



Entering the Chaos Zone, Part 1

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Nyck: Welcome to Future Sense, a podcast with Steve McDonald and Nyck Jeanes. Broadcast weekly from our Future Sense pod in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, Australia. Welcome to you, and welcome, Steve. Good morning.

Steve: Thanks, Nyck. It's great to be back again after our break.

Nyck: We have been away, so to speak. Actually, we haven't really gone anywhere, but we have certainly had a different approach to the *Future Sense* podcast. In fact, we're now not doing the podcast as a radio broadcast anymore, for various reasons to do with COVID-19 in particular, but we are now coming back to doing the podcast every week like you'll be used to, and we'll give you the details of all of that we can. So, going through a bit of a change, a bit of a metamorphosis at this time.

Steve: Absolutely, and it'll be a cleaner format without all the bits and pieces that normally go into the radio show, so we think that's a good thing. And also, it gives us a sense of freedom in terms of how we can speak and what we can speak about, because with the radio show, it was being broadcast to the general public, and so anybody who was in their car and happened to turn the radio on was going to hear what we were talking about.

Nyck: They had no idea what we were talking about.

Steve: That's right. Sometimes we do talk about controversial things and so we don't have to worry about that so much now because we're going to have a self-selecting audience.

Nyck: Very good. And thank you, all of you out there who are part of that self-selecting audience who've come back in. We'll be communicating with you. If you didn't know that we're back on the podcast, you'll certainly know about it in the next week. You can also go to www.aadii.org at the moment, and you go to the Future Sense page on that website to access the past and the future podcast episodes. We will come back online with our *Future Sense* website fairly soon (Editor's note: all episodes are now available on www.futuresense.it). We're just having a small technical problem with that at the moment.

Steve: Exactly. So, today we are talking about the topic of 'entering the chaos', the global impact of COVID-19 and the response to COVID-19. The response from an economic point of view has impacted far more people than the actual virus did, although of course, many people have suffered and some people have passed away as a result of the virus, and our hearts and our thoughts go out to everyone who's been touched in that way.

Nyck: I saw a very interesting article in the Saturday paper, a newspaper here in Australia, that quoted a decent paper which talks about COVID, and I was looking at it just as you said that then. It is written by writer, Stephanie Dowrick, who is a well-known Australian journalist (<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/2020/06/06/covid-19-life-lessons/15913656009934>; paywall). She says that one of the things that's come up in this era of COVID is really those fundamental fears that you talked about before, about death and sickness. The big questions that come up are: "What will my future look like?; Who can I trust?; Does my life matter?" We're going to be talking a little bit about *Black Lives Matter* and that whole situation around George Floyd today; and "do others' lives matter to me?" I think it's interesting that these questions appear in the Saturday paper this week, and I think they are questions that reflect part of how people are facing this at the moment.

Steve: Yeah, very interesting indeed, Nyck. And of course, we've been talking on this show for a couple of years now about the global consciousness shift that is underway and how we're moving beyond the Scientific-Industrial era and the values associated with that way of being human, to a more complex and more evolved version of humanity. Part of that shift at a personal level is exactly what was described in that article you were reading there. It's about having the time to contemplate these larger issues. In order to do that, we really need to get out of what we used to call 'the rat race', which was the day-to-day pursuit of success, and doing it mostly in the form of money, within the modern world. Here, with the response to COVID-19, we've been gifted a break.

Nyck: And it's wonderful to look at it that way, rather than the sort of shock-horror of it—and I'm sure some people, understandably, have had that response too, especially if it's really impacted you strongly, particularly as we've said, if you've had the physical problems with you or yours or people close to you, or economic impact, as we're talking about here—but it is that moment of reconfiguring that: yes, it's shocking, yes, it's horrible, but actually, it is an opportunity. It is actually a gift for change, and I think there are many people, certainly in our reality that we know here—and we are in a bit of a bubble here where we are broadcasting from—but many people are seeing it as a gift and really trying to go deep in themselves to try and find 'what is my response to this now?'

