

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.

Okay, so today we really have such a pleasure to have David Korten here with us to have an interesting conversation.

I'm looking forward. Thank you so much, David, for joining us today. Well, thank you for setting this up. It's a great privilege and a joy to be back with you again. Yes, so 11 years ago we were together somewhere in Indianapolis, I guess, and we did record an interview, which for me was very special and I always learned so much from you. I remember we talked about your latest book at that time and in conversation about the model of domination, from a model of domination to the community of life.

You have been such an inspiration. Actually, I must say I have read many of your books around 1997, 1998, and that have influenced me quite a lot. I think the person who introduced me to you was Junie Kalau. He gave me some of his books of yours to me and that is very special to me that we are now together and we can talk about some of your books, your writings, your research. Especially when corporations ruled the world, the post-cooperate world, were books that I cherished a lot, actually, my learning.

Thank you so much. Thank you. I think Junie was very special in both of our lives. He was an incredible human being and such a loss as his premature passing. Absolutely. David, you have played such an important role, I think, in many initiatives over the past many years. Through that, you have helped people to change their perception and understanding on the role of corporations, the role of business, economy, hopefully with this help to move or to shift towards the well-being. For instance, you have worked quite a lot on helping people to understand the importance to move mindsets from a self-interest focus towards a more common good or moving away from a model of domination to a model of Earth community, a model of life.

What's your take in terms of, are more and more people understanding that or are we going backwards? Well, basically, that question takes us to a deeper question. What is our fundamental nature as human beings? Now, the theory that neoliberal economics is based on is that we are inherently individualistic and selfish. It has been very interesting to me in my experience. The individualism has very deep roots in Western society, particularly. It's partly out of the scientific revolution, but it goes back much further than that, even to the nature of our Western gods.

Part of what was living and working for 15 years in Southeast Asia, at least when I first went to Asia, it was so clear that within the cultural frame, community was more important than the individual. The community was the foundation of your identity and your being. And as I've gotten more and more deeper in the understanding of that, that also is basically what most indigenous cultures are also more in the community frame, including a sense of community with nature. So that's not an alien framework.

But the other thing is partly what's special about humans is because we are story creatures, we shape our nature by our choice of our story as we live the story. Now again, part of what's so fascinating is there's so many levels and so much nuance and the differences. I mean, we're beginning to come to an understanding in science that our most basic human nature is that we care about one another. We care about our place. We care about our pets, but more than that, we care about living beings. That in a way is one of the most fundamental aspects of our nature.

But at the same time- I know how it sounds and fully agree. Yeah. Essentially in the nature of human beings, we care for the well-being of others. Yeah, but we can't overcome that caring if we get our story wrong. That's what we have. We have it very wrong. And of course, if we understand life and community in a way, we can only survive in the long term if we embrace our caring side. I mean, this again is part of my experience living in so many different places and often coming into contact with people who were extremely poor by had very little.

And sometimes those people are right there ready to try to rip you off. But the most common situation is if you're ever in trouble, go to the poorest people you can find and they're the ones that are most likely to help you out. I mean, it really is just extraordinary. The people who have the least are the ones that are most likely to share with you when you're in need or you're your guest. We are still in much need of work to expand our consciousness with regard to the importance of common good and this view of first community.

Baby, did you have a moment in your life that you had a ha in terms of shifting your mindset, a shift in the way you look like when you were in the first years when you were teaching at Harvard and what you studied? It's hard for me to believe you always think thought the way you currently think. But was there a moment that you had a kind of shift in the way you looked at all of this? Yeah, I could tell you a long story about some of them are very sudden and very deep. Others are gradual. I mean, the first thing is to get clear that in a sense life is learning.

And when we stop learning, in a way, we're dead even though we may still be moving around. You know, I grew up in a very small isolated small town. You know, it was all, I didn't, the only people I experienced who were not white Caucasian people that looked essentially like me were the people that ran our local Chinese restaurant. I had no interest in ever visiting another country. I mean, everything that was worthwhile was right here in the United States. Why the hell would I want to go someplace else?

