

Welcome to Turning Conscience Into Action, the Earth Charter podcast. Join Mirian Vilela, Earth Charter International Executive Director, in her fascinating conversations with great thinkers, scholars, and activists from around the world who are working in the fields of sustainability, ethics, education, and social transformation. Our purpose is to generate new insights on how to face current global challenges and inspire Informed Action. Welcome to our podcast today.

Today we have the pleasure and the honor of receiving Abelardo Brenes.

Dr. Abelardo Brenes is a psychologist. He's retired as a professor from the University of Costa Rica and from the University for Peace, where he used to be a professor for many years. And he was actually the founder of the Peace Education Program at the University for Peace. So welcome, Abelardo, and thank you for joining us today. Thank you, Mirian. It's a pleasure and honor. So I would like to start by recalling that in the late 90s, you were part of our Earth Charter drafting process. You offered significant input and contributions to the thinking behind the Earth Charter.

Therefore, could you start by sharing with us one or two highlights of your experience and your own learning through this process of drafting the Earth Charter? Okay. Well, first, I'll give a very small background. As we drafted a document called Declaration of Human Responsibilities for Peace and Sustainable Development, which was somewhat inspired by the message of universal responsibility. And it was presented that year by the Costa Rican government to the General Assembly of United Nations for its recognition as a non-governmental declaration.

In the decade of the 1990s, I used that as a framework to develop two educational programs in Central America. So that's the context I was in when you, Mirian, invited me to join the drafting committee of the Earth Charter. So all of these previous elements I just described were very relevant to my experience in the drafting process. Well, let me just tell you about why the declaration. First of all, it was drafted to a very broad-based international consultation between government, between some of society organizations.

Those days, the internet was just beginning, and so we had consultative meetings in several cities around the world. But the basic paradigm behind this is that we had reached a milestone in contemporary history in the 20th century. We had the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. As some authors now say, in 1950, we had to be the start of what's called the Great Acceleration and the development of globalized capitalism. And the human rights paradigm in and of itself, I interpreted basically as an agreement by the universal community of nations to protect and respect and protect each person, each member of the global family, universally.

So, but in a global culture that was emerging based on a model of personhood, a culture of, let's say, egoistic individualism, which underlies capitalist development around the world, which was what was problematic is the relationship between human rights and human duties. So nobody really wanted those days to be told what their duties are. Nobody was just thinking self-centeredly in a very predominant way about what the one's personal and collective rights are. This goes way back to the 18th century when human rights

frame, we've started developing part and parcel of the development of capitalism, John Locke, and other people.

Anyway, so the basic vision here is that we could and needed to culturally, globally, adopt an alternative complementary paradigm in which all people, that's one sense of universality, and each person's scope of responsibility is for the planet as a whole. Not just human beings, but the planet as a whole living ecosystem. So it's universal from an ethical point of view in both of those senses. And so that's the core, let's say, principle in that declaration. Okay, so would you share with us some stories or one or two highlights of your experience in participating in the drafting process of the resharum?

Well, I had already, as I just mentioned, had the experience of a consultative process which was joint with the university profiteers and the foreign ministry of Costa Rica. But the quality, the breadth, the multiplicity of sectors involved in the Earth Charter drafting process was much greater. And it was very, very holistic and it really benefited also from the series of United Nations global conferences that took place after the Earth Charter was mandated in 1992, the Rio, the Genedo Conference on Environment and Development, and all the series of other conferences of the United Nations.

So that also was very important. So I would say being under the leadership of the coordinator, Professor Stephen Rockefeller was a very significant experience. Now, in terms of my personal participation, it was a privilege to be part of the committee, but also within the committee, we had a sort of like a small core group. So it was such a tremendous learning process. For example, one of the things that really impressed me was the fact that to understand how certain concepts and values took on different meanings and implications depending on the context in which they were embedded.

