

**2025 - 4 session version**

## Links

- WhatsApp group:

[https://chat.whatsapp.com/GeDIDpMxxdjCsTCxz4XD40?mode=r\\_c](https://chat.whatsapp.com/GeDIDpMxxdjCsTCxz4XD40?mode=r_c)

- Shared doc:

 Participants Doc - From Metacrisis to Second Renaissance: A 4-Week...

-  Explorer Course - Second Renaissance - 4 Noble Beliefs

## Intention of the course

To leave participants *empowered* and *enrolled* in the **possibility of a Second Renaissance**—not merely intellectually, but as a lived, personal and collective horizon of action, meaning, and hope.

This leaves them empowered to act in their lives and their communities.

## Course Frame: Introduction to the Second Renaissance

### S – Situation

- Participants are arriving into a space of inquiry and hope.
- Both amongst participants and more broadly: likely some awareness of growing crises (climate, AI, breakdown of trust, meaning), but may not yet have encountered a coherent vision that makes sense of what is happening and offers a credible path forward integrating inner and outer transformation.

## C – Complication

- Some of you and many in our society feel overwhelmed, cynical, or hopeless.
- There's a gap between systemic awareness and a lived, meaningful response.

## Q – Question

- What is the Second Renaissance, and how does it offer a framework for understanding and engaging with our moment in history?
- How can participants begin to personally and collectively engage with it?

## A – Answer / Course Objectives

Participants leave the course:

1. Able to **name and explain the Four Noble Beliefs** of the Second Renaissance.
2. Feeling part of an **emerging community or movement**.
3. Invited into **personal reflection**: why am I here, why does this matter to me?
4. Oriented to the course arc, including pre-readings, discussion format, and potential for deeper involvement (e.g. facilitating, sharing the ideas).

## Outline

**Core readings** and **expanded readings** by theme. Noted where references are missing and suggest follow-up steps.

# Core Reading Materials for the Course

These are the essential texts to be read (or viewed) by all participants:

1. **Second Renaissance White Paper #1** *Core framing of the Four Noble Beliefs.*
  2. **From Polycrisis to Metacrisis** *Noble Belief #1 (Polycrisis) ⇒ Noble Belief #2 (Metacrisis). Transition from manifest crises (symptoms) to diagnosis of underlying culturo-ontological disease.*
  3. **Second Renaissance White Paper #2** *Focus on the Third & Fourth Noble Belief: the "Eight Fold Path" and movement-building.*
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## Expanded Reading Materials by Theme

These offer depth for those seeking further context and intellectual grounding.

### 1. On the Polycrisis / Civilizational Breakdown

- Ecological crisis
  - Rockström et al. (2009). *Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity – Nature*
  - IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report (2023) – especially Summary for Policymakers
  - Future of Humanity Institute (FHI) reports on existential risk
  - UN Global Risk Reports
  - Suggested: Short readings or visualizations summarizing the *multiple stressors model*



- AI x-risk (TODO)
- Cascade institute on polycrisis as a whole

**Optional Exercise:** Provide 3–5 readings plus a short overview on the nature of “polycrisis” with examples (e.g. pandemic + climate + geopolitical + AI + trust breakdown).

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## 2. From Polycrisis to Metacrisis

- ☐ *From Polycrisis to Metacrisis* (core)
  - ☐ Wilber, Ken – *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (selected sections)
  - ☐ Vervaeke, John – lectures or selections from *Awakening from the Meaning Crisis*
  - ☐ Bhaskar, Roy – on explanatory depth and critical realism (optional)
  - ☐ Schmachtenberger talk(s)
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## 3. Cultural Evolution

- ☐ Henrich, Joseph – *The WEIRDest People in the World* (core chapters)
- ☐ Gebser, Jean – *The Ever-Present Origin* (introductory sections)
- ☐ Wilber, Ken – *A Brief History of Everything* or Spiral Dynamics overview
- ☐ Inglehart & Welzel – *Cultural Evolution + World Values Survey* – selected graphs or summaries

**Optional Visual:** A single chart showing shifts in dominant value systems over time (e.g. survival → self-expression).

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## 4. Historical Analogies / Phase Transitions

- ☐ Kuhn, Thomas – *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (chapters on paradigm shifts)
- ☐ Berman, Morris – *The Twilight of American Culture*
- ☐ Possible resources on:
  - The Renaissance as cultural rebirth
  - Fall of the Roman Empire
  - Axial Age (Jaspers)
  - Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution

Let me know if you'd like help creating a simple PDF reading list or structured slide with links and summaries.

