



122. The Global Shift: The Ascension Café podcast Interview, April 2020

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You're listening to Future Sense and I'm Steve McDonald. In this episode I'm interviewed by Howard Blott, host of the UK-based Ascension Café podcast, and we're discussing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human evolution.

Howard: Thanks for making time to be on the show for this episode, because I've been really excited to have you on for a lot of reasons, but one notable reason was the presentation that you gave back in Zurich at the Elevate conference in 2018 (see <https://www.futuresense.it/resources/>). That made such a massive impression on me in the way I was making sense of what was happening back then. But now we're in 2020 and it really feels like we're in the midst of the essence of that phase shift that you were talking about back then, so I'd love to get your perspective on current events, initially, and also what led you into that work of uncovering the work of Clare Graves.

Steve: Sure.

From the perspective of that work I spoke about in Zurich, which is the research of Dr Clare W. Graves, it's essentially a developmental psychology model showing how human consciousness moves through various stages or layers, and each one of those has its own discrete worldview; in fact, even deeper than that, it has its own discrete way of making sense of reality, I believe, and its own set of values, its own particular motivations, etc. We are at the end of the Scientific-Industrial era, which equates to Layer 5 values on Graves's model. Using his model, which was the result of the study of individuals—however, Graves realised at one point that the stages or layers that individuals grow through as they develop also reflect the eras of the evolution of humanity from Hunter-Gatherers to Tribal to Warlike to Agricultural, etc., so it's kind of like a fractal pattern that he's discovered there, that applies seemingly at all scales for humanity—looking back, we can see the progression through those different eras that I've just mentioned and into the Scientific-Industrial era.

Each successive one of those eras has lasted for a shorter time than the previous one, so we were Hunter-Gatherers for quite a long time, maybe, I don't know, 100-150,000 years or something. Then we can look back to some markers at the beginning of the Scientific-Industrial era, such as the Industrial Revolution, the Scientific Revolution, and see that this one has only really lasted about 300 years in full flight. You can trace the early stages of it further back in history than that, but in terms of it really becoming the dominant global

paradigm, it's only really been about 300 years or so. We can see that the systems that have been designed during this era—and even the things that have been invented, which didn't exist before like corporations, for example, and nation states, which didn't exist before the Scientific-Industrial era—those things seem to be struggling to maintain themselves in the midst of the complexity that has arisen. We seem to be on this, as far as we know, this spectrum of increasing complexity, and that complexity comes from all of our life conditions, including our natural environment, both on and off the planet—because we are influenced by a lot of things that come from off the planet, such as sunshine and cosmic radiation, and also we create complexity ourselves by inventing new technologies such as the Internet, for example.

So you can look at the early waves of the next paradigm, which Graves called Relativistic, the sixth layer in his model—some people have named it Postmodern—and you can see that, going back at least as far as the mid-eighteen hundreds, we started to see the emergence of human rights groups focussed on things like women's rights and racial equality and those sorts of things, and there have been successive waves that have flared up between then and now, including particularly the late 1960s, early 1970s, where there was the big flower power revolution and the anti-war movement and all sorts of things which do reflect this an emerging set of values from Layer 6.

Although those things were beaten down by the dominant Scientific-Industrial paradigm back in the 70s, with things like the War on Drugs, for example, and changes to other various laws, they didn't go away. They continued to bubble away under the surface. Since then, we've seen a couple of successive waves, and this one that we're experiencing now feels to me like it's going to be the wave that reaches the high tide mark and actually ushers us into the next dominant paradigm, being this sixth layer that Graves described.

Howard: This new paradigm, this is the decentralised one, right?

Howard: Yes, that's right. There are a number of different things that we can talk about, including decentralisation, re-localisation of resourcing, those sorts of things.

If we think about that phase shift process—in other words, the change process that occurs between the paradigms—that takes us from stability in the old paradigm into a period of stress and then eventually into a period of chaos where the structures and belief systems associated with the old paradigm start to fall apart and don't function properly, and then inevitably there's a breakthrough at some point, which is the tipping point that tips us over into the new paradigm starting to flourish and becoming dominant. No-one really knows exactly where we're at on phase shift journey but my best guess is that we have been in the stress part of it for some time with the old systems—like economic systems, political systems—creaking at the seams, and what's happening right now—this COVID-19 event, which is clearly a global event and unprecedented considering the technologies that we have and the capacity that we have for global co-ordination; it's certainly unprecedented in those terms—and this seems to me to be like the entry point to a period of increasing chaos or disruption that will take us through to that tipping point that I mentioned.

My best guess at this point is, I'm seeing 2032 is emerging as a very, very significant tipping point. That's my best guess of when we start to tip over into this new layer of consciousness becoming the dominant global paradigm in terms of the predominance of its systems and decentralisation and those sorts of things.

Howard: Interesting, because this has been a topic of a lot of my conversations with people recently about these two timelines that humanity seems to be straddling at the moment, where one is that we move towards this decentralised, more free society; and then we have this kind of other one where they're trying to lock us down with central bank digital currencies and social credit scoring. It just seems like that plan is ultimately doomed to fail, but I do sense a lot of fear out there surrounding that possibility. I'd be interested to hear what your perspective on that is.

Steve: I certainly agree with what you're saying.