For example, in principle, one of the key principles of the Earth Charter is to care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love. Now, initially, this or similar statement was mentioned in what is now principle 15, which says treat all living beings with respect and consideration. And principle 15c says avoid or eliminate to the full extent possible the taking or destruction of non-targeted species. Protect wild animals from methods of hunting, trapping, and fishing that cause extreme prolonged or viable suffering.

Now, I remember that in one of the consultative meetings, this idea of caring for the community of life with love and compassion was related directly to that specific context about protecting wild animals. And I remember that the representatives of the Inuit people took objection to that because they would lose their livelihood. So I made this suggestion, why don't we bring that into a more general context and thus became principle number two. So by being very general, this concept of care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love, it was no longer problematic.

So to me, that was one of the most fundamental, let's say, experiences in learnings. Also because this principle is, to me, is very much related to the basis of an ethics of universal responsibility. So we can talk about that if you like. What do you think Abelardo is the uniqueness of the Earth Charter as a document in, especially, what is its relevance for the current times? Well, I think all of the main goals and usages that the Earth Charter has been put to use and that have been identified also are still relevant.

I have always been skeptical and sometimes critical about certain assumptions that an ethical movement in and of itself is feasible and has meaning. Particularly if we look at the values and principles involved here, which are in an ethical nature, and we place them or try to apply them in context, be they local, national, or global, where there are so many inequalities, forms of oppression, exploitation of peoples, of nature, and so on. The relative, let's say, harmonious nature that these different 16 principles have with one another become contentious.

So if we're working within a broader framework of peace building or peace resolution or so on, of democratic building, democracy building, of socioeconomic structures, and so on and so forth, it's a big challenge. And also the way that it's a challenge, the way that the Earth Charter is structured, it's very linear in the way it's written. Whereas its content, if one understands it well, one can see that it's a very holistic document and that we need to work in all of the domains in a very complex, interactive, systemic approach, I would say.

So to me what's most relevant is still the core, is the core of the ethical principles, particularly those stated in the first four principles and in the preamble. But it has to be something accompanied in the diverse groups, movements, governmental, non-governmental, civil society movements, and oftentimes related to complex strategies linked to, for example, peace conflict, resolution and peace building processes, democracy building processes, economic justice, environmental justice, gender justice, and so on and so forth.

So it needs to be relevant to different contexts in the interest. And I think a mistake that sometimes has been made by some people is to see an ethical movement as something autonomous in and of itself and it's not the way I think the world works. So even though you said it's written in a pretty linear way, if someone really understands and knows it, you could see that it's actually pretty interrelated, all its parts should be seen with a systemic approach. And that's clearly reflected in the very last sub-principle on the definition of peace, which is intended as a synthesis of the Earth Charter as a whole, which says, recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, earth, and a larger whole of which we are all apart.

So if you unpack that, you know, each of those domains of relationship is very rich and very problematic as well. Okay, so you have worked a lot on the topic of universal responsibility. We could say about 30 years, three decades of working and thinking about how to articulate the notion of universal responsibility, which also should embed the whole notion of differentiated responsibility, especially in terms of how it's articulated in the Earth Charter. You actually have written a chapter in the Earth Charter in Action book, precisely on that topic, which I have used extensively over the years in classes.

So can you share with us some of the key ideas that are embedded in the idea or notion of universal responsibility, as it is articulated in the Earth Charter? And why do you think that is important? Could you help our audience to understand what is in it and why is that important? Okay, I already gave you a background reason for why it's important. It's the big cultural shift we are challenged to make in our time. You know, like Thomas Berry says in his book, the great work. Each generation has a major challenge, and our major challenge in the anthropocene is to live organically with the planet as a whole, all beings.

So I say that's the main reason. Now the notion of universal responsibility, for me personally, I had been very much inspired from a Buddhist Mahayana background, but it's not only unique to Buddhism. I take a secular approach as well. In fact, one of the articles I wrote, which is a chapter in a book called Handbook on Cultures of Peace edited by Joe DeVeta, I wrote a chapter on personal transformations needed for cultures of peace. And so I there look at comparatively, that contributes from Western theories of values, value transformation in psychology, psychological models for that.