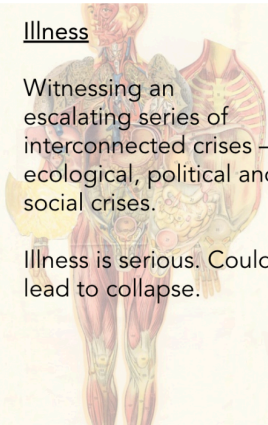
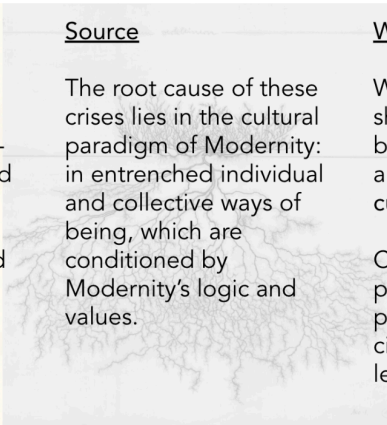
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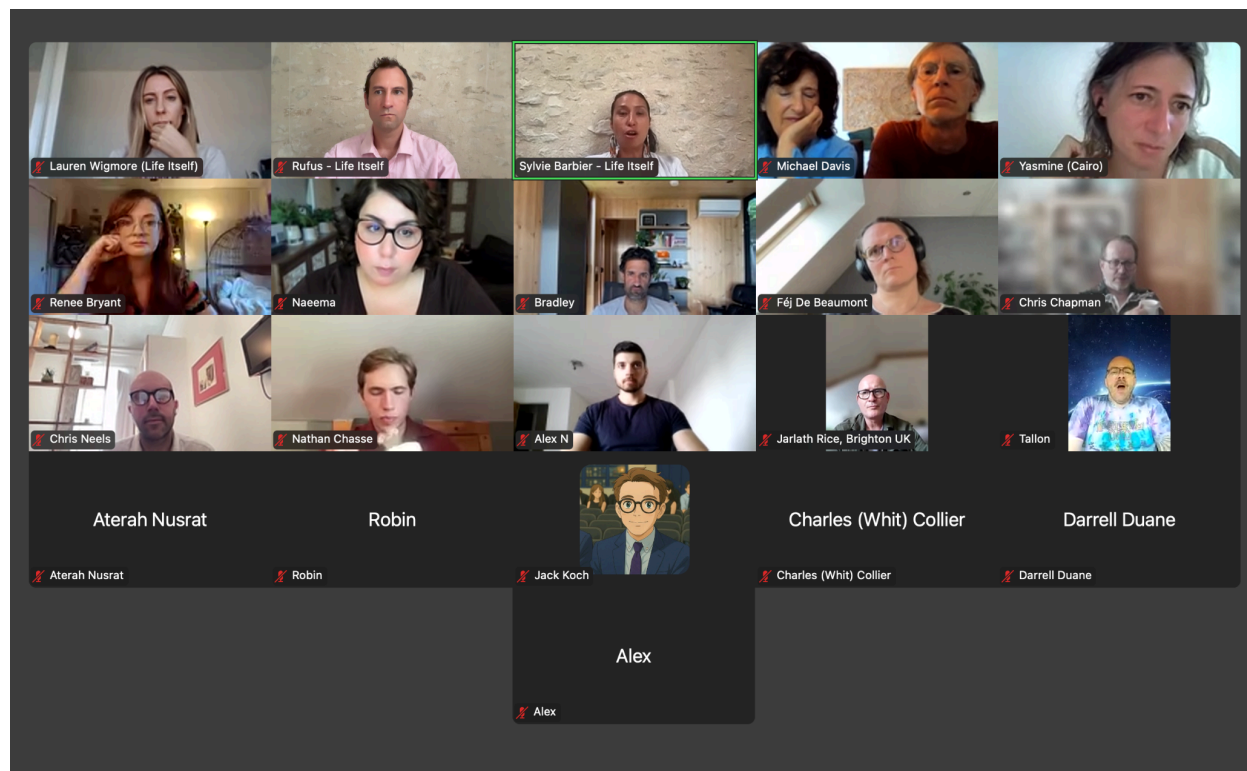
## To-Do / Next Steps


- ☒ ~~Finalize core materials (you already have)~~
- ☐ Select 2-3 recommended readings per expanded section
- ☐ Optionally: Record short video dialogues summarizing each section
- ☐ Create a 1-pager PDF of the Four Noble Beliefs + recommended readings

Would you like me to draft that 1-pager or propose readings for any of the specific themes above?

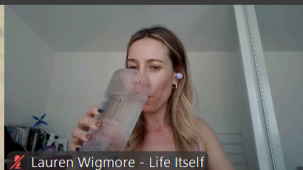
# 4 "NOBLE BELIEFS" OF 2ND RENAISSANCE

<u>Illness</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Wellbeing (is possible)</u>	<u>Path of Wellbeing</u>
 <p>Witnessing an escalating series of interconnected crises – ecological, political and social crises.</p> <p>Illness is serious. Could lead to collapse.</p>	 <p>The root cause of these crises lies in the cultural paradigm of Modernity: in entrenched individual and collective ways of being, which are conditioned by Modernity's logic and values.</p>	<p>We need profound shifts in our ways of being, thinking, feeling, and acting: a new cultural paradigm.</p> <p>Cultural evolution is possible. We can profoundly evolve our civilizations at multiple levels.</p>	<p>It may have features like this ... inner growth, wisdom, interbeing, new ways of assessing value ...</p> <p>How does that happen? ... deliberately developmental spaces, nurturing the seeds, growing new social and political movements ...</p>

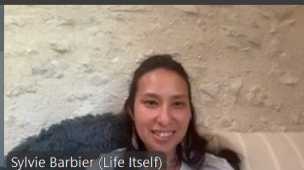




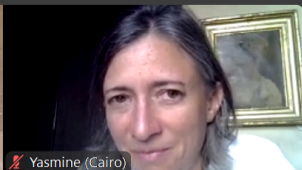
Rufus - Life Itself




Lauren Wigmore - Life Itself




Sylvie Barbier (Life Itself)



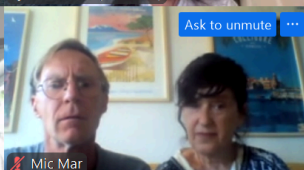
Yasmine (Cairo)



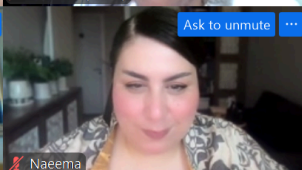
Jarlath Rice Brighton, UK



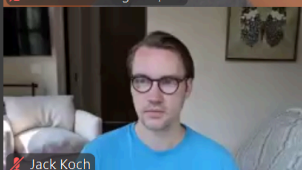
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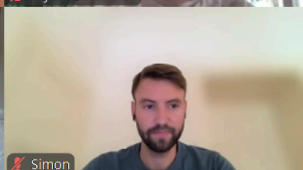
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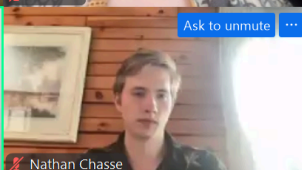
Jack Koch




Simon



Ranwa Abdelnabi



Nathan Chasse



Chris

Alex N

an747


Darrell Duane

Alex N

an747

Robin

Tallon



# Learnings

# Learnings / improvements distilled

*See subtab for details*

Here's a distilled list of **learnings, improvements, and specific actions** to implement for the next iteration of the course, grouped by theme.

