person.

Although these ancient texts didn't have the full notion of perspectives—we have to be careful not to retroject emergent ideas in ancient sources—yet there's a continuity in this notion that Ken referred to; of these three persons, these three perspectives, which Ken likes to call them three primordial perspectives, *meaning* they're structural to reality itself. There's a text in the *Zohar* in the 13th century that speaks of them. Actually, it's a major theme in the work of one of my predecessors, Mordechai Leiner; this notion of these three places.

One of the earliest conversations was very early on in 2002–2004, where Ken and I were talking with David Steindl-Rast—who's with us and alive, I think he must be 90 now—and Father Thomas Keating was in those conversations.

***So what emerged was this notion that the God you don't believe in doesn't exist; that God is not a dogmatic occurrence, God is a realization of a particular dimension of spirit, which is intimate, and infinitely powerful. We began to talk about not just the infinity of power as an incarnation of the Divine, but the Infinity of Intimacy.***

I remember that Cynthia Bourgeault, when she read about the Infinity of Intimacy, she called and was excited. She said, that captures exactly what I've been trying to say.

We feel reality, but both based on realization, and based on the integration of the best of what we might call the exterior and interior sciences, we feel reality as incepted by this Infinity of Intimacy. The infinite desires the intimate, and the intimate infinitely desires the infinite. We've understood reality, especially in the last four or five years here at the Center, as what we call the ***progressive deepening of intimacies***. This is core to the fundamental project of the Center, which is to articulate a new Global Story, based on First Values and First Principles that can be the matrix for a global ethos for a global civilization. We call this New Story, CosmoErotic Humanism.



[Click here for a brief paper on CosmoErotic Humanism by Dr. Zak Stein and Dr. Marc Gafni](#)

CosmoErotic Humanism is a world philosophy much like romanticism and existentialism were in their day. It integrates many metatheories and is in some substantive sense with great delight - scaffolded on the brilliance of Integral theory. And it takes several, we think crucial, new steps in terms of the Universe Story, narratives of Identity, Power, Desire and Community. It is these core stories - rooted in the deepest integration of all the wisdom strains available to us, premodern and postmodern that is the core of our work. The new

story is CosmoErotic Humanism. At the core of CosmoErotic humanism there are a series of equations. Here is one of them which we call the Intimacy Equation.

We're defining intimacy in a very particular way, not in a casual way. We have an intimacy equation, kind of like a relativity equation, but in the interior sciences, if you will. The equation is intimacy equals shared identity, in the context of (relative) otherness, plus mutuality of recognition, plus mutuality of pathos (feeling), plus mutuality of purpose.

The Intimacy Equation:

*Intimacy = shared Identity in the context of (relative) otherness X mutuality of recognition X mutuality of pathos X mutuality of purpose*

We're now unpacking what we call the Tenets of Intimacy, and the Social Miracles. Zak and I and many other people are deep in the conversation, but we're using intimacy in this very precise way. This definition of intimacy applies across domains; it applies in all the life worlds, in all the quadrants, as Ken just described them. *Meaning*, it applies in objective structures of reality, it applies in the biological world and the life world; in the mind world and in the worlds of matter.

For example, if you have subatomic particles that are allured together, they come together—proton, neutron, electron—and they share identity; they feel each other, there's actually a mutuality of pathos. It's what Whitehead was referring to when he talked about prehension, but many people understood that; many people had this understanding of this interiority. Actually, the world we live in is a kind of pan-interiority, is what Zak and I call it. In *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*—Chapter Four, Footnote Two—Ken calls it pan-depthism.

So there's these interiors that live across reality, and these interiors that are inherent in protons, neutrons, and electrons come together, and then this new wholeness is formed. There's a shared identity between protons, neutrons, and electrons, and the shared identity is called an atom. It's in the context of otherness, because they're still protons, neutrons, and electrons, they recognize each other, there's mutual recognition; they feel each other, mutuality of purpose; and there's a new function, which is—not just mutuality of pathos and purpose—called an atom.

That intimacy equation, which begins at the very beginning of the evolutionary chain, actually works all the way through matter, to life, to mind, through all the stages of matter, all the stages of life, and all the developmental stages that Ken was referring to, and that he's talked about 100 different models of development in *Integral Psychology*. That's unbelievably significant. Because what we actually begin to understand is that we live in

an Intimate Universe, and the Intimate Universe lives in us. The implications of that are enormous.

Now, I want to leap into a particular dimension of this. So part of what evolves in reality—you've interiors and exteriors evolving—is value; the universe itself generates value. Last year, I've been reading a lot of Whitehead, Ken has read a lot of Whitehead; we love Whitehead. This doesn't come from Whitehead, he's one of the people that talks about this. Charles Sanders Peirce talks about it, James Mark Baldwin talks about it. It's inherent and integral and explicit in parts of Integral Theory, and it is core to the Lurianic lineage of interior sciences which formed me, so Ken and I have talked about it dozens of times over many years.

**It's an unbelievable idea, that *the universe generates value; the universe is allured to more and more value, there are trajectories to the Kosmos.***

So if we would say it simply, we'd say, there's actually a narrative arc to Kosmos. Reality is not just a fact, it's a story; but it's not an ordinary story, it's a love story; but it's not an ordinary love story, it's an Evolutionary Love story, it's an erotic love story.

Reality is the progressive deepening of intimacies, and that deepening of intimacies happens on exterior and interior level, and one of the major trajectories of evolution is the evolution of value. So we know we move from simplicity to complexity, which is beautiful, but that's insufficient.

Six years ago, I was sitting with Ervin László in Tücaný.... Barbara Marx Hubbard—our beloved, who we miss dearly—said, you've got to visit Ervin. I talked to him about you and the next steps in conscious evolution and the source code that you are unfolding and said he must talk to you. And you all know that it is hard to say no to Barbara. So I found myself in Tuscany talking one of my first walks with Ervin.

I talked with Ervin about what Ken and I have been talking about for so long, this evolution of Eros. Ervin says, "What are you talking about? It's simplicity to complexity." I said, "But, Ervin", I asked, "what does complexity mean? It's just a word." Complexity means there's more and more interconnectivity, there's more and more Eros, there's more and more depth, there's more and more interiority.

So actually, in this narrative arc of Kosmos, there are plotlines to Kosmos; there's Telos inherent in Kosmos. Part of the Telos of Kosmos is there's more and more complexity, which means more and more interconnectivity. It's moving to more and more wholeness, it's also moving to more and more uniqueness, it's moving to more and more creativity, it's moving to more and more consciousness—which is where de Chardin focused—and it's

moving to more and more care or concern. So these are primary trajectories or plotlines of Kosmos.

I want to look for a few minutes at particularly one of these plotlines in this *progressive deepening of intimacy* and this evolution of intimacy, which is Kosmos.

We want to look at a particular plotline, which is beyond relevant today. We believe at the Center for Integral Wisdom that it's the overriding moral imperative of this time. In this time between worlds, in this time between stories, in this Renaissance moment, just like in the da Vinci moment where premodernity is ebbing, modernity is not quite there, there's this space in between, and in the space in between, a new story needs to be told.

Da Vinci and his cohorts can't go to every place where the Black Death struck, or the pandemic struck; they've got to raise all boats, they've got to tell a new story, and that new story is the story of modernity.

The precise extent that that story was accurate and aligned with the interiority of reality—to the precise extent that it fit in all four quadrants; survival of the fittest, which means it fits with all four quadrants—it's a gorgeous and profound idea, and we could talk about that for 10 hours. So to the precise extent that the new story of modernity was aligned with all four quadrants, it birthed gorgeous, stunning unfolding; the gorgeousness of modernity.

But to the precise extent that there were fault lines in the narrative arc of modernity, modernity actually set up and seeded a series of disasters, which are now coming to the fore with the threat of existential risk; what we've called at the Center since 2012, *The Second Shock of Existence*<sup>[1]</sup>.

The first shock of existence was the realization of the death of the human being. Ken talks about this very beautifully at the beginning of *Up from Eden*; it's a major theme. Then there's *the second shock of existence*, which is, after all the stages of development, we realized, *Oh my god, we're threatened not with the skull grinning at the banquet of the individual human life, we're threatened not just with the death of the human being, but with the death of humanity.*

What we're understanding as the generator function for existential risk is not any of the techno-economic issues, although those are all real, and we've talked about them in great length in many different contexts.

But actually, what we're understanding is that at the very core, the generator function of existential risk is a *global intimacy disorder*, which is rooted in the failure to articulate a

shared story. Ken and I originally called it a world spirituality based on integral principles when we co- founded the Center for World Spirituality in 2010, we now call it at the Center, **a universal grammar of value**; a shared story, a shared narrative, in which all human beings can participate, which is based on a universal set of shared values, shared axioms, in which humanity actually realizes that beyond the polarities, that which unites us is so much greater than that which divides us. But without a *universal grammar of value*, we can't actually articulate **a global ethos for a global civilization**; it can't be done.

So we're putting a lot of focus, especially in the last year, bringing together lots of work that we've done in the last eight or nine years. We did this at the board meeting in September, we talked about it in December, we promised to talk about it again today, and we're going to get much deeper into it tomorrow. We're going to be hearing from a lot of people, we're going to be hearing music, and we're going to be dancing. But now we're starting to go deep inside for a moment.

So we've articulated a new idea, [ really a new formulation of what we have always called Dharma] which we call **Evolving First Principles and First Values**. Let me just share what we mean by that.

Let's go back to premodernity. In the earliest periods of premodernity, you've got structurally developmentally blood relations dominate; blood is everything. Where before early horticultural, late hunter-gather, you've got a clan, you've got blood relations in the early tribe. But there's a moment in which we move beyond that, there's a moment in which we jump to the next level—in early, later agrarian—and we begin to emerge into the axial moment. In that actually, there's this realization that there's a rightness of things, there's this realization that we can actually be bound not by blood, but by a set of ideas.

Now, it's a very early moment. It's the movement from what our friend Howard Bloom calls *from genes to memes* in his book *Lucifer Principle*, back in 1995, which was actually a year before *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* in that same work. [Howard, actually Ken reads you all the time and loves your work madly; we talk about it all the time]

There's this premodern moment in which ideas begin to mean something beyond the bloodline. But what happens is, every local kingdom, tribe, fiefdom, empire, and religion claims that it has the exclusive and correct set of values. **So values are real in the world, there's a sense of the rightness of things**, but actually, there's a competition about what values are right and what values are wrong, and then there's a confusion about what constitutes a value. Is value what the perennialists call a depth structure? Is it something that's validated by direct gnosis? That's one form of value. But then there's another form of

value, which is more of a surface structure; it's more cultural, it's more socially determined. But there's enormous and inescapable confusion in premodernity between those two.

The rituals of religions however are more than surface structures however, they are the unique self of the religion, the unique configuration of intimacy, unique language of intimacy, unique quality of intimacy, that expresses the unique texture in the erotic embrace of the divine, unique to that religion. One of the core integral mistakes adopted from the perennialists is to reduce the ritual of the religion to mere "surface structures. But of course, much of religion is simply historical surface structure often mediated through prism of consciousness that we now understand to be regressive or even ethically repulsive.

The religions themselves can't disambiguate between their surface and depth structures. The early Christians can't disambiguate between surface structures and depth structures, so they claim surface structures has depth structures. Each ethnocentric moment claims that its set of values are divinely ordained, and they happen to also command either the attack of all the other systems values, or minimally, their conversion; but usually much worse.

So the notion of a universal frame of values can't actually emerge out of premodernity, but you've got the beginning of something; you've got the beginning of value, which is beyond blood. You've got these competitive notions of value, and you have a confusion between surface values and depth values, which is unsolvable. But everyone's living in the Tao. The Tao means that there's this unshakable realization that we're living within value, that we're not making value up; value is real. Sometimes, we can articulate it clearly, it infuses everything. The Tao that can be spoken is not the Tao—the Tao that can be coded is not the Tao, the Tao that can be measured is not the Tao. The Tao is the unquantifiable quality; that paradoxical infusion or this recognition that Kosmos is valuable, that everything matters, that there's a pervasive *meaningfulness*. That is the Tao.

My mentor in formal academic studies, Moshe Idel, had a conversation with Derrida that he shared with me once in the Bar Illan library. Derrida said to him, "Moshe, we both believe in multiplicity of interpretations. Your lineage and my postmodernism, we both believe that there's infinite possible interpretations to a text." Moshe said back to Derrida, "No, here's the difference. You believe there's no value; and therefore, there's infinite interpretations. I believe there's such a plenitude - an infinity of value, that's why there's infinite interpretations". So that's a beautiful expression of the premodern moment in its splendor. And perhaps it is better to call it the classical or traditional moment so as not to define it regressively.

Then modernity comes online, and within modernity, there are essentially two schools. One school is an extension of premodernity, *meaning* it stays and lives in the Tao. Zak likes to talk about Comenius, who is one of his favorite thinkers. He is an exemplary expression of this notion, where modernity stays in the Tao, extends premodern traditions of Revelation and reason, but actually places reason at the center and merges revelation and reason in multiple ways—as Harry Austin Wolfson at Harvard pointed out.

So modernity stays in the Tao and deepens, and tries to articulate ***two universal grammars of value***<sup>[2]</sup>, both of which are savagely and partially correctly attacked by postmodernity: one is natural law, and the second is perennial philosophy.

Natural law is already very strong, of course, with Aquinas in premodernity. But it gets very strong at the beginning of modernity in this first school of modernity, which says we're living in the Tao, we're living in value, and natural law is much more universal than Aquinas thought. So they try and correct a couple of Aquinas' mistakes. Maimonides, of course, also talks about natural law. That notion—the tradition of natural law—goes all the way through C. S. Lewis at Oxford, who adopted it as central to his work. There's a natural law.

The second was perennial philosophy, which has been written about extensively, and which says something unbelievably important. It says that, actually we can extrapolate from all these diverse positions in premodernity, underlying universals that are validated by direct gnosis—not by dogma, but by direct access—through transfiguring practices.

In a very great essay in 1943, Aldous Huxley wrote about what he thought were the five principles of perennial philosophy, which was published in the Vedanta Society. Ken has written beautifully about the perennial philosophy in *Grace and Grit*. Huxley and later Fritzof Schoun has written incredibly important and useful work. Huston Smith was also a perennialist. So there's an enormous perennial tradition, which extrapolates these shared universals. Now, perennial philosophy got savaged—partially correctly, partially incorrectly—by postmodernity.

There's a second strain in modernity, and David Hume is perhaps an appropriate originating source for it, although it doesn't really originate with him. But you can actually draw a straight line from David Hume, all the way to logical positivism, to postmodernism, and to strains of existentialism. David Hume basically steps out of the Tao. He basically says, "We can use the language of spirit if we want, but basically, value is out of the picture; human beings create value."

There's a line from David Hume to Kant—Kant is interpretable in multiple ways, but there's a direct line—and it becomes the strong position of modernity, which disqualifies reality, which is that reality doesn't have inherent value, that value is in some version or another, a purely human creation. A growing sense in modernity that then explodes in 1859—exponentially with Darwin's publication of origins, and then gets much stronger through the second half of the 19th century—comes to this conclusion, which is a reductive, dogmatic materialism, rebelling appropriately against certain strains in premodernity, but it winds up with a disqualified universe; it winds up having stepped out of the Tao, it winds up with no intrinsic and inherent sense of value.

That then leads to Neo-Darwinism, logical positivism, strains of existentialism that lead to postmodernity, which all climax in a deconstruction of value, a complete stepping out of the Tao; there is no value. Postmodernity and modernity, each make great strides forward in the incarnation of value. Modernity brings universal human rights: the abolition of slavery, the scientific method; that's the right part of the plotline of the great story of the evolution of intimacy, which is modernity. Postmodernity includes the disenfranchised, notices the periphery, realizes that worldcentric consciousness doesn't mean just British white males who own land. So there's this great postmodern expansion of value in terms of practical incarnation, but there's this radical deconstruction of value in terms of the essential understanding of value; there's this radical stepping out of the Tao, and people like Skinner, the behaviorist, or Wittgenstein, who all embody different dimensions of it.

Let's now see where we are. So now, the same postmodernity comes along and says, "Perennial philosophy, no way! Perennial philosophy didn't understand cultural context, didn't understand the postmodern insight. Perennial philosophy overreached and made claims that ignored evolution, and didn't actually include or address feminism or embodiment or evolution itself." All of those critiques are legitimate, those are all important critiques. The same thing happened to natural law; natural law was accused of making a naturalistic fallacy. There's about 10 major critiques of natural law that are all valid, Zak and I just wrote about them this year. But basically, it's a similar critique in which the understanding is that natural law misunderstood that it was living in a developmental context; that natural law claimed surface structures which are the result of hermeneutic as natural truth [for example the absolute prohibition on contraception] or the overemphasis on nature as a source for natural law. So natural law got savaged together with perennial philosophy.

Now what we're saying here, in this meta modern, post post modern, in the context of integral wisdom understood in its widest sense, is, we can't leave the conversation there. Because if we leave the conversation in a place when the only choice is either we're going to pick regressive premodern values—which fundamentalism picks up because it's better

to go there than a world bereft of value—or we're going to stay with a kind of pallid lip service to value, but we don't really believe in it—which is common in the Academy—or we've actually deconstructed value.

So for example, our friend Yuval Harari—in Chapter Two of *Homo Sapiens*—says, “Both Qaddafi's Libya and universal human rights are fictions; they're equal fictions.” He calls them fictions, imagined realities, social constructs, and says that that's the most you can say about them. That's a shocking thing to say! *Meaning*, Qaddafi's Libya and universal human rights both have the same status as fictions, with no qualitative ontological difference between them. Harari who's a populist—and he is a smart populist—is a poster boy for that postmodern moment; he says it glibly, he says it as kind of a matter of course. But when you read Harari, you get that chill of a feeling of living in a universe without value.

I remember when Shawn Ramer first send me Harari's book five years ago, Zak and I looked at it, and it was actually a chilling experience to see the receptivity that it had received. The reason it's received that receptivity is because at least he's trying to connect the dots, at least he's trying to see a narrative arc to Kosmos, and we all have this yearning for the patterns that connect. So Bill Gates, Barack Obama, (and Jeff Bezos, recently in the *New York Times* when they showed the bookcase behind him, he had two books, and one of them was *Homo Sapiens*, which says that universal human rights and Gaddafi's Libya are the same; both fictions.)

So what we realize is, we need to actually make an evolutionary Erotic move, an integral move, we need actually to reclaim the best of perennial philosophy, and to begin to talk about an evolving perennialism and evolving natural law—instead of just savaging natural law and perennial philosophy, which is what postmodernity did. Because postmodernity's greatest fear was the oppression of the totalizing framework, but postmodernity completely didn't understand existential risk.

- 1) If in fact, the key generator function of existential risk is that we're faced with global challenges which require global coherence, but you can't have global coherence without a shared narrative, because it's only a shared narrative that creates intimacy; that's number one.
- 2) Number two, the current story that reigns is rivalrous conflict, governed by win-lose metrics, aka the success story—which is what we did our Success Summit around; around this failed narrative, this failed human story, which says that the human story is rivalrous conflict based on win-lose metrics—which is the second generator function for existential risk, which creates the exponential growth curves and the

extraction models, and the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

- 3) In fact, if we understand that the generator function for existential risk is this failure of story on multiple levels—which I won't unpack anymore now—then what's clear is that to respond to existential risk, we need to actually restore intimacy; or more accurately, evolve intimacy to a place that it never was before. How do we do that? By articulating a new story.
- 4) How do we articulate a new story? By articulating an evolving set of First Principles and First Values?
- 5) So actually, what we're saying is that the postmodernists missed half the point. They didn't realize that actually, there's an urgent moral survival need of *humanity* at this moment in time to articulate a shared story. While they're still obsessed with the danger of totalizing narratives—so postmodernity is going to come and claim that the only grand narrative is that there are no grand narratives—actually what *humanity* needs now for its very survival is in fact a shared narrative.

Need always drives evolution, because evolution is love in action responding to authentic need, and the authentic need of this moment is an integral need; it's a need for a new set of First Principles and First Values—we're working really hard in articulating what the parameters for that is, and what does the First Values and First Principles mean, but we're not going to talk about that now—to actually articulate a shared evolving set of First Principles and First Values, to reclaim the heroic attempts in modernity, to articulate the beginning of a *universal grammar of value*, to actually correct the mistakes, to integrate development, and to begin to actually tell the story of an evolving set of First Principles and First Values.

I'm going to finish with this last example. So a bunch of us have been reading a set of books around what Zak and I are calling *techno-feudalism*, and one of the books by Shoshana Zuboff is *Surveillance Capitalism*. I'm not going to go into the model of the Tech Plex today and how it works and what its great failures are; it's a session we'll talk about tomorrow afternoon. But let's just say this. Zuboff, throughout the book, her words are “astonishment and outrage at the egregious violations of *Surveillance Capitalism*.”

But she never succeeds, and you know why? Because she can never explain what's being violated; what's going wrong. In other words, she never succeeds in telling us what Google is actually doing wrong, because she refuses to actually step into the Tao; she won't actually step into a sense of First Principles and First Values. Even when she wants to assert the dignity of individuality, she cites Sartre, who talks about the importance of first-

person voice. But Sartre, of course, is the apostle of Kosmic *meaninglessness*. In other words, she plays a gerrymandering game. She alludes to wonderful phrases and she cites Auden, but she never actually says why should you be outraged by this?

The only reason you should be outraged is because Google is violating First Principles and First Values of personhood, Eros, intimacy, etc. But if you can't articulate those First Principles and First Values, you're left with this feeling of, why should we be outraged exactly?

***You can only galvanize political will based on moral will, and moral will comes from a sense of being in the Tao. We're either aligned with the Tao or we're in violation of the Tao; we're actually either inside of it or outside of it. The Tao is an evolving Tao, absolutely, but it is a Tao.***

***There's an intuitive recognition of that in the world***, but it's rejected by all the mainstreams because it hasn't been articulated. So this is a key expression of the integral impulse.

Thank you all for listening. We're going to turn to Zak, but before we turn to Zak, I'm just going to turn to Ken for a moment—Zak is going to have all the time in the world—for any comments, thoughts, jokes. Your mind must be buzzing, and I'm sure you made everything I said million times better, but I want to just turn to you. We haven't gotten to talk about this in the last six or seven months, so I've just missed you insanely.



# Ken Wilber

## Highlights

- The Crimes of the Enlightenment;
- Levels of Development
- Post Modern Tragedy
- Foucault and Biopower
- The Limits of Natural Selection and Random Mutation
- The Reduction of Measurement

***As you well know, I'm fully agreeing with what you're saying.*** And what I want to add is that we can focus down on some of the particular levels of development that were occurring when each of these major changes in society occurred. That's because when the leading edge of development apparently becomes about 10% or so of the population, then there's a major transformation in culture itself, and the values that are embedded in that particular level of development tend to suffuse in a sense throughout the culture, even if they're not specifically adopted by every person in the culture. Nonetheless, most people in the culture become more open to those values.

It's what happened with the Western Enlightenment, is about 10% of the population hit rational. A lot of researchers give the name rational to that rational stage of development; it's Piaget's form of brain cognition, and it's Jean Gebser's rational mental stage of development. It comes out of the previous stage, which Gebser called mythic, and which dominated a lot of what you were describing, which were some of the problems as well as the desires of the great early religions. So a lot of them had sort of mythic beliefs, as we call it. One of the reasons they got shut down is myths particularly were looked upon by rationality—which came to dominate modernity, as the mythic dominated advance-premodernity—in the same way we'd look at Zeus, or Aphrodite, or Santa Claus, or the tooth fairy. So that was just asking to get shot down in those ways. A lot of the value structures that were contained in those expressions—Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, Jehovah, Allah—got shot down, because they were so poorly adopted to the rationality of modernity. That's one of the lessons that we learn.

The same thing happened when Green started to emerge. Green had a higher cognitive developmental complexity than did rationality. *So what it did is it reflected on the rational level and its productions, instead of just these universal, monolithic systems that rationality*

*would tend to come up with, particularly in the sciences; it had modern physics, modern chemistry, modern biology. When it invented those systems, there wasn't a Hindu chemistry versus a Jewish chemistry versus a Protestant chemistry; there was just chemistry. That was part of what stowed the universal values of the Enlightenment and made it such a powerful attractive force, even though only around 10% or so of the overall population was actually at that stage. Nonetheless, they people begin to associate with rationality and at least accepted as a background value structure.*

The same thing happened when we get to Green per se in the postmodern development. Very much like some of the higher integral stages, in 1959, the percentage of the population in the United States of America that was at Green—this multicultural diversity postmodern level—was about 3%. In 1972, Jacques Derrida was the most frequently quoted academic writer in America, and the percentage of the population that had reached the Green postmodern stage was at 13%; on way to about 20% or so. So that gave us a lot of the attractions of postmodernity, and it also gave us a lot of the weaknesses of postmodernity.

We could approach it by saying that modernity still accepted categories like the good, the true, and the beautiful. When it said the true, it believed that there was an objective truth that you could get at. Postmodernity, the way it tore all that down is by attacking all form of categorization; there was no truth, there was no beauty, there was no goodness. Those were all nothing but human constructions, and they were essentially made up; there was nothing that you could actually point to that they represented.

But then the downside of postmodernity—and one of the problems that you're especially talking about—is that it became wildly self-contradictory. Because its official stance was, there is no reality, there are no universal tools, etc. That's a completely modernity-driven desire to come up with a clamped down single version of the one and only true objective reality. But then, they couldn't help but notice that they themselves were talking as if there was a real reality that you could point to. For example, they argued with each other, and could agree when one of them was right and one of them was wrong.

They also tended to adopt some of the more usable ideas of each other. Foucault, for example, was famous for writing extensively on power; all social hierarchies are hierarchies of power, and power, of course, is bad. But each of the postmodern writers, in their own way, were attempting to resurrect something that would stand in the place of power. *Foucault ended up adopting what he called biopower, which he could extend to all life forms, whereas power forms tended to sound suspiciously just human-generated. Biopower, on the other hand, was fantastic.* But we can at least start to see, in what's called modernity, the birth of genuinely rational approaches.

Now, what really distinguished modernity from premodernity—and what made people say that Aquinas, for example, did not discover science, or Aristotle wasn't the discoverer of modern science—is modern science wasn't just a way to look at the world. Aristotle had looked at the world about as carefully as you can, and classified it in different ways. So they say, he was doing a classifying science, but that wasn't what real science is. Instead, what real science is—according to one of our favorites, Alfred North Whitehead—Whitehead said that modern science was discovered independently and separately by two men in the West: Kepler and Galileo.