And also, I bring in the Buddhist approach and end with the Earth Charter as something that expresses the holistic approach based on Buddhism. And so universal responsibility, as I said, is the complement of universal human rights. So the two pairs, the concepts that are the first pair is human rights and human duties. Every right needs someone to take on the duties to create and protect and respect the respective rights. Now responsibility is a different concept. It's like the bridge that connects rights with duties and obligations, which are codified into most constitutions of democratic societies, rights and duties and obligations.

Responsibility though is an awareness, a sense of consciousness and a will to act in a certain way. It requires one to be creative and so on and so forth. And it's based on an internalization commitment to the values and ethical principles that are embedded in the human rights framework, which is now broadened. It's not just human rights, it's also animal rights, it's also planetary rights. So it's a whole domain of rights that now their responsibility though has two different meanings. There is an ethical domain, moral, how it's internalized in us as persons, and an ethical is how the norms with which we agree to relate.

So in that sense, universal means that each and every human being, we all agree on a set of principles. These are the ones embedded and expressed in the A-charter. And secondly, still within the ethical domain, the scope of that responsibility is the planet as a whole, because we are living in an interrelated, deeply interrelated planet. But in order for this to have any practical utility, we need to look at responsibility in its other meaning, which is the capacity to respond, which can be prevention, the writing wrongs, damaging control, reparation, reconciliation, etc.

Justice making so many things that are involved here. Because we could face many challenges, but we wouldn't have any capacity, no knowledge, no power, the capacity to respond to many challenges. And therefore, the level of we could have the responsibility, but not the capacity to respond. Right? Right. And as the A-charter itself states very clearly in subprincipal 2B, it says, affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good. Okay, so common good refers to the ethical domain.

But in order for that ethical domain to have meaning, we need to bear in mind that we live in a world where freedom, knowledge, and power are differentially distributed. Absolutely. And that's how the A-charter articulates the notion of differentiated responsibility. Yeah. Because we all have different levels or capacity to address. Exactly. Exactly. So that's the great challenge that we have here. And one very important aspect, I mean, each of these concepts, you know, we could dissect and analyze.

It's something I tried to do in some of the writings and so on. But let's take freedom, for example. I make a further distinction between internal freedom and external freedom. Amartya Sen, for example, is a very fletcher writer who has talked about different domains of external freedom, freedom from want, freedom from fear, and so on. And if you look at the framework of human rights and freedoms, which, you know, they're part of the same framework, most of the freedoms have to do, or the concept of freedom that's dominant there is what I would call external freedom.

And if... Especially in the book he wrote, *Martin Sen on development*, us freedom, linking the idea of freedom with development. Exactly. Exactly. Now, if you relate that to a capitalist culture and type of socioeconomic societies that dominate the world today, most people have a very limited sense of freedom in most groups in their society. It's freedom to be a good consumer, for example, to be an obsessive compulsive worker, things like that. And people like that, living that way, cultures like that, which I think have been dominant and still are dominant.

Maybe they're changing. That's a whole big discussion. And how can we make them change? We have to look at the internal dimensions of freedom. How can we overcome these obsessive compulsive mental and cultural dispositions that we are embedded, that we've internalized to develop the mental capacity to be... To creatively respond within a common shared ethical framework, to go beyond the self-centeredness of freedom. You know, Buddhism, for example, now that we've been in the pandemic of COVID-19, some Buddhists have stated very clearly that this pandemic illustrates very clearly the interdependence of so many phenomena that are going on in the world.

And that... But in Mahayana Buddhism, the core, let's say, source of all of our problems, all of our afflictions, including things like violating the nature that unleashes a virus like this, which is based on self-grasping ignorance and accompanied by cognitive self-centered attitudes. Ego-centrism, in one word. So how can we overcome ego-centrism, which is needed if we want to live according to the first sub-principle of principle 2, to care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.