## Course Design & Structure

- **Decide on course length and format:**
  - Use **4-session version** as an introduction or funnel into deeper offerings.
  - Develop a **6–10 session version** to cover all Four Noble Beliefs in depth.
- **Pre-session learning materials:**
  - Share **pre-reading or video content** ahead of each session to prepare participants.
  - Consider turning current content into a **studio-recorded video course** or use refined clips from past sessions.
- **Increase emphasis on dialogue:** Structure sessions to **maximize breakout time** and **return discussions**, where deeper sense-making happens.
- **Introduce buddy groups:**
  - Assign **pairs or trios in Session 1** for weekly peer dialogue.
  - Encourage them to meet 30–60 mins between sessions (optional but strongly invited).

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## Operational Improvements

- **Pre-session coordination:** Create a **recurring calendar invite** for the facilitation team:
    - Starts **1.5 hours before** each session.
    - Lauren only needs to join the final 45 minutes of prep.
  - **Feedback & learning evaluation:** Conduct a **follow-up retention survey** (2–4 weeks after course end):
    - E.g., ask “What are the Four Noble Beliefs (without notes)?”
    - Gather reflections on what concepts stayed with them.
  - **Track drop-off patterns:** Try to understand why some participants disengaged (survey, exit check-in, or simple outreach).
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## Facilitation & Delivery

- **Maintain clear roles and tech support:**
  - Lauren (or similar support) manages slides, breakout rooms, and tech.
  - Back-up facilitator (like Finn) ready if needed.
- **Keep ritual structure early on:**
  - Maintain soft music, meditation, and check-in/check-out prompts especially in early sessions.
  - Helps break the ice and ease awkwardness.

- **Create stronger ending:** Reinforce the course arc with **closing shares** and **next-step framing**.
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## Content Development

- **Formalize the Four Noble Beliefs framework:**
  - Continue refining structure, metaphors (e.g. wheelchair, bed of seeds), and teaching tools.
  - Consider writing or visualizing it as a short guide/booklet.
- **Explore productizing the course:**
  - Option 1: Studio-recorded standalone course.
  - Option 2: Use cleaned-up recordings of current course with guided facilitation.
  - Option 3: Provide pre-session materials + live dialogue-based facilitation.



**Raw + ChatGPT**

# Learnings / Improvements

## Session 1

- Aim for 2 breakout rooms per session
- Take our time - even if we don't cover everything
- Come from Abundance
- Flash 4 noble beliefs at each session
- Rufus to flesh out - the reading / reference doc
- Poll at beginning/before session - have you heard of these terms (could be sent before the course)

## Session 2

- More time to explain the ideologies and views and values - to create a shift
  - Water to the fish
  - Imagine in feudal times (and where that is still present now) & the positives and limitations
- Help people understand more why we are sick
- (Start Session 3 - by shaking peoples assumptions)

## Session 4

- What worked:
  - S+R being in separate rooms

- 4 noble beliefs worked well
- And metaphor of wheelchair and seeds/culture lands well
- 1.5hrs good length (not longer)
- 2 breakouts per session and re-creation
- Shared document helpful and whatsapp group
- Music in room and mediation when entering (esp first sessions when ppl more awkward)
- First session vulnerable share from facilitators -and end share for context of why doing
- Having Lauren/Finn in place
- Feedback form and prep in advance
- Team dynamics smoother generally
- Month good length of time

#### In future / Improvements:

- Calendar invite to all facilitators 1.5 hrs before the course start time to support preparation
- **Next step:** get what we've done into a script, polished and recorded properly for a course online
- Work out ways to learn what is working and sticks
  - Survey of retention in 2 weeks after course etc
- Q into whatsapp group in a few weeks - to ask what are the 4 noble beliefs
- Recorded videos for those to watch so the coming together facilitates more conversations for sensemaking

- Ppl knowing in advance what is coming up next week to help keep them engaged
- 4 noble beliefs properly is likely 6weeks
  - 4 week course done like 2.5 noble beliefs
- Create buddy groups where people meet once a week to discuss what came up

## End of Series reflections

### What Worked Well

#### Format and Facilitation

- Being in *two separate rooms* (even within the same building) worked better for facilitation.
- **1.5-hour sessions** felt like the ideal length—longer would likely lose focus.
- **Two breakout rooms per session** helped with engagement.
- Starting with a **big personal share** in Session 1 set a tone of vulnerability and openness.

#### Content and Metaphors

- The **Four Noble Beliefs** framework worked well.
- Two **key metaphors** stood out:
  - The **wheelchair** (diagnostic metaphor).

- The **bed of seeds** for culture and human nature.

## Atmosphere and Rituals

- Soft **music and meditation** at the start helped ease people in—especially valuable in the first two sessions.
- **Check-in/check-out in the chat** (saying how you're arriving and leaving) worked well as early-session icebreakers.

## Operational Logistics

- The **pre-shared course content document** helped participants follow and review.
  - **WhatsApp group** reminders supported continuity and re-engagement.
  - Having **Lauren** manage tech (breakout rooms, slides) made a big difference; same with **Finn** filling in.
  - The **feedback form** worked well—especially having it prepped and lightly reviewed beforehand.
  - Noted improvement in **team cohesion and functioning** over time.
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## Suggestions / Improvements

- **Pre-session coordination:** Create a recurring calendar invite starting **1.5 hours before** each session for the core team.
  - Lauren may only need to join the **last 45 minutes** of prep, but the full block should be held.

- Helps avoid “flying by the seat of your trousers” feeling.
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## Next Step / Vision

“I feel the next step is recording this as a proper video course.”

- Use a **studio-quality setup** (good camera, backdrop).
- **Polish and record** the course content now that it feels mature.
- Create a **recorded version** that others can watch, then be facilitated by you, Lauren, or others.
- This isn’t about redoing the live course for improvement—it’s about **capturing what works now**.