They both hit upon the idea that, as Whitehead put it, *“The laws of nature are to best be understood through measurement.”* We had never looked at reality just through measurement, and extensively through measurement. So Kepler measured the actual motions of the planets, came up with the laws of planetary motion; Galileo measured earthly terrestrial motion, came up with the laws of earthly motion. The genius Isaac Newton threw them both together with his universal law of gravity. Now all of these were essentially modern ideas, because they bought into rationality, which bought into the existence of the good, the true, and the beautiful as existing realities that they were going to measure.

The paradoxical thing about the Western Enlightenment is that, although there's something that's widely called the crime of the Enlightenment, and every postmodernist believes that there was something called the crime of the Enlightenment, it was hard to nail it down and making it stick. *Because the common assumption is that the crime of the Enlightenment was it reduced everything to material atoms; it was atomistic, it didn't see wholes, and it was materialistic. But Arthur Lovejoy, in the book, The Great Chain of Being—he is generally considered to be a genius, and I think he is; it's an extraordinary piece of work—he pointed out that the second most common place belief during the Enlightenment was The Great Chain of Being. The Christian form of The Great Chain of Being, of course, is matter, body, mind, soul, and spirit.*

The first most common belief, by the way, was what the French philosophers called the *Système de la Nature*, The Great System of Nature; it was a holistic viewpoint. John Locke called it the great interlocking order. So they believed in the wholeness of the natural world.

But as they started measuring the actual world, what they found they were measuring most of the time—because that's what you get when you measure something—is they were measuring and ending up with material exteriors of reality. That's why Kepler measured just the exterior realities of the planet, Galileo measured the exterior realities of

earthly things, and both of them ended up with rules of measurement of just material events. When Isaac Newton attempted to draw them together, of course, he used another material measurement, namely universal gravity. But they still believed everything came in wholes, by the way; it was just the exteriors.

So as I put it, the crime of the Enlightenment was the reduction of everything to the lower-right quadrant. They still believed in quadrants, they just weren't measuring all of them; they still believed in the universal wholeness, but we can start to see the attractiveness of postmodernism attacking something like that. To give them the benefit of the doubt, what they were reacting to was the crime part of Enlightenment; they didn't believe that everything should be reduced to just exterior measurements, which is what the scientists were coming up with, whether they intended to or not.

Then because that gave them just measurements of exteriors, they were reacting against the reductionism of all realities to the lower-right quadrant; to just the exteriors and the material realities of those things.

You can see again, how easy it was to do that. Even if any one of us has the authority in our upper-left first-person reality, it has a corresponding change in brain structure; in the upper-right quadrant. So you can see that there remains correlations between all four quadrants. If you had even a vague intuition of something like that, you wouldn't like seeing everything reduced to the exteriors measured. But you can get a little bit of finer detail to what you're saying, by looking at the differences in the actual levels themselves and what they've brought to the picture. What they all need desperately now is the structure beyond Green.

Virtually all developmentalists agree that there's an Orange rational structure, and then there's a Green post-rational or pluralistic or multicultural diversity structure, *and then all of them have some sort of integral structure that is actually capable of seeing the pluses and minuses of the previous stage, and bringing together the good parts of each of the previous structures, as well as getting rid of the bad parts, so to speak.*

***Actually, several researchers that I've studied refer to the coming age as an Integral Age.*** All they're doing there is just extrapolating from the direction that they can see development or evolution is heading. They've seen it go through the mythic stage, a rational stage, and a pluralistic postmodern stage. The people that go through those stages, all of them—if they continue showing up in development—end up going into integral stages. So that's how we can sort of get a sense of how all of those are there; they all unfold in that general direction. The good news, again, is that they're all headed towards an Integral Age.

I would end by saying that I think that the task, so to speak, or the goal that this organization has developed—I think largely under your leadership—, but again, the whole point is that everybody is sort of getting in this together, as we continue our own evolution—is to word this in a way that can stand up to the criticisms of Orange and Green in their healthy versions. Green in particular, when unhealthy, which is for a good portion of postmodernity, there's nothing that will allow you really to appeal to a broken structure.

So we don't have to do that.

But coming up with something like a universal value system that you're talking about, and seeing that as inherently tied in to evolution; those are all important points that will help get us moving to continue our evolution towards what can reasonably be called higher, or more complete, or more whole, or holistic stages of development. I think that's fantastic.

Also, right now we're at a good time. Because evolution, clearly there are so many areas that it doesn't cover. There's sort of the 'what' of evolution, and then there's the 'why' of evolution. The what of evolution is not argued by anybody, they simply trace the actual stages of organization that unfolded with evolution. So everybody agrees that quarks came first, then quarks came together to form atoms, then atoms came together to form molecules many millions of years later, then billions of years later, molecules came together to form cells, and so on. That's the actual what of evolution, nobody disagrees with that.

It's the why, and how did that happen; that's where there's an absolute disaster area occurring in the orthodox, mainstream sciences. So you have somebody like the Santa Fe Institute, Stuart Kaufman, who had actually come out and say...

***“Mutation and natural selection cannot account for evolution, you have to add at least a self-organization.” In other words, you have to add something like Eros; whatever actual definition you give it.***

By the way, if you have to mention a genius philosopher in America produced, almost everybody agrees that it's Charles Peirce. ***You're using the term Evolutionary Love***, that was a term he used. He said that evolution could not be explained the way people were trying to, where there was just the typical causal factors of random mutation, and then the second factor which he called evolution. But he said, evolution is not enough to completely explain what's going on. What he meant was not the way evolution was being explained back then, because at best, it was sort of the combination of these two inadequate forces. So he said, there's a third force that's operated in the universe and is

needed, and he actually called that *Evolutionary Love*. *The love part was the part that he felt needed to be added to the whole mix, and it does a perfect job of explaining.*



# Dr. Zachary Stein

## Highlights

- A Time Between Worlds
- Comenius: the Path Between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment
- First Principles and First Values
- Transitional and Enduring Structures
- John Rawls: Justice as Fairness
- Reconnecting Value and Evolution
- Baldwin and Peirce
- The Consciousness of Center for Integral Wisdom
- Technofeudalism

Amazing! I was missing the fact that we wouldn't all be together, and now I'm actually kind of happy to be sitting here; it's gently snowing in Vermont. Just blessed by Ken's presence. Just so you know. I'm 40, so that's half my life that this guy has been completely in my head. It's wonderful.

I'll say a few things here, which I think will set us up for Howard and for tomorrow, and kind of try to bring together some of what was said. So we've been talking about basically this theme that we are in historically very unprecedented situation. Let me say that again; we are in a historical situation which has only very few precedents. It could be thought of as a fulcrum in sociohistorical development, which is when we're literally entering a new stage of development, but we're not quite there yet.

This happened before, and that's why we keep remembering the Enlightenment and the Renaissance and this path between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment; which I've been studying intently as part of my studying the great educational philosopher, John Amos Comenius, who was a total proto integralist, and I'll get to that. But the reason we keep remembering that was because modernity totally got something correct; like the Thirty Years' War was bad. Now, Modern Warfare, in many ways, was worse. Anyway, I'm not going to get into those comparisons. But the point was that something happened there—this is what Ken and Marc were talking about in different ways,—*which was that this thing that we now call science emerged out of what was a much more indistinct matrix*

*of different ways of making sense of the world that had been around for a long time; many of them much more about the interior and intuition and about values and other things.*

So what I keep hearing, as this gets discussed, is a couple of things. One is like, what happened? Because we clearly are about to all maybe kill ourselves here on this planet. The question of how this thing, *which at the time was a remarkable historical jump in a few key lines of development, ended up leading us to the brink of inexorable self-termination?*

There's a couple things I'll say, and *then we'll get to the First Principles and First Values.* One is that it seems clear that there were multiple lines of development going in the society. So when the science lines kicked in with Enlightenment, and specifically when they acquired measurement technologies, as Ken pointed out—which is a very important point, can't be overestimated, and it's noted in passing by so many different scholars—the metric system was a spread on the end of a bayonet, but it was spread universally.

But it appears that in individual growth, there also are similar fulcrums, and it's at those fulcrums that you can get the emergence of pathologies or warps. Because some things move along faster than other things, and then those things that moved along faster than other things have the ability to repress or push back down those things that didn't quite make it at the same rate. So this is one hypothesis, which is kind of like re-articulation of the Habermasian view. Like, instrumental rationality emerged and—wedded to measurement and wedded to certain forms of social control—made it so that there was an allergy, and an active attack on those other forms of knowledge which had previously existed alongside stuff that looks a lot like science; which is what Ken was saying. There had been a lot of really good inquiry into the objective world using hypothetical deductive methods, because there had been formal operators.

So this, I think, is one of the things we're pointing out is that, we can kind of start to isolate and understand like a psychotherapist looking at society, what happened there? It seems like that this certain cluster of skills got very advanced very quickly, justified a ton of things about itself, and then *began to actually act backwards upon those other things; specifically, certain values.*

Part of this new emergence we're in now, as we move through another world of historical transformation and sociotechnical and ideological things—that's why I talk about being between worlds; it's literally a new world emerging in all four quadrants, just like with the Enlightenment, but actually deeper—there's two things. One is the balancing of the value spheres. This is what postmodernity was in an attempt to do, in a sense, like a guerrilla warfare in this direction. It was like, *Wait! No, we need to preserve aesthetics, and we*

*need to preserve discourses about marginalized people, and the goods that are not instrumentalized or measurable; so trying to balance the value spheres.*

Then here's where the *First Principles and First Values come in, which is that there are transitional and enduring structures*. So what the First Principles and First Values are, are these enduring structures, which actually link us all the way back to premodernity, and then all the way back through the ancients, all the way back to when we were plants, and then when we were minerals. The First Principles and First Values are an attempt to isolate those elements within evolution, and then eventually within cultural evolution and history, which have been—as Marc stated—perennial, and which specifically tie our culture into evolution as a natural and value-creating process.

If you think about an individual development, there are certain questions which emerge at every age. I like to use the example of fairness; this is, incidentally, one of the First Values and First Principles. Something like fairness gets thought about by little kids, and then it's like, how many M&M's are in each hand? Like literally count the M&M's or Steve will freak out, and he freaks out for a good reason, because he's done fair from his perspective. Then you get adolescent notions of fairness, which tend to be more articulate, but often a little bit biased and egocentric with not a good time horizon. Then you get John Rawls, who writes a book called *Justice as Fairness*. So this notion of fairness doesn't go away when you grow up, it deepens.

But if as you're growing up, some other stuff happens, and you never talk about fairness, and you actually start to have a certain set of skills that allow you to *manipulate* people—and then you're like, *I don't even want to think about fairness; fairness is stupid*—then you get this underdeveloped sense of fairness in otherwise a personality that's pretty developed. You're doing well in the world because you've mastered all these technical skills, but those very technical skills built a narrative for you that made you nod value of fairness.

This is the kind of thing that I'm suggesting happened on a cultural level with modernity. So what it did was it repressed certain key principles and values, which actually unite humanity with the rest of the Kosmos. There's an anamnesis here, there's a remembering here. I'm going to be harping on this theme, because I thought about this and I'm going to speak about it tomorrow, so I'm not going to steal my own thunder. But Marc dropped one of his wisdom insights when we were speaking Wednesday—which he had mentioned before, but it struck me hard—that evil is the absence of memory; this is a deep theme.

One of the things that makes it feel, often in our overly scientific culture, that we're approximating evil—like when we think about genetically modified humans, or an artificial

intelligence that captures all of our biology in like a matrix-like thing—it's because there's a sense of what is so absent from that picture of the universe of the sense of forgetting. Similarly, when people—as I described in those warps profiles—get this sociopathic development of certain technical skills at the detriment of emotion and things like that, *they've actually forgotten the part of themselves.*

Then if you disconnect the human from the rest of the evolution, which is to say, the First Principles and First Values are not just our connection through modernity to premodernity, it's also our connection to plants and animals, and the billions of years of evolutionary time where there were things like coherence, which created basically the route towards what we call justice. There are through lines all the way back through culture, into the material universe.

Actually, James Mark Baldwin recognized this, in part because he was into Spinoza. He had these notions of what he called evolutionary developmental modes, which was this notion that there's a line that went all the way back through the individual, through the womb, into the DNA, and into the very code of evolution itself.

So we don't have anything like a definitive list of First Principles or First Values, but we've identified that schema, which is a schema that a lot of evolutionary thinkers have been thinking about but has never quite been landed. This is key to the new work on First Principles and First Values.

Like I said, Baldwin had the basic idea that there's something we can identify here, which occurs throughout the human lifespan as a concern, throughout the history of cultural evolution as a concern. If we think of it in an imaginative way, which is to say, read science like a mystic or read science better than the scientists do, we can actually see that these patterns are in the universe itself.

I'll say that truth is one, fairness is one, and beauty and others. But when we look at the pathologies of modernity and the dignities, what we can see is that truth was captured; they actually picked that out from among the First Values and put it front and center and actually built the ego structure around that, which is wonderful in the context of a Thirty Years' War, which is built about, is this piece of bread the actual flesh of Christ or not. Of course, there's many things in the Thirty Years' War, but the key ideological tension was the propaganda of the Catholics First; the propaganda of the Protestants. It wasn't a scientific debate, it wasn't like alternative facts or whatever; it was alternative theologies. So when the plague emerged and measurement set in, the path was set for science to just basically be able to do away with much of this premodern stuff.

That leads us to where we are. It leads to exactly what Ken was saying, and the focus of the Center's work, which is that there's an advancement—so there's this integral thing emerging, we're moving to a new world—that requires the remembering; that's literally re-putting together your body parts. So there's something there that is profound to get. We kind of have been basically stumbled into this notion of First Principles and First Values when doing what we always do, is reflectively abstracting more and more on the structure of the Dharma and what was coming out of our engagement with the texts and engagement with the world.

Peirce is another one who identified similarly, these universal patterns of that tracing the line between the continuity of life and mind and culture and spirit. Piaget is another one. So in a sense, we're trying to name something and then begin to explicitly work on something that has been a subplot in a lot of the more advanced grappling with evolution and modern culture and the evolution of cultures. That gives us a sense of what the First Principle and First Value is. In some sense Marc began this conversation out of his own deep reality reflections in that sui-generis way that he does that, and I am framing it, deepening it, evolving it all, with the larger context of these key subplots of reality.

This is I think is one of the tricks, like integral consciousness is able to speak to all the prior levels, remember that; this is like an old school integral trope. The consciousness of our Center for Integral Wisdom which is an expression of meta integral consciousness is rare and needed, because it can actually step out of the zero sum dynamic between the other lower levels, and be able to speak to each of them through a more advanced perspective-taking. So that insight tells us that this form of remembering we're getting into here, and the First Principles and First Values we're getting into here, these are actually the things that allow us to build a conveyor belt to speak all the way down and to bring everyone up.

The First Principle and First Value is like fairness; if you have a public discourse about fairness and you're very clear that there's like a few different ways to get into this, and we can't pretend that just this one is the only way to think about it. But the point being that there's a game afoot, which is to define that language that will provide the architecture for that new world. It's not just the things we think exist out there in the objective world, it's also the things we think about one another, and the things, again, we can speak to as First Values.

So in a sense, I think, as we'll speak about later—the *techno-feudalism*—just as modernity did something amazing, but then set us on this kind of pathological path, there is the possibility. *This happens often in individual development; you make one fulcrum wrong, and then you get to the next fulcrum, and it doesn't go well. This is why pathology often*

*deepens, especially in complex personalities. So we are in a point where either we heal this pathology, or we move through this next fulcrum in a way that is pathology, where a couple of the skill lines get hypertrophied and we push through it up into something new, and in many ways, it'll be amazing.* There'll be pockets where it is amazing, and those pockets will make themselves blind, like what else is going on; just like what happened to modernity.

This is the stakes we always talk about here: *this race between utopia and dystopia*. This is another way of seeing it in terms of these emerging potentials for pathology. So this is the moment when, right before you have a big transformative experience, someone remind you of who you are and what you went through.

***This is the opportunity we have at the Center with the Great Library and the other initiatives; to get enough into the culture seated, so that there's a transition through that can be possible, first of all.***

Even if it's just that we get the seed crystal through to the other side and it's a distorted mess on the other side, at least the new Ozark...has arrived, which is to say that the key notions and the key First Principles and First Values have not been forgotten; that we've been able to preserve their traditions, even if only in some narrow form.

So that's a less optimistic view, because there could be no pretending that the forces of the *techno-feudalism* and etc. are deeply entrenched. I covered a lot of ground there, and I'm happy to pause there. I believe Howard will be with us in only a few minutes. So I'm happy to hand it back to you, Marc.

# Dr. Marc Gafni

## Highlights

- The Thanos Principle
- The Great Library
- Anthro-Ontology
- First Values and First Principles

Zak, thank you, what a great conversation! 20th century: Darwin, Freud, Marx, Einstein. Who else do you remember? I am completely convinced that the thought that we're doing here in this context, in the interior sciences—I'd stake my life on it—is as valuable, and ultimately, it's going to be far more positive and constructive to the future of the 21st century. Even if you didn't follow all the details, actually, this was a source code conversation. So I want to try in this transition moment to Howard, just to make it simple real for one second.

Let's go to the Avengers movies, Marvel comics. It's 2018 and 2019, there's the heroes and they're against Thanos. Who is Thanos? He eats in a rice bowl, he lives in Silicon Valley, he's really good at Weapons of Math Destruction; not mass destruction. He's very sophisticated, and so he comes to a conclusion. The conclusion is we should either wipe out half of the population of the world, or the whole thing, in order to restart the system. The heroes, who are the Avengers, they actually don't give any good speeches. Thanos is very compelling, he makes perfect sense. The Avengers just say no, that's terrible, but we're not sure why. Thanos is the most compelling figure, as my colleague, Avi Arad—who owns Marvel Studios, and who made the movies—understood very well.

You have in the middle of culture, this figure called Thanos, who's confronting existential risk. The way he confronts existential risk is to actually remove half or all of *humanity*, because he's operating as a utopian Sans First Principles and First Values. Utopians and Sans First Principles and First Values, that combination is a wildly dangerous combination. We need to be utopians with First Principles and First Values, having stepped into the Tao. Skinner, upon whom, as we'll see tomorrow, the Web Plex is based. We'll talk about Skinner and Pentland, and a whole new body of work that Zak and I and a bunch of us are working on. So Skinner is a utopian. Read his book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, incredible book; Sans First Principles and First Values.

So what does it mean to step into the Tao? Imagine our friend Carrie Kish, who's actually the Vice Chair for the Center and President of CultureSync. Her partner, Dave Logan, originated CultureSync, and Carrie is now taking it to the next level and doing the next book. So Carrie has got a bunch of kids. Let's say I say to Carrie, "Hey, Carrie, listen, this is a big moment for the Center. Let's be grandiose for a second, what the hell? We've got the future of *humanity* right here—I actually believe that's true to a large extent; there's very few people, as Ken said, in this conversation—and this is a key moment to renew the Center, so we need financial renewal. You've got a bunch of kids, Carrie, could you just sell one? Really, just between us. It's not a bad idea, kids aren't easy anyway. Sell a kid and just give us a piece of it, I'll help arrange the sale. You need enough money, I get it. \$1 billion is not enough? \$10 billion for a kid, who's up for it? Center gets a billion. Good, we got a deal?"

The answer is, as we all know, we don't have a deal. Why don't we have a deal? Because Carrie is in the Tao, and in the Tao, there's the immeasurable, there's the priceless; there's the quality that's not subject to the measurement that Ken was describing, that Zak recapitulated in a different context. That's the Tao; that's what First Values and First Principles are. It means that when we're educators, we're transmitting values; we're not contriving values. It's that simple!

But we can't just have a fixed set of First Principles and First Values. We need an evolving *universal grammar of value* that we can explain to 50 truck drivers in Idaho, that we can explain in China, that we can explain in South America; there's no place we can't explain it. These basic senses of First Principles and First Values have to be universally accessible, scalable all over the world, and as Zak said, we want to route them in Kosmos itself. So we're going to talk about tomorrow, how do we come up with First Principles and First Values, where do they come from? We've actually articulated a very precise method for actually identifying First Principles and First Values. We first locate them in ourselves, and there's four steps to that, and then we look to locate them earlier in Kosmos.

So we've spent a lot of time on the details of this, because this has got to work. As Ken said, and as Zack spoke about, this has to be something that we actually transmit into the very source code of culture. Although my brother Ken didn't use this word, but they've got to be unfuckable. They've got to be so good that actually, they can withstand all the critiques. They've got to be so popular and self-evident that they actually suffuse culture. So we're making a big cultural move here to actually penetrate the heart of culture. But we can't do it with another little podcast that went viral and got a bunch of hits and people loved. No, we've got to do the hard work of the Great Library.

We've developed these set of memes for about 10 years that are scaffolded on an integral framework, and then sprout into areas of Unique Self, areas of Unique Self Symphony, areas of Role Mate, Soul Mate, and Whole Mate, relationships, desire, power, community, universe story; we're dealing in great depth with all of those. Then we realized, wow, we have to explain where all these came from. They come from this deep interior place, which we're calling Anthro-Ontology, from which we derive First Values and First Principles, and Evolving First Values and First Principles.

# Howard Bloom and Dr. Marc Gafni

## Howard on the Depth of his Conversations with Marc and Barbara: An Appreciation

### Highlights

- The Center for Integral Wisdom: A Think Tank in Disguise, but really a Band of Outrageous Lovers
- Human science works, because we're Kosmic humans
- Anthro-Ontology
- Fairness as a First Principle and First Value
- Common Sense Sacred Axioms
- First Values and First Principles

### Howard

You said some terrific things. I like the dystopian versus utopian; that's a useful tool, and I'm going to use it.

### Marc

Totally. Howard, Ken's here and about 40–50 of the people who are deep stakeholders. Each person here is a huge world of wisdom, knowledge, goodness, contribution resource; I could talk for 10 hours and not run out of great things to say about every person here individually. But we're going to dive into the conversation now. Howard, before we start, I'm going to ask if you can maybe just describe the conversations we've been having to give people a flavor of what that's about. Then from there, I'll try and frame it and pass it to you. You'll talk, I'll talk, Ken will talk I hope, Zak will talk, and we'll kind of have the conversation. But first, maybe give people just a peek into our world that Barbara created.

### Howard

Well, about four years ago, I got a call from Barbara Marx Hubbard. Now, Barbara almost never called me. Since we first met in 2005, we have always known that each other were there, we have always known somehow, that we loved each other in a strange way. Barbara had a project, and the project she said was co-creating genius. It was going to be a trio between myself, herself, and Marc Gafni, who I hadn't heard of before.

The first time we did one of these conversations—they take place every two weeks, and they've been taking place every two weeks for roughly three and a half years—it gave me a sense of soaring with a fellow Soul Mate or a fellow flyer, of a kind I had never had in my life before. It's because Marc has this panoptic view of the world; he sees things from the cosmic level to the micro level to the human level. I had never had a conversational partner like that before.

So in the conversations, each of us would give the others 10 minutes, simply listen and take notes, and then we'd dive in and give our own 10-minute soliloquy, then shut up, which for the three of us was very hard, and let another one speak. These have been the most astonishingly soaring conversations I have ever had. It turns out—this has just become obvious in the last couple of months—that Marc comes at this from the spiritual tradition; the mystic tradition, the Kabbalah, and things like that. I come at this from theoretical physics, cosmology, and microbiology. I've either written peer-reviewed articles or given speeches at scholarly conferences in 12 different scientific fields. I deliberately try to understand every science that my miniscule brain or profoundly limited brain can allow me to understand.

My job since I was a teenager has been to see the big picture. Guess who else sees the big picture in astonishing ways? It's Marc! So when you put my physical and biological sciences, together with Marc's spiritual sciences, you get a very strange and extraordinarily compelling mixture, at least in my not so humble opinion.

### **Marc**

Thank you, Howard; that was gorgeous. Only my mother would believe that, and I think she probably wouldn't either. Now I'm going to frame this, I'm going to give it to Howard, I'm hoping that Ken is going to want to jump in, then to Zak, and we'll wrap. But this is a big historical moment.

I just want to say something that's kind of wildly important, then I'm going to frame a little bit and I'm going to pass it to Howard. We're going to hear from our new incoming board chairs, Sharif Melnick and Gabrielle Anwar, who are incredible human beings, tomorrow; we're kind of holding the space in order to hear from lots of people tomorrow. But just to get it, the Center for Integral Wisdom at its core, our public disguise is a Think Tank. But who we really are is a band of Outrageous Lovers; we love each other. That's a really big deal; it's not just a cute thing to say, it's not a clever thing to say.

In one lineage tradition, a man named Shimon son of Yochai, who writes this master document called the *Zohar*—and one of the great scholars of Kabbalah, probably the greatest one in Israel, and the *Zohar*—Judah Leibes, a wonderful scholar of Kabbalah,

writes that all of the *Zohar* was about the band and bonds of love between what's called in Aramaic *chevra kadisha*; the holy gang. So that's who we are, we're a holy gang. We love each other, and we're committed to each other. We've been through some shit together, and we hold each other. The love is real; it's not pragmatic, it's not utilitarian, and it's not reducible to some kind of strategic game theoretic dynamic. Of course, we're all imperfect vessels for the light. But we're together, moving towards, and participating in the evolution of love for realies; we feel that and we're committed to it.

But at the very core, my relationship to Ken is I love him madly; that's it, end of conversation. Zak and I, it is deep love, and Howard; we love each other. There's lots of dyads and triads and quadads, whatever that is. There's all sorts of bonds of love that move through the Center. The fragrance of sacred Eros, which is sacred love. Right sacred love of its most beautiful kind, right moves through the center with a sense of radical commitment and radical joy. That's a big deal. I'm waiting for Ivan to write me love notes, but it'll happen eventually. This is not cute, it's what it's about; we have to be that Eros, and we have to be that integrity. So it's just wildly gorgeous to be with everyone and to be madly in love with each other. When we talk about mad love, mad love is not romantic; romantic is just one narrow form of love. Love Eros is the ultimate First Value and First Principle of Kosmos.

So I want to take a second just to frame it and, Howard, pass it to you. I'm going to try and focus on one issue, because I think it's a key issue that I would actually love to hear from you. You and I have talked about it a lot, Zak and I have talked about it, Ken and I have talked every Monday for many years—the last few months, Ken was in Tahiti vacationing, and so we missed a couple of weeks—but we've been deep in this conversation.

We all know that we have to be careful of a kind of primitive retrojection. That is to say, for example, if we claim a particular set of First Values and First Principles, and we say these are Kosmic, but actually they only appear at a very late human stage of development, besides being wrong and looking like idiots, we're not going to actually evolve the source code of consciousness and culture. So we have to actually be very careful. What do we mean by First Principles and First Values, where do they come from, and what do we mean when we say that they're Kosmic?