And to me, that is the core challenge. How can we develop that kind of orientation towards life? And to also set in the preamble of the Earth Charter, once we have satisfied our basic needs, let us understand that development is about being more, not having more. Make that fundamental shift. That's the big challenge, I think. Yeah. And we could link that with the whole notion of it's our responsibility also to make that mental or worldview shift. So you worked for so many years at the University for Peace as a professor and as a department.

And of course, you spend a lot of time thinking about peace and non-violence. Now, there is a whole section, section part four, pillar four of the Earth Charter, articulates this notion of peace and non-violence. Can you make a comment of how the Earth Charter specifically articulates the notion of peace and non-violence? What does that mean in terms of creating a culture of peace through the lenses of the Earth Charter? Sure. Before I got involved with the Earth Charter and let's say gave education for sustainable development importance in my own work, let's say as the central core of my work, I had been involved within the paradigm of culture of peace.

And as you recall, the United Nations decade for culture of peace went from 2001 to 2010. And as I mentioned earlier, I had the privilege of directing two programs in Central America in each of the seven Central American countries in the post civil war as a peace building stages. So this was work that was being done parallel to the United Nations work. And so I was able to, let's say, work within and witness the challenges of the culture of peace and peace education paradigms in very challenging contexts because we work from local levels to national levels in countries that were, in one case, Guatemala, they were still in their civil war.

Other countries like El Salvador were coming out of their civil war. Nicaragua was still polarized between Sandinistas and non-Sandinistas. In Costa Rica was showing signs of violence in those days. I could also speak about Honduras, Belize and Panama. In any case, when the... And that was during the decade of 90s and a little bit before also in the mid 80s. Yeah, exactly. I started my work for peace in the beginning of the 80s with the Quaker-based Friends Peace Center in San Jose. And so I was very much influenced by the whole Quaker approach to working for peace.

And around that time in Central America, in the early 80s, there was a lot of conflict going on in Central America. Not only Central America, you're right. But Central America was one of the regions where the Cold War, the international Cold War was very hot. Although the wars going on in Central America were considered low-intensity wars. But nevertheless, there was a struggle for how to frame the understanding of the causes and nature of these wars. And that was one of the things that we articulated after the Esquipú de Espíritu course.

Do you frame this as a struggle between capitalism versus communism, which is what the basic Cold War ideological confrontation was about? Or do you frame this as a North-South disparity with deep historical structural roots? Or a combination of both of these polarities and how do they interact? I was very much influenced by a, I think it was in January of 1989, a decoration by Pope John Paul II. When January 1st, Pope will give a peace decoration, he said, North, South, East, West, we have the challenge of creating one single cross of the vision of peace on Earth.

So that was very significant for me as expressing these archetypes, let's say. So do you think with this vision and experience you have had in what was going on in Central America and the work you were involved in, do you think the Urshara articulates well this notion of culture of peace and peace and on violence? Can you comment from the lens of the Urshara how that is articulated, whether it is done in a clear, irrelevant way? Sure. First of all, let me contextualize a bit of where I'm coming from.

I participated and also read many of the assessments of the UN decade for culture of peace and basically concluded in common with other people that it had been a failure that decade. One of the indications of that was the 2001 attack of the United States of the Twin Towers and the beginning of the war on terrorism, the global war on terrorism as a policy of the United States. Now I don't say that it was a failure due to the faults of the people who were directing this from the UN or I'm not putting the blame on the United States.

That's not where I'm heading. I just think that if you look at the theory of peace and conflict and violence, which is very important, well, peace is basically defined in two ways, let's say, as absence of violence or as a creation of social justice and democracy and rights. The first is called negative peace, which is an absence of, let's say, something that we don't want. The second is a sometimes called positive peace, which is creating harmony and right relationships and all of that. These are complementary approaches.