I mean, this is, this is it. This is the model for the world and so forth. It's very interesting. And that's actually how many people still live. Yeah. Not only the US, but in many regions in the world. And I was a very conservative young Republican and I was very frightened by these Communist revolutions that were a threat to our American way of life. Oh, that's becoming even more interesting your story. Yeah. So, you know, I went, I went to Stanford for my undergraduate education because I'd heard that they had a really great business school.

And so, you know, I want, I was going to go back and run the family business. That was my, my destiny. But then once I got to Stanford, I found the business school was only a graduate school. So I couldn't take any business courses unless I got into graduate school. So I took a little economics decided, you know, even in my innocence, realized that was totally worthless and ended up stunning psychology. But in my senior year, I had to take something called a senior, senior colloquium outside of my major study.

So there was this senior colloquium called modern revolution. And I thought, well, maybe this is something I ought to take that course since I've got to take something and learn what these revolutions are about. So I learned that they're about poverty and the frustrations of poverty. So I decided, OK, I will, I will still go to business school. That's my, my plan and I'd already applied to Stanford and Harvard. But with the intention of, I will learn about the secrets of US business success. And I will spend my life taking those out to the poor countries of the world so that they can become fat, happy, contented consumers like us.

That was, so I think that would qualify as a sudden shift, you know, in what you wanted to do and how you kind of was a moment that opened your eyes to issues around poverty. To issues around poverty and a recognition that, that I really did want to devote my life to something more than, you know, sewing dishwashers and pianos in my, in my family store. But then the process of, you know, working in, well, living and working in Ethiopia, then in Nicaragua, then in Philippines and Indonesia and back to the Philippines, you know, introduced me needless to say to a very different world.

And the gradual awakening to the nature of, of, of that world and the institutions and all the things we're talking about. The other, the other sudden shift is very relevant to our discussion. And this was back in, I don't know, it was about 1997 or eight. A group I love was part of the, what, International Development Association or something, anyhow. They had a meeting in, in, in a, in Spain. And I was attending that meeting and in one of the breaks, I was approached by this basically tiny woman, clearly of Asian extraction, turned out to Chinese, who introduced herself to me as Dr. May Wan Hou.

A microbiologist, and it turned out quite a, quite a noted scientific figure in her particular right, rather outside of the scientific mainstream. But she introduced, she said, you know, I know your work. And I think what I'm doing may be relevant to what you're doing. And this was a time when, you know, it was after I had written when corporations rule the world, I was clear that we, we needed solutions and we needed a different kind of solution than most anything we were talking about. And that somehow this had something to do with life and our understanding of life.

But the only biology I was familiar with was, you know, the essentially Darwinian biology and the survival of the most ruthless and, and so forth, which, which turns out to be a misinterpretation of Darwin, but that's who I understood it. So this Dr. May Wan Hou says, I'm a new biologist. So what, what is that? Well, she says a conventional biologist will take a living cell, grind it up, study its chemical composition and think they have learned something about life. She says, I study living cells and how they manage and exchange nutrients, energy, water and information.

Now we had to go into a session, but you know, this is, this is, this is one of these things that makes me wonder, you know, these things that are coincidence, are they really coincidence or is there some, some kind of guiding force up here? You, you, you were a business, like MBA, you studied business and suddenly you started opening your eyes and interest, interest into a new field. And I had my PhD from the Stanford Business School and I had actually taught on the faculty at the, at the Harvard Business School.

So yeah. And then she, well, I mean, this is the other extraordinary piece of this, that we, we were separated. We didn't have any further conversation at the meeting. But it turned out when, you know, I forget the name of the city, but we had to fly to, to Madrid to get the plane. You know, we're both flying to London because she was living in London and I went from there to the United States. So it turns out we were on the same flight to London and we managed to arrange so that we could sit together.

