

What is Community?

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=075UnYvcnmY>

Morning, everyone. What is community? I don't know why I chose that title. I do apologize. What a ridiculous title. I mean, communities are everything and something different to everyone. Of course we're a community right now, there are communities that are all different shapes and forms around the world, with the world itself as a community of beings. It's a complex word.

We've all got our ideas about what community can be, and we've all got our those specifics when we when hear other people talk about community, especially intentional communities or new communities forming, that all the things that can go wrong, all the things that could go right, all the reasons why I couldn't possibly be a part of one of those. Etcetera, etcetera. And so normally when I give talks, I'm talking about things far away, tribal people and what have you. But this time I'm going to be bringing it home into trying to explore a little bit about my own personal journey, if that's OK with you. And I know that's going to be harder for me to do because I will probably trigger quite a bit of stuff within the room and I called this. More of a conversation because I'm not standing here. Like I have the answer in any way shape or form. I'm standing here because I've had the extraordinary privilege of seeing some stuff that very few people on this planet from our type of society have had the opportunity to witness. And it's that that I'm holding on to and trying to hold as as a seed and bring it back. Yeah, but it's not, but, but but one of the questions I'm going to have for you is like, am I crazy? You know? Because what I'm trying to bring back and what I'm talking about, I'm thinking about is like, next level out there. It feels so far removed from where we're at that it's like. It's an. It feels like it's an impossible dream, and yet I'm still weirdly holding on to it. Like, no, it could happen, and we can do this thing if we all know about it. But knowing about it is half the the secret. Because when you think about the way that society has been over the last.

1000 Let's say 5000. Yes. Uhm, all the philosophers and spiritual leaders and clerics and everyone who's walked the earth has all had a go at trying to figure out this very question. How can humans live best together? And no one's come up with this thing, you know, even like Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Confucius, Hobbs, Russia, all of them. So got closest. Perhaps, but everyone else had their best attempt to try and figure out how society can be, and no one actually is naming this thing that I think is actually how humans were for 95% of our time on the planet. And yet has been forgotten. So deep in the depths of time that it's like not even imagined as possible. By all of these amazing human beings that have walked the earth and come up with their best ideas. And in some ways, that's because nearly all of those people I just named and all of the others too, had, you know, hundreds of years of civilization before them. And this thing that I'm excited about is is like another paradigm. And when you really understand what another paradigm is, it really is like. Fish being out of water, it's like it's almost impossible to know what what it's like unless you have the experience of connecting with it first hand and then you're like oh. That. And like

the the David Graber, who was a great thing who died last year, he was a an anarchist thought thought leader. And he had a similar view. He was out in Madagascar. And I know we're listening to him being interviewed once and he goes, you know, I've I'm a professor of. Like sociology or whatever at some university and no one was even talking about this. And I lived in Madagascar. And I realized this thing was going on. And like, you know, and that's why he became such a proponent of it. But it's incredibly hard to get your head into some of these spaces unless you've had the privilege. Of touching it or experiencing it first hand. Especially for the deep sceptics amongst us, who've sort of played in these areas so. In a way, that's also why I'm on this journey, as you'll hear, as this talk unfolds to try and create something because I've I'm a filmmaker by trade and I make films and it's a lot of the time, even with the last film I made like 10 years and a couple of £1,000,000 and like talking about various things and some of it just goes over people's heads and not a lot of. That's because I'm a **** communicator. But it is a hard film to make. Thank you. But also it's because this this thing is out there. And and so I'm like, well, maybe if I can bring it into fruition, then others can touch it too. It can be its own virus that spreads cause like what? Oh my God. Well, we could be like that. That's amazing. And yet, of course, it it's not as simple as that. I'm aware that. For anyone to move into community into connection with each other is hard enough for us. Hard enough for us to be with one person, let alone a community of other people in a really close proximity. So there's a lot of healing and and trauma release and all sorts of stuff that probably needs to go with that, but luckily the indigenous peoples offer us insights into that. Too. So the package is out there, but we've got to want it and we've got to believe it's possible and we've got to make the moves and maybe. In conversations like this, you can give me feedback as like nobody's, you've just you've lost the plot or OK, that's interesting. But what about this? But what about that? And then there's the conversations themselves that are that are really helpful for me. So let me let me dive into that thing that some of you will have heard me talk about before and. You know, I for for anyone who hasn't, isn't aware of my work. I was. I had that basically that gift gig I got. I got paid for by anyone who pays their licence fee, which probably half of you to go basically around the world and live with indigenous peoples. For for the BBC. And as you can imagine, wow, I mean, like the just the most life changing experience of of. Having my will turned inside out and upside down all the time going out having. Medicine, rituals, rites of passage, just living and being with these people in their home, cooking, living and and always questioning and like looking at, trying to look at the world through their eyes so that I could have a a different prism of which to look at my. Life and that's taken me on the most amazing journey and so much of what we're so lucky to have this weekend is obviously at its origins coming from those people who are still holding on to some of these wisdoms around the world, stuff that we kind of left and lost and forgotten and moved on from in our own journey. And nations like ours, but. Luckily, people out there still holding about connection to nature and healing rituals and healing ways and medicinal plants, and you know all of that as well as the benefits