Just to add to the complexity of the understanding, when we go through the phase shift process—that is the change journey between the paradigms—one of the things that happens is that there's a regressive value search. That comes about when people realise that, okay, the way that we've been living—our political systems, our economic systems—are really not working, so we need to find better systems, and because we can't see into the future, what we naturally do as humans is we think back to a time when things were better. This is what is called a regressive value search, where we go back and we try on the old values just to see if they might fix the problems because they used to fix the problems back then. What that shows up as in life, is people going back to older rigid value sets—in this case, most likely the Agricultural values, which were very black and white, very religious in their nature, they deferred to a higher authority to give you instructions on how to live, basically—and this is why we're seeing the rise of right-wing politicians, hard-liners and those sorts of things.

So in the midst of the transition from the Scientific-Industrial to the Relativistic, we're also seeing a flare up of the previous value set, which is the Agricultural, which is Layer 4 in Graves's model. That's part of the reason why it's so confusing, because to a lot of people it looks like the whole world's going backwards and in a sense, part of it is going backwards to those old values to try them out once again and just see if they'll work.

Howard: And this is what you were referring to in your presentation, where it's like a slingshot. So that regression is kind of building that evolutionary tension that's going to ultimately propel us forward to the next phase.

Steve: Exactly. Just like pulling a rubber band backwards on a slingshot where you're pulling it in the opposite direction to which you want the projectile to go, and in the process, you're creating tension that's actually going to drive the change when the tipping point comes—the release point.

Howard: Right. That makes total sense.

It's really fascinating to see how this is showing up in my own life now at the moment, more so since the coronavirus situation, because people are losing their jobs and getting worried and starting to think about, 'hey, how can we band together and live more sustainably?', which is actually quite a cool thing to see happening. Obviously, the pain of people losing their jobs sucks, but I think what that's going to pave way for in terms of collaboration is going to be amazing.

Steve: I do, too, and it's amazing for me as well. I discovered Graves's work in 2003 and pretty quickly realised that, OK, this is actually a map to the future. It's showing us human values of the future and the sequence in which they'll emerge, and to be actually living through that transition happening right now and watching it happen, it's absolutely amazing, and very informative as well, just looking at some of the things that are happening.

Something that's really interesting, which I did not expect at all, is how mainstream values—and I'm thinking particularly about government here in Australia, which has been a sort of a centre right government; quite anti-socialist policies—all of a sudden start putting social policies into play as a result of COVID-19, which is quite remarkable. To see such a quick shift is pretty interesting. I don't for a moment think it's a permanent shift, but it reflects a realisation that the most obvious answer to our problems at the moment is actually a more social answer. That's what's required, so it's just fascinating to see that kind of alignment, all heading towards the evolutionary destination.

Howard: Absolutely. I do hear a lot of people talking about how UBI and things like that are going to be required, especially with increasing automation and all of that. I guess the shadow side of that would be it becoming a conditional UBI and the authorities using it as leverage over the population to kind of coerce them in one way or the other, but I know as well as you do, that there's going to be decentralised alternatives to that model, which would mitigate that, right?

Steve: Yes, it's a really good reminder that the systems themselves, or the tools that we apply actually don't have any morality about them. It's the people who design them and the people who put them into place and control them—they're the ones who express the morality. That's interesting to remember that. Often, what looks like a wonderful idea from one perspective can actually be a horrible idea from another perspective, and universal basic income is one of those examples where, in the wrong hands, they could say, 'well, you haven't had your vaccine, so you're not going to get any money this week', you know, simple things like that.

Howard: Exactly.

Steve: And that's actually happened to a small extent here in Australia with children, where the government has said, 'unless you vaccinate your children, they can't get entry into a school; into most schools', so that's a pretty great example of that kind of thing actually happening here in Australia already.

Howard: Yes. They've basically done that in Germany since November last year. You can't send your kid to school unless it's been vaccinated, but it's also illegal to home school, so it's basically a mandatory vaccination policy. But that's a whole other chest to open there.

Steve: I know, it is. And I'm certainly not anti-vaccines, but like many things in society, the profit-driven success motivation that exists in so many different organisations has skewed many, many things, including health care, so that they no longer actually serve the end user. They serve the shareholders.

Howard: Absolutely.

Steve: And some vaccines are certainly in that category, I think.

Howard: Yes, I think it's a good position to take to not be just hardline anti-vaxxer. I think it's more a case of weighing each vaccine on its own merits, but also being aware that vaccines are a good vector for institutional abuse, so we have to be vigilant.

Steve: Exactly, and that's going to be the story for the next few years, where we're in a place now where things are beginning to fall apart more, and fairly quickly, and there'll be this tug of war—there is this tug of war already going on—between the old paradigm and the new paradigm, folks. Some who want to pull us back and put us under more control and keep us under the old systems, and some who are trying to push forward into the future.

Howard: Yes, absolutely. It's funny because, I don't know if you listen to Noah Lampert's podcast--it's called *Synchronicity* Podcast (<https://www.syncpodcast.com>). He's been getting people writing in saying about how they're feeling great since the corona pandemic started, and I'm one of the people that definitely falls into that camp. Despite it being a rough time on certain fronts, I do feel more at ease since this chaos has started to emerge, and I'm wondering if that's just because it's an acknowledgement that the old paradigm is really starting to fall away now.

Steve: Yes. I totally recognise that myself. The really interesting thing about this time is that it doesn't matter what strategies the old paradigm thinkers come up with, they will, by default, push us towards the new paradigm. Anything that's structured around the old way of doing things is just not working very well anymore, and it's inevitably going to push us towards the future, which is really interesting. What's happening now, which could be seen on one hand is as a global house arrest control measure, on the other hand, it's taking everybody out of the rat race at the same time and giving them lots of free time to sit and ponder the meaning of life and what they want to do in the future. So it's a gift.