Steve: It certainly is that and we're going to talk in this episode about that personal experience and also the change process and how this gift of time that we've been given through the lockdown has changed many, many people. We'll talk a little bit about moving forward from here and what we're likely to see in the near future. We'll also look at the

general themes of this emerging value set—the sixth layer in Clare Graves's model, which is very humanistic, very network-centric, and all about living life in a very, very different way than we have during the Modern Scientific-Industrial era.

Nyck: For many of you, of course, you're quite familiar with Clare W. Graves, otherwise you probably still wouldn't be listening if you're regular, but for those who are not, it's really a wonderful thing to investigate his work. He was a developmental psychologist and he died early. Steve, maybe you could provide a brief overview, just so we can come back online with Graves's work for those people who may be listening for the first time.

Steve: Sure. Clare W. Graves was born in 1914. He passed away 1986, and he worked as a professor of developmental psychology at Union College in a town called Schenectady in upstate New York. During the 1950s and early 1960s, he did some research there into human nature. His research was quite remarkable because most scientific research starts with a hypothesis and then sets out to try and prove whether that hypothesis is valid or not. Clare Graves simply started with a fundamental question, which was: 'What is the nature of a psychologically mature adult?' So he took a very open mind to his work. He studied 1,065 people over a period of nine years, so he not only looked at their nature at the beginning of the study, but also how an individual's nature changed over time. He worked together with a group of seven peers to analyse all of the data collected over those nine years, and he came up with a model of human development.

There were three key aspects to his findings. The first one was that human consciousness is inherently adaptive and it responds to changes in the complexity of our life conditions. So when our life conditions become more complex, then our consciousness adapts to operate in more complex ways, effectively allowing us to solve more complex problems. The second interesting thing that came from this research was the mapping of the trajectory of change: What happens? What is the human experience when we go through a major change that actually shifts our value set, our worldview? We'll be talking in a little bit of detail about that today. Then the third key thing that came out of his research was a series of layers of consciousness, each one with its own very distinct way of making sense of reality and its own distinct set of values and morals, and its own distinct motivations and likes and dislikes. His work mapped out discrete layers and he found that we grow through the layers, from Layer 1 through to whatever layer we need to reach in order to match the complexity of our life conditions. This is a key aspect, of course, of the field of developmental psychology, which is based on not just the psychological nature of a human being, but also the understanding that we grow as we experience life.

Nyck: It shouldn't be revolutionary, this sort of thought, but surprisingly it is, isn't it? Graves's book, which was actually finished after his death, is a major work called *The Never Ending Quest*, and is exactly about that.

There's a quote here from Graves. He says, "We must reorganise our thinking and our approaches to man's problems to include the fact that there is no ultimate set of ethics,

values and purposes by which humans should live that will ever be revealed, laid down or discovered." So there's no end point here. I think this really sets it apart from many other theories as well, especially since it is actually a psychological, scientific study and theory or model that he brought forward.

Steve: That's exactly right. At the time of his work, there were a few developmental psychology models around, and each of those was based on the assumption that there was a pinnacle and, of course, he was open to discovering that during his research. But as he said many times, the data pointed in a different direction and he had to go with the data.

Nyck: I guess that idea that there is an end point, which we see in philosophy, psychology, spirituality in many different cultures—that there's an endpoint; enlightenment, if you will—that idea itself is structured within a particular value system, or is it? I mean, at that time most people were thinking from the dominant paradigm, which is Layer 5.

Steve: Yeah, it is, absolutely, and one of the fundamental drivers of Layer 5 in Graves's model, which is the Modern Scientific-Industrial way of being human and way of thinking, is a success driver. Success implies a destination or an achievement, so you would expect that kind of thinking to underlie the research done from that particular worldview.

Nyck: And it's so fascinating right now, as we are going through what we're going through here on this planet in the early part of the first half of 2020 and beyond, that we're facing this change in how most people have to face the future. There is no certainty like that, there is no endpoint for most people. So everything's been thrown up in the air and we're going to see where it's landing. We're going to help you see some of that, hopefully today.