of living with a connection to nature and and in community and ways to bring up your kids and all of that. It's just like it's so rich and I. Insight after insight after insight with all of these indigenous peoples. But at the same time, I kind of lost any romance. It's like, OK, no, we're all the same here. We're all human. You know, you've got your own ups and downs. You know, I I I don't come at any of this from a place of, like, just pure romance. I've seen some really dark stuff go on. And it's not like I'm judging outright because I can see it all in context of where you are and where you've come from and why this might have happened. But. Still, things that are not harmonious towards the whole as well as relations to nature and a whole bunch of other stuff, so we can put these people on pedestals, but there's also. They're they're human, too, and and they definitely had their ups and downs. And and I at the end of my time living with those people who, you know, just need to say again and again how lucky and grateful and how much I did learn from. Them. But I did also think at the end of. The. Day. You know what? It's the species. That's the problem. We've still got all of these issues with power and and corruption and like, you know, manipulation and all this sort of stuff going on. And even in these most extraordinary tiny communities. And I kind of thought I could. I'd seen it all. You know, I could sit at any dinner. Table. And wax lyrical about human nature and society. And then the last very last group of people that I live with were called the pan, and I wasn't even interested in going there cause I spent a lot of time already in Borneo and I knew the place was destroyed. But I was persuaded to go and we went and then basically my whole world turned inside out, cause I finally met a group of people was like, Oh my God, you are. Completely different to any of the other indigenous groups I've been with, and I've got to be careful when I say this because I'm not trying to make it black and white or compare and contrast or anything. I'm just talking about difference. But there was something very unique about my experience there and it was essentially that they had. They weren't dealing with this whole power and hierarchy. The game. They were truly egalitarian, and I'd read about that in a book, but it didn't strike me until I was with them. I was like, Oh my God, you don't even have competition in your hearts in your in your way of being. And it doesn't mean they're different people. Doesn't mean they. They're not capable of that. Of course they are. They just have. And they just have a society and a narrative and tools that are. In place that maintained this diffusion of power at all times, and this harmonizing within the group and we'll come on to those tools later because they're they're vital. But for me, you know, I think if I'd gone to visit that tribe. You know, early on in my experiences, I wouldn't have noticed because it's kind of invisible. They they look the same. I've been to groups of people who look much more what we would think of as like, you know, going back sort of timeless timelessly into the distance. But it was something about his like for me it was literally like a different operating system going on. And. And it took me a long time to have the courage to even talk about it because I was so afraid of sounding like just a romantic, naive fool, because it was so it so affected me and and then I had the great privilege of meeting people like Jerome Lewis and Ingrid Lewis, who