Howard: It really is, yeah. A massive, massive blessing in the burden here, I think. I'm curious about: how did you end up going down the route of studying Clare Graves's work, because it's not very often people end up going down the path of researching a researcher who didn't get to publish his research before he died?

Steve: Yes, it's a really good question. Just very quickly, my career has gone from entering the military at age 19 and being a professional army officer for about 15 years, roughly. In that process, I only went to one war and that was in Somalia, Africa, and that was a country—it was the southern half of Somalia, so I guess it was half a country—in total collapse. To be there for five months, in a country where there was no government whatsoever—completely collapsed—the control of the landscape had been fought over by a group of 20-something different clans commanded by warlords, and all of the utilities that you would normally expect a government to provide had collapsed: there was no running water, there was no electricity apart from people who had local generators, and no garbage collection; there was no sanitation, all of these things weren't working. So it was basically like the Wild West; it was like it had descended into the Wild West. In the town where I was based for most of my time there—a town called Baidoa—there was a Coca-Cola factory in ruins, there was an agricultural college in ruins, there was a Fiat car factory in ruins, and just to get my head around the idea that a society could actually go backwards that much was really eye-opening for me.

Howard: Yeah, I bet.

Steve: So that really stuck in my mind—just that process of social change. Of course, we went in there under the command of a larger military force to try and restore order and feed people and help them get re-established—part of what we did while we were there was to help them re-establish a police and legal system in our local area—but on the second day that I was there, I realised that this was a long-long-term problem that they had there, and one that had been partially caused by the division of countries after World War II, where some guy in an office in London or somewhere drew some lines on a map in Africa, and in the process cut a whole bunch of tribes in half and, you know, went against all of the pre-existing agreements about who lived where and what land they used and that kind of thing. So I realised that as soon as we left, it was pretty much going to go back to the way it was,

and that's exactly what happened after the forces pulled out of Somalia: it went back to the way it was.

So that was a big lesson. I guess that the next big sort of milestone in my life was I got out of the army, I ended up working as a rescue helicopter pilot for five years, and as a result of a whole series of different traumatic experiences, one of which happened in my early childhood, and a whole bunch happened when I was at war, and then a whole bunch happened during my time working as a first-responder helicopter pilot—I ended up suffering post-traumatic stress and depression and I didn't understand what was happening to me. I became really hungry to understand how the mind worked and so I started studying informally, just stuff I could find on the Internet about the brain and neuroscience and that kind of thing. So that was the start of the learning journey around: 'What is this human mind? How does it work? How can I change it? because I'm not happy with mine at the moment, because I'm not feeling well', and I eventually started to work as a coach once I'd gathered a few models together and I started to get an idea of how this thing worked. I started to work as a coach, working with people, helping them understand.

There was a spiritual aspect to this as well. I was married at the time and my wife, Simone, is clairvoyant. She's my ex-wife now, but the whole time that we were together, 23 years, she had this psychic gift, so that was the really interesting addition to my existence—was living with somebody who was psychic and could sometimes see into the future—and I guess it made me more likely to explore the spiritual world and the meaning of life and how do we create things in our life and why is it that some things that get foretold happen and other things don't? You know, those sorts of big questions.

So, for very sort of natural and healthy reasons, my marriage ended and we agreed that our time was up and we needed to go off on our own paths again, and I ended up in Melbourne, Australia, working as a management consultant and specialising in change—in organisational change—and there was an element of personal change or personal development built into that. So that became my full-time focus after I finished flying.

When I moved to Melbourne, I met a new acquaintance down there who'd grown up in Scotland, and he had been exposed to the gang culture in Scotland, in Glasgow, and had some experience with psychedelics as a teenager. He said to me one day that he really thought psychedelics could be useful for personal development, so I tucked that away in the back of my mind and didn't do anything about it. I actually said to him at the time, I said, 'well, look, if you ever come across a chance where we can try them out,' because I had never tried a psychedelic, 'let me know, and maybe we can sort of just go into the experience with that question in our mind: is this a tool that we can use for personal development and waking people up from a spiritual perspective?' That same guy introduced me to the work of Clare W. Graves through a book that was written called *Spiral Dynamics* about Graves's work. So he was a pivotal influencer at that time in my life, and that's really how I discovered Graves's work—I bought the *Spiral Dynamics* book.

At the time that I bought it, I was under a lot of stress because my marriage had broken up, I'd moved interstate, my finances had changed, my network of friends had been left behind. I had a fairly big stress score and I ended up having a breakdown from post-traumatic stress in the second half of 2003. Two interesting things had happened around that time. I'd got

the *Spiral Dynamics* book and read it, so I had that idea in my mind of Clare Graves's model of the different worldviews that we grow through, of the phase shift process—the change journey that we experience as we move from one world view to the next—and another friend around that time had gifted me a book called *Shamanism* by Mircea Eliade. I was reading the *Shamanism* book and I got up to the chapter called *Initiatory Sickness*, and then I had a breakdown and ended up in hospital.