Let's just say a couple of sentences. So human science works because we're Kosmic humans. It's an incredibly important sentence that I've tried to articulate this year, and we've spent a lot of time talking about it. That is to say, the scientist intuits mathematics because the mathematical structures, both are interior, and in some sense, they live in Kosmos. In some sense, the split between interior and exterior falls away. Littlewood says about Ramanujan, when he's talking to Hardy in 1925 at Cambridge—Ramanujan is the

great Indian mathematician, who didn't like doing proofs, but was great at moving mathematics forward—Ramanujan's greatness is that he's intimate with every integer in the universe.

So human science works because we're Kosmic humans, and human value also works because we're Kosmic humans. We access value by going inside, and we access value because the mysteries are within us. Zak and I are working on a monograph, which is just about done, on Anthro-Ontology; anthro *meaning* human being, and ontology, it actually lives in us, all of reality. We not only live in an Intimate Universe, but the Intimate Universe actually lives in us; from the most fundamental qualities of interiors, to all of the exterior qualities. So all of the quarks, all the leptons, hadrons, all of the atomic structures, molecular structures, macromolecular structures, cellular, multicellular structures; all of these structures live in us, and all of the allurements and gnosis in all of them is contained in us.

The Enlightenment teachers who understood that Enlightenment is identity with all of reality, but also the realization that all of reality lives in you, are speaking about a particular quality of interior consciousness, which we're now realizing that there's a parallel to that, and the actual realization of evolution is that actually the whole thing actually lives in you.

Anthro-Ontology means, for example, if I have an experience of free choice, and that's a fundamental axiomatic experience of my life—that is what Zak and I have called a *common sense sacred axiom*; it's available everywhere, everyone can access it, and everyone actually builds their life based on it, it's trans-cultural and universal—then basically, you can't just throw that out with some superficial neuroscience, and bad readings of neuroscience on top of it. But you actually have a direct access to that experience, that there's some dimension of choice, which is real.

Now, we've got to then begin to say, that choice, that notion of freedom that's implicit in choice, we want to actually locate that in Kosmos. We obviously understand that in every stage of human development, it changes and emerges. But then when we go backwards, there's actually a dimension of choice and freedom and volitionality that moves through the world of plants and *animals*. There's even—Howard, as we've talked in depth and you've wrote about it in terms of stimulus and response, the earliest dimensions of Kosmos, and Whitehead talks about prehension—a dimension or a proto-freedom that lives all the way down the evolutionary chain.

I'm just going to give a second example, because Zak picked up on this example; take fairness. You and I've talked about fairness, Howard, and you asked a great question, which is, fairness is completely human, so what does fairness have to do with the *animal*

world, and certainly what does fairness have to do with the world of matter? So you and I talked about this a few weeks ago, and we began to locate fairness in this notion of harmony, that there's this primal harmony—and that harmony, which is the right relationship between things, that's actually in your originating structures of Kosmos—and that notion emerges all through the world of matter, through the world of life, through the world of the human being, and then it emerges through successive developmental structures in the human world, until we get to this emergent value called fairness. But it's a First Value and First Principle, we didn't make it up. It's not contrived, it's an innate value of Kosmos.

So essentially, in two words, what we're saying is, Anthro-Ontology; go inside. You can go inside to *common sense sacred axioms*, you can go inside to contemplation, you can go inside to transfiguration; those are three different ways of going inside. Perennial philosophy focused on transfiguration, other systems focused on contemplation, and *common sense sacred axioms*; three modes of going inside. Once you go inside and you access a First Value and First Principle, then you check, *Is this just me? What do my neighbors think about that? Well, what about people down the block? Let's check.* So now you see, it's transcultural; then you check their history, now it's transhistorical; then you go back to the previous world of *animal* and the previous world of matter, and you say, can we locate this in Kosmos itself? So it's a very careful, fine process that we're deep in. Howard, with that, I turn to you.

# Howard Bloom

## Highlights

- Howard calls his presentation in the last line “sciences interpretation of what Marc calls the Amorous Kosmos”
- This is not quite science in its conventional expression but rather Howard’s original reading of of the unspoken implications of the scientific data
- The longing between electrons and protons forms atoms
- The First Principle of attraction and repulsion
- Common Sense Sacred Axioms
- First Principles and First Values
- Particles are brought together by love

Marc talks about an Amorous Kosmos and Erotic Kosmos; he talks about the power of allurements and autonomy. I talk about attraction and repulsion, because those are the words that have been used for electrons for about 250 years. Attraction and repulsion, the basics of amorousness, go back to the very beginning of this puzzle. At the very beginning of Kosmos, there was an impossible something; a big coming out of an impossible nothing. That impossible something was a pinprick, infinitely smaller than a pinprick, which somehow contained within it, all the energy of a universe and all of the implicate properties of a universe.

Within the first 10 to the minus three seconds of the universe’s existence, which is a sliver of a sliver of a sliver of time—space and time spreading at astonishing speed, space-time *manifold*, that’s all there was in the beginning of the universe; time, space and speed—somehow, time, space, and speed managed to precipitate like raindrops precipitating from a storm cloud in the sky, in the very first things. Those very first things had a property that you don’t normally hear about, sociality; they were conversational, they were informational, they were relation-oriented and relationship-oriented. These early things were 16 different forms of quarks.

Now, first of all, if this were a random universe—a stochastic universe, a universe of six monkeys, six typewriters typing a universe by accident—and there were a gazillion copies,  $10^{81}$  copies of things, those things all would have been radically different, and they would have had no way of relating to each other. But this is not a stochastic Kosmos, it’s not a

six monkeys and six typewriters Kosmos. It's a very guided Kosmos, like a railroad train, which proceeds on rails and has certain degrees of freedom—cannot go across people's lawns, cannot fly over cities, cannot tunnel through the earth—but it's stuck with its rails. Kosmos is unfolding, it's blooming, but it goes along rails.

The first things that were created or that precipitated were quarks, and there were only 16 different forms of them. They immediately showed that they had a social property. They knew who they should get together with, and they knew who they should avoid; the powers of attraction or repulsion. Because quarks cannot exist on their own, they hurry up or the rush to find partners was extremely fast. So the quarks avoided those they needed to shun, and they gathered with those to whom they felt attracted. The result was they gathered together in threesomes, as if they had been built with little etiquette books about who's appropriate and who's not. Those threesomes immediately produced something utterly startling.

If you used Aristotelian logic, you would say, Well, you've got three quarks, and Aristotle taught us a long time ago that if you break things down to their elements, and you understand the laws of their elements, which is where the phrase elementary laws comes from, you understand everything. Understanding quarks, how far does that get you, and understanding what a quark threesome is going to be? Garbage in, garbage out, right? Quarks in, quarks out; that's all you're going to get.

That's not the way it worked at all. When you put three quarks together, you got something utterly startling and utterly unpredictable. With one form of three quarks, you got a proton; with another form of three quarks, you got a neutron. The neutrons showed you unequivocally just how social all of these particles—that were made of threesomes; that were made of a social agglomeration—were. Because a neutron had to find a partner in its first 10.5 minutes of existence, or it deteriorated into a proton and a couple of other particles.

So the social impulse—the erotic impulse in Marc's words—was there from the beginning. Allurement: the attraction of quarks to their appropriate partners was there from the beginning. Autonomy: repulsion, and avoiding those who didn't show up in your etiquette book as natural partners was there from the very beginning. This means a conversational Kosmos. Because these particles were obviously flashing to each other, their identity, so that the particle on the receiving end can make up its mind; freewill, as Marc talks about it. Except this wasn't so free, because you automatically had to reject certain others and you automatically had to be attracted to certain others.

Things got even more erotic—more love-based in a strange way—300,000 years after the universe's Big Bang; ABB (After the Big Bang). 300,000 years after the Big Bang, it was a very high temperature plasma, and temperature means speed. That meant that particles were hitting each other head on like bullets colliding head on, bouncing off of each other and immediately slamming into other particles head on. That was the nature of the Kosmos for the first 300,000 years.

Then the temperature cooled, which means particles slowed down. But when they slowed down, something happened that was totally preposterous. There were particles, relatively speaking the size of your fist; and there were particles, relatively speaking the size of the Empire State Building. Those particles the size of your fist showed an *inanimate* longing, and so did the particles the size of the Empire State Building.

Something utterly six monkeys at six typewriters unlike happened. It turned out that the longing of the tiny particles fit the longing of the massive particles perfectly, and they got together in pairs. Those pairs of protons with an electron circling the proton were atoms; the very first atoms, the very first elements: hydrogen, helium, and lithium. Again, putting an electron together with a proton did not produce just an electron and a proton, it produced dramatically new properties; hydrogen, helium, and the atom.

I think it was Doug Rushkoff, who was trying to describe one of my books at one point. He said, Bloom is writing that this is an amorous Kosmos, in which particles are brought together by love. Now, that sounds like something that Marc would write about the universe.

So the First Principles of the universe—at least attraction, repulsion, sociality conversation, information—all of those showed up within the first fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a second. When we talk about attraction or repulsion, and when I talk about an etiquette book, we are not anthropomorphizing. Because the principles I'm talking about *manifested* themselves in the earliest Kosmos, in those first protons and electrons, and you and I are made of those protons and electrons. So it should not be surprising that the principles which ruled over those protons and electron—attraction and repulsion—should show up in you and me.

Now, in you and me, it shows up in a slightly more complex form. Love, hatred, agglomeration, loving groups of people, and war, which comes out of loving groups of people ironically; all those things are *manifestations* of attraction and repulsion. Because the basic patterns of the Kosmos—what Marc calls First Principles—show up on level after level after level of emergence, and level after level after level of evolution.

As far as harmony is concerned, remember that early Kosmos where particles were bouncing off and bashing into others immediately, nonetheless, that early universe showed a pattern of mass cooperation, of harmony. How can you tell? Because pressure waves and sound waves rippled across the substance of that Kosmos like the music going through a gong. In fact, the cosmologists who discovered it called it music. So despite all of the clashing that was going on—all of the bashing, all of the ricochet—there was an overarching harmony that even showed up in the Kosmos making a music, before things had slowed down to the point where atoms could consolidate. So that's the science interpretation of Marc's Amorous Kosmos.

Marc: Gorgeous! Howard, thank you so much. This is what Shoshana Zuboff can't figure out in *Surveillance Capitalism*, what's the violation? There's a violation of First Principles and First Values. We've been birthing this all over the last year, and we're birthing it in a new level in this very moment right now. So with big delight, I'm going to turn to Ken for any kind of commentary, then we'll go to Zak, and then we'll come to a close. But we're at a big historical moment which is very rare, we're eavesdropping on history. We'll come back to Howard, but let's eavesdrop on history and let's think together radically alive.

# Ken Wilber Welcoming Howard Bloom

Howard, it's a delight having you here. I guess the way I could explain my feeling about the happiness of having you being a part of this group, is to say, when I first started writing—I ended up writing a couple dozen books—I just sort of assumed that at one point, everybody important would read what I was writing, and the world would change just sort of automatically. Then as I wrote more books and got a little saner about that, in a sense, I went sort of in the opposite direction. I thought, there's so many people on earth, there's so many people that are important, that are in charge of something, I'm not going to have any impact at all really. But I still loved the work, so I kept working on it.

Then when I was almost halfway through it, I read something that Paul Tillich had written, and it really blew me out of the water and put me back in what I think is a little bit of a saner position. He wrote, "What we call the Renaissance was participated in by around 1,000 people." That, for some sense, blew me away. Because it put me back in the realm of a possible group that could actually have an impact on the world. So what I was writing wasn't just totally preposterous stuff. Now, whether this new age that we're coming on will be made of 1,000 people or probably a fair amount more, it just gives me at least a handle where I can see something fairly important, genuinely happening. So what I feel about your presence is, it makes me really happy to have you part of my 1,000 people; just knowing that makes me feel great.

I'm a big fan of your stuff, I've read everything from editorials you've written to the more substantial books. Just even your description that you just gave us, I think it points out what I've always appreciated about your work, which is the description that you mentioned about the earth apparently having anthropomorphic principles. It's not that you reduce all humans to those early protons and neutrons, and the conversational nature of the universe; the sociality and relational nature of it. But when you write about that stuff, in a way, ***that makes me feel like the qualities that I have are welcome, and directly a part of this universe.*** That's one of the reasons that I'm delighted to have you as part of my group of 1,000 people. So I'm glad to see you here, and I look forward to whatever time we'll end up spending together.

# Howard Bloom

## Highlights

- Howard Bloom on “Marc Gafni’s proposition that a moral compass lays implicit in the universe someplace”
- The Chimpansees story
- The Capuchin monkey story
- Returning to fairness as a possible First Principle and First Value
- Margaret Mead and a tribe of 225 million.

That delights me, Ken! Because one of the remarkable things about you is that you’ve gone from writing your books and coming up with a system of thought to creating a movement, and that movement is phenomenally successful; it’s all over the world.

I’m trying to think through at the same time, Marc’s proposition that a moral compass lays implicit in the universe someplace. When Marc and I were discussing this a few weeks ago, I mentioned two stories to him. In a chimpanzee troop, if you are young and strong, and there’s an old leader who owns the females of the group as a harem, and you aspire to that position, you gather around you other males who are young and huge and strong, and you bully your way, slowly but surely, to the top.

Once you get to the top, the rules change for you. Up until now, you have had to favor your allies in order to keep them at your side. But now, if one of the young chimps on the very bottom of the social totem pole—someone on the very bottom of the dominance hierarchy, someone who’s picked on all the time—is picked on, your job is no longer to support your bullies; your job now is to support the poor and the oppressed. If you don’t do it—if you don’t start championing the poorest among us, in chimpanzee terms—a bizarre thing happens to you. The females of the group are your real constituency, and you can only hold on to alpha position if you maintain their loyalty or their love; for all practical purposes. Those females—if you continue to bully and not champion the poor and the oppressed—will turn on you and they will drive you out of the number one position. So that is a natural sense of a moral compass at work in chimpanzees, from whom we parted with a common ancestor roughly 6 million years ago.

The other story is the story of capuchin monkeys, I think, at the primate center. There was a researcher who taught the monkeys. She gave them a bunch of stones, and she taught

them that their stones were money. She taught them that if they handed in a stone, they would get a treat. Well, once these monkeys were well-schooled in this, she put two of them together in the same room. When monkey number one handed over its stone, she gave that monkey a grape. So monkey number two got all excited thinking that when she turned in her stone, she was going to get a grape too. But instead, when monkey number two turned in her stone, the researcher gave her a cucumber. Well, the monkey number two felt this was radically unfair.

Now in terms of individual selectionist terms and rational choice terms—rational choice model is something that underlies all of modern economics and many of the social sciences, but it really doesn't work—monkey number two should've calculated that a grape is 500 calories, a cucumber is only 200 calories; that means I'm up 200 calories on my total for the day, and she should have held on to that cucumber for all she was worth. Instead, she threw it at the experimenter, and she was radically unsatisfied with this disparity.

So there's fairness in another way among *animals* that we parted from 6 million years ago. Now where exactly fairness shows up in the history of the Kosmos itself, I'm a little bit muddled about. But there's a very important statement by Margaret Mead that has to do with this. Margaret Mead said around 1935, "Every tribe on earth says it is a sin to murder one of your fellow human beings. The problem is that the name of your tribe means human being, which means that anybody outside your tribe is fair game." So originally, this moral injunction meant that you could kill just about everybody on the face of the earth and it was practically fair, as long as you didn't touch your fellow tribemates. But by the time Margaret Mead was writing, she said, "Today, the size of the tribe whose members we're not allowed to murder is 225 million." That's because that was the population of the United States at the time. If we extend that, today the size of the groups whose members we're not allowed to injure or kill is 1.4 billion in India and China. Peace is going up radically.

If you look at my first book, *The Lucifer Principle*, you see that if you were born in an indigenous tribe—one of those tribes that gets along with nature and its fellow man, which is in peace and harmony with all of them—your odds of dying a violent death at the hands of another human being would have been 10x what they are today. If you had been born in 1650 in the West, before the Industrial Revolution, your odds of dying death at the hands of a fellow human being would have been 10x what they are today. In other words, somehow by accident, we have decreased the rate of violence in the world by a factor of 10; it is 1/10 what it was in 1650, it is 1/10 what it was in primitive tribes. Now all of these are just thoughts to help articulate Marc's idea that there is a moral compass and its roots are deeper in the universe than we think.

# Ken Wilber and Dr. Marc Gafni

## Highlights

- The Amorous Kosmos: the possibility of understanding love as a subset of overarching moral principle.
- Beyond naive Perennialism
- Beyond naive Natural Law
- Utterly critical to have Integral scaffolding
- The overwhelming moral imperative to articulate a vision of an Amorous Kosmos

## Ken

Maybe you talk about an amorous universe, and maybe if love is a subset of moral principles in general, if it's good to love, then maybe you could find a little opening to squeeze a moral principle in there.

## Marc

Yeah, that'd be a big deal. That little opening is the archimedean lever that we can move the world on. Ken and I and Howard originally did the Integral Spiritual Experience 2: The Future of Love; this series of unbelievably important conversations about this topic, which were seminal and central, and this notion of The Amorous Kosmos. But just so we all understand, we're not talking about an Amorous Kosmos as a metaphor; metaphor itself is a bad word. Metaphor works because it alludes to something that's real, that's the nature of metaphor itself. So when we're talking about an Amorous Kosmos, we're talking about an ontology.

But here's the key, we're not falling into a perennial mistake of a kind of naive perennialism, and we're not falling into a natural law naive mistake; it's an evolving Amorous Kosmos, we understand that fairness evolves. Once you articulate that possibility, you have a possibility that changes everything.

There's Tenets of Intimacy, and everyone who's on this call is resourcing this possibility; it's our job, integrating with the integral scaffolding. Ken's with us, and Ken is suffused in the very fabric of everything here. Howard's joined us in this very deep way. Zak and I are

in constant conversation for 12–13 years, and I could mention 40–50 other people who are in this deep conversation. But we're doing something which is pivotal.

This is a fucking historical, gorgeous, utterly necessary, urgent moment, in which the overwhelming moral imperative is to articulate a vision of an Amorous Kosmos—which is not new age, which is not fundamental, which is not progressive—which is post-postmodern, which is this integral space that Ken's pointing to, which is this new emergent, but which actually transcends and includes the best of all these pieces in a seamless, gorgeous, but also unfuckable presentation, that then actually moves us to the next stage and alleviate suffering. So this is not a meta-theoretical conversation, this is about alleviating suffering; this is about avoiding Thanos, this is about responding to existential risk.

# Dr. Zachary Stein

## Highlights

- First Principles and First Values
- The American pragmatists: John Dewey and Charles Sanders Peirce
- Robert Brandom on continuity and discontinuity
- First Principles and First Values: continuity and discontinuity
- Michael Tomasello's work on joint attention: an example of discontinuity
- On the nature of education
- First Principles and First Values in the space of our shared attention

You guys are intense, it's kind of hard to step into that space. I'll say a few things here, and I'll stick with this theme that the First Principles and First Values are the things which kind of unite the evolution of individual and cultural *humanity*, back through the *animal* realm and into the plant and mineral realm and all the way back. That there's been a long golden egg sought by evolutionary thinkers, which has been to weave the human evolutionary story back into the Kosmic evolutionary story.

So when I started the American pragmatists with John Dewey and Charles Sanders Peirce and that gang, there was this sense of like, what are we going to do here, guys? Because the kind of stuff that Kant was talking about—like universal truths and causality; that kind of stuff—it's hard to reconcile that with the seemingly ad hoc nervous system that's been created over evolutionary time. There was a fundamental undermining of epistemology by the fact that all of a sudden, the brain was this artifact of chance, and there were a couple other threads.

There was always, to me, two ways that it went down. So I thought this and then I found that in Robert Brandom, who's a philosopher. He said, essentially, there were those who took the continuity view, which was the view that basically, you can explain most of human behavior by looking back at primate behavior, or even earlier. Much of this is what we see in contemporary evolutionary psychology, where they're actually downplaying the discontinuities that are there. They'll say, "It looks like fairness, but really, that was just the hormones of the monkeys. So today, when you're looking at relationship dynamics, you should actually admit that you're a primate and not worry about artificial constructs of fairness, like marriage contracts and stuff, but in fact, just work with *animals*." So you can

get the continuity, and there were radical evolutionary epistemologists who took that stance; Dewey takes more of that stance, trying to stress continuities.

But then there were those who took the discontinuity stance, which was that actually, there's something really distinctive about the human. Yes, there's stuff that looks like primate behavior, but there's a lot of stuff we're doing that obviously, no other *animal* does; like not even close. So there's this question of is the discontinuity view the better view or the more correct view? Now, it's the one that the sciences have generally disparaged. The sciences have generally tried to say—despite psychology and philosophy—that actually, we can mostly do the continuity view; most of what humans do can be more or less reduced or explained back to some Genesis in some earlier rudiments, which is compelling, as I said.

But the discontinuity view is also extremely important because of many of the things we've mentioned here, including things that humans do for which there are new precedent and which—as Brandom was trying to stress, as Peirce was trying to stress—place us in a realm of normativity that's distinct. That fairness becomes reflective of itself, fairness becomes aware of itself, which is a completely different situation than just something like an inarticulate intuition of fairness based on sensory perception discrepancies, like with the monkey.

So I mentioned one thing here for Ken and Howard. Marc, if you haven't checked out Michael Tomasello's work—who was at the Max Planck Institute; he was a comparative psychologist and a primatologist—he really focused on this question of like, just how different are monkeys from humans; and specifically, baby humans? There's a couple things that are very interesting. He shows both that there's continuity. That in fact—just like the research you were citing, Howard—monkeys do stuff, which actually shows that there's a pretty sophisticated sense sometimes of social fairness. But at a very early age, humans would do certain things that a monkey will never do; we're talking about a three year old. These are things like follow a point. Now a trained dog will follow a point, but dogs have co-evolved with humans for way too long, so it's not fair. In the wild, monkeys do not point at stuff and then have three or four other monkeys look; it just doesn't happen. But kids do that instinctively, very early. You'll point, and a kid will look.

So Tomasello focuses in on this thing called joint attention. Joint attention is specifically a deepening of intersubjectivity that's possible at the human level, which you just don't find at the *animal* level. Now there's, again, continuity; there is intersubjectivity at the *animal* level, it's not about that. This is a reflective intersubjectivity, where basically in child and the adult, you get the joint attentional situation. But what's interesting here is that, that joint attentional situation is specifically having to do with intergenerational transmission, which

is specifically having to do with a specie-specific trait of very long gestation; very long length to adulthood. That, in fact, cultural transmission, intergenerational transmission, and this cultural ratcheting effect that Tomasello identifies, maybe is the root here of what we're looking at when we're looking at the core of how these First Principles need to be functioning.

That is to say that, as the First Principles emerge into reflective practice of humans, the place where they emerge is in the domain of education; it seems inevitable. I'm an educationist, so I have a hammer and everything's a nail. But at the same time, there's something very primordial about it. It's like the larger scale prehension of the whole social *organism*, that there's a turning over to the younger, those principles on whose trajectory we were on. So inviting what will be the universe of the future, to take on the aims that you have reflectively chosen for yourself.

So there's something deeper here that I'm trying to isolate, which has to do with teacherly authority and pedagogical approach that the Center is taking, which is to not build the technology or do other things that might be done on the basis of First Principles, but in fact, attempt to teach them and to instill them through the Great Library and other things. I'm arguing that this is in line with what humans do, exactly where the First Principles and First Values need to reside in the space of our shared attention. So that's kind of what emerged, listening to you geniuses and trying to reflect on where the work is situated and the history of ideas. Thank you, it's a huge honor to get some airtime with you guys. So I appreciate it.

# Dr. Marc Gafni

## Highlights

- Our Cosmo-Erotic Humanism
- Howard's Omnology
- Ken's Integral Theory
- All part of the same fabric: all allured to each other.

I mean, what a gorgeous moment! I want to so gently say with just quivering tenderness, but also with fierce audacity, just to feel the depth of this moment. Ideas are alive; ideas are feeling, living *organisms*. Ideas are not arid, they're not intellectual; ideas are expressions of intimacy. A new idea brings together disparate dimensions of insight, and insight is a lived *organic* expression of a human being consciously expressing a dimension of reality. So when new ideas are linked together and they integrate in a larger whole, then you actually have a new intimacy. In some sense, if we want to put these pieces together, the entire integral movement itself is an expression of the evolution of intimacy.

Howard, who calls himself a materialist mystic, if all religious people should be Howard's materialist mysticism, we would have a much different world. But Howard's integrating, bringing together, and moving towards wholeness. Zak in education and development. Everything we're doing here in what we've called in the last 10 years, the Dharma.

I just wanted to share one last thing, just in the depth of of heart. Sometimes people say to me, and lots of people on this call, "It's like so great, what we're doing is so important. God, I wish it was easier." But one of the things we know about the Kosmos is the Kosmos is intelligent, whatever that means. Howard and I have talked a lot about what that might mean or not mean. But mitosis and meiosis were not the end of Kosmic intelligence. Photosynthesis and the chlorophyll molecule, Kosmos didn't say, "Well, got the chlorophyll molecule done, let's go home." In other words, Kosmos is intelligent.

Everyone who's here on this call, we're here because we're allured to each other, because we're attracted to each other. There's attraction and allurements and autonomy, so we're all autonomous. But we're part of a Unique Self Symphony. There's no way in the world that I could write Integral Theory, that's Ken's to do. So therefore, I get to fall fuckin madly in love with him; not mine to write, it's his to write, and I get to be in total devotion to that. It's

my job to do CosmoErotic Humanism. Zak and I, we're doing together CosmoErotic Humanism and Anthro-Ontology. It's Howard's job to do what he calls Omnology. This is what's so rare here, is that we're all here with huge devotion and appreciation for the unique and gorgeous gift of the other, in full love and full Eros; it's so rare that that happens.

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[1] We thank Mauk Pipier who originally coined the term and saw our Unique Self theory as the core necessary response. See Mauk Pipier, *Humanity's Second Shock and Your Unique Self*, with afterword by Dr. Marc Gafni

[2] There are not the only two but rather exemplars of this modern attempt.