And so that whole flight was devoted to essentially my education in her biological frame. And, you know, that's where she explained to me that story of the human body that I recited to you earlier. That was not my discovery. That's, that's what I learned from her. And that conversation in the flight between Madrid and London helped generate the shift in your thinking. Well, the other piece is, you know, my next flight was from London to New York City. And it was on that flight that I put together the outline for the post-corporate world, *Life After Capitalism*, which is really the book in which I laid out my sense of the implications of this framework for economics, business and the human future.

So, I mean, that was one of the fastest shifts that I've ever, that was a moment of just an extraordinary moment of alignment. So nice. Thank you so much for sharing those, those two stories of awareness or awakening, shift, wonderful. So you have written many books, over 10 books, of course. And I would like to have a little conversation or you sharing some overview of some of your books. So in 2006, you published a book called *The Great Turning*. And of course, I also remember reading and it was wonderful to see how you articulated the idea of empire and, again, Earth community.

So in that book, you talked about the manifestations of empire and you made the case about the importance of Earth community. What was in your, what is that? What did you, can you give us an overview of your thinking around that? Yeah, this was, this was a little bit longer process, but and several people were, were key in this, including London, a Shiva, you probably know. But the, the kind of defining input at the moment was Rianne Eisler. Do you know Rianne's work? Yeah, greatly admire her. Yeah, well her, her defining book, I'm terrible on names, I can't remember the book at the moment.

*The Chalice and the Sword*. Yeah, the Chalice and the, Chalice and the Blade. I think it was. I read it in Spanish. Ah, the *Cali Sela Espada* in Spanish. Was she, you know, her framing kind of put this all in a historical perspective. And the idea that our earliest societies tended to be much more gender balanced or even woman led. And then the process by which we got separated from the land. Well, first of all, from, you know, the, the, the hunter gatherer frame where we simply integrated into nature.

To then settle agriculture where we began to exert some, in a sense, dominance over control of nature. And then how that allowed us to build a degree of surplus, which then

a ruling from which a ruling class emerged to control the surplus. To build its power of domination over both earth and people. And, you know, that, that's a process that took place more or less 5000 years ago. And, you know, what I realized that, you know, you can call it empire, which, you know, I think captures the frame. This is a dominator system.

And it is a system devoted to domination of other people and domination of earth. And originally that was built. Well, it was supported by religions, religion, a very big role in legitimating it. But then it, you know, it was enforced mainly by physical violence by military. And, you know, the, what we currently look to as police was kind of a subset of that. But then eventually over time, as, as we reached out further into empire, we began to discover how you could use money and the institution of the corporation.

And of course, the earlier corporations like the British East India Company were created to manage colonial domination. And we became quite skilled at that. So then when after World War II, there was a big move to end colonialism, break up the empires as we knew them. Now, what I came to realize by the time I wrote *The Great Turning* was that much of what we called international development and foreign aid, the work that I was devoting my life to.

You know, there were a lot of good people involved in that with, with, you know, good vision and good values, but the dominant system, the people who were really controlling that system, had figured out how to reestablish colonialism without, well, certainly not without military, because military still played a major role. But it was mainly through this dynamic of money and the control of money.

And it was by creating and expanding the institutions of the corporation and giving them more and more control of money and ultimately more control of, of lands and markets and everything else on which our well being depended. So that awareness emerged, first of all, in relationship to, to the low income countries, what we call, you know, the underdeveloped countries or the Third World.

But then as the relationship of dominance, to the underdeveloped or developed Well, it's dominance, but it's also the use of money and the control of money and the institution of the, of the corporation. Which were and are in many ways seen as completely normal. Yeah, exactly. Teaching that it's normal and that this is a path to, to great wealth for everyone. Normal because it's a paradigm. No, it's, it's part of a certain mindset. Exactly. Exactly. And so, you know, you convince, you teach people and you convince them that this is their path to, essentially to eternal well being, to limitless wealth.

And you, you know, you build a middle class that actually does benefit from this process. But then they become your instruments for control of the larger body of society, which is forced into continual dependence and servitude, essentially, to the economic system. So then, you know, as I got involved with more and more people, more and more of us were, were waking up to that piece. Then there was a gradual process of waking up to the other reality, that this wasn't just about the domination of poor, poor people in poor countries.