are anthropologists from UCL, and then Chris Knight and Camilla Power, who run the radical anthropology group, both which you should look into this kind. Cool and realize, Oh my God, no, there's an academic backup for this stuff that I'm thinking about, and I made this film called Toy and in it, Jerome and Ingrid, tell me about. No, this is actually how we were as a species for 95% of our time on the planet. And it's only since really agriculture and moving out the tropics and getting into times of. Of like needing to get through winters or get through droughts that we've started storing and hoarding, and that's where the powers come in and the whole ship has gone off on a different tangent since then, you know. And like, we could have a chat about that at the end is to like, you know, well, surely that just means that's an evolution and that's good. And we're we're in this amazing space. Now, but some stuff was lost along the way. I feel that would be really good for us to remember and see if there's any way we could bring it into our lives. And I think that one of them is that these early groups just were on it with power. And when I sit with that and see the world through their prism, and then try and look at the world in our in our world. I so need that coffee. I'll pause. It's like power is at the heart of so many of our ills and. There's a great guy I I met called Richard Wilkinson, who did a Ted talk, and he has. He did this really, really amazing survey. He's a, he's a professor at. I don't remember where, but like he the talk is great and he looks at all of these stats from around the world that being put out by the nations themselves. You know, all of their sort of UN stats and he plots it all on a graph. And he shows you all of these different aspects of society, anti social behaviour disorder or, you know, cancers and heart illnesses and like arrests for all sorts of stuff. It's like basically all the aspects of society. And he plots them all on the graph and then. Through some the way he just takes you on the journey with the talk he shows you like what we thought of, which is like actually poverty is an indicator of poor health. Poverty is an indicator of of so many of these things. It's actually it goes, it's not at all. It's actually feeling poor, not being poor. It's like how you're relating to the other people in your close proximity and. The the disparity of wealth is at the heart of so many of our ills and you know that's borne out by. So many thinkers now, but it's like. That, that tribe or those tribes, the egalitarian tribes, they know that they can see that as soon as power ossifies in any place. That it's going to get corrupted and cause problems and that everyone we're all in our hearts, super, super in tune with where we are in our ranking structure with each other. And that's the thing I really felt. I think when I first got that, it's like there's this part of me that I can't even name that normally comes to bear when I'm in the company of another group, but it's not. There's nothing for it to purchase. Yeah, it's like. And there was so many little examples of how I was with these people whereby I would normally. Just go. Oh, cool. This is when we're going to get into a little fun competition, so. It just didn't. Happen and and again we can talk about. Them. Later, but it just really struck me deeply. It's like, well, it is possible for us to live in a. Different way, and of course those people had so much that helped them. Firstly, they were born into it. Secondly, they have abundant resources in the Tropic and like easy access to those resources. So they

don't have to fight other things anyway. And it's one of the big differences between the chimps and the bonobos is the bonobos, who who are similar in an egalitarian way, lots of strong, strong. Matriarchal aspects to their society, which will come on to. But. Their their food source cause as as the Congo River came through, they got sprayed on either side. The their food source is much more dispersed and so everyone has access to it and so. That may be at in some ways part of why they have a slightly different social makeup. That's that's that wormhole. We could dive into. Probably better not I see IANS in the audience is probably going to ask me about that later. So you know, so this is this is no easy thing. But what what I learned from speaking to Jerome and Ingrid and others. Was that the tools that these people use to maintain this? Balance and. And that just really struck me as like, OK, how much of this could be transferable to a modern society? And the answer is with immense difficulty. But. But the more I'm with this and this is where. There there will be disagreement in the room, I think, but I I I'm increasingly feeling that nothing short of radical shift is is going to be. You know nothing short of radical shift in almost every aspect of our lives is going to. Work. He said that. Because you know, the other thing I had other than living with tribal people was I was also sent around the world looking at some of the problems of the world too. So I did a whole series down the Amazon where I specifically went to look at all these extraction sites. And, you know, soya logging, mining, ranching, you know, gold, all of it and like. And it was super clear to me that the globalization experiment, for all its blessings, was also allowing us to have all sorts of problems that were just being just out of sight. And like that was terrifying. And I'd seen it on my travels. But to go and look at it so specifically, then I did another series around the Arctic where I was looking at climate change and meeting, like, the head scientists. It's all bad and you know, and it was like unequivocal man-made. And then coming back to the UK where it's still being debated. And I was told I couldn't even mention climate change in my conclusion to the series. So. It's like what everyone is not being informed by these public bodies that are supposedly there to help and like we're heading towards this calculation and and and it's all trying to get back to business as usual and it's like this is a disaster waiting to happen. And I know that everyone in this room is here because they have a sentiment of that. That's about 12 years ago now, maybe 15. You know, and we'd already been whatever for me, it's super clear. And all of the talk of. Like a technological fix and stuff, you know, I've seen the places where you have to get the new minerals out. We're just the whole thing is a disaster. We can't do it and and still we are wanting more. You know we're still in this paradigm of growth and like we still want if I only get that you and you know and like we got the rest. Of the world. Trying to catch up. It's like it's it's not looking good and I'm sorry to be down or hopefully not the only one this week. Thrown in a few seats like that, but like for me it was super clear. It's like OK, something has to happen. We've got to do it. And like, here's these insights I've had into these extraordinary ways. And then when I started taking on this sort of egalitarian dream into my head, it's like fight this. You know the whole reason. I mean, I was in the Marines. It's like I wasn't in the Marines to save