## Lauren and Rufus

### What Worked Well

#### Team Dynamic

- The **energy between Sylvie and Rufus** was smoother and less disruptive than before—still dynamic and engaging, but more grounded and trustworthy for participants.

## Pedagogical Approach

- **Simplicity of content delivery** was key—bringing discussions back to emotional connection and participants' lived realities was effective.
- **Breakouts and sharing** supported this connection and worked really well.
- The **diverse participant mix** enriched conversation and added nuance.
- Having a **simple next step** (e.g. the OASIS tent) felt good—inviting without overwhelming.

## Content Quality

- The **Four Noble Beliefs** framework has improved over time—distilled and clarified through repeated presentation (e.g. starting in Berlin).
  - Metaphors and narrative structure are becoming strong teaching tools.
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## What Didn't Work / Needs Attention

- **Drop-off rates:** Understanding why some participants disengaged (logistics? life? content?) is important.
  - **Late-stage prep:** Some sessions still had a "last minute" feel; a more stable pre-session structure would help.
  - **Limited shared reflection time:** Not enough time in plenary for deep dialogue or sense-making after breakouts.
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# Improvements & Suggestions

## Content & Format

- **Turn the course into structured material:**
  - Either polished studio recordings.
  - Or even using **existing recordings** (even if a bit rough) to supplement live sessions.
  - This allows future sessions to focus more on **dialogue and breakout-led sense-making**.
- **Pre-reading/video watching** before each session could improve engagement and retention.
- Consider expanding the course to **6–10 sessions** to properly cover the Four Noble Beliefs (you covered ~2.5 in 4 sessions).
  - The 4-session version works as an intro.
  - A 10-session version could allow full depth.

## Participant Structure

- Introduce **buddy groups** in the first session:
  - Groups of 2–3 (or up to 5, in case of drop-offs).
  - Meet independently between sessions.
  - Increases accountability, engagement, and deepens reflection.
- **Don't announce the groups in advance**—present it as a live invitation with opt-out.



# Feedback & Retention Tracking

- Use a **follow-up survey** 2–4 weeks after the course:
    - Ask participants to recall the Four Noble Beliefs from memory.
    - Assess what ideas or practices stuck.
  - This helps measure **retention** and **teaching efficacy**.
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## Key Learnings

- The **sense-making happens in the discussion**—not in the information download.
- **Pre-material plus breakout-rich sessions** are the sweet spot for adult learning and integration.
- Group size and duration need to balance **depth with accessibility**.
- **Longer-term buddy structures** and **follow-up surveys** can improve both connection and retention.
- You're ready for the **next phase: productizing** the course content.

## Lauren And Rufus Raw

Lauren, what do you think worked, what didn't, what could work better, and what are the learnings? Yeah, I won't sort of repeat some of the things that Sylvie said because I do agree with all of them. I thought from my side just to reflect back that your dynamic works much better, it's much like more, it has a smoother

energy to it, but it was still your kind of like back and forth, which adds a beautiful energy, but it's not as disruptive, I think. So I think that helps it become easier for the people in the course to connect with and, you know, connect with your personalities and also feel trusting in what it is that you're that you're bringing and sharing. So that's a matter of like, well done to both of you for working on that. I think, yeah, the simplicity has worked really well, like actually kind of like not over-complicating aspects and bringing questions and items back to the kind of like emotional connection core that the participants have kind of, they've come here because they're connected to something and so bringing it back into their world is useful. So that kind of weaving between the two and that's supported through like the breakouts and the opportunity to share, I think has worked really, really well. I think the main things, obviously trying to understand maybe why people have dropped off, as we mentioned earlier, would be useful for this session, why there is that decline, whether it's something that's like a logistical thing we can we can put in place or if it's just a life situation. I think seeing how many people come through into the OASIS will be a really interesting, like how many people are really going to take the next step that is quite simple. So having something as simple as the OASIS tent as the next step was also a really great call without overburdening individuals. I think what works well is also we had quite a variety of participants from different backgrounds which was really helpful as well in starting to create that diversity and allowing the conversations to be more nuanced. Any other improvements or thoughts in that sense? Yeah I agree prepping a little bit earlier is useful so that things are not kind of still having that little last minute energy, although I know that you guys also need that for your kind of like creative genius, so finding the sweet spot

I think around that and I think Sylvie's suggestion is probably the best way around it. I think that's all. Great. Okay so very quickly for me I think my biggest learnings, I think lots of stuff worked. I think obviously just like we're getting the content like the Four Noble Beliefs distillation which was there in the original launch but has been refined a lot. I've now given a starting in Berlin last year giving presentations it always just gets better and better as you present and you learn is just getting things because ultimately what we'd want to test and I'd want to test out of a course if they allowed me would be like a month later can you tell me what the Four Noble Beliefs are? You know just can you remember those four things? Then there'd be a lot of like how can you explain it to someone but just even that, that's the minimal thing we want people to remember and it's difficult also for us to now remember how new this was to us. Like I didn't know what the concept of cultural evolution was you know when someone said to me I said what's cultural evolution? That sounds weird. So you know just trying to really check with people how it's landing who aren't us and I think so one learning or improvement would be to work out ways to learn what's working because we don't really know a lot out of the course often and I would love to do maybe this the basic survey but to follow up even in two weeks like with a like a survey of like without like looking at your books we're just trying to look at retention something like that but anyway the other learning is I think what we've said is I would turn this down into material whether we do a professionally recorded even video of course which even just like here's the pre-prepared material to read in a doc and then we're going to discuss it kind of thing or you know watch these even the videos from this course I really think you could just chop up a bunch of the video from this course even in its crude form and like use it let alone a put