A lot of it comes from Joe Hengau-Tung, he was a major theorist in all of this. This polarity can also be divided into direct violence, peace, structural violence and peace and all different domains of social and economic and political relationships and cultural violence and peace and so on. So it's complex and any peace education work has to bear in mind these different domains. I have been very interested in understanding what goes on psychologically as well as culturally. I feel examined all of this.

And so I attribute the failure of a culture of peace approach to certain psychological roots, let's say. Now let me first also add that culture of peace or peace as a term and sustainability or sustainable development as another term, these are very complex terms each and you cannot define them easily and if you start unpacking them, you will look, they're holistic terms, let's say, and they are expressing complex sets of interrelationships with multiple domains of relationships of societal, personal, domain and with nature and so on and so forth.

Now what happens is if you try to work for peace basically and you use that as your concept of reference, because of the way human psyche is structured, usually the need for security will dominate. Talk about a couple relating in a family or come to the broader society. You'll see these dynamics happening everywhere because we're talking about survival. So I came to the conclusion and some of the things I've written are examining this. So when the sustainable development paradigm of education in the decade of the United Nations going from 2001, 2005, sorry, to 2014 was proclaimed, I had already come to the conclusion and written about how sustainability is a paradigm that implies peace, of course.

It's one of the dimensions. It is intimate related to peace, but it has a much better chance of triggering the mind into approaching the positive peace definition of the concept peace approach to peace. So both are complementary of course, but in a global context in which the war on terrorism is dominating in most societies, we very virtually needed that. Okay, so how do you think if there's that articulates well the notion of peace and non-violence and culture of peace? Well, because I think it expresses clearly the complete paradigm of peace and sustainability that I was talking about and the approaches to peace that come from the negative peace approach, but emphasizes, that's the importance of the subprincipal 16, F emphasizes the positive peace approach, which is what it uses terms like peace is the wholeness created by right relationships in all domains.

So to me, the human need for living holistically with in relationship to oneself and in relationship to all other significant relationships, because we are profoundly interdependent, and are profoundly interdependent with nature with one another, and we all need to want to find our meaningful place in a dynamically creative unfolding cosmogenesis. So this creates a tremendous potential for the unfolding of the higher

qualities of human beings, I would say, in Buddhism and many other faiths and on, let's say religious approaches.

There's a belief that caring based on love and compassion are the core of our psyche. And wanting to live in harmony, which is related to living with integrity are part and parcel of mental, emotional and physical health. So it's a very powerful concept that's embedded in the synthesis of the Earth Charter. Sure, wonderful. So let's go back, let's look at the, let's look at the peace education program of the University for Peace, which you helped to develop and create many years ago. Could you share with us how that process took place and how you use the Earth Charter?

Okay. Well, the process of designing that began in 2002, two years.

And all of the previous experiences I had had the tools, the elephants on were of course, utilized for this. And it was this master's program piece occasion was designed with the help of renowned peace educators from different parts of the world. And we had a very key consultative meeting at Teachers College, Columbia University with the support of distinguished peace educator, Betty Reardon and her staff.

We also had people like Sui Hinto and her wife, Virginia Kawaras,

who David Adams, who had been a coordinator of the UN Culture of Peace Program, considered Sui Hinto the most distinguished peace educator he knew. You know, we had people like that. So the overall, let's say, goals of using the Earth Charter for education

were also affected in the goals that we identified for a peace education master's program, which was developed to train educational leaders from around the world for educational reform.

And the, let's say, the main themes and holistic ethical principles of the Earth Charter are clearly reflected in the different phases of planning and structuring this program.

And if one looks at a document describing the program, which one of whose components was a planning matrix for each of the courses, there is a course on education for sustainable development. And in that context, the Earth Charter is explicitly referred to quite a bit as one of the important frame to reference to be taken into consideration by people who designed the specific courses in that program. Yeah. And then in the teaching of the program, different professors taught that course and other courses that we tried to make it a master's program that was very

organic and holistic as well and also related to other master's programs at University for Peace and Youth for other programs and also to benefit from other programs.