# Dr. Marc Gafni

## Highlights

- From Skinner to Facebook.
- A world sans First Values and First Principles
- Techno-feudalism
- Pre-modernity and its relation to value
- Modernity and its relation to value, two moves: David Hume and Comenius (Zak's friend)
- Two moves in modernity: in the Tao and out of the Tao
- Post-modernity and value, defending against oppressive totalizing narratives and yet losing the story line.
- Post-modernity not understanding the need of the moment
- Evolution is love in action responding to authentic need
- Modernity extrapolates universals
  
- Second move of modernity: David Hume
- The straight line between modernity and post-modernity
- The deconstruction of value
- Poised between utopia and dystopia
- The second shock of existence
- Evolving perennialism
- A shared space of value
- All challenges are global
- Overcoming Global Intimacy Disorder is required to create global coherence
- First Values and First Principles as the matrix for a Global Ethos for a Global Civilization

### **Highlights - continued**

- Global Intimacy Disorder equals rivalrous conflict governed by win lose metrics ,
- Success 1.0 and Success 2.0
- Responsibility for the future itself is a First Principle and First Value
- A covenant between generations
- Two forms of existential risks: the death of humanity and the death of “our” humanity
- The death of our humanity seen through the prism of Google
- Technofeudalism
- Six declarations of Google
- The end of democracy: Eric Schmidt and Barack Obama
- Marc and Zak’s new monograph “Technofeudalism”
  
- Zuboff’s Surveillance Capitalism: excellent work and a failure of First Principles and First Values
- Only a violation of value generates outrage
- In the Tao or outside the Tao: that is the question
- From Skinner to Facebook
- From Skinner to Social Physics
- From Natural Law to evolving First Values and First Principles
- From Hyper Social Self and Hyper Separate Self to Unique Self and Unique Self Symphony

So here's the plan, we're going to have three parts, and we're doing two things here. It's very different than last night with Ken and myself and Zak and Howard Bloom, where we did this big map. We brought Ken and Howard into First Values and First Principles and had this huge and epic Renaissance conversation. This morning, we looked at the deepest strategic unfolding of all the layers and all the pieces, and we looked at the emergence of the Great Library; its different pieces, its challenges and the invitations, and we resourced and stepped up. By the way, the holiness in that moment of resourcing was just beyond gorgeous; we all felt it. Thank you. Laurie sent me a text this afternoon that she wanted to actually give us her house, which is very sweet; I just thought that was very moving.

So here we go. I'm being a little light, because it's about to get so serious that we need a little light. So here's our topic, let's take one slow step at a time; it's a topic that emerges from many sources. Zak and I are deep in this conversation. As I mentioned this morning, we talk twice a week, and we're deep in this topic and deep in this conversation. If I would try just to frame the conversation, what we're going to do is we're going to talk about what

we're going to call techno-feudalism. From Skinner to Facebook, what does reality look like sans—meaning without—First Values and First Principles?

Evolving First Values and First Principles are a very big deal, Ken was actually blown away of excitement by that conversation; it's really important conversation. I'm going to just spend two minutes, but if you don't already know what we're discussing here, the next two minutes won't make sense, and that's okay. But for those of you who are deep in these evolutionary source code structures, let me just say very briefly.

We've got the premodern period, with all its competing systems of value, which meets... the exclusive and confused between depth structures and surface structures. You move into modernity, and modernity has two streams. One stream is an extension of premodernity, but attempting to extrapolate the universal shared structures into a coherent narrative. We're identifying two examples of that coherent narrative: one is perennial philosophy, the other is natural law. Those are two examples of Move A in modernity, out of premodernity. But remaining is what we're going call in the Tao. Meaning it's in sight of values and objective structure of Kosmos; Kosmos generates value, we're in the Tao, or we're in the eternal logos, or we're in the Dharma; there's lots of words for it in West and East, but we're inside of that. But each of us think that we own it exclusively, and that everyone else needs to be converted or brought to our vision of it; at the end of premodernity.

We then move into early modernity, we move into the Renaissance and post-Renaissance, and we actually have two divergent moves, one of which stays in the Tao; two expression of that. The move of modernity is this third-person abstraction of universals from particulars; that's what modernity does. So we abstract universals, the universals become either natural law, which already exists in premodernity, but gets reified in a much different way in modernity; or perennial philosophy. Both of these, as we pointed out last night, have been severely critiqued by postmodernity.

As we pointed out last night—and this is key to the way we're thinking—postmodernity is defending against totalizing narratives, but not realizing that for the first time in history, existential risk creates a new need, and need itself drives evolution. Because we can actually define evolution as: evolution equals love in action, responding to authentic need. Again, every one of these sentences, as you all know, is heavily footnoted; we're just getting the sense of it.

So this notion of modernity is extrapolating universals, it's creating this shared human language. Although postmodernity is going to critique the hell out of both of those attempts, what they miss is that this is an unbelievably important precursor and an

unbelievably important attempt to create a shared language. We'll talk about why this universal grammar value is so important. So that's one move in modernity.

The second move of modernity is closer to the David Hume move that we mentioned last night. There's a straight line between David Hume, certain readings of Kant, and postmodernity; David Hume, certain readings of Kant, 1859, Darwin, Neo-Darwinism, logical positivism, existentialism, behaviorism, and then into postmodernity. This is the stuff we've talked about in different contexts, and I'm tagging it, not explaining it, just kind of creating the frame. It's a big frame, and it's a critical frame to actually understand where we are, and be able to respond to it. So that's these two strains that lived together in modernity.

Now, the second string is borrowing social capital from premodernity. It assumes value, even though it begins the deconstruction of the actual ground of value itself. So when we move into postmodernity, and postmodernity, like modernity, has an actual pragmatic evolution of value—modernity abolishes slavery, modernity brings in universal human rights; postmodernity actually reincorporate the fringes, reincorporates the peripheries of human beings, reincorporates the peripheries of culture that don't fit into the classical modernist narrative; it's actually an expansion and extension of ethics—yet at the same time, paradoxically, it continues the second strain in modernity which is the deconstruction of value itself. That value itself is, by definition, a creation.

I cited our colleague, Yuval Harari, who in Chapter Two of one of his books says clearly and explicitly that the only difference between Libya's Qaddafi and universal human rights is nothing; they're both fictions, they're both figments of imagination, and they're both social constructs. Harari is not a thinker in the sense, he is a lovely man, but a populist poster boy who's just imbibed this postmodernist trope and takes as given that actually universal human rights and Libya's Qaddafi are both fictions; no difference between them, both completely created. So there's this ultimate deconstruction of value, that's the context we're operating in.

Now, within this context, we face for the first time in history, this new dimension of existential risk, this new dimension of catastrophic risk. That's our context; catastrophic risk and existential risk on the one side, and this potential for a dystopia, and yet at the same time—and we emphasize this here at the Center and in the Great Library— **this equal potential for utopia; there's unimaginable dystopia and unimaginable utopia, unimaginable possibility in both sides.**

So we're at this place—this time between worlds as Zak often refers to it, or I call it a time between stories—this time between worlds and this time between stories, we're in this da

Vinci moment, much like the moment of the Renaissance emerging out of the Black Death, in which the structures of premodernity were themselves deconstructing and falling apart; they couldn't meet the new challenge, they couldn't meet the new need.

Let's get this straight, **need drives evolution; the clarification of need is an essential movement. Love responds to authentic need. Remember, evolution equals love in action, responding to authentic need.**

Again, I haven't even said anything, we're just creating the frame here for the conversation because the frame is everything. It's not even an intellectual frame, this is actually understanding reality that we live in. So we talked about this last night, and this is kind of the frame we're in.

Now, at the Center, we've called existential risk since 2012, we've called it *The second shock of existence*<sup>[1]</sup>. Zak and I talk about the second shock of existence in an early article published by the World Future Society<sup>[2]</sup>. Again, we're just kind of finding our way. The first shock of existence, the early human being or the Dawn Man realizes death; the skull grins at the banquet.

*The second shock of existence*, we go through all the stages of history, and we realize we're faced not with the impending death of the human being, but with the impending death of humanity. I'm going to slow down a little bit when I get to the heart of it, I just want to little bit fast forward and bring us into the conversation. So second shock of existence is the impending death of humanity itself.

One of the key people who started this conversation was Derek Parfit at Oxford. Derek Parfit had actually an interesting younger colleague student in that world, Nick Bostrom; Nick Bostrom does a lot of the formulations that Derek Parfit actually began. I've got here my Derek Parfit library. Derek Parfit is actually quite amazing, I didn't actually know him until about a year ago. He really sources a lot of the existential risk conversation in an important way, but we'll get back to that.

So now, what I want to dive into is we're calling right four links between First Values and First Principles—particularly Evolving First Values and First Principles—and *the second shock of existence*. I'm not going to double click on that now, but by adding the word Evolving First Values and First Principles—that's what Ken was excited about last night—we actually solve all the critiques of postmodernity, which critiques natural law and critiques perennial philosophy; we've listed about 10 critiques of each of those. But actually, we're talking about evolving perennialism; Evolving First Values and First Principles. How that works is a conversation by itself, and we're actually putting out a

major monograph on that; we think this is a monograph that can actually begin to create part of this next Renaissance. Evolving First Values and First Principles. Love is real. Eros is the first value, and Eros evolves. It doesn't mean Eros doesn't evolve and mean anything; it's not purely a social construct, it evolves within its own inherent framework. But we're going to bracket that conversation.

Now, let's slow down. Evolving First Principles and First Values means that there's actually a shared human story, there's actually a basis for a global ethos for a global civilization; that it's not just a constructed story, that we can actually move beyond the polarity. The polarity is based on the inability to create a shared space of value, but actually, if we articulate a set of Evolving First Values and First Principles that become the matrix of the new story, then that new story scaffolds the global ethos for a global civilization. Pieces of this conversation, Zak and I have been having constantly, and some of them have spilled out into One Mountain and into Dharma Circle and into Holy of Holies. So we've got a sense of this conversation. For some of you, it's brand new, I understand; most of you, it's not.

Let's kind of deep dive now. So what we just said up till now is worthy of 10 hours and that's a book by itself as it will be, but now we're going to the next stage. So what are the four core links between existential risk and First Values and First Principles? Again, I'm going to still be a little bit quick because I mentioned this last night, and then it'll gradually slow down.

So number one of the four links is, every challenge today is a global challenge; there are no fundamental existential challenges that are local. The major catastrophic and existential challenges are global. For example, who owns the data is a global issue, climate is a global issue, bioterrorism is a global issue, sexual slavery is a global issue, the growing gap between the wealthy and the have and have-nots is a global issue, etc.

This became most apparent, obviously, during the pandemic. Do you all remember the conference that happened? January of last year, all the world leaders got together. We knew that Corona was happening. It was in France, it was led by the United States, President Trump was there, and he rallied all the leadership of the world in this brilliant way. Because of course, the COVID-19 virus obviously crosses boundaries, we prepared for it. It was an incredible conference, it was reported all over the world. But of course, that conference didn't happen; it never happened. Because we actually couldn't create global coherence in the very obvious moment where global coherence was desperately needed, but we didn't have a shared language that would allow us to create it.

So the first generator function—the first root cause, if you will—for existential risk is a global intimacy disorder. Intimacy can be created, not restored, but evolved, the same way you evolve it in a couple; you have a shared story about a relationship. Then even within a company, you need a culture. As Peter Drucker said, culture eats strategy for breakfast. That is to say, we need a shared culture, which means there's a shared story. If there's no shared story, if there's no shared narrative, based on an agreed upon set of realities, you can't create intimacy. So the global intimacy disorder at its core, is rooted in a failure to have a shared narrative.

In order to have a shared narrative, we actually need Evolving First Values and First Principles; that's the only way you can create a shared narrative. Without that, there's no way to move beyond polarity. You can't just talk about it, you actually have to articulate a clear set of Evolving First Values and First Principles, and we're working very hard on that project. So that's one: to create global coherence, we need to overcome the global intimacy disorder, and we overcome the global intimacy disorder by creating new intimacy, and new intimacy is based on a shared cogent story based on First Values and First Principles that becomes the matrix for a global ethnos for global civilization.

Number two, the actual story being told today—and we spend a lot of time on this, Barbara spent a lot of time on this; we did an entire event called Success 3.0. about this in 2014—the shared story is actually rivalrous conflict governed by win-lose metrics. It's win-lose metrics that works between nations, within companies, within divisions of companies, within families, and between parts of ourselves that are trying to triumph over each other. So that rivalrous conflict based win-lose metrics itself generates extraction models, exponential growth curves, gaps between have and have-nots.

In other words, all of the violations in one way or another are related to that core failed notion, which we called Success 2.0. Success 1.0: obedience, religion; Success 2.0: rivalrous conflict based on win-lose metrics. So we need to move to a different story; that's the second root cause of the various 10 forms of existential risk. Now we've detailed that particular piece in great length in a couple of books that are upcoming, and in many conversations, so I'm not going to go into it.

Here's number three—we're going to, by the way, be focusing on four—the third link between existential risk and First Values and First Principles is, the very notion that we're responsible for the future is itself a First Principle and First Value. The very notion that we have to preserve society at all, why is that our obligation? If that's not an obligation, that obviously lives in a human being the way I have an obvious instinct to take care of my kid.

Actually, that notion of the preservation of the species only make sense within the Tao. Only if you're within the Tao can you actually speak of there being what we're calling here, a covenant between the generations. In the old world, we talked about a covenant between the human being and God. But if you read the text carefully, there's a covenant—*beni u ven bene yisrael*—between me and between the people of Israel. Between the people of Israel, we're taking that text to mean, a covenant between the generations. The past, the present, and the future are interlocked, and the present is responsible for the future.

If we live in the last generation of all generations, then literally trillions of human beings are lost; the entire future, all of its creativity, all of its wonder, all of its beauty, all of its goodness, all of its true, that's all lost. But that we are responsible for that, that in itself is only understandable within the Tao; that covenant between generations itself, which would move us to respond to existential risk. This is one of the reasons that the environmental movements had such a hard time galvanizing support, because this notion that we're responsible for the future is not obvious; we actually need to be in the Tao as it were, we need to be operating within value to articulate that covenant between generations. That's the third link between existential risk and First Values and First Principles.

Here's number four coming at you. Number four is, there's a second form of existential risk. The second form of existential risk is not the death of humanity, but the death of our humanity. It's not an actual technical extinction, but it's the death of our humanity; we actually stop being human beings as we understand human beings to be. That's a whole different story, and this is where we're going to enter today. So we've talked about many of these other pieces, we're in middle of writing many of these other pieces, and we want to enter the story from this point today.

Let's offer a prayer to Goddess that myself and Zack and Daniel and Ken are able to say this clearly, that we're able to articulate and actually generate a new knowing here that we can then translate into the Great Library, into the world, and into the alleviation of suffering. Intellect is never ours, nothing we say is ever ours; we're always in prayer. She can stop us from having synapses connecting our mind in any moment, I just got that deep realization moving in my mind.

So we're now in this fourth link between existential risk and First Values and First Principles, not about the death of humanity, but about the death of our humanity. I want to enter this conversation and try and achieve in this conversation, a dimension of clarity—Zack and myself and Clint Fuhs, seven or six years ago, gave a course on *second simplicity*—we're trying to achieve a *second simplicity*; no sloganeering, but I also don't

want to get lost in the thicket of details and complexity. But level two *second simplicity*, it's a key idea, and it's key in our distinctions.

So we're going to focus on one dimension of this existential risk; this loss of our humanity. We have to be aware of not just weapons of mass destruction, but we have to be aware of weapons of math destruction, which are equally insidious. Because what's happening is, the original authority in the medieval world was with God, but of course, everyone claimed to be interpreting God. Then the authority moved to human reason in the modern period.

But in the postmodern period, human reason is dethroned and value is deconstructed in multiple ways, and what's happening in this insidious way is that authority is moving to the algorithm; the algorithm is becoming the source of authority—we could talk about that for several hours, I'm not going to but that's a very important realization—and there's no recourse to the algorithm; who do you complain to? So when the bank denies you a loan, or when you're fired as a teacher in Washington, even though you're one of the best teachers, because the algorithm determined that you were a bad teacher, who's your recourse to? So there's this moment where the authority is moving to the algorithm.

Because we have a limited amount of time, I'm going to enter this topic in the middle. I want to take a look at this particular notion of existential risks linked to the death of our humanity through the prism of a document, which comes from the early Google inception point. The Google inception point, how does it happen? So a couple of Stanford boys, Larry and Sergey, they're postmodernists, formed in Stanford, postmodern capital of the world. Often, postmodernists have a sense of value; they've deconstructed value, but value still lives in us. So they say, we're starting this great search engine. They read in 1998, a fantastic paper, saying that advertising in a search engine is an ethical contradiction, so they say they'll never do that.

It's now 2000, they're in Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is governed by an intense rivalrous conflict win-lose metrics. Sergei Brin says, we had to change everything because I felt like a schmuck. In Silicon Valley, you've got to win big, you can't just be profitable; you can't make \$20 million a year, you can't make \$50 million a year. For Sergey Brin to make \$50 million in that particularized form of the win-lose metrics, in Silicon Valley, was actually to fail. So at this particular moment when the Dot-com boom goes bust, there are two actual very critical Wall Street firms that have invested venture funds into Google. They don't have a business model; it'll make \$50 million a year, but that's not enough, because they're looking for exponential return.

There's a guy named Amir Patel at Google, and Amir Patel figures out how to do data mining with a few other people around the world. They realize, we've got this other

product, which is the digital breadcrumbs, which they call them the data exhaust. The data exhaust means that actually every single thing that you've done on the web—how long your mouse hovers, the pattern of your typing; everything you've done on the web—through weapons of math, it can be actually downloaded into machine intelligence. Machine intelligence then takes that information and actually develops a personality profile on you.

Now, we're talking about the best machine intelligence in the world, not the machine intelligence that beat Boris Kasparov in the Deep Blue match in the mid-80s; that machine intelligence is ancient. We're talking about the machine intelligence like Google AlphaZero pro in 2017 that wiped out Stockfish that wiped out Boris Kasparov. So the most advanced machine intelligence in the world is now creating a personality profile—to quote one of the data scientists directly—that knows your inner demons; what you feel, what colors you respond to, what images you respond to, all of this is fed into machine intelligence.

Machine intelligence then develops a data profile on you. That data profile then creates predictive analysis near certainty about how you will respond based on particular inputs. That predictive analysis is then sold to third parties who are almost, by definition, misaligned with your own interior values and your own interior goals, who then move to manipulate you directly. Remember, there's two basic structures of a democratic society; there's a voter and a consumer. Both of those are based on freedom of action, that we can act freely. Both of those get destroyed. There's the slow destruction or the slow undermining of the very notion of individuality and will, which is a creeping annexation.

Here's where it gets really interesting. Now we're going to kind of slow down, because we're moving too fast, but we're going to speed up at the same time because we want to cover a lot of ground. That's paradoxical, but we can all hold paradox here because we can do that. I'm going to read you something which is shocking. These are six declarations by Google, in which Google explains why it has a right to do this.

- 1) *We claim human experience is raw material free for the taking. On the basis of this claim, we can legitimately ignore considerations of individual's rights, interests, awareness, or comprehension.*
- 2) *On the basis of our claim, we then assert the right to take an individual's experience for translation into behavioural data; that means we're going to feed it into machine intelligence.*
- 3) *Our right to take based on our claim of free raw material confers the right to own the behavioral data derived from human experience.*
- 4) *Our right to take and to own confer the right to know where the data is disclosed.*

- 5) *Our rights to take, to own, and to know confer the right to decide how we use our knowledge.*
- 6) *Our rights to take, to own, to know, and to decide confer our rights to the conditions that preserve our rights to take, to own, to know, and decide.*

Meaning, we can do everything we can, using all of our political will, and all of our muscle to make sure that we protect these rights.

So I want to get with you what that means. What that means is that what Google just said is, is that we have the right to the goods of your personhood, we can own those goods, and we can take them from you, primarily without your knowledge. Even if you've signed on I Agree, people spend 14 seconds on those long things that exist, so there's no real contract; it's actually an uncontract. There's no real sociality of contract, number one. We can take this information, we can feed it into machine intelligence, and we will own your personhood. We will develop a personality profile that you've never agreed to allow us to develop, and we own it, and we can sell it. Then, we can use that to affect every decision you make.

Now, in an individual person, that has some limited impact; you might be buying stuff you don't want. But when you actually aggregate it into data sets—because actually, you're compared to all the people who meet particular machine intelligence criteria, who fit into a particular data set—you actually swing elections. For example, Eric Schmidt was the key person in the 2008 campaign of President Obama, and they were using micro targeting behavioral campaigns, which the Obama campaign was perfectly aware of all the wavering voters. They used that in 2012, Eric Schmidt ran it directly.

One of the people working for Eric Schmidt in 2012, then went to a company called Cambridge Analytica in 2016. Then the Trump campaign use that same strategy. But of course, in the Trump campaign, it blew up and the Cambridge Analytica scandal happened. But actually, the Cambridge Analytica scandal was business as usual; it was actually Facebook doing what it does. There was actually nothing unusual, it was standard practice that had been deployed by Schmidt himself, overseeing the Obama campaign. That means you can get X amount of people not to vote, X amount of people to vote, and change the election, all without people understanding that this is arrayed against them.

In other words, Kasparov at least had a chance, he knew he was fighting machine intelligence. But the body politic has no chance, no one's even aware that it's happening. It's kind of a shocking situation, which then gradually affects the consumer structure, gradually affects the democratic structure, and begins to actually undermine the very

notion of what it means to be a consumer, and the very notion of what it means to be a voter.

Let's move on, this is just the basics. Again, we're going to split the time, and then we'll get to talk to each other. This is a big moment, we want to change history here, and we want to actually get this in a big way. So what allows Facebook to do this, what allows Google to do this, what allows the emergence of techno-feudalism; based on what right?

Shoshana Zuboff wrote a very important book called *Surveillance Capitalism*, which is both important and very weak at the same time. So the *Surveillance Capitalism* book like several others of its ilk—actually, Jaron Lanier wrote a popular book of that kind—basically says, "Oh, my God, this is terrible." Zuboff says, I want to arouse moral astonishment and outrage. But Zuboff never succeeds, because she can never quite access what are the First Principles and First Values that this Google move is violating?

It's like, what have they done wrong? It wasn't against the law! It was an unprecedented reality, unprecedented realities don't have precedents, and law is based on precedent; nothing against the law. So when you've stepped out of the Tao, which means you've stepped out of value, then the only thing you have left is law. If law doesn't prohibit it, it's fine.

Google is actually violating First Principles of Eros, First Principles of Intimacy, First Principles of Personhood, First Principles of Uniqueness, First Principles of Choice, First Principles of Fairness, and so on. But Zuboff is unable to articulate these as actual First Principles, and she struggles. Together with her colleague, let's say Steven Pinker at Harvard, she's a classical postmodernist. She has stepped out of the Tao, and she'll make rhetorical allusions to the Tao. She talks about original sin, but in a kind of metaphorical way. She'll quote Auden.

I'll just give you an example, just a great example of the passage. She wants to assert her anger at what Google does. In one page, she quotes a fantastic passage from Sartre to actually assert the notion of the individual. She says, "Without bearings stirred by a nameless anguish, the words labor to find voice. The voice is born of a risk: either to lose oneself or win the right to speak in the first-person."

What Sartre was reaching for when he talked about the "nameless anguish" of First Person dignity struggling to affirm itself, but he refused to name it was first values and first principles. And without naming it the center will not hold. And Zuboff paradoxically deploys Sartre, the apostle of ontological meaninglessness to avoid naming first values.

She quotes this with another Sartre quote, which is about the idea that it's not enough to will, it's necessary to will to will. So she quotes these quotes, and this is kind of her source for the assertion of the inherent of the individual. The only problem, again is that Sartre is the apostle of cosmic meaninglessness. Sartre is not in the Tao; Sartre, by definition, stepped out of the Tao. So Zuboff uses Sartre as a strategy to avoid naming, naming first values. Even though she affirms in multiple passages in her work the overwhelming moral imperative to name in order to transform. But Zuboff is afraid—academically afraid, intellectually afraid—but I actually think that parenthetically, in her own interior, she actually holds First Values and First Principles; she can't say them, perhaps not even to herself.

You only arouse outrage when you access the energy of what we would call value; value has energy. That's what Whitehead was talking about, reality generates value, and reality is driven by the evolution of value. So when you're in violation of value, we arouse outrage and we can go to the barricades, because something's been violated. Evil is only evil if it's a failure of intimacy, because there's a value of intimacy. But without intimacy, evil is not evil; evil is just ordinary.

So Google in its postmodern stance steps out of the Tao, and it ignores First Values and First Principles when the win-lose metrics rivalrous conflict steps in. When their company is not being successful, they change the whole business model, and they build the business model on the creation of this techno-feudalism; that's the core business model at play. There's billions of auctions happening every second, which are actually selling this data, and the data is owned by this very small private group.

Let's go deeper than that. So I want to introduce a couple of friends here, and these are important friends who will lay the basis. One of my deep old friends is C. S. Lewis, who is an interesting and important thinker. I think he's wrong about lots of things, particularly the way he portrays natural law; he was attacked by postmodernity correctly. But C. S. Lewis wrote a little book about education in 1943, and it's called *The Abolition of Man*. In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis talks about the stepping out of the Tao.

He has this prescient vision that as we step out of the Tao, what's going to emerge is, as we gain new technologies, as we gain what he calls omniscient technology and new scientific methods, there'll be the creation of an omniscient state—by the way, he was wrong about the state, it's going to turn out to be private companies—an omniscient complex, which will actually generate a new class of *conditioners*. The *conditioners* will have stepped out of the Tao and they will actually not be in value, but they'll be conditioning value; they'll create an artificial Tao. They'll actually create a world in which we can actually have some control.

He says, those *conditioners* in the first generation, they'll still remember the Tao, so they'll view themselves as utopian saviors. But by the second generation and third generation, by the time there's a crisis, there's going to be nothing to hold them within the Tao, because they've stepped out of value. They are, by definition, the creators of value. As Lewis writes, these are not necessarily bad humans, but because they've stepped out of the Tao—actually, in our words—they cease to be human; they're not bad humans, they just cease to be human. They've stepped out of the Tao.

So what Lewis presciently predicts is emergence of this new kind of class of *conditioners*. Now, who is Lewis talking about in this abolition of man? He was actually talking about behaviorism. This is where it gets interesting, and in the next 10 minutes or so, we want to land this, and then we're going to go to the next step. But everything we set up till now is to actually get to this point. So what Lewis was referring to was actually behaviorism in all of its multiple forms. Behaviorism is dominant; B. F. Skinner is at Harvard for six decades. Behaviorism is this particular form of psychology which was very strong, it's actually been empirically discredited on numbers of grounds, but it's got major champions. Actually, you're going to see this is going to be wildly relevant to the life of every single person in this room directly; there's going to be nothing meta-theoretical here, nothing abstract, all wildly relevant.

The champion of behaviorism in 1971 is this guy, B. F. Skinner. He writes a book called *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. Now, Skinner is often wildly attacked; Chomsky attacked Skinner, famously. But actually, as you begin to read Skinner—Zak and I have talked about him a lot—Skinner's larger than life; he's smart. He's wrong, he's a reductive materialist, but he's web smart, and he's got a large vision. Now, Skinner is the archetype of the *conditioners*. I think probably C. S. Lewis was referring to him personally indirectly, but he's referring to behaviorism that's going to come and try and condition society, which will be *The Abolition of Man*, which is the second form of existential risk that we're talking about; not the death of humanity, but the death of our humanity. That's what CS Lewis is talking about. Although he doesn't mention any place, but we're pretty sure that he's referring to Skinner.