This was a global phenomenon.

And of course, that plays out now, you know, in the United States, which I grew up thinking was the ultimate universal middle class society.

You know, our middle class in the United States has been systematically shrinking. You know, as, as the few on top get ever, ever more separated, and then there's kind of a, an upper middle class, but the actual middle class of people living a normal, you know, kind of adequate material life with material sufficiency is shrinking. Is that ever larger part of the total population is living in desperation day to day. And of course, you get so focused on surviving day to day that you don't have time to step back and say, what the hell's going on here?

Why, why am I experiencing what I'm experiencing? And, you know, this is all where the waking up has to take place. And part of, part of what struck me, your question about, you know, winning over corporations is the, the stories I get from some of my friends that, that have connections with, you know, with corporate executives. That many of them recognize what's going on and that it is contrary to their values and they're very upset by it, but they also realize the system is such they are not in control.

They do not, you know, with very rare exception, they do not control the corporation. They are employees of the system. And if they nobody controls the system and the system controls everybody. Yeah, well, it's, it's, it's sort of their, well, ultimately, it does control everybody because if anybody flakes out on the system, they will be excluded from the system and someone else will step in and take their place.

So that's, you know, that's part of the dilemma we face. So in that book, *The Great Turning*, you talked about ecological civilization.

What did you I don't think I use that term. I used Earth community. The term ecological, I don't know, is it in the book?

I think it is in the book, but you talk about ecological civilization there started, you continue to talk about that. My question is, what do you mean by ecological civilization? And do you think humanity can eventually evolve towards that? Or also, if you change their mind between like 10 years ago, thinking about what is ecological civilization and now? Well, what, what I was framing as an alternative to imperial civilization, which, as you look at it, you say, well, what do you mean by civilization?

Is, is a society devoted to exploitation?

Civilized? Is that our idea of civilized? So you could just say it's, you know, we need to take a step to civilization. But what's important about this framing is recognizing that getting beyond our current crisis requires a whole lot more than a few marginal adjustments.

It requires a fundamental reframing of our understanding of who we are, what our purpose of being is, how we need to learn to relate to one another and Earth. And then a deep transformation of virtually all of our existing institutions, our business institutions, our government institutions, our educational institutions, our religious institutions. In a sense, you know, it is a civilizational transformation, or you could call it a step to a true

civilization. I happened to like the term ecological civilization, because it, it brings in this connection to, to Earth and to life and emphasizes our nature as living beings.

But the name is not the crucial piece. I mean, what the specific name it is, the recognition that the nature of the living being is the same. This is truly deep change, and it has to happen with extraordinary speed.

And, you know, this, this is where it becomes very difficult, because people ask, what do you think we, you think that we have time, that it's possible to do what we have to do.

And, you know, when you ask that question, you know, if I flip into my academic mode, you know, sort of the objective observer, the answer is clear.

It's not possible.

Absolutely impossible. There is no way we can navigate this.

But then I realize also, in my objective mind, that if you take that as your guiding premise, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. And we don't know that we can't do it. So we have to assume we can recognize that we have extremely little time.

You know, this really needed to be done 10, 20, 30 years ago. I mean, we needed to be on this back when the, when the Club of Rome and the Limits to Growth study came out and said, you know, we're, we're on a path to environmental system collapse. In 2009, you, you, you wrote a book or published a book called The Agenda for a New Economy. Actually, the last time we met was around that time when you had just launched the Agenda for a New Economy. And in that book, you talk about something that you call the Phantom of Wealth. What is that? It seems that you identified the root causes of the financial systems of systems approach to the financial system. The financial systems approach to create money without producing anything of real value.

Can you talk a little bit about what, what do you mean by that? What was your finding there?

Well, it goes back to this observation that money is just a number.

It is not wealth.

And the trigger for writing that book was the, the financial collapse in 2008.

And of course, that financial collapse was about all these financial bubbles that had been created around a system that is, is creating massive debt that ultimately cannot be repaid.