So after a few days of rest in hospital and trying to get my thoughts back in order again, a light bulb came on and I thought, 'holy shit, this is happening to me, what I just read about in these books!' So as difficult as it was at the time—and it was a very, very demanding experience; a very difficult experience for me—at some level, part of me was witnessing what was going on and going, 'yep, that's exactly what it said in the book.' So that was a pretty huge life-changing experience for me in many ways. I basically personally road-tested the theories that I'd been reading in these books and I came out the other side nodding my head going, 'that's right, that's exactly what happened to me, that's exactly how I felt', and that was really cementing my ideas and my motivation to explore this further and to help other people understand this process as well. That was really the entry point for me.

Within the next couple of years, Don Beck, who was one of the authors of the *Spiral Dynamics* book, came to Australia and I attended two courses actually that he ran here in Australia; and then 12 months later, I flew to Texas and I did a more advanced training course over there that Don had organised as well. Then I came back to Australia and reoriented my consulting business to work primarily with this model that Clare Graves had put together, so I then road-tested it in the corporate world by using it as a foundation for consulting and advice. That was a very steep learning curve for me, because I very quickly found that the jargon—the American jargon from the *Spiral Dynamics* book—just did not cut it with Australian audiences, and I realised that I had to adapt the language in order to be able to explain it to people here and use it. So I went through an action learning process, or an action research process, of adapting and changing how I delivered this information and how I asked people to apply it in the workplace.

I guess the pinnacle of those years was I did an intervention for the legal department of one of the major four banks here. They flew their team from London and a couple of teams from different cities in Australia into a retreat centre and we did an immersive journey into this work. I did some one-on-one assessments with the people attending and gave them sort of written evaluations based on Clare Graves's work, and then we put together an action plan for them to take back into the workplace around how they could capitalise on the capacities they had within their team and really use them to their own personal benefit and the benefit of their team and the benefit of the larger organisation, the bank.

All of that happened just before the 2008 global financial crisis. I got some feedback from the team leader after the financial crisis had played itself out, that they found it extremely valuable to have that experience under their belt. Part of that process was also talking to them about the nature of complex adaptive systems and the different functional parts that a viable system has, and of course, Clare Graves's model is really a complex adaptive systems perspective on human nature—from my point of view, at least, anyway.

Howard: It's definitely a very useful framework. I'm intrigued how you're able to take this now and give it to the corporate world as a useful kind of framework so they're not just mindlessly going into the future, extracting more and more from the Earth, but realising that they're actually participants in this evolutionary process.

There was a point you made in your presentation that was talking about the market reports picking up this new globalised, socially conscious consumer, so the market, I guess, is following this change in consciousness anyway, right?

Steve: It is. It starts with the individual, of course. There has to be development in the individual to the point where they are transitioning into this new worldview, basically—so that's a key driver—then the social products that come from various individuals having their own journey and deciding that their values have changed and they want to focus on different things.

Howard: Definitely. That resonates with, at least my journey, for sure, and I guess many others that are probably listening to this show.

I'm curious about the way we get towards this decentralised paradigm. I know blockchain or distributed ledger technology is going to play a role in this, but are there any other things are ways that you see—I don't know, tools in our belt I guess—for getting there that you're aware of?

Steve: I think another big one, which is still in its early stages, is 3D printing, which has the potential to revolutionise the entire manufacturing sector. There are huge implications for this. When you think about what we do at the moment—look at the stuff that you've got on there on your desk in front of you, and probably some of that stuff's made in a factory in China and then it's shipped to the UK, and think about all the energy that's involved in doing that in the supply chain, and the retail and the wholesale and the manufacture. To be able to get something like that 3D printed, perhaps in your own home or, if not, perhaps in an industrial 3D printing shop in your local town, my goodness, that is going to change the world in big ways. Absolutely big ways. And now, even though it's still not a widespread technology, we're already 3D printing houses and big stuff like that, so I think that is another really obvious technology that's going to make decentralisation much more practical.

It's also going to decrease the cost of living. When you're going into a shop and you buy whatever it is you've got sitting on your desk there, and you don't have to pay for building the factory in China and you don't have to pay for all of the transport that's in the supply chain, and you don't have to pay for the staff at the wholesalers, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, I mean, my God, that's a huge change and it's going to make things super cheap.

Howard: Yeah, definitely.

Steve: And these things are like threads that you can follow, so once you've got a hold at the end of that thread and then you think about, 'OK, so if the cost of living goes down, what does that mean? That means that we don't have to work as much to earn enough money to live for a week, and then we have spare time. What does that mean? Well, that means we can do other things like be creative, spend time socialising, whatever it is that we might want to do.' One thing leads to another, is what I'm trying to say.

Howard: Sure. And as we move into this new paradigm from the Scientific-Industrial one, which is more individualistic, to this more communal one, I guess people are going to start growing more of their own food in this crisis as supermarket shelves have started to become empty. And that's a good sign, I think. It isn't as reliable as we were led to believe, right?

Steve: Exactly. A big part of the driver during the First Tier paradigm shifts or movement between the layers—and when I say First Tier, I'm talking about the first six layers in Graves's model. They make a set and then you've got this huge leap—what Graves called a Momentous Leap to Layer 7, which is off the scale—it's like a quantum leap that's a bigger change than any of the previous changes that have occurred, and there's some evidence now pointing to the possibility that this actually could be a species transition to a new species. So, just back to your question, when we make the transitions between the first six layers, there's a natural rejection dynamic that goes on there where we naturally want to throw out the baby with the bathwater. So everything that came before, everything that was a product of the old paradigm, we want to get rid of it. Understanding that, if you think about all the things that are wrong with our food provision at the moment—like the use of chemicals that are poisoning us, for example, and the packaging and the processing of food so it's hardly recognisable as food anymore—these are all things that are also going to drive people to want to produce their own food locally; if not grown themselves, then grown by someone local that they know and that they trust is not going to poison the food and it's going to be fresh and nourishing.