life as in the wounds to save a way of life. You know, we as a nation state are still out there. You know, stealing from everyone else and we do it. Hide it incredibly well, but we are a rich nation for a reason and like it's it's this is the this is the paradigm of competition aggression that these tribal people together turn tribal people knew would happen if you let this thing shift. Get out of hand, you know, and that's it. We we we. Let the genie out the bottle and we've gone on this rampage and to me, anything other than putting the genie back in, it's just going to cause the same thing. We're just going to keep on going on this ramp back towards this stuff that this ramp and extraction and destruction, unless we find another way of being. And everything else. To me, just feels like turning the, you know, readjusting the deck chairs on the sinking ship. It's like. For me, and so I can see that the the looks on your face is a bit more serious, so I'm looking forward to your questions in a minute, because I I you know, I I know that I'm. I'm only coming from a position of like my my personal insight. I don't know any of this. It's just my feeling and it's really sweet of you to come along and listen to me and I and I'd love someone to point out that I'm just an idiot and that's not right. And we can totally make it another way. But like, that's where I've got to. On my travels. It's like ****. OK, here's another paradigm that we existed for 95% of our time in the planet and then ever since we got into this other game, it's being kind of on this trajectory of which we are on now and maybe. There could be a way of figuring out how to get back. To something cause I also believe that they're actually happier, you know, and it's not that I want us all to become hunter gatherers again, to go live in the forest. But the tools and tricks they have for maintaining balance, it's like so many of our stresses in life, as I said a second ago, are as a result of this incredibly sensitive aspect we have within us as seeing where we are in relation to each other. And we all know what it's like when your boss gives you a hard time and you're like you can't answer back because he's the **** power or whatever it is in every relationship. It's like they just speak to that the whole time. They don't let it happen. It's like if if if a hunter was with the group, the Benji and the Congo, who another egalitarian group with Jerome and Ingrid. And. And there was a hunter, the other side of the the village, and the guys were like, you see that guy over there? He's he's the. Best hunter amongst. Us, you know, we all we kind of think he's amazing. He we go out hunting elephants he's got this big wooden steak. He goes out first and then we all come in afterwards with our Spears or whatever. But like he's the dude you know he's the he's the brave one but a couple of years ago start showing off. That he was the dude. And so of course we had to stop going hunting with him and the women refused to cook his food because. We can't deal with that **** around here.

Yeah. Great to see you go.

Yeah, you know and. Like. And. The. No, he. Well, you know. He had to, like The thing is, it's. Like. Yeah. The. These tools that they use aren't coming from a place of like hatred. It's all about wanting to include and wanting to bring back in another the big tools they have and one of the things that I I hope we can chat about in a bit as well is the role of the women in in these societies as far as maintaining balance. It's

like it's primary and when you see an egalitarian society where the women are fully empowered to be themselves in the way they want to be and they have as much say as individuals and collectively as anyone else, then you. Feel Oh my God, not everyone's trying to be in this male space trying to act out in a certain way in order to have any say in society or whatever. It's like, no, they just hold space in their own way with a completely different quality of power and hold the guys to account and tease them. And make songs and jokes about them and a whole bunch of stuff which, when I first sort of heard about that, sounded like that's not going to do a lot, but they are solid, you know, it's this, it's this solidarity and their ability to. Hold. The other to account, but they do it in a loving way. It's not like you toxic masculinity. It's like we're gonna laugh at you for for whatever it is, but not to push you away. It's until you start laughing at yourself too. And then you can come back in. You're part of the gang, you know. And so it's coming from a place of love, but it's incredibly powerful. When you see those sorts of tools in play. You're like ****. You know that's how it could be. And you know there. And there's a number of moments like that that have really. Inspired me in this sort of understanding cause a lot of the other groups that I was with weren't like that. You know there there's like, there's the patriarchal energy came in really early. It feels. And I've seen that. And of course there's loads and loads of different groups around the world, including matriarchal groups, but the, the, the egalitarian ones are so wise that they don't. Think of themselves as matriarchy because the women know that if they hold on to power too long that that will just cause resentment and and all the rest of it too. So they step back and let the guys come in and the guys do their thing. And it's this play between the two energies is at the heart of maintaining balance within society and at the heart of the female power is also this like. You know, we're gonna we're gonna play with you and we have. This great time but like. If you carry on this behavior, we're a gang and you know what's going to happen, you know? So you won't. You won't get any so. So that's the sort of like the the subliminals sex strike is a really powerful tool too, you know? And and so these guys, they're super, super like they're, they're on it. You know, it's pretty good. And you see the guys all sheepishly going. We kind of get a bit scared with the girls. It's like it's fun because it's done with love and it's like it's genuinely they bought into this idea of the community being bigger than themselves. And this is probably our biggest space where we're at is, is this individualism. Like we're deep in the paradigm of the individual and all of our narratives, more money, more fame, more stuff, it's all based on the on the individual. You know, it's like the American. What the right for pursuit of happiness? Or I can't remember it. God, I really do need a coffee, don't I? Uh. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and all these things are still like an individual creed. And and these groups, yes, they're the most empowered individuals that I've ever met. But with that freedom and it's like understanding. It's like cool. This is this is a good gig. You know, we've got this **** figured out with this freedom that I've been given. I now choose to hand. Back and put the the group as my primary focus and so that's no one's forcing anyone to do anything. It's like you're you're voluntarily seeing the communal the the collective as