Now, the details of this get very complicated, partly because since money has no existence outside the human mind, there is no material reality to it. So there is no logic to it. That if you got control of the computers, basically there's all kinds of ways to create money out of nothing. And you get these pieces playing against each other that creates essentially Phantom wealth. And, you know, we're just our vocabulary. We're told to call it wealth.

We also call it capital. You know, doesn't that sound like something real capital? Boy, that's, that's real. That's solid. I get my arms around that.

The challenge here is to detach the, that money is not a synonym of wealth and wealth is not a synonym of money. Yeah, exactly. Real wealth is, you know, is land. It's labor. It's love. It's, it's all the things that are essential to our well being.

The only one that we can really get totally along without if we had to is money, not, you know, not necessarily in our modern economy, but if, you know, the people who live for thousands and thousands of years with no equivalent of money, humans can do it. But we cannot live without, you know, real wealth, the things that we cannot live without that we, those are the only things we should refer to as wealth. So anything that just money I refer to as Phantom wealth. So in that book, you also argue that leaders in the public and private sector lack the will to make the urgent fundamental changes to the economy system.

What do you think is needed to break out the walls? You talk about that in that book. What is needed to break out the walls that do not allow many people to see that the fundamental changes are needed in the way in which we approach economy? Yeah.

Well, that of course is what I got to more in the book Chains of Story, Chains of the Future. It is the frame that we are, we're in a sense seduced, hypnotized, conned into embracing this system of Phantom wealth, Phantom wealth creation, which then allows the few to gain control over us to grow their power which in a sense is Phantom power because, you know, if we destroy Earth's capacity to sustain life, there's no winners in that. I mean, you know, getting all these arguments about who was the most oppressed and excluded on a dead Earth, that is, you know, the most oppressed and excluded.

We have got to band together to create a society that meets the needs of all people in a balanced relationship with Earth.

Now, you know, there are signs that we have to make sure that we have a balance between Earth and Earth. Now, you know, there are signs that there may be some awakening within the halls of corporate power. And here's again, you know, where a nuance comes in. You know, some of those people in power, are literal psychopaths.

You know, they, their, their humanity has been so damaged that they cannot express empathy or behave in a truly rational or responsible way.

But there is a small percentage of the total.

Now, any individual power holder in that system is very limited in the choices they can make. But if enough of them got together and said, wow, this system ultimately is not working for me. It is actually destroying my humanity. In my daily work, I am forced to do things that are contrary to my deepest values.

And I want to change the system. They might be able to do some powerful things together. But only if it ties in with the broader movements of humanity, the people outside the



system so that we join people within and without in that process of transformation. That's, that's where there may be hope. But it also, we've all got to recognize that it's not sufficient just for those people to wake up and start making collective positive decisions. I mean, those positive decisions have to recognize that they have got to include a radical redistribution of ownership. You know, we talk about, mainly about income and equalizing income or bringing up income. We talk about income from the bottom, but income is money that we get day by day. Ownership is the source of power.

And this is where our whole concept of property and ownership has to be transformed. We need to first of all recognize the nature of common property. The things that none of us created.

And none of us has a right to own as an individual.

But each of us has some right to.

And then when we're talking about rights, and this is one of the things I just checked on the, the, the Earth Charter is interesting. The Earth Charter constantly repeats the term responsibility.

Responsibility. The emphasis of the Earth Charter is on elevating our sense of responsibility. Yes. And this is part of recognizing, you know, again, our western focus is so much on rights, individual rights. But within an Earth Charter frame, we recognize there are no, no rights without responsibilities. They are inseparable. And if we only exercise rights and no response. So, you know, we've, we've got to.

We've got to sort out what that means. And if we recognize that most of what we talk about as property is common property that none of us created, none of us has a right to own to exclusion of others. How do we organize our relationships to that property such that we share it in ways that are consistent with the well being of all that conversation has hardly begun and I, you know, I'm not sure. I don't have, I don't have answers to it. I have only the questions that we need to examine for some of the questions we need to examine.