Skinner is derided, Zuboff derides Skinner as this kind of crazy man, but he wasn't a crazy man. I'm going to read you a little passage from Skinner for a second. Skinner was actually concerned with existential risk. Skinner got existential risk, and Skinner implicitly responding to C. S. Lewis says, what I'm concerned with is the abolition. Page 200, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, the chapter called "What is Man?" right after the chapter on values. We're going to see why this is relevant, because as we're going to see, the entire Web Plex is built based on this.

So Skinner says, we're concerned with the abolition of human society, and he's responding implicitly to C. S. Lewis, who mocked him 20 years earlier and talked about *The Abolition of Man*. He's saying, "C. S. Lewis, you got the wrong problem. C. S. Lewis is saying man's being abolished, but what he doesn't understand is that the abolition is going to be of human society." Skinner wasn't crazy, what Skinner was doing was actually articulating Buddha's critique of the Separate Self.

By the way, if you think that Skinner knew nothing about Buddha, just pick up his book, *Walden Two*; it's a very important book by Skinner, it was his utopian novel. In the opening of *Walden Two*, he explicitly places himself in the lineage of Buddha; he says, I'm a Buddha guy. He says, the greatest cultural revolutions are not politics. There was people like Buddha and Lao Tzu, who study human behavior. So he's identifying Buddha as a behaviorist, and he's saying, I'm in the tradition of Buddha. Now, what was Buddha's critique? Stay close, you actually can't understand anything about where we are without this. The Buddha moment is Buddha says, Separate Self is fucked; Separate Self causes *Duhka*, Separate Self causes suffering. That's what Buddha is saying.

Now what Skinner does is Skinner says, let's add to Separate Self existential risk and nuclear technology. Because we don't have a story equal to our power, it's no longer existential risk a few 100 years before the Common Era with primitive weaponry; we're talking about existential risk in a nuclear world, we're talking about existential risk in an exponential technology world. So what Skinner is doing is articulating Buddha's notion of Separate Self who causes suffering, combined with existential risk, and saying, therefore, we have to abolish the Separate Self.

What defines the Separate Self in Western culture? This is where all the Unique Self Dharma comes. Freedom and dignity. What is Skinner saying? He's saying, let's move *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. Why? Because freedom and dignity in Buddha's view, which Skinner has adopted and added exponential tech and existential risk to, is the source of everything. I'm going to quote Skinner now, directly. "We need to abolish autonomous man. We need to abolish the man defended by the literatures of freedom and dignity; his abolition has long been overdue. If we don't abolish it, we will face the abolition of human society." So what do we need to do? He says on Page 201, we need to turn from the inaccessible autonomous man to the manipulable; to a man that we can manipulate, that we can actually control. Because otherwise, the whole thing's going to fall apart.

Now, it gets wild. How does Buddha respond to his critique of Separate Self? Buddha articulates what we call in our Dharma of the five selves, True Self; a self that's identical

with consciousness. Skinner doesn't want to access that. Skinner doesn't use this word, but it's a word that Zack and I are using. So Skinner actually articulates what we're going to call the Social Self. Here is the sense of what Skinner says, 'If I had access to physics—just like the physicist has access to laws that can determine how objects move in a space—I could actually manipulate in the best way in order to save humanity.'

Skinner is not a bad man, I don't know about him personally, but his vision is utopian. Skinner is a utopian, and he's moved by Buddhist critique of the Separate Self. He says, we don't need a Separate Self. But unlike Buddha goes to True Self, he said, we need a Social Self. But he said, I don't know how to do it because I don't have the physics that will allow me to do it.

Skinner dies. Next, take a look at this book, this is the successor that people are unaware of; it's called *Social Physics*. *Social Physics* is written by a guy named Alex Pentland, and there's a chapter in it called Beyond Freedom and Dignity; he never mentions Skinner in the book at all. Pentland is one of the most famous data scientists in the world, who actually, recently, a little while ago did a dialogue with our friend Howard Bloom. His other name is Sandy Pentland, and Sandy says to Howard, I'm the guy who created the internet.

In Pentland's understanding, *Social Physics* means we now have the physics; the machines and methods that Skinner wanted, which is data science. We now have data science, and through data science and through this algorithmic process, we can actually use social pressure; nudges and cues, likes. We can actually download into what Pentland calls the nervous system of the planet, which is the Tech Plex, this version of the Social Self, which we can now control for our utopian motivation.

So Pentland has gaggles of doctoral students. All of those doctoral students start companies, those companies then embed in the Tech Plex, and then they actually code the Tech Plex with likes, with social pressure, cues, invisible nudges; all based on the predictive analysis taken from you against your will, downloaded into machine intelligence, and sold to misaligned third parties. So actually, the Tech Plex doesn't look like what it does by accident. The Tech Plex is a combination of utopianism, sans First Values and First Principles, combined with a massive power avarice motivation, which is actually the business model that made Sergey Brin \$80 billion and not \$50 million.

So the Tech Plex is driven by utopianism, based on the model of the Social Self, without First Principles and First Values, but utopianism emerged with an almost untrammelled drive for power. As Page says, our real agenda is the societal agenda. Zuckerberg says, we take responsibility to connect the world and to give people platforms to share. But of

course, that platform to share is what drives the extraction model of Facebook, which allows them to up level their predictive analysis, which exponentially increases their profit.

So what's happened is utopianism has married a private profit sector, C. S. Lewis's *conditioners* have actually fulfilled themselves, and we're actually developing a techno-feudalism, which is undermining the very structure of will itself; the very structure right of personhood itself, the very structure of free elections, the very structure of democracy, the very structure of economics. This is not just more advertising, it's not more of the same. This is all of machine intelligence invisibly arrayed against you, and the data set in which you're a part, to change the essential structure of society without you knowing that it's taking place; that's a very big deal.

This is stepping out of the Tao. The Tao that can be spoken is not the Tao, but words can point to the Tao. The Tao that can be measured is not the Tao, but measurement can point to the Tao. The Tao that can be coded is not the Tao, but code can point to the Tao if we code for Social Self.

Now, what does that mean that we need? We need a new model of self. Shoshana Zuboff has no model of Unique Self, it's not available to her. Alex Pentland has no model of self, he has only what we're calling the Social Self in his *Social Physics*, which is a frightening book in its banality; it's cheerful, it's lovely. Unless you read it carefully and understand the implications, you're just reading this lovely, nice book with a really nice cover by Penguin. But actually, Pentland and his gaggles of doctoral students are the successors of Skinner, and Skinner is actually the *conditioners* that C. S. Lewis was talking about.

Now, C. S. Lewis makes a mistake. C. S. Lewis is a classical Catholic Christian, he wants to return us to some version of natural law. But that's not going to work for all the reasons we said; we don't need the old natural law, we don't need the old perennial philosophy. So we need to correct C. S. Lewis's mistake and talk about Evolving First Values and First Principles. Number two, we need to actually articulate a new model of self; not just in our *Unique Self* book as we talked this morning in terms of strategy, we need a *Unique Self Theory* book that penetrates the academy and all of its levels. In *Unique Self*, we need a model of Homo Amor, we need the five selves; those have to be available and they have to suffuse.

I was talking to Elliott Ingersoll—a professor of psychopharmacology, the leading one in the country—about the Unique Self model that he's now teaching; Kathy Brownback taught it in her secondary school, Lori's working on Unique Self Recovery, Zak deployed it brilliantly in his gorgeous book on education.

***But we need to actually articulate this model, and then this model needs to be downloaded into the world of data science. The Tao that can be coded is not the Tao, but just like words can point to the Tao, words can point to Unique Self. So we need to actually articulate a completely different vision of what it means to be a human being, so that we don't move towards Pentland's superorganism of the social hive, in which essentially we become data bits in a system; our freewill is gradually effaced, the algorithm becomes the authority, there's human puppets that kind of represent, but actually algorithms are making all the decisions.***

In the end, what Google wants is to organize the world's information. But in Silicon Valley speak, information means reality, because they've adopted Shannon's view of information. Shannon, of course, got the math right, but the metaphor wrong; Shannon's talking about precisely non-information, he's talking about digital bits that Mabel can cram through, he's talking about information without meaning. But from Google's perspective, organizing the world's information means we're going to organize the world; we're going to see what search comes up, you're going to turn to us for who to marry.

That's Google's goal; who to marry, where to live, everything's going to go through the algorithm. We're going to have biometric sensors, we go from holdables the phone, to wearables, to then under-the-skin surveillance; everything's fed into the algorithm and the algorithm makes all decisions. So this is the fourth form of existential risk, which is not the death of humanity, it's the death of our humanity; a techno-feudalism or a digital dictatorship, which makes the sovereign state a joke, which makes democracy a joke.

Pentland wrote an essay, believe it or not, called The Death of Individuality, which is literally echoing Skinner. So Skinner actually won the day. Pentland speaks at all the Google and Facebook conferences, but Pentland's not the devil; he's a nice guy. But he stepped out of the Tao, and his model is the Social Self; that's what's being coded.

So we originally articulated Unique Self as a response to Separate Self in its shadow form, hyper-individualism. Now we need to have Unique Self respond to Social Self in its shadow form, which Zak you refer to as hyper-collectivism. So Unique Self has to respond, not only to the limitations of True Self and the Buddha Enlightenment system, not only to the limitations of Separate Self and False Self, Unique Self actually has to respond to Social Self; it needs to be placed in that context. Because without that, techno-feudalism rules, and we will not recognize the world of 20 years from now.



# Dr. Zachary Stein

## Highlights

- Self induced extinction
  - The end of the human
  - Undermining the conditions that we hold foundational for humanness
  - Habermas and neuroscience
  - Undermining moral self understanding and legal discourse
  - “Man is written on the sand... and there is waves coming”
  - “Keep the human, but lose personhood.”
  - Core notion of CosmoErotic Humanism = “Evolution is driven by need”
  - Technology solves a problem and creates an entirely new class of problem
  - A mass Skinner machine
- 
- A planetary scale, computational stack
  - The internet of things
  - Constant surveillance
  - Sovereignty and software
  - Google: organizations in a time between worlds
  - Totalized omniscient control of human behavior and information
  - Modernity: the move to measurement
  - Instrumental rationality
  - Man written on the sand has been washed away by the technofeudalist ocean
  - From hyper-collectivist super organism to Unique Self Symphony

I think the framework that Marc laid out is super helpful, that there's actually this form of catastrophe and extinction that is obvious, which is, we all die. So there's a giant cloud of nuclear terror, or actually an extremely deadly virus that just wipes out the humans, or a meteorite that splits the earth into a thousand pieces. But what we're talking about here is something much more subtle, which is a form of self-induced extinction that has to do with the end of the human as we have known it, and likely the birth of something like a new non-human form of life. This is actually a theme that was surfaced early in the nucleolar era, and there's a couple ways that this can play out.

Marc has pointed to the emergence in a similar vein—like with Harari—of a split where you get an emergence of a split-off of what he called the Homo Deus who just basically are the *conditioners*, and then you get the conditioned, who are without choice.

***You play that out enough generations, and you end up undermining the conditions for the possibility of a lot of things that we hold as foundational to personhood and humaneness.***

But before that, there were things we were doing in genetics, and neuroscience in particular, that had astute philosophers really worried.

Habermas in particular was concerned with the use of neuroscience findings in criminal proceedings in an exculpatory fashion, which is to say, *the use of neuroscience to argue against the existence of freewill literally; to get someone off for doing something wrong. So the idea that one's brains made you do it is a creeping explanatory problem for the neurosciences in modernity, which Habermas pointed out.* He said,

***"If we get too serious with this whole explaining away freewill thing, neuroscientists, we will undercut the condition for the possibility of moral self-understanding and our legal discourses."***

Now, couple that with an invasive technological agenda, which says, not only do we not have freewill, but we understand well enough how the brain works that we can put a computer chip in it. So there were already concerns about cyborgization and the removal of even the language of choice and freewill from legal discourse and things that Habermas surfaced. There's also been concerns about genetic mutations.

But what's interesting is that what many of the Europeans express in very stark moral concern—as Habermas did, where he writes a book called *The Future of Human Nature*, where he addresses on this—many of the Americans and British became transhumanists and they were like, "Fuck yeah, bring it; human was stupid," and many postmodernists as well. There's a great passage in Foucault where he talks about how *Man—he's French, so to say Man is like the human of modernity—is written on the sand, and there's waves coming*; his notion. Deleuze speaks in this way, or at least similar. So there's a sense of like, the eclipse of man; the end of the human. Of course, you quoted Skinner where he says, *we must abolish the man defended by the literatures of freedom and dignity.* That's actually a postmodern sentiment; a man, which is to say, male.

So there's been this long discourse about the exhaustion of the human as defined by modernity, and some people have embraced it into an accelerationist form of

transhumanism. But what's interesting there is that you end up in a situation of *intergenerational injustice* that, I think, is the strongest argument against embracing the transhumanist approach; I'm not going to get into that now, what I want to focus on is where Marc went. There's these other ways that we could keep the human but lose our humanity—*keep the human but lose personhood* is how Marc and I are saying it at the Center—which is to say, to eliminate the nature of personhood from the human organism at scale, and then we finally move beyond those literatures of freedom and dignity.

So we've seen the Google issue and we have this sense of what a remarkable situation this is. It's worth noting that, and Zuboff even mentions this, when these technologies first emerged—specifically Facebook, Google, music sharing platforms, things of that nature—they were meeting a very real need. To Marc's point about ***evolution being driven by the meeting a very real need***, there was something happening in the breakdown of social systems and economic systems, which was identified pretty early as this process of individualization.

What happened was people became much more isolated, faced with much more complex problems, and the internet provided a massive information and connectedness and solutions to very real problems that were unprecedented that we were having, almost instantly. So there was a move to adopt that was so rapid because of the perceived benefit, that as it slowly changed into something else, people had come to appreciate the benefit and didn't notice how long those agreements they were signing were becoming, before signing up for a service. It's worth noting that it's not like Google held a gun to everyone's head and was like, you guys better use this whole computer thing, and they were like, I don't want to use the internet. No, people were very much using this, and it changed everything as we've experienced.

So that's the first bit is that it's like your classic dialectic of Enlightenment, where a technology solves one problem and then creates a whole new class of problem. But I think this class or problem, what's interesting is that we always thought it was going to be like the *Terminator* scenarios; they create the artificial intelligence and then they come in as like *The Matrix*. But instead, it is imperceptibly but clearly turning into... a mass Skinner machine, a mass learning box, a conditioning Internet. That was in part because of the move to allow so much of the content to be dictated by advertisements, but it's not just that; there's a whole bunch of pieces here.

I want to deepen that analysis, I just kind of brought us to where we were. Benjamin Bratton, this guy wrote the book called *The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty*. He talks about the emergence of a planetary scale computational stack. Now what he's talking about here is the physical infrastructures that allow that massive data ocean to exist, and

more specifically, what we now refer to as the Internet of Things, which is the vast sensor and activator network that is coupled to that data in the cloud.

So as much as it seems like we're on the screen and it's tracking us, but then when we're walking around or whatever, we're no longer in the cloud or on the internet; this is actually also incorrect, and increasingly so, especially if you're in a major city. You have to get that it is the enclosure of the mind and the enclosure of choice, but it is also actually a physical enclosure. Soon, this thing will likely include a whole bunch of stuff like your medical data, and if you've been vaccinated and stuff. Then because it's on the cloud and it's linked to the internet, you'll walk into a place and they're like, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, you cannot come in here, because we've figured out—because you're connected, because you have to be—that you don't have XYZ thing. So that's just an example.

Of course, the Internet of Things is coupled to almost everything now, and when you read books about it, it's amazing what it can do. So again, we're solving a shitload of problems with the Internet of Things, but we're creating a whole new dimension of the control of human behavior, and the routing and mediating of choice. It won't feel like you don't have choice; it is going to feel like you're making choices. But when a menu is put in front of you and you don't know which options aren't on it, because they've decided which ones you can have, because they've already figured out who you are, then choice becomes very dubious. Now, if we get back to the cyborg scenario and the genetic engineering scenario, then we can get deeper into situations where there's a question of what it feels like to be without choices.

So there's the data in the cloud and there's a surveillance that's happening, and then there's the Internet of Things, which is actually encoding those personality profiles, not just in what appears on your screen, but also in the circumnavigation of space and the delivery of goods and the tracking of movement and a ton of stuff that Benjamin Bratton lays out. But what's important to get here is like, this is the Wild West. The computational scale planetary stack that has been constructed or that has been hobbled together to meet needs in an ad hoc market fashion, with no overarching sense of design and no overarching sense of legal jurisdiction, which is why he talks about sovereignty and software. It's like, who owns the data, where is the data? You build these servers in offshore waters? That's really interesting Google; they're doing that on purpose.

So there's a really deep game being played. Beyond the borders, laid down on the surface of the earth, we have a super ordinate planetary stack which doesn't respect those borders. In there, we have competing, a set of organizations like the world has never seen; Google being probably the exemplary one. If you think about—because we've talked about the Renaissance and the birth of modernity—back then, the Dutch East India Company.

Now that was so categorically different from the way that a feudal village would run anything that looked like a business in a feudal village, that it took a long time for people even to detect what it was. Our good friend, Comenius, dedicated his book to it; he was aware of what the Dutch East India Company was. But it was a very innovative economic forum, but also a forum for the control of human behavior and the movement of goods and information, specifically bookkeeping; information was huge.

So what I'm suggesting is that we're kind of in that place, again, between worlds, where there is a form of organization that has emerged, which we actually really don't exactly know how to make sense of; Google is a great example of that. My sense is that, just as there were radically new forms of attempts at cosmopolitan legal codes—like the Westphalia and then eventually Bretton Woods Agreement, and other things which tried to actually lock in a sense of, what do we do with these giant nation states that emerged, and also the birth of some of the large structures of economy that accompanied the birth of modernity—there will need to be some form of new regulation; I'm not even sure if regulation is the right word.

That's another bit in here, is that, we can speak a lot about the need for inducing understanding on the part of those people who are engaging with this thing, which is what we're doing—like be aware that when you're looking at a screen, behind it, actually invisibly arrayed against you, there is a vast architecture of behavioral manipulation potential—but there seems to also be moves that need to be made at a level that is beyond that. Like, these are companies that we've never seen, they're willing powers that are dwarfing the powers of nation states in some respects. It's clear that they're also deeply in cahoots with the structure of the nation state, which is a plot Zuboff gets into as well.

But let's get more specific about this issue. You build a giant planetary computational stack and you have a personality profile for each person who is a member of basically, the human race; that would be the ideal. So when you think about the idealization of the totalized, omniscient control of human behavior and information, you start to see that there's something baked into the foundational vision that could potentially be problematic, and the source of what the issue is.

Marc has been pointing to Skinner, and I think that this is a very interesting place of the point. Beyond Skinner, you can also look back to Taylorism, which I think is related to Skinner and related to the broader issue, that it's not just the manipulation of behavior, it's also the organization of behavior for the purpose of production and consumption. Before Skinner, Taylor was sitting there with stopwatches at the factory, figuring out exactly what

the precise human motion would be that would optimize the production of XYZ thing. So this was behaviorism, before behaviorism.

I'm going to kind of bring it back to where we were actually last night with Ken, which is that the dignities and disasters of modernity are playing out. When modernity emerged, Marc, you separated these three strands; you separated the natural law and the perennial philosophy, and then the third strand, which was the predominant strand, which ended up being the strand of scientific knowledge and technology production.

Specifically, Ken was astute to point out that that strand, in difference from the other two, had this movement towards measurement and mathematics, which kind of made a ratcheting effect such that, in those cultural conditions, at that time, science kind of took the ball and ran with it; and left the values laden with discussions of universal religion and the perennial philosophy—and the values laden with discussions of natural law—kind of in the dust as it were. Habermas refers to this as the hypertrophy of instrumental rationality. Of course, Skinner pulls so deep into that, that he didn't even see it as a hypertrophy, and this is what rationality was.

So there's some diagnostic to make at the level of the worldview that we ended up with at the time that we stepped into the digital, and the paucity of alternative deep First Principles and First Values to draw on as design parameters. That leaves me as an educator, thinking about this fourth form of existential risk—when we basically lose our humanity, even though we survive physically—as fundamentally this combination of just how radical an educational crisis can get, that you end up in a situation where you've undermined the condition of self-development and reflection that would allow people to create technologies that are truly beneficial.

There's no blame. In fact, I'm not sure that there's ever been a situation where we weren't quite teetering on the edge of not having done justice to the ones who will come after us. So the ones who will come after us now, will no longer be like us. If that gets deep enough—that the ones who come after us are no longer like us—to the extent that we cannot truly understand them, or expect to be understood by them, then you've crossed that threshold that we were talking about, and man written on the sand has been washed away by the ocean, and there's been some strange birth of a new species beyond the pale of what we—basically the creators of that species, or mothers of that species—can understand.

I'm circling back to where I began, and then I'm actually going to wrap because I want to have a chance to have some back and forth around us. So this has been the stuff of science fiction and nightmare for a long time in the Atomic Age. Like when you think of

Arthur C. Clarke's childhood, there's a transhumanist moment there where him and humans are done, and technology has moved on; that was a nice run you guys had and it set us up for something else, but the human is over. Again, with genetic engineering and cyborgization and accelerationist transhumanism, I think there is an embracing actually of that as an ethos.

I think what's important to get is that there's a couple other strands of transhumanism—and I would place Barbara, Marc, Daniel and myself and our vision at the Center among these—that Teilhard de Chardin and Aurobindo formed, that are different; they're not techno-optimist transhumanists, and they take onboard Skinner's critique, that if we all stay in the Separate Self, we're going to die.

***But they don't therefore say, let's progress back down below the Separate Self and make something like a hyper-collectivist superorganism in which we eliminate individuality. Instead, we have a transhumanism that suggests the emergence of new forms of consciousness and the mental capacity for care and love. That the thing we call Man—which has been written on the beach, which we're waiting to be erased—needs to be erased, but what replaces it is what we call Homo Amor, and that the religious version of a transhumanism is the actual answer to the techno-optimist version of the transhumanism.***

Because the human is sometimes referred to among some ecological activists as a failing species; we're about to actually maybe even kill all the other species, which is a way of failing that most species couldn't even muster. There's this idea that the human is a failing species, that Skinner and Buddha and all these other people are like, it's just endless fighting unless we crack this Separate Self thing.

So I think that's a little bit of a way of understanding one of the plays of the Center, is that it's a cryptic religious transhumanism. Barbara was very explicit about that—that unless the Kosmic Christ moves through the human or as Marc and I are formulating it, unless Homo Amor emerges or Metatron descends; however you want to characterize it—unless we become more than the human has been, we will all die.

The solution to Existential Risk implicit in Skinner and what are are showing to be implicit in some of the animating ideologies moving through the techno-feudalist move, is to have a different solution to that; the behaviorist move, - and ***this goes to the core of what we are saying here at the center – might avoid the death of humanity but will like result in the death of our humanity, the second kind of existential risk that we are referring it at the core of our work.***

That would be the one, where you have the *conditioners* and there is a small number of them; they are probably life-extended, DNA-augmented, cyborged, Beyond Good & Evil supermen. Then there are the conditioned, who are exempt of choice and probably some other things; who don't understand themselves as moral agents, or as responsible for their own lives and behavior. So that is the future we need to fight, as they say, in *The X-Files*. I say with the X-Files, because it seems like this should be a science fiction conversation, but it's actually not; in the 90s, before the internet, this certainly was not. When Arnold Schwarzenegger was saying, I'll be back, that was the vision of how we might get it from the AI. But things have changed. That was about 35–40 minutes there, so I'm going to leave it there, hand it to D., and then maybe we'll have some exchange.

### **Marc**

Fantastic! Thank you, Zak. I'm going to just briefly introduce Daniel, many of you know him; he's been with us for a long time. He's a dear friend and brother in the deepest sense. I think, end of 2013 we met, and since 2014 or 2015, he has been in almost every board meeting, and has just played an enormously important catalytic role in conversation. We've had regular conversations; myself and Daniel, Daniel and Zak, collectively over the last more than a decade. He is doing fantastic work in a different dimension; we're working on kind of memes at the Center and this articulation of an entire mimetic structure, and Daniel's working on structural governance in society, which are more related to the right-hand quadrants, and some of the lower-left. But our work fits together in an enormously important way. It's just a personal delight for all of us to have you here, love you madly and take it away. So Daniel's going to step in, and then the three of us will engage in conversation and open for questions, which might be the most fructifying piece.

# Daniel Schmachtenberger

## Highlights

- Hydrocarbon supremacists
- Biology is more than messy wetware
- Beyond the metaphor of computation
- No ethics without tasting strawberries
- Beyond trolley car problems
- The limits of rational utilitarianism
- Radical asymmetries of power
- Six companies defining the stock market
- Asymmetry between supply and demand: supply dominates
- Obliterating the dialectic of demand
- Machine intelligence aligned against you
- Supply dominates creating addiction as the defining feature of markets
  
- Manufactured demand destroys the intelligence of markets
- Power manufactures more power exponentially
- Solving problems generates new and larger problems
- Paperclip maximizers
- From models of reality to the Tao
- Multi-polar traps
- All issues are global
- The AI solution
- The magical singularity
- Or a new collective intelligence at a values level
- Which is also more effective at technological and resource optimization and allegation.

I'm actually here just to argue on behalf of the moral supremacy of the board that are going to replace us, and that you are just hydrocarbon supremacists that have not yet come to understand that you should be replaced by that which betters us.

It's actually funny. As I was thinking about making a joke about you being a hydrocarbon supremacist, I actually know many of the top people working in AI, and that's the view they hold. It's a very interesting thing to understand that they're mostly on the autism spectrum and actually don't have any embodied sense to anything good about hydrocarbons. They mostly think biology is messy wetware, and they learned computers and did better with computers before they learned people; they still haven't done that well with people or nature. So the metaphor of computation, the assumption is that brains are just doing computation and that actually all of nature's just doing computation, and that wetware is just basically shitty computers.

It's actually very interesting from a symbol grounding perspective, which is, before you've tasted the strawberry, all the description of the chemistry of the strawberry still gives you no idea what a strawberry tastes like; you have to actually ground the symbol to really get a sense of it. There's a kind of ethics that can only happen by having a deep connection to the nature of experience and interpersonal experience and the experience of other sentient things; other people and other non-human life. If you don't have that, the closest thing you can have is the simulacra of ethics, which is rational instrumentalism, which is some idea of everything gets turned into a trolley problem. *Okay, well, there's this many lives here, and there's this many lives here. Are all lives equal? No, we'll calculate the value of the life based on the area under the curve of how much they'll effect on these other metrics.*

Ultimately, rational utilitarianism ends up assuming more certainty about the future than we can have and says, if we go this way, these dreadful things will happen; therefore, we must go this way, and it justifies these other dreadful things that are less bad. So it justifies the most sociopathic action in the name of avoiding worse things that are based on more certainty than anyone can actually have.