you're. As where you want to basically prioritize all your meaning in. Life. And they're not pursuing happiness. They're pursuing something bigger than themselves, like the community, like the future generations, because they know that the pursuit of that is where you can find your happiness. And it's a point that Victor Frankel made some of you will have read his book from Auschwitz, who was a psychiatrist in Auschwitz. And he made that point really clearly, it's like. Anyone who came into this space, and let's be honest, there haven't been many that have worse in the history of humankind. But anyone who comes in here with a philosophy in their hearts of like, OK, I get my meaning and I and value from pursuing happiness. That's I make myself happy. I can make other people happy. But that's basically about making me happy 1st and that's their philosophy of life. Well, clearly in a place like that they had a really difficult time because you're not going to get anywhere to be happy. Anyone who had a pursue a meaning that was beyond themselves? Like family, children, God, whatever. They were able to find joy and happiness in the in even in the most atrocious moments, because they were. It wasn't about them. And this I think is again what the indigenous group have to offer us is it's like if it's just stop being about you put into the collective. But it's terrifying because we are so holding on to our individual identities. We've all got our dreams and aspirations and to like let go of that into something else, which is what I'm in the process of doing with with a group of people at the moment. And I'm going to ask you some questions about that at the end because it it's, I. It's hard and I'm not. I'm not doing a very good job of persuading people. I think I'm just like, either completely mad or I'm just not explaining it very well or it's just not going to be possible. Because we are so. Focused and. So, so, you know, we'll we'll hopefully we'll get to that chat. A bit. But as you can see, I'm kind of on this on this ride. I'm like I'm super keen on this. I'm really interested in how it could come about as a a lived example for others to connect with and also go wow. Yeah, that's something you know I can learn about and maybe bring it to my own life. And and it is like a. It is like a a rural thing. It's like hard to imagine this in some of our workplaces and what have you. I mean, there are, like direct democracies and there are democratic industries and what have you and you know, people are obviously aware of this sort of stuff, but. What I'm thinking of in my space is like just trying to do this as as a simplistic way of being. In an environment. Whereby we are really trying to think not only about egalitarian within ISM within the group, but also like how are we relating to everything else that's going on the world. I mean, there's 8 billion people here. If we're going to have a truly. Philosophy. Well, that's 8 billion people I've got to live a life which basically 8 billion other people can live too, because if I'm taking the Jaguar and what it's like and there's not enough of them, you know how how can I live in a way that actually we don't have to all go to war with each other? And because all the wars are and always have been about resources, because we're out there stealing. For other people who like get passed off with the whatever go back and it's like, that's what's going on, we know it. And so when I'm trying to think of this through that prism, it's like, OK, how can I do this in a way that actually could be a virus that

could spread to the world because. It Once Upon a time, I think it was like that. And interesting this this group called the Benelli. This is a group in in the Congo that I went with Jerome and Ingrid. They are they? They gave me another really beautiful insight and that was. Essentially, how their egalitarian society came about. This is kind of some of you have heard me talk about this before, but this is kind of. Mind blowing for me too, it's like. OK, so if we came from Africa, which most people think it's pretty well established that the pygmy peoples living in the Congo are one of the the oldest sort of direct lineages of peoples on the planet and. And you've got others like the the the like Kung san in the in the in the South and stuff. Who but they've had a lot more interaction with the outside world over the years with the, with the pygmies in the Congo have like pretty much lived. Some of them have lived like, you know, without that much impact from the outside. And so they're carrying something really deep and interesting. And I was privileged enough to have this. This. Insight through a ceremony with them. That that, that's kind of mind blowing and. And so the ceremony was it was called it jengi. And to cut a Long story short, it's a sort of a ritualized remembering of that moment when they say their society was created and when you pick it apart. And Jerome Lewis has done a lot of work on this. And then having been there and seen it, you're like. OK, yeah, this is what this is. So you've got this, like male spirit coming out of the forest that looks like a penis. He's like, all covered. He's, like, goes up and down, and he's like swirling around with leaves and stuff you can't see. What's under the leaves? But they all say it's the male spirit. And he comes in and then basically all the guys get between this spirit and and the women behind. And it's like trying to stop this spirit getting to the women and and you're like, OK, so this is the reenactment of the moment the women came together in solidarity and said no to the alpha male from our previous primate past and invited the other guys. Come and live with them in community. It's kind of out there. Mind blowing like wow. Wow. And I, you know, I can't say if that is 100% for real what's going on in that ritual, but that's what they say, not directly. This is how we began. This is how we started. And there's all sorts of theories around why it is that. You know, this moment might have happened and the the guys from Ragg, the radical anthropology group, Chris and Camilla Power have come up with some really interesting insights into. Why? You know, we maybe even evolved for this moment to be able to happen. You know, why did it? Why was it needed? Well, you maybe because we stood upright, our hips narrowed. You give birth to really intensively needy kids. Was. You know, previously they could probably hold onto the fur and climb around in the trees, and now it's like I've gotta use one arm and it's like a lot harder. The head's bigger. I've got to give birth early, so they're really, really like coming out premature. And what's this, like big muscly dude doing sitting around fighting everyone? It's like we need a hand, man. You know, so. Maybe you know who knows and. And things like, you know, we don't show. Why when we're in ostracism, we we come into synchronization every 28 days and these may have been things that evolved in in our species in order for them to say no, because if you say no on your own, you'll just get overrun. Overpowered. But