That's wonderful. Now in your in 2015, your latest book on related to stories was launched. It seems that you articulate in that book the importance of stories and how, how we should make use of these stories to drivers to the future we want. So the book was called change the story, change the future, a living economy for a living birth. Can you elaborate a little bit on the gist of that book? Well, it's basically what you just outlined.

Yeah, it comes back to the thing that fascinates me is the the fundamental truths are so obvious. And in some ways they're so simple. When you get into the issues of actual implementation and what it means for the changes we need to make in society, they are infinitely complex. I mean, it's just like coming back to the body. Okay, the idea. Yeah, our body depends on all these trillions of cells getting their act all together and self organizing in a synergistic way to make our body work. That's in a way that's very simple and straightforward.

Before you start getting down to the details. Well, how in the world do they do that?

How do they do that? I mean, it's in some ways is more complex than trying to get those seven, eight billion humans together trying to figure out how to live on a on a living live together on a living Earth.

In a way, the body is so simple and straightforward. I'm not it's first time I got myself into that one. I don't know whether that holds up or not, but just the mystery of how would you make that work and yet the body clearly does it. And it's not just my body or just your body. It's I mean, it's it's every living organism does it. And they seem to do it sort of naturally and effortlessly. So what can we learn from that? And how do we do it?

But it all begins with the with the story and the recognition that the body is the body. And so what do we do? So what can we learn from that? And how do we do it?

But but it all begins with the with the story and the recognition that by our choice of story, we basically choose our future.

That's so important to clarify that to be careful with the stories we tell. Yes, exactly. Careful with the stories we learn and we have been learning stories throughout our lives. And certainly, I think in your book in your writing, and I think I shared that very much is that the predominant story we have learned and told is that success and happiness has something to do with money, money as an equivalent of wealth. And of course, you know, reflect on that.

You know, if you get a new computer, new gadget, you know, there's kind of a, an immediate term shift, thrill.

But that disappears pretty fast. And then ask yourself, what are the moments where you get your greatest satisfaction? And this is almost universally true, except for psychopaths.

Our moments of greatest satisfaction are when we feel like we've really been useful. We've, we've been helpful to another person or even we've, you know, been very helpful to our pet.

Or we, we helped a bird that was having trouble out in our yard or something.

It are these moments when we feel we have done a service to life. That are moments of greatest satisfaction. And of course, the work that you and I are involved in.

Again, we get our greatest satisfaction when we feel that we've been participants in advancing some breakthrough and understanding and the ability of people to get together in ways that they have not been able to get together before. So that's all part of, of understanding ourselves and, you know, basically getting our story right. Yeah. So one of the key challenges of the current generation is to, to reshape the story of what it means to be, what are the purpose of human being, the purpose of human being, the purpose of human being.

To reshape the story of what it means to be, what are the purpose of human being, the purpose of our life. To reshape a bit the story of what it means to be successful and also this moving away from serving money to serving life. That's what you articulated that

book, right? And the challenge to the young people is that they've got to learn that on their own. Because the education, most of the educational system that they're immersed in will give them, will not only give them no help at all. You know, it breaks up knowledge into these little silos, these little tubes and it's almost as if we've designed a system to destroy the mind's capacity to think in terms of systems.

You know, and people who work with, with very small children, it is our inherent nature, the striving to understand relationships and to make connections and so forth. In ways that our modern educational system seems intent on driving out. This is a huge challenge for education, to realize that, the education system. Yeah, so in a sense part of their deepest challenge is learning to learn. I wonder, I hadn't thought about this before, but maybe this disruption of the educational system is, is advantageous.

Now, I mean, there are, there are kind of mechanical things that we need to learn. We need to learn, you know, arithmetic and we need to learn to read and write and, you know, basic scientific principles and so forth. And those things in a way are, are very well adapted to remote learning. But the real lessons of life, you learn only by living, by engaging with people and, and working together to solve problems or to help each other out or even to learn together. And maybe, maybe this disruption is a way of helping us get, get back to, you know, get into a real education that is aligned with the needs of our time.