But it's interesting that computation provides a level of asymmetry of power that cannons just didn't and even nuclear bombs didn't. So the people who grew up, being very oriented not to do well with people and very oriented to do well with computers, in that emerging time, then it's actually their embodied sense of First Principles and First Values—whatever that happens to be for them—that ends up driving the most asymmetric power differential that the world has ever seen, which is a big damn deal to think about.

It's why when you think about the degree of asymmetry of wealth right now, compared to the robber barons—like when you think about somebody having \$200 billion today, you're like that's 200,000 millionaires in one person, let alone the total amount of money they can leverage on top of that with changing market topologies—it's actually really hard to imagine what that level of wealth asymmetry means.

If you look at the stock market, where the market is up, it's because six companies are up. Their cap weight is that actually offsets the fact that the rest of the entire stock market minus those five companies is down. So that level of wealth asymmetry and power asymmetry is not something that ever existed when theory of markets was being created; early local markets, all the way up to Randian markets. The theory of markets assumed a certain symmetry of power between supply and demand; between the consumers and the producers.

It's because if I'm going and trading my shoes for somebody's cows or for somebody's grain, the person who's just literally hawking their wares at a market and I can talk to them doesn't have that much asymmetry of power to be able to lie to me better than I can kind of tell they're lying; maybe there's a few people. In terms of if they're trying to share partial information, they say their shoes are the best, I can actually go check out the other person's shoes; check out theirs, talk to them, and they don't have split test optimized manufacturer of demand capacity.

But when you start to think about it, there's still this idea in theory of markets that there is a symmetry between supply and demand, because the total amount of money coming from demand is equal to the total amount that is flowing into supply. Except it's all of us—who are purchasers of Google or a Nike or whatever—aren't in a union who are coordinating our activity together; it's just us as an individual against a billion or trillion dollar organization that is coordinating its capacity.

So when Zak was saying we can increase people's awareness about the nature of the behavioral manipulation that happens online, actually, you can't increase your awareness enough to matter that much in terms of symmetry. Because I'm aware that Facebook is running AI algorithms—that as Marc said, beat the fuck out of the AI's that beat Kasparov at chess, and I'm nowhere near as good at controlling my attention as Kasparov was; I don't even realize it's happening, but I'm aware of that—so I'm going to hop on and I'll be sovereignly in control of my choice. But I don't even know what's going to show up on my newsfeed ahead of time. So then I think I'm making choices about the nature of my attention allocation, but the nature of tracking where my retinas going and tracking where my mouse goes, and being able to do advanced behavioral analytics on it, I can't even be aware of that; I don't have that enough bits of information per second to do it. So I don't have a symmetry of awareness regarding my own self, as the extraction-oriented machine does.

So it's important to get that actually, market was a kind of religion. Marc was talking about that there was a God in the pre-Renaissance, and then that turned over to science, but

then it actually turned over to markets in a meaningful way; the Invisible Hand is a kind of God, which is why people have such a sacred relationship to it. We couldn't possibly know what is good; we couldn't possibly coordinate it. But the collective intelligence mediated by the emergence and the complexity of supply and demand means that the very best goods and best services across radical parallel processing will emerge to make the best thing possible. So this emergent complexity of the Invisible Hand becomes the new God of progress.

Except it's a pathological god, it's a paperclip maximizing God, and increasingly more so as the symmetry increases, the asymmetry increases. Because the original idea is that the demand is that people are going to want real things that will actually improve the quality of their life, they'll want a better plough that will make it to where they don't have to work quite as hard; whatever it is. So there is a real intelligence connected to quality of life and the nature of demand in a market.

People want something and they're willing to offer resources for it, they're willing to pay for it, and that creates an evolutionary niche for supply to emerge. So now different people try to make the best supply, and the rational human actor—who can see all of the supply and compare them, and is going to make the best choice—will choose the best product or service at the best value. The intelligence of that will mean that the market keeps making better and better things more and more efficiently, that actually matter. That's kind of like the theory of market.

Then it gets reified with evolutionary theory and social Darwinism that that's basically how evolution works, and that markets are an instantiation of evolutionary process; there's competition and survival of the fittest that actually drives higher complexity organisms. That's what a market is doing; competition, driving innovation, driving survival of the fittest, etc.

The issue, of course, is as soon as supply starts getting enough larger in its coordinated capacity than the demand—meaning, I don't have a union of customers, I have individual customers; so it's not coordinating symmetrical capacity—then the supply side says, our job is to maximize the lifetime revenue of the customer—like addiction is the very best way to maximize lifetime revenue of a customer; starting them earlier, upselling them, cross selling them, whatever—so the more we can drive addiction, the more we can compel their choice to not actually be choice because they have to do it, the better we do.

Then we actually signed a fiduciary responsibility that we're legally bound to maximize profit for the shareholders whose funds we're basically managing. Then it's like, I don't just want to meet the authentic demand they have, I want to manufacture demand they didn't

have; I want them to desperately want shit they never heard of before yesterday. Then I want to drive perceived obsolescence, so then they want more shit, whatever.

Now the moment you manufacture demand, the underlying theory of the intelligence of the market just broke. But also, with the ability to keep manufacturing demand, now you have an autopoietic supply side; the supply side is actually driving the whole fucking thing because it's driving the non-rational actor, which is what behavioral economics, Dan Ariely and all that work started to expose.

This is actually a very important thing to understand about the nature of power, is that power differentials are fundamentally autopoietic. Meaning if I have more power—whether it's information power, monetary power, political power, military power—than you, that more power gives me more ability to maintain my more power and get more of it. So increased power both gives the capacity and the orientation to protect and advance the total differential. It's a key insight, because once it starts, how the fuck does it not just go runaway? Well, it always has gone runaway until it becomes so severe that the civilization breaks, and then you start over.

That was the essence of what Piketty showed in data but many people had known previously, is that if I had a society, and by some Divine Decree, I hit restart and I gave everyone an exact equal amount of money and resources— $t = 0$  and everybody has an exact same amount of money—some people would, for various reasons like luck and capacity, start to do better than other people in some transactions. Then that increased capacity that they have more wealth means they can get better technology, more people in their employment, better tutors, and their kids get better schooling and better nutrition. So pretty soon within a few generations, you'll have a power law distribution of wealth where a few people here have almost all the wealth, and it gets increasingly less so until that becomes so asymmetric that the whole thing can't hold together.

So there's this question of how do we keep asymmetries of power from perpetuating themselves? This brings us to what Marc was talking about; rivalrous win-lose metrics, which is obviously when we're talking about power asymmetries, we're talking about that. I think every metric is win-lose, even if I'm intentionally trying to apply the metric for the good of all. If I'm trying to say, I want to sequester  $\text{CO}_2$  for the good of everybody and future generations,  $\text{CO}_2$  is not a good indicator of the total health of the world by itself. Because I can sequester  $\text{CO}_2$  through a strategy that involves planting a lot more carbon sequestering plants, using nitrogen fertilizers near river deltas that cause more nitrogen effluent and dead zones and oceans. So with the  $\text{CO}_2$  in parts per million actually—in a fundamental theory of trade-offs with all the other effects and things, and if I'm not paying attention to all of them—without even intending to, I win-lose some metrics at the expense

of others. This is the thing Zak was saying, that in solving a problem, we make worse problems.

We talked about this in the last board meeting. It's a funny example, but it's so fucking key to give. The problem that the automobile was solving was the difficulty of horse husbandry; very specifically, horses were just a pain in the ass to go across country and go far places and whatever. They ate a lot, and very specifically, they shit a lot; horseshit cleaning was one of the big issues starting to address highly populated areas. So being able to have a horseless carriage solved the horseshit problem and other horse husbandry problems, and obviously increased the quality of life in many really important ways. But all of the wars that were mediated at scale because of the internal combustion engine, all of the oil spills, all of the wars over oil in the Middle East, and the US Petrodollar and climate change itself are all the externalities of solving the horseshit problem the wrong way.

So this is where we will define a problem in a narrow way—we want to solve CO<sup>2</sup>, or we want to solve childhood hunger; even if it seems like a good one—but we're defining it in a way smaller than serve the Tao; serve the thriving of all life in perpetuity, which there is no measure for, there is no metric for. There's lots of metrics, but ultimately, wisdom is the gap between what all the metrics say to optimize for and what the right choice actually is. The right choice is something that when I factor all the metrics, there's still a difference.

This is why metrics-based optimization, which an AI Singleton could do, will always be a paperclip maximizer. Because there's always an unknown unknown set in reality that we don't have metrics for that matters. So when I'm optimizing for the model of these metrics, I'm externalizing harm to other critical things.

The difference between the models of reality I'm optimizing for an actual reality, is where I fuck reality up. This is what I take, aligned with the Tao that is speakable; the Tao that is modelable is not the eternal Tao, and the model that is optimizable is not the thing to optimize for.

When I think of *no graven images, no false idols* thing, it's that the model of reality is never reality. Rather than say, "This is our best current understanding, which is still infinitely inadequate, but we work with it with both humility and interest and sacredness," as soon as I hold that the idea of reality is it and it's sacred, that's the graven image, and that's kind of the fall from redemption.

I guess one thing I do want to say, because I think it's an important part of this, is multipolar traps are at the heart of the thing we have to solve in terms of what the right transhumanism is. The multipolar trap is, as soon as anybody makes nukes, everybody

has to do their best to make nukes or they lose by default. No one can ever actually do nuclear disarmament because whoever gives up their last nuke first is fucked, and they know it. So who's going to say, I'll destroy my last minute first, and trust that the other guy then won't just take me over at that point? Well, I'll say that I'm giving up my last nuke while lying and hiding it, hoping that he gives up his last but he's doing the same thing. So it's like, fuck it, we'll just both race to make better hypersonic nukes.

So it's very hard to get out of that arms race or that multipolar trap; the collective action problem. This is why we didn't do nuclear disarmament, it's why we have an arms race on AI weapons, CRISPR weapons, and everything. It's why you have an AI arms race between the attention capturing algorithms of YouTube, Facebook, Google, etc. Now AI is competing with each other for attention optimizing. It's also why we haven't achieved any of the UN SDGs is because all of the things that require global coordination, we can't do; we suck at the ability to globally coordinate. *Because if we do the right thing for the big picture in the long term, we won't maximize our game theoretic advantage in the short term.* If someone else does the same that it maximizes their advantage in the short term and fucks the whole, they win. *So now we're all in a short term race to the bottom.*

How do we get out of that? Well, the Nick Bostrom's and many people in that field say, there's no way. The only way is we need rule of law at a global level, because the issues are global. No one is smart enough to handle the total information singularity other than an AI, and we couldn't trust anyone enough. But the rule of law requires a monopoly of violence. Because without a monopoly of violence to enforce rule of law, there is no rule of law; it's just kind of a suggestion, and whoever has more violence still wins. So we need an AI overlord that is benevolent.

This is literally the best thinking of the best people in the world on how we solve this right now, is an AI Singleton—you can watch Bostrom talk about it on 10, Yuval talks about this—that has a true monopoly of violence, because it's so asymmetrically smarter and faster than us; and that has a true monopoly of information processing, but is coded with the right values to be a benevolent overlord. Well, that's compelling in the presence of the multipolar trap where we just keep racing to the bottom as idiots with exponential tech the other way; those are our two options right now.

Or let's just forget about it and hope that somehow magically, we ascend into the Kurzweil singularity first or something. Elon says, rather than a single AI Singleton overlord—AI is definitely going to happen, we can't stop it, it's going to be an overlord—we're going to chip our brains so we merge with it, so that we aren't totally useless in that landscape; we aren't just pets. So neural link is his best bet, combined with let's get off this planet, because

we're ruining it. By the way, this is not dumb people, this is people who are actually facing the hardness of the issues. But the landscape of good choices just sucks.

Okay, if we don't want an AI overlord, and we don't want to have to just chip ourselves into the Borg—because if you can't beat them, join them—yet there's an information Singularity, and we have these multipolar traps; we have to get past the multipolar traps, how do you do that?

***You have to actually bring about a kind of collective intelligence that can orient towards big picture, long-term, non-externalizing solutions at a values level, but also be more effective at technological and resource optimization and allocation than the extract of short-term paperclip maximizing thing is; it has to do both of those. Then that becomes autopoietic, but in the right direction.***

# Dr. Marc Gafni

## Highlights

- Reintroducing a caste system
- The deception of graphs and statistics
- Weak conceptions, Spirit and value
- Nick Bostrom's strawman
- New visions of value
- Evil as a failure of intimacy
- Towards a universal grammar of value
- Reclaiming the value of Personhood and the Personhood of Kosmos

Fantastic. Thank you, Daniel and Zak; those are both two big pieces. I think it's clear to everyone how these three pieces fit together. I think that's kind of self-evident how these pieces are all kind of part of a fabric, and we were just playing together in a Unique Self Symphony. We're just playing different instruments, but these instruments are actually complimentary. So we're going to do one round between us, then we'll take some questions and we'll close. But it's a super important conversation that picks up on some of the really important conversations that we had last year, and conversations over the years, and we're going to try and bring this together, both in writing and conversation and in implementation.

Let me just raise two things and kind of put a couple things on the table, and then we'll open up; a couple of small things, then I want to get to the essential thing. The small thing, just to say the obvious—Daniel referred to it, I referred to it, Zak referred to it; all in different terms—is that **essentially we're reintroducing a caste system**. This is something that has been pointed out by a number of arcane and little red writers, but they actually pointed out very correctly, that for all of history, rich people thought they were better than everyone else. But that was bullshit, because why are you better than everyone else? You're not!

Now, that's going to become true. Actually in a several generations, the ability to actually augment yourself, both cognitively and biologically and in terms of resource, will actually mean that your children and your line, in a relatively short amount of time, will actually be smarter, faster, more longevity, more beautiful, more capacity than the rest of the world;

that has never been possible in human history. So actually, paradoxically, the arrogance of the uberwealthy become—at least in an objective sense—justified, because we're very rapidly moving towards a caste system. After this moment of dramatic inequality, we introduce a dimension of equality—Daniel unpacked some of Piketty, who points to the structures of how some of this works—and we're moving towards a radical inequality. That's one.

Two, when you hear the techno-optimists talking—when you hear Steven Pinker talking in his book, for example, *Enlightenment Now*—there's an enormous amount of legitimacy. We would call *Enlightenment Now*, Pinker's book, a great example of the dignities of modernity. When we talk about Habermas and the dignities of modernity, *Enlightenment Now* is a great example of it.

But just track this for a second. Let's say you get that life is a First Principle and First Value. Now, clearly what's happened is there's an explosion of life; we went from 0.5 billion people couple 100 years ago to 7.7 billion people now. Even if all of the techno-optimist graphs are right, and they're debatable, and even if you say, there's only 20% of the people who are suffering at an abject level, you have two three times as more suffering people when you're talking about 20% of 7.7 billion people. So on the one hand, it completely destroys the entire argument; you have more life, but you also have incredibly more suffering objectively on the planet. That's a great example of just the deception happening.

So yes, there's dignities of modernity, but actually, we're dealing with a level of suffering that's actually unimaginable on the planet in the second; this is not a meta-theoretical conversation. The Center's commitment and our commitment is to address suffering; this is about the healing and transformation of suffering, and affirming the dignity of every life form and every human being in the most gorgeous sense.

Let's see if we can focus our last round on First Principles and First Values. Nick Bostrom is a great example, by the way. Nick Bostrom is the person I mentioned before who was influenced by Derek Parfit. One of his younger cohorts is, let's say, Toby Ord. We did a review of his book on existential risk that came out a few months ago. Toby Ord uses as his foil, Steven Pinker in the footnotes; interesting conversation, the existential risk conversation. Toby Ord, by the way, crunches the math and says one out of six in the next 100 years, one out of two in the next 500, approximately, in terms of the reality of existential risk. So this is for fucking real.

This is where we have enormous leverage, and I want to point to leverage here. So one, the conception that Nick Bostrom has of spirit is actually a very weak conception; this is a

very interesting paradox. We have a person who's really good at X amount, and then when he starts talking about spirit, he actually creates a caricature of value and destroys the caricature. For example, all of the postmodern critiques of perennial and natural law are based on correct postmodern insights, but they don't actually articulate a notion of interior science and a notion of Evolving First Principles and First Values, that actually answer all the reasons that we would actually dismiss value.

So paradoxically, imagine if you had to go to a doctor, and you went to a doctor who was doing 16th or 17th or 18th century medicine; not a good idea. But actually, we're doing bad 16th, 17th, and 18th century spirit. We're working with old notions of materialism and dualism, which actually have been decimated in good philosophical thought; David Ray Griffin has done a really good job of talking about that. We're working with old models of self and old universe stories, and actually, much of the conversation of Nick Bostrom or Yuval Harare; Harare is a good example.

Yuval Harare was formed by a secular Israeli ethos; it's an ethos that I spoke to very directly, and I know the ethos. He just takes as a given, as we said many times, that actually all value is a fiction. But if you look at how he describes the notion of objective value he's attacking, he describes it in terms that it doesn't need to be described. So actually, there's a complete process, and we've tracked this; same thing with Shoshana Zuboff, same thing with Steven Pinker, same thing with Howard Bloom, but Howard is actually now shifting.

In other words, what's happening is there's a caricatured description of value, and based on the caricatured description of value, value as an objective structure being in the Tao is dismissed; and therefore, all that's left is all the forms of game theoretic dynamic. So we wind up with versions of Thanos in Avengers 1 and Avengers 2, who's making game theoretic calculations, who has vast asymmetries of power, and the results are for the sake of the good, the destruction of half or all of humanity. To move out of this Thanos moment—and essentially, that's what we're describing—we need to actually step back into the Tao.

But we can't step back into the Tao by making a regressive premodern move; by making a superficial natural law move, which actually is natural law that confuses depth structures and surface structures, natural law that ignores evolution and doesn't understand the evolutionary movement; nor perennialism, that highlights a particular kind of spirit and ignores all other forms of spirit, and also ignores basically context and all of the postmodern insights. That's not going to work. So actually, the single most compelling thing we can do is to actually articulate a notion of value; by value, I mean, meaning or spirit.

I'm just going to give you an example. Daniel and I had a series of conversations around value and spirit in 2014, which were important and something important I think Daniel would say transformed in them which of course gave voice to voices already at play in him. Not because I was persuasive personally but because the dharma, the vision was uniquely coherent and compelling in its internal coherence and Eros. m Howard Bloom is a great example. Howard Bloom says, I'm an atheist; there is no value. But as we've talked for two or three years, Howard's position has evolved dramatically. Because he sees that there's actually alternatives that are available, and that he can actually step into the Tao in a significant way without adopting a particular religion or regressive view, etc. And of course these conversations gave voice to intellectual and existential moments already at play in Howard and Daniel. And as profound as I hope I impacted on each of them, they have impacted on me in their realms of science and governance and civilizational structuring.

I'll give you one more example, then I'm going to turn to Zak and Daniel. I want to focus on this notion of the caricature. So there's a gentleman named Leonard Mlodinow. He wrote with our colleague, Mr. Chopra, *War of the Worldviews*. Leonard's web smart, good thinker. So when Leonard talks about why he dismisses the notion of personhood in Kosmos—he does it on Page 65, if you're interested in *War of the Worldviews*—and I've seen this move a thousand times, this move is repeated time and again; Bostrom makes this move in several places as well—he says, "My mother was in a concentration camp. The Nazi Guard has eight people kneel on the ground, and then arbitrarily shoots this one, doesn't shoot that one, shoots this one, doesn't shoot that one." Mlodinow says that the notion of personhood, the notion of anything that we would call the intrinsic value of Kosmos, he says that's a violation; that's just not true.

That's the move made by most people in this realm. Again, Bostrom makes it but in a slightly different way; this move exists across the spectrum. But actually, the entire notion of evil only makes sense if you realize that evil is a failure of intimacy. If there's no Intimate Universe—with everything that that means to us here—and fairness is not an actual First Value and First Principle of Kosmos, then there's absolutely no reason for the world not to be fair. There's an implicit understanding that the Intimate Universe causes something to be evil.

So what often happens is postmodernists, which Yuval is good example of, Yuval in one sense will say, human feelings are reducible to biochemical patterns that can be translated into algorithms. But then, he'll make a number of humanist assumptions which demand a certain kind of behavior as the only right and ethical behavior, which is Foucault's

performative contradiction. Sartre says, there's Kosmic meaninglessness, and yet Sartre does affirm the dignity of the first-person voice; he just affirms it dramatically.

But what Sartre is rebelling against is what Rilke is rebelling against. Rilke's critique of religion is killing a particular version. It's not that we want to go back to classical religion. No, that's not the move. The classical religions have an important role, which is critical, and they need to be each evolved within the framework of their own integrity. But we need a *universal grammar of value*. In order to do that, we have to step into a much better vision of value.

I'll give the last example. So when Ken and I first met, Ken utterly dismissed the notion of second-person; it just didn't make sense. In his book, *Up from Eden*, it was utterly dismissed; it was a dogma. But as we got deeper into conversation, we had this understanding that came together between us; that actually, first, second, and third-person are primordial perspectives, and they're actually principles of Kosmos itself. For example, if the Tech Plex operates based on third-person, Tech Plex is manipulable based on third-person view of the human being, but the Tech Plex leaves out first-person and second-person.

So we actually reintegrated a realization that second-person is actually an absolute principle of Kosmos, and that anything you do in reality has to take into account first, second, and third-person. So we actually established these first, second, and third-person as realities. I'll close with this, and open up the conversation about the overwhelming moral imperative to articulate a vision, a universal story, a narrative of identity, a narrative of desire, a narrative of power, a narrative of communion, based on First Values and First Principles.

I'll end just with this story. I remember I was at the loft with Ken and we were going back and forth, and we'd had a very hard conversation; it was 2004. I said, give me a recording of the last conversation. He said, you kidding? The system broke, we don't have the recording. So I said, Ken, let me tell you a story. It's about a particular master named Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev; it's the mid-19th century, and he's trying to make a blessing. He says, *Barukh ata Adonai*, which is, Blessed are You; then there's a whole text of a blessing. But he would start making the blessing and go, "Blessed are You! You! You! You!" Then he would faint in ecstasy; he could never get to make a blessing because he could never get past the realization of second-person. So that's a very deep idea.

We can actually point to that realization in many different ways; this notion of the personhood of Kosmos. I'm talking to Howard now, together with Zak, about the personhood of protons. In other words, when you have a meta-theoretical model which is

easily destroyable, which is the meta-theoretical model of value that is held throughout most of the leading intelligentsia thinking about these issues; including Elon Musk, including Nick Bostrom, and across the board.

I've actually spent a little time looking at their meta-theoretical context of value, and they're actually caricaturing value/meaning/spirit in a way that it doesn't need to be caricatured; and therefore, leaving themselves only the alternative of: we've stepped out of the Tao, so now we've got neural link and now we've got Mars, and now we've got the paperclip problem. So if we can actually articulate these new dimensions and these new meta-theoretical structures, and in ways that are as unfuckable as they can be, something's moved in the world.

# Dr. Zachary Stein

## Highlights

- Responding to multipolar traps
- First Principles and First Values
- Implicit grammars of value
- Bostrom and company awaiting the second coming of Christ
- Technological apocalypse can only be genuinely addressed with new formulations of value

Absolutely. I'll underline a few things here, and the key one is Daniel's point about the multipolar trap; how the hell do we resolve that? So the play of saying that there could emerge some kind of a *universal grammar of value*, is the only way to think about a multipolar trap. Because the real resolution ends up being something like actual trust; you can resolve multipolar traps in relationships with people that you trust. Because I know you will destroy that last nuke bro—of course, I said bro because that's a sign of trust—I looked in his eyes, and I know that he'll do it; that's the only way. If you're stuck in a purely game theoretic decision procedure, then you simply can't get out of the multipolar trap. So what gets you out of that is the uniting of the broader context of intimacy, which is the shared story, which is the matrix of value that connects the two people.

I'm always reminded to the second-person. So when you read the Old Testament, it's like, two dudes meet on a road and they're conducting some business or a transaction, and God was there. They mentioned that God was there, and the two men are aware that He was there. That's just an example that between the two of them, there's the overarching context of a value, and that allows them—on the road where there's no cops who are going to come and enforce the contract, it's just the two men in the wilderness—to come to an agreement of trust. Sometimes it was like, will you bring this note to my wife? Even though within it, there is money, but it's for her. Like, how do you establish that kind of trust in a situation outside of the rule of law?

This is where I'm coming to, is that story of the Samaritan on the road; the idea that you encounter in the wilderness another. I'll tell a little story. Some of the research I was doing as part of the work with Daniel, in 1984–86, we were trying to figure out what the hell to do with our nuclear waste, and they set up a committee for human interference. The goal

here was that we've got to bury this shit really deep in the ground, it's got to stay there, and no one can disturb it for between 10,000 and probably a million years.

We might be able to do that technically, although that's difficult in terms of the burrowing down and securing it and stuff. But we actually have to do that semiotically, which is to say, we actually have to figure out how to leave a series of signs behind that could warn future humans—that we never will encounter, and actually can't even imagine; don't know what their language would be, what their values would be or whatever—that don't dig here. So they got this guy Seabrook who'd been a student of Peirce and he was a semiotician, they got scholars of religion, and all this kind of stuff happened.

Let that sink in, first of all, that the government had a committee that was specifically designed to handle problem-solving over deep time dimensions; specifically, communication over deep time dimension. But it's also worth noting that why the fuck do we give a fuck about humans that we will never meet 10,000 years from now, and whether we hurt them? In the moment of planning for nuclear winters, it's like this frightening moment in geopolitical and technological and scientific reality-making when we have to figure out how to dispose off this material that's more dangerous than anything we can possibly imagine, and that will remain that dangerous for 10,000 years. Yet, we're like, but let's worry about those humans 10,000 years from now who we'll never meet, and make sure that they're safe.

This is an example of what we call a First Principle and First Value or a *common sense sacred axiom*, which is that after you strip away all of the premodern detritus and you're into this purely austere modernism/postmodernism with no value, where the universe is claimed to be completely demystified and out of the Tao, as it were, there is still in the human, something that's orienting.

Another example of this implicit grammar of value: you will not sit at the dinner table and tell your young daughter that horrifying story about the meaningless universe and the nuclear winter to come; you will try to get your daughter to be happy. But why the hell do you do that in a meaningless universe; more specifically, why would you invest government money to try to protect humans who aren't Americans; we don't even know who they will be?

It's just like, hidden in the most reductive reaches of the military industrial complex, there was actually this strangely unconditional concern for the future. So that's an example of just how deep even though we can go into the confusion of our ontology, that we actually are stuck in the lifeworld with one another, and often will return to the core value. That story is just all a way of basically saying that there is an implicit grammar of value that we

never ceased to operate with. Kant made this point saying, "If you had a society full of devils, who all lied to one another, and didn't trust one another at all, it would fail; it would self-terminate, almost immediately." Even the devils would have to be honest with one another and trust one another, at least a little bit, to get anything done.

