

A Deep Ecology for Earth 2, and You 2

Moving Toward a New Way of Being Human, and Aging in the
“Right” Place

Seminar Schedule

- 10 to 11 - Deep Ecology presentation
- 11 to 11:15 - Break
- 11:15 to 11:45 - Aging in the Right Place
- 11:45 to Noonish - Dance Meditation

The Talking Dog



Who Am I?

- Anthropologist
- Husband and Father
- Family and Community Physician
- Geriatrician
- Ordained Interfaith Contemplative Minister
- Hospice Physician
- Explorer

My “Aha” Moment

- Shamanic ceremony (“deep meditation”)
- Intention dealt with my past, present, future
- The past: how to interpret and understand who or what I really am
- The present: optimal management
- The future: who will I become; becomes core of ongoing “prophetic” dreams and thoughts, optimism, interconnectedness with a fluid time-space continuum - a “deep ecology” mindset

Who Am I really?

- Non-self: part of an evolving ecosystem sharing the same dust, air, soil, water, and “noosphere”
- Non-attachment: impermanence
- Teacher: sharing information and knowledge gathered from various sources; help people understand and appreciate interconnectness
- All this mirrors what indigenous peoples have believed and taught for millenia!
- I guess I am just a slower learner - it took “ceremony” for me to get the message!

What is Deep Ecology?

- “The deep ground that feeds what we call our soul”
(Joan Halifax)
- From Shamanic (40,000 years) and Buddhist perspectives, the interconnectedness within and between all forms of life, including the living Earth
- All life is from the same “dust” and our extended “self” has become an expression of the world
- We are all part of the same global ecosystem

The “Core” of the Philosophy and Practice of Deep Ecology

- Biospecies equality, harmony with nature
- Recognition that Earth’s so-called “resources” (habitat for other life forms such as oceans and rainforests) for human beings are limited
- Requiring human commitment to a responsible relationship to our co-species and to an environment that supports all life on the planet

However,

- Indigenous prophecies: We have lost our connections to our ancestors, and “mother Earth”, and this leads to devastating effects on our planet and our health
- As we age, we tend to lose our connectedness and contact with our “spirituality” and our oneness with the environment
- Our 40,000 year evolutionary path has led us off-track as human longevity increased
- There have been now centuries of environmental degradation especially since the Industrial Revolution and growth of animal agriculture

- We're not hunters and gatherers anymore. Cavemen were always active, hunting down animals with limited success, and foraging wild plants along the way. They didn't have access to meat 24/7 for every meal. And the meat was wild, not farmed raised. They did not follow a "Paleo" diet.
- Animal agriculture for 7 billion people isn't sustainable. 1,800 gallons of water is used to produce 1 pound of beef. Cows produce 150 billion gallons of methane per day, a major contributor to global warming.
- 90 million acres of all the earth's farmland is devoted to corn and soy to feed chickens and cows, using 1/3 of all US farmland and water for animal agriculture for human consumption.
- 90 million tons of fish are pulled out of our oceans every year.

When Deep Ecology is Not Practiced

- Lifestyle illnesses
- Low-level air particulate pollution associated with oxidation, inflammation, age-related chronic disease, loss of bone mineral density and bone fractures
- Climate and environmental disasters, eg fires, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, military conflicts, refugees, loss of life and property, despair, poverty, shorter life spans and life expectancy, global pandemics
- Now more than ever we are one interconnected world and this makes us more vulnerable

Earth 2

- How do we change our current course to protect our deep ecology?
- How do we get back on track for the health of the planet Earth and our survival, especially as we age, and for our descendants?
- Biosphere 2 was designed to search for environmental solutions
- “Earth 2” - a re-design of our lifestyle and interconnectedness with all life forms through a recommitment to a deep ecology consciousness

- “All of those who knew, or could have known - including those conveniently closing their eyes to events (harming our planet and democratic institutions) or permitting themselves to be intoxicated, seduced, or bought with personal advantage (and financial gain), or obeying from fear - share responsibility”

Paraphrased from Foreign Affairs article Jan-Feb 2018 on the undead past 20th century atrocities

- What can we do to protect our deep ecology? What lifestyle changes in particular? How do we get on a more sustainable and healthier evolutionary track ?