Right. Now, the, the Earth Charter in the current times, we are in the third decade of this new millennium.

What do you think is the relevance of the Earth Charter to current times and to the great turning that we should be having to? Well, it's, it's interesting. I find that, that there is a deep hunger among people for finding some kind of a guiding framework or document. And one of the things I found very disturbing is the number of people and many, many of my own colleagues who seem to uncritically turn to the United Nations, supposedly sustainable development goals. I call them the UN's unsustainable, sustainable development goals.

Why do you call that way? Because, well, you know, it's part of this deception we're drawn into. I mean, the, you know, the idea of ending poverty, or, you know, ending deprivation and everybody should have food and housing and all that is, is very well taken. But the kind of defining action goal in the unsustainable, sustainable development goals is explicitly economic growth. And if you look at the deeper document, the larger document, there are just repeated references to sustained or sustainable economic growth, which makes that in a sense the, the driving goal, ignoring the fact that we now have decades of experience with the outcomes of a focus on economic growth.

And that outcome is destruction of Earth's capacity to support life in order to grow the financial assets of the already richest among us, which further drives the inequality and the exclusion of the majority of the peoples from the essentials of daily life. And I don't think that's a mistake.

Because over the course of... It's a compromise, probably. Well, it's sort of a, it's a really compromise. Maybe really an understanding, a thinking or perspective that the only way to address poverty and social inequality is through economic growth.

Well, you know, one of the things I first became aware that, you know, in terms of our powerful global institutions, among which the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, you know, two institutions very dominant in terms of sort of economic development, that their, their whole frame was essentially devoted to getting poor countries deeper into debts that they could not repay, which then put them in a position of restructuring the economies of those nations, again, to shift more of the power and control to global corporations and global financial institutions.

And what I came to realize is that can't just be a mistake. That is built into the process. And once I became aware of that, I also began to notice, you know, the United Nations is a body of governments, most of which in our current setting are ultimately controlled by the rich and powerful and by corporate interests. And yes, there are, there are actually many wonderful people in the United Nations, and there are in the World Bank and IMF as well. But the dominance of power resides with those who are dedicated to the elite agenda.

And then in amongst them, even, you know, are all the people that they have been educated in neoliberal economics, and they have not been fully exposed to the critique, and they're not even aware of what they're actually doing. So is, you know, what does this tell us about the UN?

You know, it's a mistake to trust the United Nations without examining carefully its recommendations and charters. And, you know, that's, you know, we, we absolutely need global forums to reshape our global framework so that we actually, you know, the global supports the local supports the community, supports people and coming together as communities in control of their economies and their resources, so that they can actually get control of their lives, while sharing information, sharing knowledge, and even, you know, sharing physical resources is necessary and ultimately probably a radical redistribution of population as surface condition shift on earth.

But, you know, very complex processes that need levels of sophistication and commitment to the overall well being of humans and earth on in this very rapidly changing and very dangerous circumstance. So those are all the. So one more on your brief thinking on the relevance of the Earth Charter to the current times and the great turning. Well, the, the Earth Charter is in my view the, the best overview statement that we have, I mean, there, you know, there are a variety of different statements, but in terms of, of a kind of metaframe that is consistent, consistently a living system frame, and is ultimately a living earth frame.

Um, you know, I just think it's the best document that we have around which to mobilize fine common ground and have these discussions about. Okay. Um, it doesn't exactly tell us how to get there. But it helps us get our story right. That we are living beings we are interdependent. These, these defining issues of our time are all inextricably interconnected. And the only way we're going to have a viable human future is all of us coming together

in common cause to create a world that actually works not just for all humans, but for the whole of life.

On which we're ultimately depend. So yeah, I, I kind of like the Earth Charter. Very well articulated input. Well, David, thank you so much for being with us today and for sharing all your knowledge. There's so much experience. I feel we could spend days just chatting with you and it's such an inspiration. Thank you so much. And thank you for, for the invitation giving me this opportunity. And I look forward to working with you in any way. If you liked this episode, please share it and support our movement by making a donation.

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