Steve: That's right. I guess there's no greater disruption than to one's way of making sense of the world, and that's exactly what we are going through at the moment. We're shifting our worldview on a global scale, and we are, by my calculations, still in the early stages of this shift, which marks the end of the Scientific-Industrial era and the beginning of a new way of being human, which is the sixth layer in Graves's model. According to the structure of Graves's data, that sixth layer that we're entering into now ought to be fairly short-lived, so it's only likely to be dominant globally for 10 to 20 years in my estimation. When you look backwards down the scale of human evolution, you can see that the further back you go, the longer the periods of domination of each particular worldview were, and they just get shorter and shorter and shorter as you come towards the present.

Nyck: It's fascinating now, isn't it? Because when a layer begins to dominate, I guess those in that lab begin to think, 'well, we have the solutions now; we know the way it is, somehow,' and that 'Green' layer, Layer 6, which is emerging largely on the planet at the moment, does

really think they have the answers. Yet, in a way, it's a transition. It's a slightly cruel irony. Perhaps you could argue that we're moving even beyond the 'Green' principles, which do align politically to 'Green' with a capital G principles to some degree as well.

Steve: They do, and you heard Nyck using 'Green' as a label there, which comes from a book called *Spiral Dynamics*, which was probably the first book published that was based mainly on Graves's work. There's a new book out which was published last year called *The Change Code*, authored by Monica Bourgeau from Oregon, and it's a wonderful short summary of Graves's work, so if you're not familiar with the detail of Graves's research, I really recommend *The Change Code*. You can find it at www.thechangecode.net. I had the pleasure of reviewing that and writing a forward for it last year and it really is a very readable and very accurate resource.

Nyck: Yes, it's a very accessible book.

As we're talking about Layer 6 which we're emerging into, she says at one point in the book that "community," which is a core word for 6, "community is the cure", and I guess that's exactly what we're hoping to stimulate a bit here; that notion that we now need to start to build this fairly brief layer, perhaps, this transient layer, as we move forward. But we do need to actually do something to create new systems, the foundation for new ways of being on this planet, and it's clear after this time of COVID-19 and everything else that's happened on the planet, that this is the time for change. I think everybody can feel it to one degree or other. Hopefully they can.

Steve: Absolutely. The change period between these two eras is likely to be strung out, and in my work as a futurist, looking at all the various predictions that are being made, my best guess is that the biggest tipping point in this shift is probably going to happen around about 2032. So that implies that we've got a lot more disruption to come as we see the gradual collapse of the old dominant systems and the gradual emergence of new systems that will become dominant on a global scale. So, even though for many people, the COVID-19 response has been massive—and probably for a lot of us it's been the biggest global disruption that we've seen in our lives—there is much more to come according to all of the indicators. So we ought to really take that on, and we ought to spend some time learning from our experience over the last few months and changing the way that we live and preparing for further disruptions over the next decade or so.

Nyck: Yes, I think it's a major thing for some, and certainly in my experience of people, there are some people who think, 'well, this is it; this is the big change that's happening now; this is going to change everything.' Well, clearly it's an accelerator; clearly it's a catalyst for change. It's been the fire in the alchemical process, you could say as well. So there's a there's a great beginning here, a great start, and yet we have to be watchful, mindful of how we're interpreting things in this era of fake news—we'll come to that as well—and find a way

forward, which is really about, on one hand, finding that community. But it's also, isn't it, about looking pretty deeply at oneself in this period where we are locked down or have been locked down and more private than most of us have been for a long time, perhaps?

Steve: Absolutely.

These layers of consciousness that we're talking about alternate between an individual focus and a communal focus. The Scientific-Industrial era has been an individually-focused era and the impact of that has been separation. If you look at all the things that have come out of the modern era, you'll find that they've all been about looking at things, studying things, very separately. So all of the different disciplines that have developed in the academic world that have specialised in very narrow things have gone very, very deep and gathered a great amount of knowledge within a very, very narrow field. That is a general theme which applies right across the way-of-being associated with that era. So from a personal, emotional perspective, what that has resulted in is a sense of loneliness and a sense of separation, a lack of community. You can see how the community that we had in the previous era—if you go back to the Agricultural era (Layer 4)—was largely dismantled, even to the point of the nuclear family being dismantled in most cases during the modern Scientific-Industrial era. Now, the pendulum is swinging back in the opposite direction towards community, towards that feeling of community and all of the communal themes that come with a communal era. So this is why we're all feeling like reconnecting and it's wonderful to have that as a compass, because we can know for sure that anything that is leading us back towards community at this time is going to be helpful.