So that notion is key that, in fact, already implicit in human is the ability to solve that multipolar trap basically; that there is something that could be made explicit, which we're actually acting in terms of anyway, that needs to be brought forth. It's just worth noting that this sounds like we're going to change people's hearts and minds, and they'll reverberate through society this sense of like love and peace, but it's actually not that. In a sense, this is in people's self-interest to be able to find a way to articulate a common shared matrix of universal values to resolve multipolar traps.

I would mention that this view where we're trying to change minds and hearts seemed less crazy than the view of Bostrom and company who are actually awaiting something like the second coming of Christ. Because when you describe this thing that brings pure justice and power and total asymmetry and total omnipotence and comes and brings peace to humanity at a global scale, it sounds a lot to me like your classic apocalyptic vision of the returning of Christ. So that sense that that's their solution is interesting. It may occur to them that this is what they're saying, but without a richer vision, I'm not sure where that way of thinking goes.

It's a tough sell, PR wise. You're going to convince the planet that this is the plan forward, guys? Or you're just going to roll it out behind everyone's backs, and then it's too late for them all? At the very least, there would be a need to release this plan of trying to put in place a universal matrix of value to resolve multipolar traps to sell that. I don't think you can sell the AI overlord Borg hypothesis. So that was kind of a weave through some of the themes and deepening some of the themes.

The sense that Marc is presenting, that the solution to this which appears to be a technical problem may not be a technical problem. This is one of the ways to think about the overarching thing here, is that there are technical problems to be solved, absolutely. One way to think about this is as one of the most complex technical problems humans have ever tried to solve, which is how do we build in a non-ad hoc way, a planetary computational stack, which has an information architecture and a human interface structure that's not radically exploitative, making people go insane and want to kill one another? That's a massively complex technological problem. But the will to make that, and the realization that there is a better and worse way to do that. There's plays here that are as crucial as a technical play, which are not technically speaking technical, if I can say

that; they're in the domain of the moral and the ethical, and in the domain of personality and ensoulment and Unique Self Realization and Symphony creation.

# Daniel Schmachtenberger

## Highlights

- A reboot of culture
- The Great Library
- Exponential change
- The basis of a cultural reset that is adequate to the nature of the issues that we currently face

It's actually strange. As I listened to the things that both of you shared, I feel kind of emotional, because these are such important topics, and I don't feel like I can do them any justice in this time. Zak, you were saying you don't know if they can sell the AI overlord. Just two thoughts that arose on that. One is they don't have to sell it, it's just being rolled out and no one's doing anything about it. I think it was E. O. Wilson, I'm not sure who made the quote, but something like

"We have Paleolithic emotions, medieval intuitions, and Space Age technology; that combination is existential."

One of the points that Elon Musk has been making—and even as the richest guy in the world, it's not landing, which is one of the very interesting things—is he's like, the purpose of government is to regulate the predatory aspects of market; market does most of this stuff. There's a market for organs and child sex slavery and all kinds of shit, and we don't want that. So we ethically encode rule of law and give rule of law monopoly of violence, so that it's more powerful than the top of the market.

But what happens is the regulation usually comes after the market harm has occurred for a long time; as was the case with smoking, as was the case of seatbelts, as was the case with DDT or anything like that. So by the time the AI risk is that clear, it's impossible to reverse; the same is true with gene function research on CRISPR-based virology. The speed and the scale, and the magnitude and the irreversibility of our current tech is such that if the regulation follows the problem having already become obvious, it cannot be reversed.

That requires saying, culture, recognizing that it has to change the nature of our institutions to not be medieval institutions that are so gruesomely outpaced by the pace of technology. Who's going to take the responsibility to change it? The market won't, because it's not the market's incentive. Government can't, because it is the thing that has to be rebuilt from scratch and has been captured by perverse incentives.

There has to be a reboot of culture, that is where the values are that are what are encoded into rule of law. The idea of law is based on jurisprudence as the encoding of shared ethics, which are where we would bind something where we would otherwise have market incentive to do something that we choose not to do, because there's an ethic that is other than just market incentives.

So either there's a cultural reboot that can rebuild the institutions that can guide the markets that guide the tech, or this system self-terminates. It has to start with culture, then into institutions, and then into markets.

That's what this whole Great Library CIW work is asking and responding to: what is the basis of a cultural reset that is adequate to the nature of the issues that we currently face?

It has to be informed by all the previous systems, it has to have learned from the evolutionary wisdom of them, but none of them were adequate because they weren't dealing with AI risk and CRISPR-based risk and the effects of 8 billion people in globalism and the cumulative effects having hit planetary boundaries.

E .O. Wilson's quote is, we have primitive intuitions. So most people don't have any intuitive sense for exponential growth, because we don't have a lot of experience at exponential growth. We also don't have an intuitive sense of radical asymmetric changes in the landscape, because historically, that never occurred. Because when there was a jump in technology, *like somebody figured out a slightly better catapult and then started winning everywhere, the huge advantage that a Genghis Khan had by a faster, lighter military was still like a tiny jump in the total technological stack of capacity, and then everything rearranged around it.* So our intuition evolutionarily was conditioned with very slow rates of change that were not very asymmetric.

But right now, we're dealing with radically rapid rates of change that are highly asymmetric that we are not intuitively prepared for.

If you just want to get a sense, if you try to look at the speed at which machine learning is increasing its capacity or quantum computing, you won't be able to get an intuition for it because it doesn't ground at anything you can even sense.

So you hear that a quantum computer just in a couple seconds did something that takes classical computation 2.5 billion years, but you have no idea what 2.5 billion years means or classical computation or what the talk of quantum computer means, well enough to get a sense of what that really means.

But if you want to get a sense, go to Boston Robotics and look at the evolution of the Boston Robotics' tech each year; just look at the pace of it. Because it's closer to something you can see, because it's a literal robot and you're looking at the capacity of its movement. Look at Boston Robotics robots this year in their capacity, in the release that just happened, compared to last year and two years ago.

Then realize that the rate of change there is dwarfed compared to the rate of change in pure computation, which is much more powerful.

Now what happens is, most people, they don't ever get a sense. But if they get a sense of it, the moment this thing comes out and I scroll Facebook for a moment, just completely inundate, I forgot about whatever the fuck it was that I cared about, that was an existential risk for the world, because this just completely drowned out my entire attention. Now let's add that I go and get on some antidepressants and some entertainment and I got to make the mortgage. So you don't have to sell the AI singularity, it's just everybody's going along.

Now, the other way that it is being sold actually has to do with Separate Self. So you have the Kurzweilian appeal to people who are afraid of dying, and because I don't want to die, the idea of having my consciousness uploaded in the cloud is so compelling that the fact that the idea that that is assuming the consciousness is the result of pure computation, that computation is both necessary and sufficient for mind consciousness and universe is so compelling that it will kind of go along with that thing. So those are the first couple thoughts that came up.



# Dr. Marc Gafni

## RESOURCING THE FUTURE: MAKING THE REVOLUTION REAL: WHAT DO WE NEED?

### Highlights

- Towards a cultural reboot
- The Tenets of intimacy
- The Intimacy Formula across all platforms
- Resourcing the revolution

Thank you, those are all super important.

It is a critical conversation, I want to try and wrap the last piece just for a minute and then open up, and we're going to close on time; we said we're going to close by the latest. But let me just say just a couple of things very briefly, and we'll finish here.

So when we talk about the shared language between Zak and Daniel in this moment, it's that a cultural reboot is utterly imperative; that's the shared space. Obviously, we're overlapping in pretty much everything, but that's the key shared space. I want to give just a simple one minute—Zak could say the same thing, I'm saying it for both of us and for all of us, Daniel and I've talked about this many times—so we can just kind of see it. We're not talking about making a fanciful claim.

Barbara and I used to have one thing that I would tease Barbara on, but I meant it very seriously. Barbara said, I declare that. I said, Barbara, I love you madly; it's great that you declared it. She's laughing, because Barbara is with us listening to this conversation right now. I said, but we can't declare it; we've got to show it to be unfuckably true in a way that actually sweeps reality or enough of reality, that it actually trickles down and changes culture. That's the move we're talking about.

For example, when we say ***we live in an Intimate Universe and we articulate the Tenets of Intimacy***—we're about to publish a bunch of books in the next few months, and those books need to be published, and as Zak said this morning, these are a promissory

note on the unfuckable shit—what we actually have to do is articulate Tenets of Intimacy. Let's just take the intimacy equation:

The Intimacy Equation:

*Intimacy = shared Identity in the context of (relative) otherness X mutuality of recognition X mutuality of pathos X mutuality of purpose*

That intimacy equation, we can show operates across every structure of reality; up and down the evolutionary chain, every quadrant, every lifeworld.

Now, when we begin to show that, the truth is we can't do that ourselves. When they did *Homo Prospectus*, they had 20 people working across disciplines. When Toby Ord wrote *Existential Risk*, he had about eight people, because he was actually crossing disciplines. So we actually need some firepower, because everything we say has to be perfect.

In other words, we've outlined the basics of this in many conversations; we've got the Tenets of Intimacy, we're beginning to see how they apply across all disciplines.

But imagine, for example, we take the Tenets of Intimacy, which is an interior science equation, and we show that it's true everywhere in this unfuckable way; 500 pages of footnotes. Adam Bellow said to me—who's on our board, but he's unable to be with us this week—Marc, that book, I can take bigger than *Homo Sapiens*. He said, you give me a book with 500 pages of footnotes, you take the intimacy equation and show you're not making this shit up, show that it's not a declaration; that won't do it. *Unique Self*, the way it's written now is a really important book, but it will not take us home. Zak's education book is a really important book, but won't take us home.

So we actually have to be able to go into unfuckability, where we're doing a level of showing a new reality; a level of articulating and responding. When people are holding a caricatured vision, we can't respond with a couple of nice insights, we've got to respond with a level and depth that's unfuckable. Now it doesn't mean that everyone agrees, it doesn't mean it's a dogmatic idea. But it means you cannot ignore this, that this claim of the Intimate Universe—these definitions of Eros, intimacy, uniqueness, etc.—are rooted in the hard sciences, they're rooted in the soft sciences, they apply across economics, schools of economics, attachment theory, they integrate the best of premodern, modern, and postmodern. That's the level we have to play it.

I want to say just super honestly, we don't yet have the fucking firepower that we need to play at that level. Just personally between us, it drives me completely out of my mind. As

I'm trying to get people on board and say, we need firepower, we need funding, and everyone's like, we're just going to do it. No, we're not going to just do it. If we actually fucking care about the planet and suffering, let's get out of our little egoic traps and our little petty stories, fuck that, and let's actually generate what we need to make this happen. This incremental pace and this careful, polite thing, not going to work; we won't do it in 150 or 300 grand a year.

As Sharif said very beautifully, the other day, we need to move the needle so we can actually generate the funding, so that we have enough of everybody's time, so that we can actually present this. But without that, the culture move that we're talking about—the word that Daniel used, cultural reboot—can't happen. You can't culture reboot based on a Marianne Williamson bestseller, with all due respect to Marianne; it's not going to work. It's got to be this integration of interior and exterior sciences at the highest level it's ever been done before. If anyone thinks this can't be done, it can be; we can see the moves.

That's why resourcing actually here really matters. We've already done the fundraising, so I'm not making a fundraising pitch. But I'm saying, it frustrates me to no end, if I can just be perfectly honest, when people don't see the picture, and then it's my responsibility; it's my fault. Because it means, I'm not doing a good job of communicating, and I apologize for that. So it's fully 100% my responsibility. Zak and I together, we're doing our best job of communicating; we didn't make it clear enough. The stakes are beyond high! It's not an accident that we're the people in this room. So I apologize if that was a little bit over the top, but it's an over the top reality. There's not a ton of people doing this, almost nobody doing this.

There's lots we can't do; there's lots of really important things happening in the world that have got nothing to do with the Think Tank, obviously. But this very particular niche, this reboot of culture, in the way that we can do it, this is ours to do. We need help; we need the best people right around from every place, and we need to be able to resource that. We need Belgium and we need Miami, and we need the center of the Center. It's a big deal.

# Questions and Answers

## Highlights

- The dance between certainty and uncertainty
- Ethics commensurate with the philosophy of science
- The God you don't believe in doesn't exist,
- The God you believe in doesn't exist.
- God exists
- The Tao is real
- Uncertainty and certainty are both values of the Tao

Let's hold for a second. Thank you, everyone. We've got a few minutes, and we'd be delighted to take any questions, comments, or alternative thoughts?

## Timothy

One comment if I could. When I was studying synergic science and looking at the civilizations, I described three types of humans. I called one Homo Adversen, the people who believe there's not enough and we have to fight; we divide the world in predator and prey. Of course, this is the animal world. Then Homo Neutralen, which is our capitalism. Capitalism and democracy was an escape from the adversary way, but it was neutral. It's one plus one always equals two. I have \$5, everybody agrees it's worth \$5. I go into a restaurant, I get a meal worth \$5; everybody agrees the meal is worth \$5. I walk out of the restaurant with really no change in my income, and the restaurant hasn't changed there but they have a little profit; they make a profit, I'm making a profit. Then Homo Synergen, which is working together. It's using gifting economy as an example, or working together as the body works together. The human body has 40 trillion cells, these cells create good space internally, and there are no adversaries inside the skin of the body in the ideal situation. So you have to create a community where it's completely safe, and you live in good space.

## Venu

Now, when Daniel was talking about the controller and the controlled, I was thinking of Homo Controlled and Homo Controller. Right now, the Google's and the Facebook's are Homo Controllers. We are getting less and less, they're more and more wealthy, and all of the rest of us are becoming controlled until we end up with that. It's really a step back;

whenever evolution encounters a problem at the level it's existing at, it steps back. I think all we've done is we've converted major force power to major market power. So the Google and Facebook are major market power versus major force power. That's my comment.

### **Marc**

Thanks, everybody. Daniel, I think the first thing I was struck by is one of the very first things that you said, which is that you know a lot of these folks, and that many of them are on the spectrum. So I'll make an assumption that for some of these folks, this is not merely a way out or a maximization of utility; they actually feel this is the proper, logical, reasonable, and ideal move of evolution itself. So in light of that, can you all speak to how the meaning of evolution itself may need to change as our response to what may be on the horizon, according to these folks? Zak maybe you take this first?

### **Zak**

Sure, there's a few things to say there. One is that, it's no mistake that the Center has been involved in discussions of evolution since its inception. So much of modern sociology and modern psychology, and as Daniel said, even modern economics tried to dovetail with the theory of evolution, it's what we inherited. Instead of a great chain of being in the premodern metaphysics, the 'modern metaphysics' is evolution.

So I think you're right. To the extent that those individuals building this future are trying to ground what they're doing in some coherent relation to the rest of the universe, they're going to do so by saying that this is the future of evolution, and in fact, our reason directs us in line with what evolution would direct us to do, which would be this direction. I agree with Daniel, that there's a simple grounding issue here; they are sincerely and earnestly believing that this is the right thing to do now. But the basis of those judgments are hard to...

This is just, again, part of the multipolar trap that deepens the significance of how hard it is. Because it's not just that we're people who all grew up with the same background, watching the same TV, eating the same food, and we're disagreeing. It's like we have profoundly different bases from which our semantics and language emerge. So trying to get a man who's never felt fallen in love, for example, to understand why you would want to have spaces in society where romantic love could be preserved and emerge. Or a guy who's never had amazing sex and trying to tell him that like, actually, sex is a very important part of society.

For example, Will Helmreich whole argument about the rise of Nazism had to do with the fact that for about a decade, there was no place for young people to hang out and have

sex or do anything like that. So fast forward to the pandemic, like it's not a good situation. But if you've never engaged in that, it's not a value for you, basically, at all. So there's that question of how not to just get those linguistically mediated matrix of shared value, but to create enough context where people have shared experience. This was the Deweyan notion of the public schools, it was a symbol grounding thing; it was that we actually needed to get people together and have enough shared basis of experience as a country so that when we meet and argue about stuff, we're actually grounding.

I think some of the challenges is that, it's not just that these organizations are completely unregulated—they are, and there's no legal structures to capture some of what's happening—but it's also that some of the standard appeals that would be made, that would potentially have reined in the activities of prior industrialists with the Christian lessons they learned from their mothers and the secret fears of potentially going to heaven and stuff and how these things are falling on deaf ears. So it's always predicted that modernity would eventually undermined the social conditions that allowed it to actually keep functioning. It's pretty deep; not quite sure where I was going with that, but that's where I ended up.

### **Marc**

I'm going to turn to Daniel if he wants to address this and just say one word in between—there's a phrase we use here all the time, where we say, the gods you don't believe in doesn't exist. When I say God, I mean the value; however you want to say that sentence. In other words, we have to actually revision and get beyond the semiotic problem. We call this the strawberry ice cream semiotic problem, we've called it that here for the last decade. Meaning if you've never tasted strawberry ice cream, there's nothing you can do to convey it; it's not possible. My mentor at Oxford, Moshe Idel, Derrida's good friend, would always say, we've got all these scholars writing on mysticism who have never had a fucking mystical experience; it's completely hilarious.

Here's the big but, which is, we can't just go into the interior world; we have to bring together the best, most sophisticated technologies. In order to be successful at scale, we can't just do a book and do a book tour, it's not going to work. That's why we need to resource; we need to up level the level that we're playing in this conversation. The reason we did Success 3.0 back in 2014 is because there was a sense that we had, that we actually need to wildly increase the budget. That's actually why we did it. Let's take the success issue, and let's blow away the win-lose metrics. Because without increasing the budget, we can't actually play at the scale we need to. In other words, so we took this one issue, the win-lose metrics, Success 2.0, and we worked that as the core of everything. This is the highest game in the world that can be played. So when I say game, I mean, we're playing for the future of the Kosmos. It's a big deal, and it's for realies!

**Daniel**

To Venu's question, evolution selects for Guinea worms and tapeworms and HIV and botflies. There's nothing that says that evolution is a consciously mediated process that is selecting for the maximum true, good, and beautiful in a way that we would understand to be maximally moral. Parasites and viruses, arguably won the evolutionary game more than apex predators. But you can justify why they serve some relevance in weeding out the weak ones and genetic transfer and drift and whatever.

So it's important to get that, our modern primary models of evolution have evolution based on mutation that is assumed to be random—cosmic rays and oxidative pressures and whatever—and then a selection process that is based on survival and mating of those random mutations. As soon as we started making tools, because we consciously apprehended a principle and consciously made a thing, as opposed to a unconscious random mutation making a thing, that was a process that could no longer formally be considered evolution in the same sense, even though you can still think of it as progress in a particular way.

So the theories of evolution as we have them are inadequate to describe the emergence of the human technosphere, and we also wouldn't want them to be the basis of describing it. Then we have to say...

***if we can consciously make new stuff and we can consciously change whole ecosystems, what should be the basis of how we do it?***

The tricky thing is that the ability to make new stuff like technology and engineering is the applied side of science, which is where the Is-Ought distinction exists. The philosophy of science can say what is but it can't say what ought, which is fundamentally an interior or subjective or subjective-objective related thing, as opposed to the philosophy of science being purely objective.

So if the system that has all of the power to affect the world is fundamentally unbindable, with a basis of what right choice of how we affect the world is, then what ends up guiding the science and tech ends up being who's funding the research and what ends up getting ahead; it ends up being game theory, wars, markets, etc., which ends up being an evolutionary-like pressure. So now it's an evolutionary-like selection criteria, but with mutations that aren't mutations, that are consciously created things with radically more asymmetry. That ends up being the source of all of the existential risks we're facing. If we didn't do very powerful tech, we couldn't risk killing everything. We could kill as much as

we could locally, but a polar bear just can't mess up that much stuff, neither can an orca; an apex predator is just not that powerful. But we are, because of the tech.

So then we have to say, if we have this abstraction capacity to understand the world enough to build a fundamentally different world, how does that abstraction capacity also tell us what world we should build?

That is why you need an ethics that is commensurate with the philosophy of science that can guide it, and then new social institutions that are able to actually hold that; the new social institutions that are strong enough to bind market tech forces rather than get captured by them. But those have to find their basis in a culture that has an ethics that is not just interior, but is also not just instrumental.

### **Marc**

Fantastic. Thank you, Daniel. I'm going to end with these just a couple of thoughts. First on Evolution one quick but important note.

Lastly, evolution. If you just think about it, transposition: one, horizontal gene transfer: two, epigenetics: three, symbiogenesis: four, genome duplication: five. Those are five dimensions of evolution that are completely ignored in the random mutation argument; the word random doesn't mean anything like we think the word random means. The dogmatism and orthodox Neo-Darwinism today is a fundamentalism of the most extreme kind, and serious evolutionary scientists all know that. Evolution has inherent Telos, there is a sense of the evolution of love. We need to actually retell the story of evolution—not in some weird, dogmatic, inappropriate way—in a way that actually takes the facts into account. This is the place where there's most dogma at play, so we need good evolutionary science.

### **Daniel**

Marc, when you said the God that we don't believe in doesn't exist, it's funny because before you said that, I was almost about to say something else, which is, the God that you believe in doesn't exist; when you were mentioning the atheism of Howard Bloom. Because that is to me what the false idols are. The Tao that is believable, as opposed to experienceable in a way that is trans-semantic and not translatable to belief, that's the key distinction. The moment I believe in it and I believe that I can conceptualize it adequately, that thing is an antichrist. That is now a thing where I have a degree of cognitive certainty beyond what should be there, as opposed to a felt sense of a sacred that makes me want to continue trying to understand it forever better, knowing it will be forever inadequate, which is what leaves a degree of humility and sacredness and awe, and not the excess of certainty that causes violence. So that's just another thought.

**Marc**

Daniel yes on that for sure, The God you don't believe in doesn't exist and the God you do believe in as the certainty of dogma does not exist. Belief implies dogma. The erotic mystics write that we do not cognitively know god we rather tasted god. God is value. We erotically know God means we know value. There is intellectual and spiritual and somatic Eros but it is all Eros. Eros senses value.

We are not talking about belief. We need to be experiencers of value... we're dancing between certainty and uncertainty. Uncertainty is not a problem—actually, the move of techno-feudalism is to go for utter certainty and predictive analysis—but actually, uncertainty is the name of the Divine. When I was 30, I wrote a book called Reclaiming Uncertainty as a Spiritual Value, where we looked at this notion of ontological pluralism, not epistemological pluralism. There's an ontological pluralism in which uncertainty is a value, it's the First Value of Kosmos itself; the dimension of uncertainty itself is a First Principle and First Value of Kosmos. That's what I mean by caricatured visions of spirit, in which spirits identified with a kind of epistemological certainty, which leads to an epistemic arrogance, which leads ultimately to the infliction of pain by one group or another group. So we have to actually take on certainty and uncertainty, both have to be built in as a First Value and First Principle. So we have to be careful not to certainly reject uncertainty and embrace uncertainty. That also is not to hold uncertainty. Rather we reject the absolute epistemic certainty of "it is true" in relation to dogma but we hold the core certainty of being, in the sense of I am True and Love is True and Goodness is True et al. First Values and First Principles are true even if their particular applications are uncertain and evolving and contingent. The tao that can be spoken is not the tao but words point to the tao.

The great religions made a lot of fuckin mistakes; that's for sure. The esoteric traditions and all of the great traditions, with all of their confusion, all understood what we just said. The God you believe in doesn't exist. But the God you taste and know is existence itself.

That is to say that there's a non-conceptual felt sense right of the Tao. Yes, the Tao that can be spoken is not the Dow, and yet words can point to the Tao.

I actually have a little Taoist book here, I wanted to finish with a book. We'll finish with little Taoism, because why not? I'll just read you one text. "Thirty spokes are joined at the hub, from their non-being arises the function of the wheel. Lumps of clay are shaped into a vessel, from their non-being arises the function of the vessel. Doors and windows are constructed together to make a chamber, from their non-being arises the function of the chamber." Therefore, as individual beings, these things are useful materials constructed together in their non-being to give rise to function.

"Gaze at it, there's nothing to see; it's called the formless. Heat it, there's nothing to hear; it's called the soundless. Grasp it, there's nothing to hold on to; it's called the immaterial. Invisible, it cannot be called by any name. It returns again, to no thingness." "Contemplate the ultimate emptiness—meaning empty of anything that's not utterly full—remain in true reception. All things are together in action, but I look at their non-action."

So this notion of the Tao, it's this notion of this direct, accessible, shared experience that all human beings can access of value. Meaning, even if the Center is desperately in need of a budget, and someone offers me, I don't know, for Daniel, \$20 billion, I'm not going to sell him. Why? Because he has irreducible value, he's priceless, and it's immeasurable. I'm not selling Zak for \$30 billion, not happening; we're not selling each other. That's the Tao, that's immeasurable value, that's the priceless. Actually, we can have access to that. So that's really important.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ibid fn 1

<sup>[2]</sup> Reimagining Humanity Identity, Responding to the Second Shock of Existence, Zachary Stien, Marc Gafni, World Futures Review, Elisha Bilbao please sir and love



## Dr. Marc Gafni

Sally spoke about imagination, and we're here in response to the crisis of imagination. It is, at core, not actually a crisis of resources, not a logistical crisis, but a crisis of imagination, in which we need to reimagine what utopia could look like, and also to be willing to not look away and imagine dystopia. It's only from that place between utopia and dystopia that—as Zak and I wrote in the title of the article—we can reimagine reality itself.

A key person in our world and my life personally, actually the godfather of my son Zion, who's just an incredibly dear friend and brother is, Warren Farrell. Warren has been—this is his highest-paying job—Vice President of Gender at the Centre for a decade. If you want to know where he got that really beautiful house in Noe Valley, clearly it's the Centre. Warren has done a fabulous and important job in the world.

Ken actually originally told Warren and I that we should find each other, but we never did way back in the day. Then we were actually doing a dialogue series in 2008 or 2009, where Warren and I did a dialogue, and we said, "Oh, my God, who are you?" I had actually read Warren's book, *The Myth of Male Power*. It's a fantastic book, I think it's probably the best single book on the state of masculinity today. I had kind of pored through the footnotes carefully, and so we had one of those geeky conversations on footnotes. Then we got together, he was in Mill Valley, and became fast friends.

Warren, then, was, in a certain sense at the end of a huge piece of his life, and was doing all sorts of creative and important things and expert witness things, etc. So we just felt like, Oh, my God. Warren was just getting started, and he came to speak; we did a big event, and Warren gave a gorgeous keynote. It was super exciting to have Warren just shift gears again and step back into action.

A book and a vision he had been working on for a long time, we wanted to crystallize, we helped get a publisher, and what emerged was *The Boy Crisis*; an unbelievably important book that Warren did and was the lead writer on, that John Grey participated in, who's a board member of ours and a dear friend on the ADHD chapters. It's an unbelievably important contribution, because the gender issue is unbelievably important.