Howard: It makes so much sense. We live on a farm here that we're transitioning into a more food-productive farm. Something we've been experimenting with was 'can we grow citrus fruits here sustainably?' We're in our second year of that experiment and the answer seems to be pointing towards 'yes'. When you think about citrus fruits, that production is centralised, at least in Europe, to very specific regions and putting massive stress on the environment. That's before we've even got to the added miles that it takes to ship them here and all the chemicals they have to put on just to preserve the integrity of the fruit, so we're definitely going to see multiple benefits aside from the obvious environmental ones through this shift. It's very interesting to see that playing out.

Steve: Absolutely. And then you've got new farming technologies coming, like the use of AI in farming, for example, and vertical farming and those sorts of things.

Howard: Absolutely.

There was there's another curious piece, because I visit your website occasionally and I've been watching this one that you posted in 2017 for quite a while. It was the tipping point for global change and it basically had charts on there showing different astrological phenomenon and what we can expect to be happening during those periods, and you kind of nailed it (<https://www.eman8.net/global-tipping-point/>). It's amazing how much it lines up.

Steve: Yeah, I think the timing was slightly out. It's always very difficult to judge timing with astrological influences, but I didn't just use astrology to make that chart. I used a bunch of different sources, but there are very few things that will give you an accurate time frame. So if I re-did it, I would probably just—I think the structure of what I did was right, it just needs to be slid to the to the right slightly, I think. All I've reflected there is the trajectory of change the Clare Graves described in his research, which is also the *Hero's Journey* pattern from Joseph Campbell's work as well.

Howard: Amazing. I'm going to put these links in the show notes so people can see what we're talking about, because it is really fascinating when you start looking at this stuff and connecting the dots and seeing, 'wow, this really is an incredible time to be alive.'

Steve: Yes. I don't know if you saw it, but there's a little video on my blog site, www.eman8.net as well, of sound patterns on a steel plate—cymatics (<https://www.eman8.net/change/sound/>). Basically, it's a guy with a metal plate and he hooks up an oscillator to the metal plate so he can run sound waves through the plate, and then he sprinkles rock salt on the metal plate and he dials the sound frequency from low frequency to high frequency. As it goes up in the frequency range, it transitions through periods where there are stable standing waves that make what's called a cymatic pattern—a complex pattern that emerges from the chaos—and then as the frequency continues to rise, the salt will become chaotic and the pattern will fall apart, and then as it reaches a new place on the frequency spectrum, it will reform understanding waves and stability again. That's exactly the same pattern that we're seeing in human consciousness at an individual and a social level. Things become stable, then they fall apart as we go through a transition and then they become stable again and the pattern repeats.

Howard: So it's a bit like on a psychedelic journey when you're in that chaos phase and you feel like you're never going to come back down again into a normal human being, and then you kind of do.

Steve: That's right. It's the same thing. It's just the same change pattern, and it's the more you look, the more you'll find it everywhere. It's reflected in so many different things in our lives, from the sun rising and peaking at midday and then setting again, the dark in the night; the Taoist and *taijitu* symbol—the yin-yang symbol—the pattern of change is reflected, of course, most famously in the *I Ching*, the *Book of Changes* from ancient China; but also in things like the tarot deck—any mythology you want to look at around the world has records of this process.

Howard: Talking of the world emerging as a truly global civilisation, what do you see happening as this process unfolds? I know that the idea of having a one world government is definitely unappealing to a lot of people, but also at the same time, we do need some means of sensibly co-ordinating, so how do you see this space unfolding in the new paradigm?

Steve: As we were saying before, a tool or a system is not inherently moral in and of itself—it's not inherently good or bad from a moral perspective—it depends on the person who is wielding it. So, as you just indicated, global government could be a good thing and could be a terrible thing depending on who's actually controlling it.

What I'm expecting to see, I'm expecting that what we're experiencing right now is kind of like dipping your big toe in the water to get a sense of what the temperature is like, and we haven't even entered the water yet. But over the next 10 to 15 years, we're going to be subject to increasingly chaotic disruptions as parts of the old system collapse. There'll be a time where the old system is collapsing like now, for example, and the new system hasn't stood up enough yet to really take over. If you just think about the economic system—the global economic system—at the moment, we've got the inklings of a new system in blockchain, but it's not really widely understood and it's not accessible to enough people for it to become a dominant global system any time real soon. This whole process is going to be repeated across all different walks of life, different aspects and disciplines of life where the old ways really aren't working very well anymore but we haven't got a decent choice to move to something new yet.

I also think that Mother Nature is going to play a very large hand in how this pans out. I think over the next 10 or 15 years, we're going to see some fairly major climate disruption, which is essentially being driven by space weather, from my perspective.

Howard: I agree.