like a really refined version I think that's the way to go you know and it means that people can come to session and do more breakouts more dialogue more discussion which is when the sense-making happens you know it's really when the sense-making is happening for people and we didn't often get enough time to read a lot of these people to come back there actually be some dialogue in the room or debate then they go back off your breakout room then they come back and people share in the room and so on and I think the other thing that will also help with retention is people know what's coming up next week they can pre-read it and they can show up to discuss it you know um yeah I think that's for me the the biggest the biggest learning is is that and I think the other one would be that we probably need to do the whole four noble beliefs properly is probably four six to ten sessions and I think we're clear here which is we we trailed pockets which is great we didn't like do movement building but I think it's actually we got through actually I would say two and a half noble beliefs in four sessions which is fine I think I think this four session course can work for because it's like something up for 10 session course that's you know landmark does it but it's a it's a lot for people but I think a month is reasonable um and I do the other learning I would I would I would in the first session create buddy groups I would create groups of two or three people maybe even more if there's enough people five people because then if people drop out but I would then say you meet between the sessions that would I would also really add that I would have done that from session one and allocate people and say that you know people could opt out of it but I wouldn't tell them in advance but say hey we're inviting you to meet once a week for like somewhere between half an hour and an hour to discuss what you came up I think that would actually make a huge

difference a lot of fun for the course um for me okay uh that's it is there anything else people want to say okay let me

## Sylvie Raw

Just so you're saying, the learnings, or like, what worked about the course, Xiyue? Well, I'd say it worked better, it works good that you and I are in two different rooms. Because, yeah, I don't need to go into because, but you and I are in two different rooms, even if we're in the same buildings. I think the Four Noble Beliefs worked really well. I think the metaphor of the wheelchair and the metaphor of the bed of seeds of culture and human nature, like, that metaphor seems, like, these two metaphors, I think, really helped. I think the length of one hour and a half is really good. Like, I wouldn't go longer, like, I think people wouldn't be able to focus more. I think having two breakout rooms per session worked really well. And having the recreation, like people coming back. I think you did really well in having that document where people, where you put the course content there that people could follow and go back to the WhatsApp group to kind of send little notification, re-enrollment, staying in touch. Just little things like arriving in the room, having the little music and doing the meditation. Especially, I think, for the first two sessions where people are a little bit more awkward, don't know each other, to say that, oh, say how you're arriving into the chat and say how you're leaving. I think these things made it, like, it's less needed when people feel more familiar, but in the beginning as an

icebreaker. And I think having from the start, the very first one, we did a big share of, like, why we're doing this, why it matters to us, personal stories. So, making ourselves a bit vulnerable so that it creates a sense that they can open up and also, yeah, I think for me it worked to have an end share or so of, like, okay, this is re-putting again a context so it's not just a course. I think it worked really well to have Lauren there, having to deal with the breakout room, deal with the slide. If Lauren wasn't there, like, it would add more strain. And it worked, it was great that we had Finn when you couldn't be there, Lauren, to deal with that. I think that in general I would definitely put in the calendar as send an invite to all three of us an hour and a half before the course starts. Because I've just noticed sometimes we just do it the 45 minutes before and then we're a little bit like, you know, we managed to do it where we're a bit like to the seam of your trousers. Can you say that? Yeah, yeah, yeah. A little bit. So, I think if we had a calendar invite, you know, the course plus an hour and a half before where we are, like, maybe Lauren does not need to be there for the first, does only need to be there for the last 45 minutes. But I think that these are little things to put in place that can just help, like, with integrity and things running even smoother. The feedback form really worked, Lauren, that you've prepped it in advance, that we reviewed it just very briefly before. Yeah. Yeah, I think, like, we're just more operating better as a team or so. Okay. In terms of, like, what we can, yeah. What do you want to, just a sec, so is there anything you want to improve? Then we'll come to Lauren. Or you can pause and come back if you haven't got anything in your mind. I don't know if it's improvement. I feel the next step for me would be really getting what we've done into a proper content and recording them in a studio setting almost, like, properly with a good camera, good backdrop. And

actually, I feel now we're ready to actually record a course that we can then send people the video recorded course. That's my sense. So it's not feedback, it's not like an improvement, but it's like, oh, what's the next step? Because we, I don't see especially a kind of like, ooh, let's do this course again and we'll get better in terms of, like, narrative and content. I feel more now the next step is to, you know, polish the course so that we can deliver and being recorded in a way that we can film it and have it then be a course where then either you and I facilitate or Lauren facilitate or other people facilitate. Just watch the content. Great. OK, Lauren, anything? Just one second. So that's.

# Attendance



## 2R Explorer Attendees

Those interested in the next steps:

Teaching / collaborating and sharing the course

- Darrell

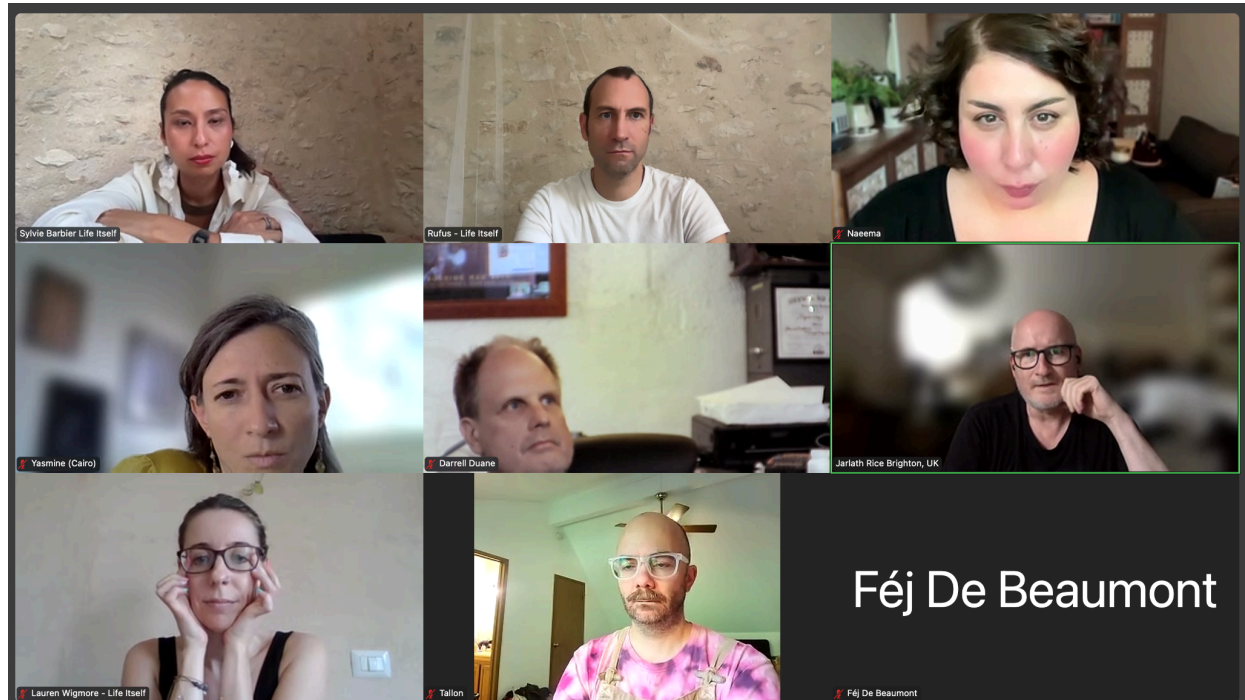
Joining the Oasis

- Tallon, Darrell, Jarlath, Fej

Follow up in whatsapp:

- Reminder re the Oasis calls
- Q (mid/end Aug): In your own words, without referring to any materials, what are the four noble truths/beliefs of a 2R?

## Session 4 - 6/7 attendees (Chris left for work call after 30m)



# Session 1

# Suggested Structure for Session 1 (60–90 mins)

Segment	Activity
1. Welcome (5–10 min) - Sylvie	<p>Warm opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduce ourselves</li> <li>• intention-setting, gravity and hope</li> </ul> <p>Ask people to write in the chat where they are and how they are arriving.</p>
2. Personal Share (10–15 min) - Sylvie	Each facilitator offers a personal story of what brings them here
3. Breakout of 3 (20 min) - Sylvie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3min per person (total 10min).</li> <li>- Share back into the main room (10min)</li> </ul>	In three: what brings you here ...
4. Core Teaching (20–25 min) - Rufus	The Four Noble Beliefs (with Q&A or dialogue)
5. Movement Framing (5–10 min) - Sylvie + Rufus	Introduce the Second Renaissance as a vision and movement

Segment	Activity
6. Invitation (5 min) - Rufus	Encourage reading the white paper or watching a video
7. Optional: Meta (5 min) - Rufus	Share that this course could be led by others—they could train to lead
8. Check out (5min)- Sylvie+ Rufus	One word per person who they are leaving

---

## Course Arc Introduction (Mini-Script)

“Welcome. This is a course—but more than a course, it's an invitation.

We’re here in grave times. Many of us sense that something is ending—and we’re not yet clear what could begin. This is a space to explore what comes *after* the crisis—a second renaissance.”

“In this first session, we’ll introduce the arc of the course and the core ideas—what we call the Four Noble Beliefs. We'll invite you to reflect personally on what brings you here and what moves you about the world right now.”

---

# Four Noble Beliefs of the Second Renaissance (Core Teaching)

1. **There is suffering** – something is wrong. (e.g. polycrisis, collapse, alienation)
2. **The cause is the end of modernity** – its worldview is exhausted.
3. **There is a way out** – another paradigm is possible.
4. **The path is cultural and spiritual renewal** – via the ‘eight fold path’ (a set of core values and practices), seeded by pockets of a new movement.

Make these highly memorizable and repeat them in each session.

---

## Next Steps

- **Pre-material:** white paper (or a recorded video/dialogue if produced)
- **Session 2 onward:** deepen into each belief, explore the ‘eight fold path’, cultural evolution, and how movements spread
- **Final session:** practical commitments or next steps for involvement

# Session 2

# Session 2

## From Crisis to Metacrisis

### Overview

This session explores how many of us have come to perceive not just isolated crises, but a deeper civilizational breakdown. We invite participants to reflect on their own growing awareness of symptoms of societal illness – that “something is not working” – looking at how “crises” became salient for them and how this sense deepened. We introduce the metaphor of illness and healing to frame the journey. Finally, we move to diagnosis, introducing the concept of the metacrisis and working through a guided example of the climate crisis.

### Intention

**Participants leave this session with:**

A clear understanding of what a (poly)crisis is, and have begun to look at their own lives for where they’ve seen symptoms of a polycrisis. The aim is not just intellectual understanding of the polycrisis and its relation to the metacrisis, but a personal inquiry into where this resonates for them—why it really matters, what they care about, and what they’ve seen with their own eyes.

- **A clear felt-sense of how multiple crises relate to their personal story of where they seen**



- An understanding of the distinction between polycrisis and metacrisis.
- **A concrete example of how one surface-level crisis (climate) reveals deeper systemic roots.**
- A shared vocabulary and set of reference points for further exploration.

## Suggested Structure for Session 1 (60–90 mins)

Segment	Activity
1. Welcome (5min) - Sylvie	<p>Warm opening and music</p> <p>Ask people to write in the chat where they are and how they are arriving.</p>
2. Personal Share (5-7 min) - Sylvie	<p>Today we go deeper into how we each <i>felt</i> and <i>recognized</i> something wasn't working — not just surface crises, but a more systemic breakdown."</p> <p>Sylvie offers a personal story how and when she saw crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 98 french extreme right election</li> <li>- 9/11</li> <li>- 2008 economic crisis</li> <li>- Climate crisis talked about</li> <li>- 2011 occupy wall street</li> <li>- Rise of depression</li> <li>- 2013 arab spring</li> </ul>

Segment	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- COP 21 failure</li> <li>- Late 2015 Trump election + Brexit</li> </ul> <p>At this point at LI people felt things were a bit bad but not too bad, we can still fix it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Covid</li> <li>- Ukraine/ Russia war</li> <li>- Israel Palestine war</li> </ul> <p>This is important so that things are not just number, there are personal stories and shared insight</p>
<p>3. Breakout of 3 (30 min)</p> <p>- Sylvie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3min per person (total 12min).</li> <li>- Share back into the main room (15min)</li> </ul>	<p>What were key events that you noticed, how did they impact your reflection and thinking?</p>
<p>4. Metaphor -(5min)</p>	<p>Backpain – wheel chair</p>
<p>5.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	