Nyck: It's also interesting that that sense of community—and again, I'm talking from personal experience of people that I've come across in this time—that many people are finding that some of the people in their lives are kind of passing away. I don't mean dying—that might be happening, too—but rather that what people need, what they're resonating with, is somehow shifting, and some people are not. This always happens, I think, in people's lives but perhaps there's an acceleration of that, that the geometry of being is rearranging itself. Different people are coming together in different ways now. And I think that's important for us to observe in our own lives and see what actually works for us now. Who works for us? What does it feel right to be doing now?

Steve: Absolutely. We might just unpack that process a little more by looking at what I call 'the change dynamic', or sometimes 'the change trajectory'. It's basically a map of the human experience of change. It's one and the same as what was called 'the hero's journey' by Joseph Campbell, the philosopher. It's a pattern that you'll find in many, many different bodies of work and in many, many different tools that people have created for understanding life and the way it works. Even simple things like the Taoist image, the *taijitu*, which is the tai chi symbol, shows the dynamic interaction between the active and the passive, the black and the white, and how each one, as it reaches a pinnacle, creates the seed of the other, and that generates itself.

So from a human perspective, when we go through transformational change, we start from a place of stability. In the case of recent events, you can think back to life before COVID-19 and how it was relatively stable in one sense, comparatively. Then all of a sudden this stress emerged, which was the sudden feeling that 'something's not quite right here. What's going on? What was that I heard on the news about that?' Maybe nothing much had changed in your personal life at that point, but you know that there's something that could be coming and there's a potential for something to change, and so you start to feel that stress and anxiety.

Nyck: And you have your particular response to that from your particular layer and value system you are currently operating at then.

Steve: Exactly. Often at that point, the first human response is to think backwards to a time when things were good and often we'll go on this regressive value search. We will go back to old ways of thinking and old ways of doing, to try them out and just see whether they solve this problem or they're going to be useful for us in the face of whatever challenge we're facing. Eventually, that place of stress descends into a form of chaos where things start to fall apart—I'm talking now from the point of view of your values changing, so a transformational personal change—and that becomes a very, very difficult place to be because nothing is the same anymore. Of course, we've all just been through this to some extent. The old routines, the old systems, the old ways of problem solving, all changed very, very suddenly and unexpectedly. It's in that place of chaos where we have no choice but to sit with the way things are right now—albeit disconnected when we've lost all of our anchors of surety in life—and that is the place where transformation really kicks in. We have all sorts of physiological responses as well as psychological responses to that. We get changes in our body chemistry, changes in our day-to-day routines, and, of course, psychological pressures and psychological changes which can trigger changes in our neurochemistry and those sorts of things. It's within that chaotic zone that we're forged in the fires of change, and at some point, there will be enough change within us to create insights and eventually a breakthrough to see that there is actually an option here. There is a different way that I can live, a different way than I can be, a different way I can think, a different way I can feel.

Nyck: I'm just thinking that the word 'values', for some people, probably is a little problematic for one reason or another. Values may be equated with ethics or morals, which is not the same thing. But I think the word 'perspective' is as good a word to use as the word values, because as you're speaking, I'm literally visually seeing how people's perspective is changing. And with that, of course, is a value system change, but the word 'perspective' is maybe a bit lighter than 'values'. It occurred to me just then.

Steve: Certainly those things are deeply linked. If you take 'perspective' literally—say that you're sitting on a hill and you're looking out over the countryside and from that particular place without moving, you have a set perspective—that's how we are in life. When we're

operating from one of these value systems and we're in the stability of that value system, we have a particular viewpoint, and it's like we're sitting on a hill, but we can't move. So we can see things from a certain angle, and then someone else who's sitting on a different hill will talk about something that we see, but they'll talk about it differently. We'll go, 'that guy doesn't know what he's talking about. I can see it from here and it clearly looks like that.'