Could you share with us what peace education means, what ESD or Education for Sustainable Development means for you and how do they relate to one another? Well, as I said before, peace and sustainable development or sustainability, which are two concepts that have very different implications, they are organic, holistic, complex concepts and

they are deeply interrelated. So if one is a holistically minded person, think systemically, I would say there's no distinction, there's no separation.

You cannot have one without the other in talking about core values. We could say that peace education and education for sustainability are quite similar.

I would say they're identical. Yeah, we agree with that.

For example, you take Earth Charter, the first four principles, but particularly principle one, respect the earth and life and all its diversity. Okay, but particularly two, care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love. Three, build democratic societies that are just participatory, sustainable and peaceful, secure earth's bounty and beauty for present future generations. We're talking about the rights of future generations.

Can you separate these four principles? You can't separate them.

Sometimes we call them the mini-Earth Charter, these are the core conceptual and ethical principles. These ideas could serve both to education for sustainability and also to peace education. They need to serve both. The only reason they've been separated or reasons as you said, they're different interests group and agendas and institutions who like to carve up the world for different reasons. What is peace education for you? Well, I like a broad-based definition.

But basically it goes like this. It's the absence of negative violence or negative the greatest reduction of negative peace or in other words, the greatest reduction of violence. It's different domains, structural, cultural, direct violence, the minimum violence and the greatest harmony based on social justice, democratic building, building institutions, relationships between humans and with the natural world including sentient beings and also all other earth sustained earth system sustenance entities and relationships.

What are the relationships and differences between peace education and education for sustainable development? If you take a holistic approach like the one I've just described and the one we certainly tried to develop in that master's program in peace education, the differences are basically strategic. It has to do I think with the context you are educating within. Are you involved, for example, in a war-torn area zone where perhaps people are not even aware of the environmental determinants that fuel so many conflicts in the world? Or is your entry point an environmental situation where the unsustainable ways in which access to ecological resources and the way they've been exploited for human production and distribution are creating conflict and violence.

So the practical strategic levels are to me what is practically useful to distinguish but always working with a very holistic framework.

How do you envision, so could you say that you envision education for sustainability and peace education be implemented from a holistic approach always?

Always. For what other reason does the Earth Charter have sub-principle 16D or 16F as a synthesis of the whole Earth Charter? It's definition of peace. What's it doing there? It

should be at it. In my view it could be at the beginning as well. That would be good too. But it doesn't matter because if we go away from linear ways of thinking and think systemically as I've tried to do and I have once created a diagram, I don't know if you remember at the very center was peace and all these other relationships that are basically reflected in the Earth Charter are linked in different concentric circles. It was a mandala.

It's important to look at these different conceptual ways of mapping our domains but it's a big error in our time now to separate these domains. Sure. At some point in time you wrote an article or a chapter called the Earth Charter values as a foundation for integral education. Yes. That means you know or you have ideas about what is integral education and can you share with us a little bit more about that article or what do you mean by integral education and Earth Charter as a foundation of that? Okay. Well I had collaborated with a friend called Edmund O'Sullivan, Professor Edmund O'Sullivan from Ontario Institute for Studies and Education back in the 90s who had written a very influential book called transformative education and there was a whole network of educators interested in integral education. Integral and holistic are very interrelated terms. It's not exactly the same but very close to stuff. Now Edmund in his book the main message that he gave is that we need to educate for three fundamental pedagogical purposes.

To develop consciousness that the issues we're dealing with are about survival. Secondly to be able to educate critically to understand the causes and reasons for the challenges in the face of history we are involved in. And thirdly to be able to creatively and positively envisage new ways of being and living and relating in different domains for a positive transformation and resolution of the different problems and consequences of the first two books. So I adopted that vision of Integrality and also embedded it. Another writer that I felt very influenced by was David Hammond who wrote about different scenarios for the world that we're in, our movie into.