Segment	Activity
7.	
8. Check out (5min)- Sylvie+ Rufus	Write in chat how leaving

## Structure

### 0. Opening Intention (5 min)

- Welcome and frame: “Today we go deeper into how we each *felt* and *recognized* something wasn’t working — not just surface crises, but a more systemic breakdown.”
  - Reminder: *This is not just about understanding the terms; it’s about emotionally and existentially connecting with them.*
- 

### Part 1: Noticing the Crises

Share personal stories of noticing crisis:

- 9/11
- 2008 financial crash
- Climate change and the scientist
- Mental health crisis

- Trump / Brexit
- COVID

**Prompt:** “When did you start noticing crises and breakdowns in the world?”

**Breakout Room 1** (pair share, then a few plenary shares)

- No pressure to find something deep — just surface events that stood out.
  - Examples to mention briefly:
  - Share back: a few illustrative shares (no analysis yet)
- 

## Part 2: When Did It Start to Feel Deeper?

**Prompt:** “When did you start to feel that these weren’t isolated events, but signs of something deeper being wrong?” **Breakout Room 2** (pair share, then brief room harvest)

- Personal narrative encouraged — e.g. “I kept seeing the same patterns,” “It started to feel foundational,” etc.
  - Anchor this with *your own story* to model the shift.
- 

## Part 3: Opening Metaphor — The Bad Back to Wheelchair

**Purpose:** Frame the *felt* progression from manageable disruption to systemic breakdown.

- Introduce the **backache-to-wheelchair** metaphor:

“At first it was occasional pain — annoying but manageable. Then it became chronic. And one day, you realize you’re in a wheelchair, and don’t know why.”

- Emphasize the importance of *diagnosis* for making sense of what’s happening — and for restoring hope.

## Part 4: From Crisis to Meta-Crisis

**Purpose:** Begin introducing *what a metacrisis is*.

- Frame: “What if these repeated crises are symptoms of a deeper systemic illness?”
- Introduce **metacrisis** conceptually (lightly):
  - Not just many crises, but a breakdown with its **roots** in our worldview, in our views and values, our systems of meaning, coordination, and being
  - Sensemaking failure, moral confusion, systemic dysfunction
- Offer **one illustrative case** (e.g. climate crisis → techno-solutionism → deeper value/cultural misalignment)
- Conclude: This is what we’ll dive into more deeply next time.

## Poll (whatsapp)

*Before you did this course, how many of the following terms were you familiar with ...*

- Polycrisis

- Metacrisis
- Second Renaissance
- Integral
- Great Turning
- Collective Action Problem
- Climate Crisis

How familiar are you with Integral and the work of Ken Wilber?

- Never heard of it
- ...
- Deep expert - i could teach a course on it

# Session 2 ChatGPT outputs

<https://chatgpt.com/share/686e41f3-f284-800a-9c83-6ee273904bfc>



# Structure

# Session 2 Structure: From Crisis to Meta-Crisis

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## Part 1: Opening Metaphor — The Bad Back to Wheelchair

**Purpose:** Frame the *felt* progression from manageable disruption to systemic breakdown.

- Introduce the **backache-to-wheelchair** metaphor:

“At first it was occasional pain — annoying but manageable. Then it became chronic. And one day, you realize you’re in a wheelchair, and don’t know why.”

- Emphasize the importance of *diagnosis* for making sense of what’s happening — and for restoring hope.
- 

## Part 2: Noticing the Crises

**Prompt:** “When did you start noticing crises and breakdowns in the world?”

**Breakout Room 1** (pair share, then a few plenary shares)

- No pressure to find something deep — just surface events that stood out.
- Examples to mention briefly:
  - 9/11

- 2008 financial crash
  - Climate change
  - Trump / Brexit
  - Mental health crisis
  - COVID
- Share back: a few illustrative shares (no analysis yet)
- 

## Part 3: When Did It Start to Feel Deeper?

**Prompt:** “When did you start to feel that these weren’t isolated events, but signs of something deeper being wrong?” **Breakout Room 2** (pair share, then brief room harvest)

- Personal narrative encouraged — e.g. “I kept seeing the same patterns,” “It started to feel foundational,” etc.
  - Anchor this with *your own story* to model the shift.
- 

## Part 4: From Crisis to Meta-Crisis

**Purpose:** Begin introducing *what a metacrisis is*.

- Frame: “What if these repeated crises are symptoms of a deeper systemic illness?”
- Introduce **metacrisis** conceptually (lightly):

- Not just many crises, but a breakdown with its **roots** in our worldview, in our views and values, our systems of meaning, coordination, and being
- Sensemaking failure, moral confusion, systemic dysfunction
- Offer **one illustrative case** (e.g. climate crisis → techno-solutionism → deeper value/cultural misalignment)
- Conclude: This is what we'll dive into more deeply next time.

## Raw

Like, when did you start, what did you say, when did you start noticing crises?

Crises. Yes. You know, just anyone, not whether they were deep or not. Crises and breakdowns in the world. And breakdowns. And it really becomes salient for you. No, no, no, just when did you notice crises and breakdowns in the world?

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And go in the breakout room and share with your pair. Yeah.

And then? And after that, it's like, oh, when did you start wanting to know what might be at the source of it? You're noticing these were kind of persistent. You've gone from like, I've noticed a few, to like, boy, these just don't seem to be getting better. Yes. You know, just to flag it back to the thing, your bad back keeps

coming back, right? Yes. That, you know, kind of notice more of these. Yes, and something deeper might be going on. Be going on. Yes. And then, we're going to actually like, do an analysis of a particular crisis and why it's a meta-crisis. Yeah, we might leave that for the next session. Okay, we're going to run out of time.