Steve: And I think that will trump a whole lot of stuff, kind of like COVID-19 has. People will be arguing about 'oh, we should be doing this, we should be doing that', and it's like, 'oh, my God, look what's coming, quick, take cover', you know? So I think a lot of human ideas and human endeavours will be somewhat overruled by Mother Nature stepping in, because really what's going on, from my perspective, is not just a shift in human consciousness. It's a whole systems shift that applies to our entire solar system. It's kind of like we're hunkering down in

small tribal groups to weather the storm, and the more independent we can be locally, the better. That doesn't mean we stop sharing things and shipping things around the world, but there will come periods—and it might not be an entire global period where everything's disrupted—but there will be periodic disruptions where certain communities won't be able to ship things around the world. They might just have to hunker down where they are and really weather some extreme climate change or whatever it might be. I was certainly aware of the likelihood of pandemics, but I didn't for a moment expect a pandemic to be so disruptive to global life so quickly as this one has been.

Howard: Yes, it's very interesting how this whole thing has panned out.

Have you heard of that whole *Event 201* thing?

Steve: Yes.

Howard: It's a weird one, isn't it?

Steve: As you know, I have my own podcast and I said right from the very, very beginning that there are a whole lot of things that don't make sense about this pandemic and the way that people have responded to it. There are a whole lot of breadcrumbs that suggest foul play. The mainstream media hasn't really been covering it very well but there's lots of information out there about the Institute of Virology in Wuhan, which is a P4 lab that studies viruses like Ebola and HIV and coronavirus, and there are papers that you can find on the Web that have been published by a researcher there, a female Chinese researcher who's been researching how to alter a coronavirus that originated from a bat and make it more likely to infect a human. The paper that I found was published in 2015, it mentioned collaboration with the US military, Fort Detrick, which is the Bioweapons and Chemical Warfare Centre in Maryland that belongs to the US Army. Just prior to the outbreak, there were stories, again in the mainstream media, about a viral research lab in Winnipeg in Canada that was collaborating with the lab in Wuhan, helping them upgrade their security measures because their security wasn't good enough at the lab. There were two Chinese nationals who were travelling backwards and forwards from America to China who were involved in that work, who were accused of stealing viruses from the lab in Winnipeg and taking them to China. One of the former heads of that lab in Winnipeg was in Nairobi speaking at a conference some time in February, I think it was, and he died unexpectedly while he was there. Then you had the Harvard professor, I just forget his name, who was also accused by the US government of illegal dealings with the Chinese government. He is a chemist by trade, but he's been working in nanotechnology and he had links to Wuhan as well. So there's a whole lot of breadcrumbs there, and whether they mean anything or they lead to anything, I can't say, but it certainly warrants investigation.

I think one of the most interesting things at the moment is what's not being reported by the mainstream media, and that whole story is something that's just not being reported. There's

a whole bunch of discrete events there, and I found one or two reports when I started doing research on this stuff, but no-one's talking about it now.

Howard: No. It seems like the timing of it is very odd because a lot of people are expecting a financial crash this year anyway without the virus.

Steve: Exactly.

Howard: So it's been like a great smoke screen for that.

Steve: Absolutely. I travel and talk as a futurist, as you know, and I've got a pretty good global network of people from different walks of life, including people who've worked in the military and intelligence circles, and it's pretty unanimous amongst my key sources that this wasn't something that was a natural virus outbreak. There was either a mistake or a deliberate release. That's the most common theory or idea—hypothesis—amongst my contacts, simply because of all these breadcrumbs all over the place that I was talking about. Whether it was premeditated, or whether, once it started to happen, people saw an opportunity to take advantage of it, I don't know, but I think there's certainly been recognition of the possibility of making this into a global-level emergency so that emergency legislation can be activated to deal with the economic problems that we're facing. You may have seen that the US Federal Reserve has done exactly that. They have activated their emergency legislation because we have a global emergency, which enables some of them to print money and do bailouts of organisations like they did after the global financial crisis in 2008.

The fact that Europe was just about to fall over—the EU—and has been sort of staggering for quite a while economically and then all of a sudden we've got the entire global economy being put on pause, you've got to start to think and say, 'what is going on here?' And I still don't really know whether this was all premeditated and the virus was just a distraction to do it, or whether the virus happened and then various governments and other organisations decided to capitalise on this opportunity to declare an emergency, pump it up in the media reports so it really sounded like a proper emergency, and then we can roll out our emergency legislation and re-jig the economy; reboot the economy, perhaps, for a few years.

Howard: Really, it's hard for me to see it as anything other than a premeditated event, or 'plandemic' as some people are calling it, because I've watched most of the *Event 201* video now, and it's just so weird how you've got the World Economic Forum, the World Bank, the American CDC, the Chinese CDC, Johnson and Johnson, all these other big corporate and governmental players, talking about what they would do if a novel coronavirus came out; and that's in October last year, and then like that's a boots on the ground reality in Wuhan just months later. It's like, what?

Steve: The *Event 201* thing is an annual event, so it has happened before. So that's some mitigation, is they did it the previous year and the previous year. It's a normal health emergency kind of exercise, but the fact that they were talking about a coronavirus is interesting. You've got to remember, too, that coronavirus is like a generic term that applies to all the variety of viruses. It's not just the particular COVID-19.

But then you've got to look at, I mean, there are so many things that don't make sense—there's a long, long list, more than I could mentioned during this call—but you've got things like the fact that Bill Gates is all of a sudden resigning from his day job so he can devote his time to convincing us all that we need to buy his vaccines and his digital I.D. technology that's going to make you scannable. And the fact that Bill Gates happens to be a major funder and influencer of the World Health Organisation. And the fact that the World Health Organisation issued the directive in the last couple of weeks saying that medical staff should code deaths as COVID-19, even if it's only an assumption and there's no proof through testing. Now, why the hell would they say that? That doesn't make sense to me at all unless they want to just pump the numbers up and make it look worse, make it look more like an emergency threat for some reason.