Embrace Deep Ecology for “You 2”

- Interconnect with nature
- Do no harm - Protect the Earth
- Eat healthy without harming the Earth ecology by transforming our food culture. Good news: “Veganism” has grown 600% in US and world over past 3 years
- Remove toxins from a dependency on animal agriculture, and move toward plant-based nutrition and renewable energy

- Make breathing clean air and drinking pure water top priorities
- Be mindful, and be ethical
- Embody qualities and attributes that allow us to evolve to “being” human (a verb and aspiration): lovingkindness, compassion, forgiveness, and non-attachment especially to harmful ways of adversely impacting the environment

Evolve a Sustainable 21st Century Consciousness

- Deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of lifestyle, deep ecology and personal and planetary health
- Appreciate that our personal survival and ability to thrive comes from a sense of “oneness” (atone!)
- Recognize “being” human is a verb (Hopi), that one strives to attain
- Understand the relationship between earth changes (+) and personal transformation (+)
- Responsibility to find your path and transmit/teach

Personalizing Deep Ecology

- Processing our lives, evolving personas and interests and relationships, remembering both who we have been and who we are becoming (“deep meditation” a vehicle)
- Living in the present, remembering the past, and foreseeing the future
- Being where the mind, body, and spirit come together, unified

Remember that

The increase in human longevity in the 20th century was not primarily due to antibiotics, chemotherapy, intensive care units, and an extended pharmacopia, but was due to public health, sanitation, and lifestyle changes.

In the 21st century, continued increase in human longevity (rather than decline) will depend upon our:

- critical interconnectedness with the environment, our shared deep ecology;
- continued personal lifestyle improvement (healthier and sustainable eating, physical activity, managing stress, and healthy aging parameters such as engagement in community and social relationships, and especially living and aging in a sustainable place and way of life.

Through language and story, we weave ourselves into the world. Make a tapestry promoting both personal and planetary health.

AGING IN THE RIGHT PLACE

- How best to live in that “deep ground that feeds what we call our soul” and be interconnected with a healthy ecology?
- How can we optimally adapt to our changing needs and environment as we age?
- Aging in “place” in our own “home”? Or,
- Aging in the “right place”?

Key Factors and Variables in Health Status For “Optimal” Adaptive Aging

- Mobility
- Resilience
- Social Interactions
- Relationships
- The human “spirit” is our evolutionary momentum toward adaptation, exploration, movement, and community for survival

Why it is important to age in the “right place”

- For individuals living alone: preventing loneliness and providing community
- For couples/partners: dealing with asymmetrical physical and/or mental decline and resilience capacity
- For those seeking “community”: living with people sharing similar interests, spiritual or religious values, politics, hobbies, etc.

Strongest Predictors of How Long You'll Live

- Not your weight
- Not what you eat
- Not how much and how you exercise (flu vaccine more imp)
- Most important predictors are:
 - * Close relationships (people you can depend upon, esp when in need)
 - * Social integration (how many people you talk to throughout the day - colleagues at work, postal delivery person, grocery store clerks and customers, etc.)

Healthy Aging Parameters

- Community activities and social networking
- Adaptation to changing “environment”
- Recognition (vs. feeling “invisible”)
- Meaning and Purpose
- Creative pursuits
- “Never too late” - PCOA logo

Ongoing Learning and Creative Pursuits

- The Drawing Studio - Andrew Rush
- Murray Keshner - art teacher, age 86
- Dr. Henry Koffler, Age 95

- Doris, Tucson's "Grandma Moses", Age 103
- Homer Cooyama, Artist and Medicine Man
- Gregory Bateson, Anthropologist

Common Options Our Patients Consider

- Maintain current residence, with certain physical modifications and occasional household or home health assistance
- Downsizing to a smaller residency (eg apartment or townhome)
- Moving to a retirement community in Tucson
- Relocating to live with or near family/friends in other parts of the country
- Relocating to a location based on interests, better weather, better politics, affordability

How to Find the Optimal Place to Age Well?