if you come together as a collective, and if you're all in season at the same time. And if you don't show when you're in season, then there's a more of a chance that you're going to be able to go through this moment, evolutionary moment that brought about our ability to live the way we live now. And like you know, that's out there stuff and I don't know if that's true or not. And forgive me if I'm. Being rushing through this and and getting my language a bit wrong cause it's sensitive stuff, but I find. That. To be fascinating. And So what, again, I'm super interested in is like, what can we learn from that moment? What were the tools and methodologies that enable them to go from where they were to where they are and? You know, that was maybe one of the only times in history where we've truly had a revolution. You know, nearly every other revolution you. Think about in society is either, no matter how well meaning a group of people coming in, but because they use violence and force, they just end up being as bad as the people before, or it's the type of revolution where we're just like basically scratching away and trying to bring a little bit of power back. But the main power body stays where it is, but here they managed to fully. Like reverse and diffuse that alpha aggressive competitive masculine element and bring it into something. It's like boys come, lads can be with us, but just leave that **** at the door. Yeah, we don't want your competition and aggression and we're gonna hold you to account because that's the agreement we've made. And we're now going to live together. That's cool and like and. So what is it that they did that was? That enabled that and and again it's like they they understood that if they tried to take on this, this force at it in its own game, they're not going to win. So their strategy was to remove. To step back. And and say no. And and I think the same now we're we're sort of like in the last 10,000 years since agriculture and this this movement back into this world of this paradigm of aggression. And competition we we're faced with another moment of this like out of control, runaway aggressive force and like how are we going to learn from those amazing women back then to figure it out, are we going to go out and attack it? Are we going to go and fight it or are we going to try and just basically create something else? And it's like Einstein. And Buckminster Fuller both saw that they were like, you know, create something else, allow that to diffuse and crumble rather than try and take it on head on because you won't win. You know, we got to create something else. And so there's another reason why I was like, OK, just stepping out. Might be a strategy and this gets then into really hot water because it's like there's. Whenever we talk, talk about community, especially intentional community, people are well, you know what's wrong with just trying to turn the ship around or what what you know, hope you're going to be connected to the outside world. Hope you're going, you know, all of this stuff about how inward looking versus how outward looking, how much you turning your backs on on the other members of your society and all the rest of it is like really, really complex. And so as much as possible. Making. Taking the wisdom of those people, it's like it's not about. Well, it's about trying to navigate that in the right way. It's like, yeah. Do I want to be feeding into this system that is causing all these problems in the world? You know, we we've become more aware even in the last