From the perspective of the Centre, we are ecstatic to have participated in this and participating and supporting Warren. Warren is in charge, this is his bailiwick; this is his Unique Self, this is his gift, and we're madly in appreciation. This issue is unbelievably important. Those of you who remember, Warren and I did an intense and important dialogue that's on the web, on gender; we've talked about it many times. There's a book that's emergent from the Centre that will be part of the phenomenology. Claire Molinard and Dr. Kincaid, *Phenomenology Beyond He & She*, the movement to what we're calling Unique Gender.

Warren, John Grant, and I must have done around these topics, for a book that became *Beyond Venus and Mars*—which in the end, John wrote, and which will become *Beyond He & She*—but we must have met 30 times or something like that in Mill Valley, with Lesley, and having just deep conversations. So Warren's really taking an important critical cultural space. Just yesterday, he did a major national television appearance, to actually try and challenge some of the gender assumptions that are happening. Warren's going to talk for a bit, he's going to take questions and answers. Then somewhere around 5:15, we're going to switch to part two. But I could not be more excited to have Warren here. There is no Center for Integral Wisdom without Warren Farrell, and there's no my life without Warren Farrell. So it's delightful to have you here. Take it away, sir. Thank you.



## Dr. Warren Farrell

It is such a pleasure to see so many faces and have a chance to meet, and to be back with Marc again. Marc and I do talks every month and I really look forward to and enjoy it, and we have a wonderful back and forth with a sense of humor, which I really enjoy. I did wonder how he was going to pay for this. But when I saw that there was one face in among us that I hadn't seen before called NextStage Funding, I knew that was the way he gave me that private masseuse.

So what I'd like to do today is, I'm going to lead to the Gender Policy Council. It's a White House Gender Policy Council, which is going to be an executive order President Biden will sign in the next few days or weeks. It excludes boys and men, which proves that your children really know more about gender than the President does. Because if you asked your children, are there only boys, are there only girls, or are there boys and girls, your children would probably say, there's boys and girls. But apparently, when President Biden is forming this Gender Policy Council, it is all about women and girls; nothing about boys, nothing about men, and nothing about fathers.

But I want to explain why that is as much of a disaster as it might just on the surface appear, and why such a formation is both sexist and racist, and also really anti-trans and anti-inclusion and anti-diversity and anti-equity. Pretty much everything President Biden says he stands for, and that I stand for with him; maybe not with him, but was hoping with him. It's certainly not about healing when you divide the sexes that are already too divided. So I'll talk a little bit about what's happening with boys, for a while. I've talked with this group before about that. But your life is not as focused on boys' issues as mine is, so I'll do a little bit of a refresher as to why this is important, and a little bit of updating of some of the data.

Then I'll move into why the White House Gender Policy Council is racist and sexist, what I've been trying to do about it, and what I'd like to invite you to do about it with me. Because this is something that every one of you who cares about the other gender, really can potentially do something about it now. Because it is still in the process of being cited to an executive order, and it's possible that we can call the attention to President Biden

about how a gender policy council that only includes women and girls is exactly the opposite of everything he stands for, or says he stands for.

So a bit of background first on *The Boy Crisis*. When I started doing the research on *The Boy Crisis*, it was decades ago, and when I was speaking on other books around the world, a number of teachers came up to me in places as far as Japan and Australia, and said, “Dr. Farrell, I really appreciate that you’re speaking about women’s issues.” Because I was on the Board of Directors for the National Organization for Women (NOW) in New York City, and so I was deeply involved with the feminist movement. “But in my particular class, here in Australia or Japan, or wherever, the boys are actually having more problems than the girls.”

So I started looking into that. I talked to my sister about it, who was a grammar school teacher. She said, “Yeah, the boys are having more problems in my class than the girls too. Some boys are pretty angered, and girls are having serious problems now, and they were pretty good students before.” So I said, tell me more about that. So she started inquiring a bit and she said, “In three cases out of three cases, the children had had divorces, and as I dug further, I found that the divorces had settled in such a way that the mom was the primary parent and the dad had been pretty much left out. This was creating significant problems for girls, but it was creating very significant problems for boys because they didn’t have any male role model, whereas the girls at least had a female role model with a single mom.” But something was happening that was deep.

Then I started looking in broader context and smaller context, and seeing that the boys who didn’t have contact with their dads very much, who were what I call dad-deprived, those boys were really sort of getting angry, they were becoming coercive with their moms, they were often withdrawing into video games—and into porn when they got a little bit older, like 13 years or so—they felt that their friends were not anybody in their family, and the only people they’d talk to were people they were doing video game stuff with. So they seem to be withdrawing and depressive, and in the worst-case scenarios, suicidal.

So I started looking at all this data. For example, in the mental health area, I saw that when boys and girls were age 9, they rarely committed suicide, and when they did, boys and girls did about equally. But when they were between the ages of 10–14, boys committed suicide twice as often as girls. Then, between the ages of 15–19, boys committed suicide four times as often as girls. Between the ages of 20–24, boys committed suicide five times as often as girls. But the red flags of suicide were not apparent to many parents, because almost all studies of depression were focused on girls’ manifestations of depression.

But I discovered in the research for *The Boy Crisis* that there were 63 red flags of depression in boys, some of which were the same as girls, and some of which were quite different than girls. Like, boys act out things to a great deal more, or boys who hurt tend to respond by hurting us. For example, the mass shooters have two things in common: they are male, and they are usually dad-deprived male at about the 85% level, both male and dad-deprived male. The ISIS recruits are male and female: 90%, male, 10% female. But both the females and the males are dad-deprived children. Prisoners are 93% male, and as you probably know, the prison population in the United States increased 700% between the 1970s and a couple of years ago. In that 70%, it was 93% male.

I ran for Governor of California some years ago, and I spoke to a number of prison populations. I saw in those prison populations, when I asked the question of how many of you had an involved father, almost no one raised their hand. Then when I asked, how many of you felt like you were deprived of good contact with your dad, almost all the hands would go up. Then I started talking to the prisoners about the importance of fathers, and how there were 50+ developmental areas that children without fathers tended to suffer in, from not just suicide and depression, but failing out of school, not having any postponed gratification, being failures to launch, being 66% more likely to live in their parents' basement, and on and on.

So I talked with the prisoners about what there was about father involvement. It was the tendency of fathers to enforce boundaries. Moms tended to set boundaries more frequently than dads, but dads tended to enforce boundaries, require the children to live up to the boundaries they agree to, and in the process of doing so, create postponed gratification, and the postponed gratification was the single biggest predictor of success or failure. So boys who had that postponed gratification, as a result of their dad's discipline, tended to do better in school or better in sports or better as a musician, and they felt better about themselves. Therefore, they didn't have depression, they didn't feel like they were losers, and they weren't afraid to dream.

But with boys growing up in single mom homes, oftentimes, the gift was that their mom was very good at spotting their Unique Selves—as Marc would put it, and I would also agree and put it like that—they were able to spot the children's Unique Self, they were able to encourage the child to pursue music, and to pursue whatever unique talent he or she seemed to have. But oftentimes, without discipline that did not create the postponed gratification, they would fail in the process of pursuing their dream because they'd get sidetracked by an invitation from a "friend" to play a new video game.

So instead of having the discipline to rehearse the different plays in football or basketball or music or acting, they wouldn't become outstanding. Because in any field that's fulfilling

like the arts, the more fulfilling the field is, the less it pays, because there's a very high demand for fulfilling fields in relation to the supply. So you have to be at the top 1–2% of a fulfilling field, in order to be able to succeed at it and make a living from it. So these were kids that were trying the new dream their parents had spotted, or usually their mother had spotted, but failing at that dream. Therefore, after a while, they became afraid to dream.

So I started seeing patterns like this happening. Because I was hearing this information from teachers, as I said before, in Australia and New Zealand, etc., I started looking into it to see whether this was more than a US boys' crisis. I started to see from the UN data that boys were failing in all 53 of the largest developed nations more than girls were, in every single academic subject, but especially in reading and writing, which are, as you may know, the two biggest predictors of success or failure.

So I started asking, what was happening all around these developed nations? The key answer was in the word "developed," that developed nations tended to have the ability to not worry so much about survival, and so they became much more permissive about allowing families to get divorces. So when divorces happened, and then the children lost contact with their dad, or had only minimal contact, or every other weekend contact with their dad, that was the demographic that I spotted was having the boy crisis.

The other demographic was the 42% of women in the United States who had children without being married, I found out that—we could argue the morality of marriage versus non-marriage and having children—the real issue was that marriages tended to keep the father around to a much greater degree for a longer period of time. Whereas, among families where a woman had children without being married, the average length of time that the father remained in the family was three and a half years. So the children got in a little bit of an attachment to the father, but then the father usually disappeared, or was minimally involved, or just involved at emergency times with the children.

So the children often felt abandoned, and they felt that they didn't understand that half of themselves that were their father's genes. While this was bad for the girls in different ways than it was for the boys, and in some similar ways, it was especially bad for the boys. On a biological level, their telomeres became shorter by the age of nine and a half. That was also true for girls, but boys' telomeres got even 40% shorter than the girls. It's just amazing data.

So I started then looking at solutions to this. As some of you know from being with me in the past, I've been doing couples communication workshops around the country. One of the reasons for that is that I felt that if children were having especially serious problems without dads, then how do we keep dads involved? Well, you don't keep dads involved by

creating legislation that forces dads and moms to be together, in my opinion. But you keep dads and moms by having good communication.

So I started looking at what was bad about the communication between mothers and fathers. I started to see that the Achilles' heel of almost all human beings is our inability to handle personal criticism without becoming defensive. Many couple's communication workshops helped people listen to people who are criticizing them by doing things like active listening, but that made the person who is listening very fearful of being criticized again, because they now had to repeat back all the criticism that they heard from their partner. So they didn't want to get into that situation without the ability to be facilitated by a therapist.

So I said to myself, this isn't very useful, because only a small percentage of the population could afford therapists. But I wonder if there's any way around on biologically natural propensity to be defensive when criticized? So I worked very hard on that, and I was able to discover a way of doing that, but it took a 10-hour course at the minimum to be able to teach couples to do it and learn the routine of that and be able to do it successfully. I found that that couples communication I was able to do with a few hundred couples that I had done that with, it has helped couples stay together; therefore, helped children not have to be dad-deprived; therefore, helped to minimize the boy crisis.

I hope that's enough of a synopsis, some of which you've heard before from me. But the big thing that has come up now, that we actually have a chance to change—minimal chance to change, but a chance—is that President Biden has agreed to create a White House Council on gender policy, as I mentioned before, but that gender policy excludes males, excludes boys, and excludes fathers obviously. The problem with that is, obviously, that it's sexist. President Biden talks about being inclusive and being a healer, and we already know that there's a divisiveness between the sexes.

There's always been a battle of the sexes, between the sexes, but in the last 50 years, it has basically been a war in which only one side has shown up, and men have put their heads in the sand and hoped the bullets would miss. But that's not a very productive way of communicating.

Women, and many feminist women in particular, feel that they've been expressing their feelings and helping other women do so for 50 years, which is wonderful. So we had #MeToo, but #MeToo has become a monologue, not a dialogue. Now, since men are not speaking up and women can hear what men don't say, women have no reason to believe that there's another perspective; there's a whole life tapestry history that has been left out of the discussion.

So we're in a very dangerous place, in terms of our sons being in school and hearing that they're a white male, and part of the patriarchy, and they are essentially oppressors who have oppressed women, and the future is female. These types of atmospheres for that young boy—not only the white boys, but also black boys that don't have fathers—these children are not feeling, when they're told the future is female, that they have much hope for their future.

So we have an opportunity now, I believe, to say, "President Biden, let's be inclusive, like you talk about being. Let's heal, like you talk about healing. Let's be in favor of diversity." Because when you don't have men involved, you don't have black men involved. You can't say black lives matter if you're not realizing that black males, for example, are 25 times more likely to be the ones shot by police and killed, than are black females. Similarly, when we talk about Driving While Black, the profiling of blacks, if you think about that, it's really not Driving While Black (DWB), it's really Driving While Black Male (DWBM). If you think about somebody on the street at night that's homeless, just have the image of the last time you saw a black person on the street at night, the chances are about 90–95% that the street homeless black person was a black male. If you look in prisons, it's much more likely to be a black male.

So the other half of "black male" is "male," and President Biden has left that out. You can't genuinely say that black lives matter if you don't care about black males, and if you don't care about black males having fathers who are inspired by father warrior programmes or other male role models, like having male teacher Corps, to train teachers who are male to be good alternative role models for a black male or a white male or a Hispanic male.

Those are few of the things that I think will be really a disaster. I know President Biden talks about—and I care about—trans, but the trans are not included in the Gender Policy Council if they are male trans. So that's really such a non-inclusive policy that it defies diversity, defies inclusion, and defies really everything President Biden says he stands for. So that's what I would love to ask us to participate in sending out tweets and Facebook messages to the President or to the White House Gender Policy Council, and be able to resist this and get males inclusive in the process. I want to stop here because one of the things I know about this group is that you're all brilliant and inquisitive, and so I want to allow some time for questions.

### **Marc**

Fantastic. Warren, thank you very much. So we're going to open for questions, I'll just say one thing as we open. So what's really important here is that Joe Biden is really happy that Warren's doing this, and that's what's really important here. Meaning, what we need to

have happen in the United States—and in Belgium, and in Europe, and in Singapore, and around the world, because we're from many countries here—is actually restore healthy debate; restore the contestation, to correct political contestation that's supposed to look for a higher ground of value.

Because when that falls apart, that's disastrous, and we witnessed a dimension of complexity around that in different parts of the world. So this is the democratic process, this is the process that's actually thrilling. Actually, Warren, who's the leading expert on gender, and particularly the masculine, if he can express this and impact, and then Biden's team is impacted by it, this is how we become a Unique Self Symphony; that's Unique Self Symphony in action.

So we'll take a few minutes for questions, because it's beyond an important topic. Thank you, Warren. So who's our first question?

### **Question**

Thank you, Warren. It's a wonderful description that you've given, such good information. Obviously, you've thought about this. So what is the practical solution, where do we go from here; what's the wisdom that you can say? You've defined the problem very well, but now, what's the practical solution?

### **Warren**

Yes. So what I've done is create a coalition to create a White House Council that is inclusive of boys and men, and what we're trying to do is to put pressure on the President. I've been talking to Jen Klein, who is the woman who is the primary co-chair of the White House Council on Gender Policy. She's a very strong feminist, and I've been trying to communicate with her about the importance of boys and men to be included. Her response to me is that, President Biden already cares a great deal about boys and men, and he talks a great deal about those issues. So I've asked her to explain which issues he's talked about, and she hasn't been able to come up with any. I said, he must care about boys, and he must care about fathering. Because he's been a wonderful father, and he has been dedicated to his sons.

So I asked a question that I knew the answer to and I said, so why is he not being inclusive of boys and men in this? I knew the answer to this because I know that when I spoke to the Democratic candidates—to nine of them that were running in Iowa—that the Democratic candidates themselves, especially Andrew Yang and John Hickenlooper, were extremely knowledgeable about, and supportive of understanding that there was a boy crisis.

But their campaign manager pulled me aside and say, “Warren, I cannot recommend to our candidate that he/she speak up about boys and men’s issues, especially the importance of fathers, because that will make many women who are feminists, and who are divorced, feel like we’re wanting to give as much right to the father to be able to have access to the children as the mother, and some mothers don’t want that.” I said, what about the women who are raising children by themselves? She said, we also don’t want to alienate that group of women and children.

To get to the core of the answer to your question, and what Marc was putting his finger on, this dialogue here is so important because President Biden is in a very tough position; it is not politically possible. The people who have put him in power are both very strongly feminist and very strongly black families, and I believe he feels he doesn’t have the political support for this. So we have to make the political support viable. It’s sort of like when Martin Luther King went up to President Kennedy, and said, “I need you to support, President, civil rights legislation.” Kennedy’s response was, you make it politically possible for me to do so.

So what I’m also asking this group to do, is to contact your Congress person, your representatives, your senators, and to let them know that you are in favor of a gender policy council that is inclusive, not exclusive, and that you support, if you do, everything that President Biden talks about—about unity, about healing, about diversity, about inclusion, about equity—and a gender policy council that includes boys and men would be about all those things. So we have to ask him to live up to his higher values. They’re all there, but we have to take action to do it, and we have a very short period of time to do it because the rumor is, according to *The New York Times*, that he will very soon be signing this executive order to form this Gender Policy Council that excludes boys and men. Did that address your question?

### **Question**

It does. But the practical issue I’m thinking about is, if you have so many blacks locked up in jail, I don’t think there’s much of education in jail. Here you have a captive group, literally and figuratively, where we could have education in the jail system. I’d see if we can empower women to teach the men more. So I think education comes back to education, and that’s where I think we’re lacking; we haven’t focused enough on how do we get to the people themselves. Political is fine, but I think we have to get to the people themselves with proper education, which you have the knowledge that people need.

### **Warren**

Absolutely, let me work in exactly that issue for a moment. So when I spoke to these prison populations, what seemed to get through was when I explained how important

fathers were, the response that I got was tattooed muscled men crying afterwards, when nobody was around, coming up to me and saying, “I always thought I deserved to be in jail, that I was the black sheep of the family. I thought that I would just wait, because my family didn’t want to be bothered with me. I had no idea that I could play a role in preventing my children from making the same mistake that I made. I had no idea that the boundary enforcement issue that I got into fights with my wife about—that led me to drinking, that led me to stealing; that type of thing—was actually something that was a positive contribution to my family.”

So what I am encouraging President Biden to do is not only make it inclusive, but part of making males inclusive is to start things like father warrior programmes. Because what we know from history is that every generation had its war, and in that generation’s war, men were called to be disposable in that war. So when men were told they were needed, they were wanted, they would be heroes, and they would be honored, men responded to those social bribes to be willing to die in that generation’s war. Well, if men will respond to a willingness to die when called upon because they’re needed, I believe men when they’re told that they need to be father warriors, they need to overcome the obstacles that it takes to be an involved father—whether those obstacles are personal, whether those obstacles are political—and that they are needed, when men are told they are needed, they will do anything including dying to serve.

So that dimension of men needs to be called forth in its highest form, both among prisoners and as a societal message. President Biden speaking up about that and making father involvement something that we start working on with boys in first grade and second grade, by teaching them the emotional skills—for example, when you have a brother and a sister, and the child is the youngest and you’re a little bit older, here’s the way you can feed your brother, here’s the way you can feed your sister, here’s the way you can play with them; here’s what’s appropriate, here’s what’s not appropriate—and we begin to train and socialize boys from a very early age to feel honored by their involvement in the family and involvement as fathers. Is that a more complete response?

### **Marc**

That’s great. I’m going to jump in for a second with your permission, and then we’ll have time for one more question. But it’s really important—and, Warren, I have talked about this extensively, and you even mention this in the book, I believe at the end of the book—there is no *The Boy Crisis* book without the *Unique Self*, *Unique Self* book and *The Boy Crisis* book, you’ve got to look at them together.

Because what’s at the core of the story is—and this is what Warren just addressed—is that boys and men have a purpose which is beyond the objectified purposes. Just like we

don't want to objectify the feminine in the degrading forms of objectification, and we want to honor feminine beauty, but we also want to honor feminine subjectivity. So in the same way, we have to actually honor men beyond their performance role. Their performance role, whether that's in war, whether that's in particular forms of work, whether that's in generating sufficient levels of income, all of those forms of objectification are a big deal. Men need to know I have a Unique Self, and my Unique Self is my purpose; it's my Unique Gift, it's my unique way of being. It's a much more developed version than just saying purpose. In other words, the Unique Self narrative or the Unique Self structure is ultimately and deeply missing Warren.

### **Warren**

Absolutely, so let me be really clear about this. In Japan, among millennials, they have a game called Karoshi. Karoshi means death at the desk or death from overwork. The objection to men being defined as human doings, that you're only as good as your job. In this game Karoshi, each person has a Karoshi figure, and they compete to get to the top of the corporate ladder or the top of the political ladder, and the first person who gets there gets the privilege of committing suicide; not literally, but in the game. So what the Japanese Millennials are understanding is that the supposed definition of male power, climbing to the top of some ladder, was really a form of undoing oneself as a human being; undoing oneself as a Unique Self. So this is the new discovery.

Historically speaking, we could not allow either women or men to be themselves, to be discovering their Unique Selves. 50 years ago, in developed nations, we began to work toward getting women to be able to define who they are. Do you want to be a full-time mom? Do you want to be a full-time worker? Do you want to be breaking the glass ceiling? Do you want to do some combination of both? Do you want to do those things sequentially? So we had basically three options for new mothers, which is work full time, children full time, or some combination of both. Then the men sat around and said, well, I have three options too: option one is work full time, option two is work full time, and option three is work full time.

So we've had something huge happening recently, which is that, for the first time in history, we haven't needed so many men to die in war, and women by sharing the economic burden, have allowed men to be freed from not having to do the entire economic burden. The good news is, there's a greater amount of possibility for freedom, for being a Unique Self among males. But usually, when children do not have a lot of dad involvement, they get a chance to discover their Unique Self because mothers, as I mentioned before, are usually very good at helping children discover that.

But it takes a discipline to become one's Unique Self, because so often, the Unique Self is some type of creative spirit. As Sally Kempton will tell us, being a unique spirit, unless you aren't disciplined to get to the top of that letter, you're not going to be able to find pay in that. So it's a combination of discovering your Unique Self and the discipline to make a living from that, that usually leads to children that have both mother and father involvement to be the most successful.

Children who do the best have what I call Checks & Balance Parenting, where the parents say, you can't have your ice cream until you finish your peas, and the children tries to have as few peas as possible before they have their ice cream. So the mom says, "Okay, it's been a tough day. I'll tell you what, you can have your ice cream now because it's been a tough day." But then dad says, "Sorry, we have a deal here, you've got to finish your peas before you get your ice cream." So moms and dads recognize that that tension—that when a tough day is an excuse to not have your peas before you have the ice cream, and not making that so easy that the child doesn't develop postponed gratification; those are the types of checks and balances that men and women have to understand—leads to the children being raised most successfully.

### **Marc**

That's fantastic. So we're going to take one more question, I'll say one word and just take the question. The idea of Unique Self is not in culture yet, and we're going to talk about that in the next session. There's a number of models of self, of which is Separate Self model, where Separate Self is my talents, which is of course not Unique Self. So the narrative of identity is missing, which is why we're so threatened by a moment in which AI outsources jobs. All the old roles of identity, as they disappear, if we don't actually have a structure of Unique Self and irreducible uniqueness and Unique Gift that's not based on formal structures of economics, then we're in enormous trouble. Just imagine what it means when most of the people on the globe become men; men are actually the miner's canary for not actually having formal jobs in the old sense. Imagine when that actually takes place and affects most of the workforce, if there's not a real understanding of Unique Self in place.

Just like Warren's gone deeply into gender, we've gone deeply into Unique Self. If we can't put that model into the world—and we've talked this morning about the five or six steps we need to do that; the different pieces of The Great Library—if that model is not readily available to everyone, which it's not now in any way, then we have a social disaster of suffering of unimaginable proportion.

**Question**

Can you please speak about the communication Achille's heel of not being able to handle criticism without becoming defensive?

**Warren**

Absolutely, that's really crucial. Historically speaking, when we heard criticism, it was potentially an enemy. So it was functional to get up our defenses so that we weren't killed by the enemy, or even better yet, to kill the enemy before the enemy kills us. So in order to survive, we had to develop defensiveness to any criticism, to be able to defend ourselves against a possible enemy. But for the people who have survived being defensive, it was functional for survival, but it's just terrible for intimacy. Because the more deeply we love, the less armor we have, and the more we care about somebody criticizing us. I can be criticized by lots of strangers and not take it very seriously. But if I'm criticized by my wife, it really hurts. So the more deeply we love, the less armor we have, and the more vulnerable we feel.

So when we get criticized, we become defensive very quickly, because we don't want our partner to have that opinion of us and potentially abandon us, which is why we're so vulnerable. So we become defensive and then that closes our partner off from being able to say something that is concerning them in the future, because the last time they did, they were met with defensiveness, which made them defensive, and the whole thing escalated. So they become more and more cautious about articulating their concerns.

My job was to figure out, if something is so biologically natural, is there a way around that? I found that there was, and it's too complex for me to say here, but I'll give you the tip of the iceberg. So what I train people to do is to not participate in criticizing their partner until a two-hour period of time that they set aside ahead of time each week, during which before they hear the criticism, they do a meditation alteration like Sally would lead us to do, that includes a six part-meditation.

One of those parts, for example, is saying out loud—so that their partner can see that they're preparing to provide a safe environment, which is, for example, what I call the love guarantee—“I know that if I provide a safe environment for your feelings, that you will feel safer with me, and therefore, more loved by me, and the more you feel loved by me, the more you will feel more love for me.” That along with five other meditations, in a more complex way than I'm saying here now, leads the person hearing the criticism, to be in a temporary altered state, where they can invite criticism knowing it's not only going to be safe for them, but also for their partner, and to do what everybody wants, which is to have their love deepened.

So when I've done this with Liz, what I was surprised about—Liz and I would not be together if it weren't for this process—is that when my daughter had her first problem with her boyfriend, and I started sharing some of this with him, she immediately just caught it. She said, "Oh my God, that's what you and mom do." But she hadn't pieced it together until she herself had her own problems; and therefore, all that stuff that mom and dad do, that made sense to her only then, when she had her own problems. The point there being is that we're not only helping ourselves do that, we're also helping our children.

The last piece of that, is to be able to get to that state where you're able to hear your partner's problems. That means, what are we going to do with the other 166 hours a week that are not that two-hour caring and sharing? So the other part of the work is to know how to transfer criticisms or sarcasms that come up during the week, and what to do with them to sustain what I call a conflict-free zone for 166 hours. In other words, put off the conflict that remains at the end of that week, so that you can deal with that in the caring and sharing time and know that you'll be heard.

So the next big part of the workshop is how to sustain a conflict-free zone during the week, so that you can deal with the most important concern of the week, in a safe way, at the end of the week. That combination is what I found has an almost 100% positive outcome for couples that actually fall through and do that.

### **Marc**

Gorgeous! I mean, Warren has been with us for 11 years, and we learn every single time. Some people are like, wow, I never heard that before, other people are provoked, and other people are blown open. Warren is amazing, he's an amazing thinker and an amazing contribution. Warren, may tonnes of resource of every kind pour into your heart and soul and body, and that your work and its contribution and standing for boys and men explodes in the world, and that *Unique Self* and *The Boy Crisis* come together in every way, and that next year, you're together with us in person.

### **Warren**

If I've left somebody sort of blank on the couple's thing, my website has much better explanations of that. So just go to [WarrenFarrell.com](http://WarrenFarrell.com)