- Presentation by Danny Klein and Tom Pothoff, Serenity Senior Services
- Common variables: Single, couple, and/or with family
- Geography, economics, politics, health status

- What is your ideal place to live in to “age in place”?
- Will you consider “aging in the right place” that will also allow you to practice “deep ecology”?

My Personal Search/Research for Ideal Places to Age

- Arcosanti - 1971
- Hopi Center for Human Services - 1973-1976
 - Mt. Saint Michel in France - 1981
 - The Fountains -1980s
- Tucson Neighborhood Associations - 1990+
 - Academy Village - early 1990s
 - Sangha Sunrise - 2008
- Other Co-Housing Communities Locally, Nationally, and Globally
 - Hacienda at the River - 2013
 - Zen Inspired Community Living - 2022

Zen Inspired Community Living

- Rooted in fundamental values of kindness and compassion
- A special place to live lightly on the land in a beautiful setting
- Meditation practice with senior Zen practitioners
- Classes, workshops, retreats
- Opportunity to garden and cook together
- Dining venue inspired by Greens Restaurant

- Mindfulness-based practices: yoga, tai chi
- Encouraging aging in place: independent, assisted living, memory support programs, hospice services
- 55+ and over - for those desiring support for wellness, active engagement with the world, safety, and continued learning
- City of Healdsburg in Sonoma County, CA
- Sponsored by the San Francisco Zen Center and Kendall

Deep Meditation

- Music, chanting, drumming
- Heart:Brain meditation
- Dance meditation
- Holotropic Breathing
- Plant-based/Shamanic ceremony

Heart:Brain Meditation

- “Heart cleanse” eliminates build-up in mind and heals
- Heart-felt feelings drown out the “monkey mind” thoughts

Dance Meditation

- “Quick” make-shift community of 50-70 social interactions
- Engaging strangers or acquaintances on the path
- Connect mimicking each other’s steps and moves
- Ecstatic free flow of feelings, thoughts, perceptions, movement
- Improves balance and movement without pain from arthritis
- Egalitarian
- 8,000 steps in 2 hours!

Santiago's Dance

- Santiago, Pueblo priest/shaman and Carl Hammerschlag, Psychiatrist
- Santiago: “Where did you learn to heal?”
- Santiago: “Do you know how to dance?”
- Santiago: “You must be able to dance if you are to heal people.”
- Carl: “Will you teach me your steps?”
- Santiago: “Yes, I can teach you my steps, but you will have to hear your own music.”

What tribe are you from?

- Viets Lomahftewa, Hopi elder from Second Mesa, and Kiva introduction in 1970
- Important to first acknowledge our origins
- Then to strive toward “oneness” where are similarities outweigh our differences
- Where deep ecology and community come together

Transpersonal Group - A Tucson Community







How has our life purpose changed as we age?

- Henry Koffler example

Questions

- Why do we die? Why do we sleep?
- How can we prepare for death?
- What happens when we die?
- What happens after we die?

Thoughts to Ponder

- Preparing for our eventual death important aspect of deep ecology and regeneration of life
- Religious and spiritual perspectives differ
- The Desert Ashram Mother in the IPU
- Envisioning where the energy of your soul re-appears may be the most “universal” and perhaps the most accurate

- How can we optimally adapt as we age?
- Mobility and resilience are key factors and variables re: our health status going forward, along with social interactions and relationships
- The human “spirit” is toward adaptation and exploration and movement
- Humans have consistently had evolutionary momentum for survival and success and exploration

My Communities

- Sangha - Jukai, Book Club
- Transpersonal Group
- Shamanic community - ceremony every 6 months, dance meditation every Sunday
- Tai Chi
- The Loft Cinema
- Fit at the River, the JCC
- Office staff and patients
- Clinica Amistad - clinic, board of directors

What are your Mythologies?

- God-less, and non-duality
- Transcendence of the soul in perpetual movement in the universe
- Past - Mu
- Present - Alternate realities and pathways
- Future - 23rd Century visions thru epiphanies and ceremony

Life Review

- Satisfied
- Comfortable with a sense of meaning and purposeful being
- Tasks and goals not yet attained
- Desire to pass on values, information, etc.