year or two, about structural privilege. You know, we see the structural. Patriarchy. We see the structural racism in our society, and even if we don't feel that we're acting in a negative way, we are the benefactors of a system that supports and upholds those types of people. But we also see that just as being in a rich nation, you know, it's like almost everything I do is part of the. Problem and maybe stepping to one side isn't about hating your neighbor or thinking all of them or any of that, just trying to live to something that you feel might be helping in this in this. Pursuit of trying to live in a different way. And that's hard, and I don't even know if it's possible. And like I talk about this and I'm not in that community yet, I wish I was talking to you. Five years down the road and I was like, telling you about what? The road. Trip. I've been on, but no, they the people who organized this for like, really OK cause they're dear friends like, OK, I'll I'll put myself in a pedestal for something that might not even happen, but I'd still keen to share these insights. And. So that's where I'm at. I'm like, OK, I'm trying to. To figure out a way of stepping into something that can answer to this, and of course that's a privilege too, because it needs land. It needs all these things that not everyone else has and. And yet there's still something in there that could be replicable. You know, just. If you're really going to step into something fully as an egalitarian society, then doesn't matter what each person brings, because once you've stepped in, you're all the same anyway, and the whole thing is to deal with, like found our energy or I brought in more money or anything like that. So in a in a sense, any group can come together. You just need one person who can afford the land and others can come in and. Believe me, having spent most of my. Adult life with people who are incredibly successful and affluent and wonderful dear friends. But there there is many problems going on in in the realm of affluence as there are in there. It's not the same. I'm not trying to put them in the same space, but like that they're not perfect lives either and so much. When you've had the privilege of pursuing these not privileged. Curse of pursuing the sort of narratives of our society, more money, more fame, more goods and more notoriety to all the things to bring happiness. You realize they're not. They're not the answer at all. And they often bring you loneliness and and stress and all sorts of stuff. So. There were lots of people out there, perhaps a little like me, who've who've had the privilege of having a little bit of stuff and it's not working for them. And so this could be a blueprint for others to step into something whereby they're. Sharing, you know, and these societies are all about sharing. There's no ownership. There's no coercion, there's no hierarchy. No chiefs, no shaman, and everyone is talking and speaking to power the whole. Time. So I'm trying to write like a manifesto of sorts, which. Weird because it's like with with the group that I'm at the moment with Bruce, that's you all that's you show your power again, I'm like, Oh my God, how am I gonna explain this? It's like, yeah, it's like, yes, I know. It's my vision. This is like. But it's my vision about no power. And so can I. Can I get away with that, like? No, no, we all want to have our like, so we're like, so it's a Co created thing. It's a Co created thing, but uh. But I am holding on to something that's really, really dear to me and yeah, it's really hard for any group to go. OK, I'm all in, you know. And so

you've got all these other types of community going on, cooperatives and all the rest of it, where, yeah, you deal with the first issue of power, which is like we gonna share this house. But then we're earning different amounts. And that comes in or I can take my money out sometimes, like the the power will just keep coming back. And to my mind, unless you just buy in fully. But that's almost an impossible dream, because of course, that means letting go of a massive amount of our individualism into the collective. It's a voluntary thing, but what I'm really interested in is if we can create a container that we all buy and buy into and agree with beforehand. You know, what's our vision? What is the vision, you know, and that in its own right is something that we're trying to create. It's like, well, this line that we have at the moment, something like, you know, to enjoy a a way of being that prioritizes the future generations and the environment that holds them, something like that. I mean, who on the planet wouldn't agree with something like that? But then when you dive into what that means, it's like. OK. And we're all going to hold ourselves lovingly to account for trying to do this over a period of time. It's like, OK, when then you take on board all of these other principles and beliefs about. How we should be living in the world? It's like, OK, this is this is not an easy thing, you know, but we can actually enjoy being together and working towards that, you know, not beating each other up, but just supporting each other. But we're definitely on a journey to go somewhere and we're going to try and do this and. And so I think to to have a container that's not fixed. It's amorphous, but it's like, well. Agreed upon before we sort of thrashed everything out beforehand. It's kind of where we're at as a group and where I'm at actually I've I've written like a 37 page document, but I haven't had the guts to show it to anyone. I showed it to one like you cannot show them that. Someone else's like this is the most dry thing I've ever read in my life. So like I yeah, I'm not a writer, which is why recording this. I'm hoping maybe I'll share it with them there. It's. You know to step into that requires in some ways this sort of sort of agreement, if you will, that actually our society is problematic at its core. And that's hard, that's hard. But unless you do take that on board, then it's probably not very likely you're going to step into something like that because you're like, well, we can fix it this way and we can. You know, was a soldier on through. So I don't know what that means and I'm obviously up for being a. Challenged and and and compromising, but it just it's you can tell. I mean there's something inside me that has experienced something that's like, Oh my God. I genuinely think this is our, our, our most harmonious way of being on the planet. And and that there are tools that these people use that we could bring today. Into society and maybe even have this. Diffuse out. And like you know it, it's very likely too little, too late, and very likely that a lot of the power is never going to let go. And this is, you know, but there are tools within that too. As we learned from those early women who said no to their male about ways that we can diffuse power and it's just wanting to change the narrative of where we're at now. Most of the narratives that were peddling. Are all in the direction of growth, but like you know, how much more can we do that, you know? Well, the answer is we can't. So something's gotta shift. And here's something that I feel is a