Nyck: Confirmation bias, that's called.

Steve: Exactly.

Nyck: It's my hill. I must be right.

Steve: Totally, and within that perspective, there will be things that we like about what we see and things that we don't like. Therein are our values, the things that we value as being good or bad or whatever. Effectively, this transformational process is picking us up and shifting us around, so we end up with a different perspective, a different view. Perhaps we're still living in the same place and hanging around the same people, but we just perceive them somewhat differently.

Nyck: And interesting to know if you guys and girls and people and other creatures out there listening are experiencing exactly that now. That change in perspective where things are sort of the same, although they're not, but we are still living on the planet and yet something subtle or maybe something quite strongly has shifted in the way that we're viewing it all. It's like we're beginning to see the forest and not just the trees and seeing the waves and cycles and patterns of change a bit more from that perspective. Certainly my experience, and I think there's quite a few people who are having that experience, that opening up. Their capacity is increasing as we are faced with these stresses and challenges.

Steve: What we've been given in this global response to COVID-19 is really the perfect formula for enabling that change to occur at a personal level. If you remember that we're shifting from an individual era towards a community era, then we've been given this little slingshot by enforced isolation. You sit with yourself and don't have communal contact for a few weeks or a couple of months.

Nyck: It's bloody hard, I tell you what, mate!

Steve: And that is an evolutionary tension. So that's like pulling the elastic band back on a slingshot that's going to shoot us across to community as soon as we're released. We're craving community and personal contact.

Nyck: And probably out there, wherever you are situated in the world, as you come out of lockdown, whatever your particular country or state or city is at with that, that's probably exactly what you're feeling. This incredible compulsion or impulse to meet with and connect with and be with other people. And maybe not in some cases, because I think some people are really enjoying their isolation also.

Steve: That's right. Everybody starts the change process from a different place, so no doubt some people are experiencing it quite differently, and some people may well be experiencing exactly the opposite. Perhaps they'd been confined with a small community of relatives, which has driven them crazy, and they just can't wait to get out and escape from that. That's quite possible.

Nyck: Or if you're in the Antarctic and you're only having a six week tour of working down there and you've been there now for twice or three times as long with that same bunch of people down in the ice, could be tough.

Steve: Exactly right. So the key thing there is it comes down to your local life conditions, what you're experiencing.

So going through this change trajectory that I was talking about, we started at stability, we entered into stress, we fell down into chaos, were perhaps transformed during that chaotic experience, and then had a breakthrough. We see the way forward, we get some insights into what we need to do, how we need to be, and then we go into a renewal phase. That's typically a highly energised phase, and perhaps some people are back at work already, while other people are probably looking forward to getting out of their isolation and moving forward in new and different ways and are quite energised about that.

As we try and move forward and put new things into place, we need to go through a period of integration and we have to have adequate support. We have to have access to the various resources that we need in order to change things successfully for those changes to really stick, and then time also to learn new routines, time to embed these new systems and new ideas and routines within ourselves personally. Eventually we will reach a new form of stability or a new normal, you might like to call it. If it's transformational change we've been through, then that new normal is a more capable place where we can actually solve more complex problems than we could before. So, where we find ourselves right now—and for various people, they'll still be in various stages of chaos, depending on where they are in the world—but we have the opportunity now to start to think about how we want to be and how we want the world to be once we fully reengage, and to make different choices about that. And so it's a very interesting time and a very exciting time from that point of view.

Nyck: Just to remind you folks, for *Future Sense*, you can go to our podcasts at the moment from AADII website, www.aadii.org. The Future Sense website will be back up, we just have a small tech problem with that at the moment (Editor's Note: all episodes are not available at www.futuresense.it). You can also go to our Twitter account @futuresenseshow, and our Facebook page, Future Sense.

Since we're not doing the radio broadcasting any more, we can't take a live text line but we're very interested in your questions and comments, so you can go to those platforms, either to Twitter or Facebook, and anything that you'd like to say to us, or any ideas that you've got, or anything that's been triggered here or that you'd like to bring our attention to, please do.