Howard: Yeah, it does feel like they're almost monetising the deaths and using them as like a currency to bring in more and more weird policies. That's a whole other rabbit hole to go down, but hopefully everyone is switched on and sees what's going on.

Steve: Yes. The other rabbit hole, of course, is the long-term push that's been going on for the United Nations to become a kind of global government which is intertwined with the global warming movement. If you do your homework and look back to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme, which is what controls the IPCC, the first head of that organisation was a Canadian called Maurice Strong, who made his money out of fossil fuels and cattle herding. He was the head of that organisation for quite a few years, the UNEP, and continued to make millions out of fossil fuels and other things, and had strong associations with the Chinese Communist Party. So that's interesting as well. And then if you read about Maurice Strong, he was eventually sprung receiving a million dollar check from a sheik in the Middle East, which was something to do with the Iran *Oil for Food* programme—a cheque made out of himself, basically. So he was caught taking a bribe. He quit his position from the United Nations Environment Programme and fled to China and lived out the rest of his life in China. He died a few years ago. So there's another interesting connection to the Chinese Communist Party and the UN.

What you could deduce is that there's been a long-term push to establish a global government by an influential elite, and one of the concepts being floated at the moment—and I'm not saying this is right or wrong—is that they decided that the whole climate argument wasn't getting the world to de-industrialise and change its ways, so they were looking for something else to shut the factories down, and, my goodness, hasn't that happened?

Howard: Absolutely. It seems like everything the school climate change protests asked for, they've got it now.

Steve: Exactly. So, all I can say is that there are so many unusual things about what's going on at the moment. The story that we're being fed by the mainstream media just doesn't really fit very well.

Howard: But this is also a great time for alternative media, right? As we're seeing this push for censorship on the mainstream platforms like YouTube coming online, we are seeing high quality journalism rising to the surface here. It's quite interesting to see that playing out.

Steve: Yes, and this dynamic of having a hidden agenda is very much a characteristic of the Scientific-Industrial mindset. Think of the corporate image thing, where you get a professional in to craft your corporate image and make it look all pretty, and it's like a screen that hides what's actually going on inside the organisation as well, and it has an agenda to it. That's just like the blueprint for communication—public information—in the Scientific-Industrial era, so what we're seeing at the moment is like the extreme expression of this old value system as it desperately attempts to stay dominant globally.

Howard: And I think that's really the important thing, to see this as the dying gasps of air from the old world and not a reassertion of the old world.

Steve: Yes. Just a really quick story: When I was a rescue helicopter pilot, I had a motorbike which I bought second-hand. It was only a 250cc bike, but it went really, really well and quite fast for 250cc bike, which I eventually realised was because the engine was getting old. As combustion engines get old, their parts wear down and so there's less resistance, less drag on the moving parts in the engine, so they move more efficiently. But as, of course, the parts continue to wear down, eventually it gets to the point where the seal breaks on the piston and the whole thing just doesn't work anymore. But right up to that point before the seal breaks, the engine gets more efficient and faster and faster and faster, and then it just blows. That's kind of like a parable for the industrial paradigm. It's going to get faster and faster and faster and faster until it blows.

Howard: That's a great metaphor. I like the image that puts in your mind. It's very accurate. Obviously we've touched on a lot of this developmental evolutionary curve stuff and what's going on in the world right now financially, so what do you think this means for blockchain in the coming years? How do you see that space mapping out now?

Howard: Well, what's becoming fairly clear is, in the short term, I think governments are going to attempt to establish their official blockchains and digital currencies. I read one report that said there were at least five countries in Europe which were seriously trialling the use of blockchain, including France, and planning to introduce their own digital currencies. Of course, one of the great advantages of doing that is that you can do away with paper money, which means that there's no black market trade anymore, so there's more visibility of transactions in society and more opportunities to tax those transactions. So it's a very enticing goal for a government, and I think we're going to see some genuine attempts to do that, and quite possibly some successful attempts where countries will introduce digital currencies and will go down that road. I think the sort of anarchic intentions behind the invention of the blockchain aren't going to die, though. There are lots of reasons why people would want to use blockchains and digital currencies that aren't controlled by anybody and don't take tax off you.

So again, this is this tug-of-war between the old paradigm and the new paradigm. Eventually, it's inevitable that the new paradigm is going to win because that always happens, basically. There's never been a time when it hasn't happened. Having said that, there have been periods in history where societies have gone backwards—and of course, the example I gave in Somalia is a classic that I've personally experienced—and so that's not to say that we might not take another two steps backwards before we move forwards again. That remains to be seen. But I do think that we're really reaching a critical point where these old paradigm social systems really don't work very well anymore, and the attempts that they're talking about making now to re-jig themselves are starting to look a lot like the new paradigm, right? So, as I said, you know, it's almost like any attempt that they make to fix up the old paradigm is actually also a step in building the new paradigm, really.

Howard: Yes, because it's almost building legitimacy for it, right?

Steve: It is. Exactly.

Howard: A lot of people wouldn't go into crypto until the government says, 'hey, we're going into crypto', so it's very interesting to see that.

Steve: It's a very interesting time, yes.

Howard: So for the blockchain space, are there any projects that you think people should look at that you think might be key for facilitating this new paradigm?