solution, but like it needs awareness. It needs it needs. Belief. That it's possible, and that and that also we will benefit all of us individually from that. I think when you see people like I have. You realize? Just how stuck we are. You know, when I go to the bench earlier, I'm like, oh, my God, I really am an English white guy. It's like you're so free and your expressions just like and even though you've you're part of this really strong community, you're actually freer and more individual than I could ever be because so often. The the whole is great. Is greater than the sum of the parts. You know you we know what it's like when we when we do have the courage to commit to something. Some suddenly the whole door's open and you can become something greater. We know it from. From people who get married and then become bigger than just the two of them individually, they're a unit now, and it's and it works for them really well. We we know it when someone like a yokel in a garage that you're right. It's like it's just completely himself because he doesn't give a **** because he's got his mates where he knows where he's at and he'll just tell you as it is, you know, it's like all of these people, they're connected to something. And I think that a lot of the problems that we have in our society with the addictions and what have you, I mean the addictions as Gable matte will, will, will. Inspire. For us and inform us come a lot of them. From. From childhood trauma and all sorts of different forms of trauma. But there's also. Though. I think a deep loneliness and a deep pain that we have from not being in connection with each other and not being in connection with nature, and that is another void that we're just endlessly filling. And it's terrifying for us to step into something where we're going to be held accountable, look straight in the eye by someone who's an equal and go. You're being * ****, Bruce. But I ***** need that. Because I am * ****, a lot of the time and and and that that's great. I I want that and I know that it would be good for me, but that's also hard because so many of us are carrying deep, deep traumas. And the idea of stepping into a place where we're going to be really in connection. That's hard, you know? But like, that's another reason why we're so privileged to have all these healing modalities that we've created from around the world and that we've gained from from the east and from from the forests that can help us on that journey. But we need to know that it's a journey worth going on. We need to believe that there's something at the end of it so that I can step in. And and look inside and start that healing. Because so many of us in our society, as we all know, will do anything other than be still. And in so many ways, that is at the heart of these gerbil wheels and the furnaces of the industry that's pushing us towards the precipice, it's like, just keep moving. Just keep moving. Just keep moving and like. We don't need to because there there's something incredibly beautiful about a much simpler life. And being in connection with each other and nature that is there for us and you know, look at us now, it's like the best times we've all had is just sitting with our friends on the grass, having a good time. It's like people on their deathbeds, they all say the same thing, they. Talk about the new car and the new job. It's like I wish I had more time in my family the summer days under the Willow by the river. They were the most wonderful times in my life. And you know, we know that ****. And

yet we're filling our lives with all this, like moving and grinding. It's just like filling the hungry ghost, filling the void all the time. And and these communities. Don't see mental health issues? I don't see addictive traits in the same way. They're just like they're just not happening, you know, and there's so much to be said for. Growing up in a community in many ways, if even if we came together now as an adult, we probably wouldn't see the fruits of this. We would know that we're doing this for the next generation and then maybe for the next, you know, but this is a direction to go in, not an instant cure for us because we're we're we're riddled with stuff. But if, at least if you're in a community where the kids all and the whole community has a similar vision and set of principles and and values, then you're happy for your kids to just play anywhere without even thinking. And the kids don't want to hang out with their parents. You go to a tribe. Those kids don't want to hang out with their parents. Kids like hanging out with each other, running around in nature. Nature is the. Endless playground. Puts every Xbox to to shame when you, when you have the courage to get into, it's like, Oh my God, this is infinite play infinite, infinite play. And they know that. And they have that. And so the kids were running around. So if mum and Dad are having a stressful time, which in our society would mean no matter how much I try and hide it. The kids are sponges. They're just gonna absorb that **** and they'll be, you know, funding half of. Therapist. Sorry, guys. You'll be out of the job, but. You know, so if? If they have open barrier as sort of open doors and the ability to run around with their friends with mom and dad having difficult time, they just go next door and over time those sorts of traumas that we have get diffused out within the group. And I think in so many ways that is. Why communities also so important? It's like it just allows us to. To find a different part of ourselves and to not get so caught up in a lot of the stuff that we're, you know, things that should happen to us that don't and should things that shouldn't happen to us that do that we've we're all, sadly. You know. Victims of it in a way.

So there's 1000 reasons why I think community is, is, is an important way to go. But we've gotta want it. Thanks very much.

The Ted K Archive

Bruce Parry
What is Community?

Speech at Medicine Festival 2021.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O75UnYvcnmY>>

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