We could go on in a world where nothing basically changes or we could go that world would most likely exacerbate into a fortress world of societies that concentrate wealth and power and let's say large segments of humanity and nature which is basically the outside, moral outsiders or we could through cultural, democratic, human rights, sustainability thinking practices transform this into a viable planet. So we can approach this from so many different ways but and that was precisely the reason why we put on this conference in 1989 in Costa Rica at the University for Peace. It was the late motif was an open invitation to the global family of the University for Peace in its home basis Costa Rica a living laboratory for exploring the meaning of creating a civilization based on the values of peace, democracy, human rights and sustainability. And we tried to develop an international educational program in the 1990s with this network of educators I just mentioned and but I ended up focusing on working in Central America within the auspices of University for Peace.

There's so much work in experience you have also well we have written and published a lot and you have written on education for peace and the earth's charter you have a chapter written on that in Spanish in which you talk about pedagogical vision or your pedagogical vision of using the earth's charter as an instrument for education for peace. In there you talk about the goals should be conscientization, personal development, application of values and networks. Can you share with us like your vision of that in terms of education

for peace and the use of the earth's charter in that? Well those goals that you just mentioned come from the United Nations framework of the decade of education for sustainable development which talk about consciousness raising, envisioning, developing networks, planning and implementing evaluation and you know cycles through different models of social learning. I also examine in that article different theories of educational change and try to let's say stress the importance of working with multiple what's called geographies of educational change, physical geographies, virtual geographies, the linkages and cooperation and so on and so forth.

I also wrote another piece which complements all of this, personal transformations needed for cultures of peace. That's a chapter in a book edited by Joe de Rivera entitled Personal Transformations for Cultures of Peace and the earth's charter is also referred to quite a lot toward the end of that chapter because I think that the personal transformation domain is very very important because what's needed is nothing less than a fundamental transformation in what we believe being a human being is all about.

As I said earlier the human rights development framework, a framework of development or the development of the human rights framework in the 18th century by influential writers like John Locke, David Humes on others was part and parcel of the development of capitalism. They go hand in hand and in the 20th century certain authors like Philip Pushman talk about an empty self for example, empty of significant human relationships, breakdown of communities, empty of significant relationship with nature and so on and so forth. Someone who is emotionally start stressed because if you're a worker you have to act in obsessive compulsive modes.

All that contributes to the sense of emotional starvation and frustration and that kind of psychological makeup is needed in order for people to be good consumers and good workers and the people who own capital and means of production and so on and so forth who are endlessly ambitious, they also are part and parcel of that vision of human development and if you look at it this is the common denominator around the world that this has become globalized and a set of beliefs are taken for granted and people now believe this is human nature and this is not human nature. We can look at indigenous cultures, we can look at many traditional religious cultures and so on and so forth and concepts like living with voluntary simplicity, living with solidarity, living in a sense of community.

There's so much evidence that this is much more gratifying, much more meaningful to what it means to be a human being and if we embed this in a historical, deep historical perspective, for example the way the pioneer Thomas Berry did in many of his writings he coined the concept that where the impact the humans have had on the planet is equivalent to the change in an ecological era, an environmental era, he talked about the ecozoic and he talked about the great task, great work of our generation and now that this has been developed with the concept of Anthropocene, people don't use ecozoic anymore but they do use the concept that we are in the Anthropocene to refer to the fact that right now if you can join this with the concept of the great acceleration where also people were my fellow charter like Bob Raskins who wrote this book, Great Transition, you know, in a very similar way of thinking. We're living in an era that is very decisive whether we are going to destroy the planet or at least the likely possibilities of human livelihood

existence on this planet or if we're going to be able to make the fundamental shifts that are needed in order to let's say develop the cosmological evolutionary potential of our planet. So much at stake, huh? Sure, a lot and I want to thank you so much for your time and for sharing so much of your thoughts and your experience with us.

Thank you.

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