Steve: Look, this is not financial advice ... however ... there's one that really stands out to me at the moment, and that is the *Theta* platform. *Theta* is a video platform which is decentralised, the idea being that instead of operating through central servers, the videos

can be hosted by nodes locally, and when you stream a video, you don't need to stream it from California. You can stream it from someone nearby and hopefully get better access to the data. *Theta* has one of the original *YouTube* founders on its management board and when it was launched a couple of years ago, it had really good financial backing from China, in particular. It's operational, so www.theta.tv is sort of in beta mode at the moment. They've got people running feeder nodes already out there. Some of my friends are doing it and earning tokens out of it, and given what's happening with *YouTube*, which is kind of committing suicide by doing the same stuff that *Facebook* is doing, people are looking for new options, and I think it is going to be a very popular new option.

Howard: Amazing. I'll definitely have a closer look at that. And *Holochain*?

Steve: Yeah, there are a number of projects out there that have tried to copy to some extent what *Ethereum* did, in building platforms that allow people to build applications on their platform, so there's sort of a vertical aspect to them in that respect. Which one's going to succeed? I'm not sure, to be really honest with you. I don't know enough about *Holochain* and where it's at to really comment on it. I mean, I'm aware of it and I know for a fact, as a friend of mine was a major investor in the tokens, that it was kind of struggling early on trying to keep itself going financially. I don't know where it's at at the moment.

Howard: ... I got in on the ICO for that one and ended up buying one of those holoports to kind of do the testing, but I think they've got some big challenges on that project, because it's not blockchain, it's something totally different.

Steve: Right. As you say, there are some projects out there which are not technically exactly blockchain. There are other variations on that idea. And it's very early days. I guess we just have to be patient and wait and see which one of these gets traction, and *Theta* is one of the few that I see out there that actually is getting traction and seems to have a very sound operational concept at the moment.

Howard: That's fantastic. That's great to hear. I'm always curious to hear about these decentralised platforms that are coming online and actually being functional. I did enjoy the *Steemit* Platform for blogging because I had some good quality content on there, but you had the whole issue recently where somebody tried to buy it and then they hardforked onto a new platform, which in many ways is cool because it's showing how the communities can't be bought in this space.

Steve: Yes. I think there were lots of noble intentions in the birth of blockchain, absolutely, and let's hope that they can be fulfilled in terms of producing a new economic system that can scale globally and is very difficult to corrupt, if not impossible.

Howard: Absolutely. Well, I think that's probably a good place to end this one because obviously I don't want to take any more of your time, but before we part, I would like to just give you a chance to let people know where they can find you, and if you have any practical tips or parting words for navigating the crazy times that we're in, then feel free to share them.

Steve: Sure. In terms of tips, I think the most important thing at the moment is having some sort of a regular practice—meditational practice—and ideally something that's not simply meditational, but integrates mind, body, spirit. For me, my personal practice is kung fu—the old traditional kung fu system—which is like an open-eye meditation that's moving. The reason I say that is because we are beings of frequency and we're living on a planet whose frequency is shifting right at the moment. One of the measures of that is the Schumann Resonance, which you can find reported live online. The Schumann Resonance used to sit around 7.8Hz quite consistently, but it's been increasing for the last couple of years and sometimes spiking up to about 99Hz periodically, sometimes sitting consistently at 20 or 30Hz. We need to keep pace with the changing frequency of our planet by taking time to slow down and connect with the planet energetically and allow that frequency to filter through our bodies. If we don't keep in step with those frequency changes, then we're going to find our wellbeing increasingly disrupted, I believe. And that's also tied into the cosmic radiation aspect of things as well.

As we move to these higher layers of consciousness described in Clare Graves's research, my understanding is that our energetic makeup is changing as well, moving towards what has been called in New Age circles, the activation of the light body. I've come across some quite concrete information about that shift in our subtle energy structure through the work of a Japanese-American guy called Dr. Mikio Sankey, who works from a Chinese medicine paradigm using something that he calls esoteric acupuncture (<https://esotericacupuncture.com>). He's written seven books describing the emergence of this new subtle energy structure in the body which is laid over the top of the existing chakras and energy meridians. That's also a central focus of my interest at the moment as well.

So, the daily practice is really the number one big recommendation. Next to that, I would say build resilient communities: get to know your local people, pool your resources, pool your knowledge and your intelligence, and start building a resilient local community that can be as self-sufficient as possible to weather what's coming in terms of disruption.

Howard: Beautiful.

Steve: In terms of finding me, I have a non-profit Change Agency which is at the Web address, www.aadii.org. AADII stands for the Agency for Advanced Development of Integrative Intelligence and that's my central activity at the moment. I've got a blog site called www.eman8.net. I do a weekly podcast called Future Sense and you'll find links on the

www.aadii.org website to that podcast. You can also listen to the podcast on that site as well (*Editor's note: the podcast is now also available at www.futuresense.it*), and I work part time as a volunteer for Psychedelic Research in Science and Medicine (PRISM) here in Australia, which is a non-profit research organisation. We're currently researching psilocybin to treat depression and anxiety in terminally ill patients. You can find that at www.prism.org.au.

Howard: Wonderful man, that's great. I'm really hyped that we could have this conversation today and I hope everybody who is listening enjoys checking out your blog and your podcasts and anything else you're putting out over the coming months and years.

Steve: Thanks Howard. Much appreciated. It's been great to have a chat, mate.