Yeah, I know, but there's more. Be patient. That's okay, so we might leave that for next time. That was the prompt question for today. Yeah, yeah. In the group.

We'll see. We'll see if we can get to it today. Yeah, okay. But I wouldn't rush things. Okay, but we need to illustrate for people probably one example of going from a crisis to showing how it goes to the foundations. Yeah. So, the first one is a back metaphor. Then, it's an illustrate crisis. When did you notice some crisis? Yeah, what are the list of crises? Then, it's like, when did you have a sense that the crisis was showing that something was deeper in the matter. Yeah.

Something deeper was at the matter. Then, we go, the fourth part is like, from that to actually, what is a meta-crisis? Yeah. Right? The beginning of what is a meta-crisis. Yes, and doing an illustration. Yeah, just we do one illustration, and next time, we'll go in deeper. Well, I think people, just to think of today in an hour and a half, I think you could do that first part relatively promptly. Okay. And have 45 minutes or so on meta-crisis. Today? Yeah. So, have 45 minutes on the first part. So, you know. I do one hour, half an hour. Like, it just takes, because it's important. It's about people taking the time to connect emotionally with their own story. If you don't give them enough time, they don't make the link. It's like, it took me time right now to be like, oh, wait. So, yeah, I remember that crisis, and that crisis, and that crisis. And it's true that these things populated my sense of, like, something's really wrong. Yeah. And then it was like, something happened that I had, you know, more things happened of, like, I had the sense of, like, something's really, really wrong, and there must be something deeper at the root. You know? Yeah. So, and I'm someone quite familiar about the space, you know? So, and it's about people share, like, it's more, don't try, like, it, yeah, I wouldn't want to. So, take what we just said, and don't necessarily adjust before, just create a new, like, high-level structure. This is not necessarily slides, but just show the kind of, the three-part structure or four-part structure we've just

suggested for today, which is, I think, so we do want to start with the metaphor, yeah? We want to start with the metaphor of the wheelchair. Second, we've got, then, when did you notice some crises? When did you notice them kind of getting, you know, clusters? You start to see, okay, this is, and they're not getting better, and then part four, we'll be looking from crisis clusters, from polio crisis to manic crisis.

# Sylvie Cracks

# Raw (chatgpt distillation)

## Sylvie illustrations of crises / cracks => something deeper

Used to illustrate the narrative transition from recognizing *surface-level crises* to sensing a *deeper civilizational breakdown*—i.e. the shift from polycrisis to metacrisis.

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### Tidied Transcript

We're summarizing examples of moments when there's a shift—where people go from recognizing multiple crises, even interacting ones, to sensing that something *deeper* is going on.

Sure, there have always been wars and problems. But at some point, the sense emerges: *this isn't just one crisis after another—there's something wrong at the foundations.*

For me, a few things stand out. One is realizing that material wealth isn't it. That realization came partly from direct experience and partly from seeing close friends suffering—like when a friend of mine committed suicide. It made no sense. Suicide rates are rising, and young people, who should be full of hope, are losing the will to live.



Another moment was being in the Sahara and seeing a community more connected to land and one another. That contrast to our disconnected modern world hit hard.

And then there was the 2008 financial crisis. Not just that it happened—but that the bankers who caused it were bailed out. That felt fundamentally unjust: *you break it, you walk away without paying*.

There was also what happened with Greece—when it was nearly kicked out of the EU—and the rise of the far right in France and Italy. At the time, people said, “Oh, they’re marginal, they’ll never take power.” But now we see they can. That confidence has eroded.

Donald Trump getting elected was another jolt. And then Brexit.

All these events made me ask deeper questions. Why is it that we can’t seem to address the climate crisis, when the solution is simple—cut emissions? Why do we listen to the rich rather than people who know how to live with the land? Why are so many young people suffering?

These questions led me to see that it’s not just a matter of fixing this or that problem. It’s that the entire system—our values, our worldview—may be misaligned. That’s what eventually led me to start Life Itself.

## Example Moments Illustrating the Shift Toward Metacrisis

Use these to support the *cracks-in-the-wall* → *rotting foundations* metaphor:

## Personal & Social Cracks

- Friend's suicide; noticing rising youth suicide and depression rates
- Realizing material wealth doesn't bring happiness or connection
- Disillusionment with the cultural glorification of wealth and power (e.g. Wall Street / Goldman Sachs culture)

## Systemic Cracks Becoming Visible

- **2008 Financial Crisis:** Not just the collapse, but the **moral failure of bailing out those responsible**
- **Greece Crisis & EU Austerity:** Exposure of economic injustice and democratic deficit in global institutions
- **Brexit & Trump's Election:** Collapse of liberal-democratic consensus; rise of nationalist and populist politics
- **Climate Crisis Inaction:** Obvious technical solutions ignored; signals deeper political and cultural paralysis
- **Rise of the Far Right:** Marginal forces becoming central—eroding trust in democratic resilience

## Turning Point Realizations

- Observing communities more connected to land and life (e.g. in the Sahara) versus hyper-disconnection in the West
- Asking: *Why do we not listen to those who live well with the Earth?*
- Asking: *Why do the powerful seem so spiritually or emotionally disconnected?*

- Moving from asking “what’s broken?” to “what is the system of meaning that’s producing this?”

**Cracks Deeper (shift)**

# Raw

...in denial and therefore there's a common thing where people are starting generally to want to look at why is that, you know, and we're going to come to the why is that or our offering of why we think that is. Yes, yep. I wonder if there's the grief cycle illustration here for people as well, you know, there's initially denial, you know, someone dies and it's like you're first of all there's kind of denial, then there's sadness, there's depression, then there's... Yeah, I think I wouldn't go exactly for that metaphor, I would go more for the metaphor of like, oh you know something you have a little backache and you can still go on and like run and pick up your kid and cook and then that backache starts to get worse, like you sometimes have that backache twice a year and suddenly you're having it like three times a year and now you have it like almost like six months out of the year and you can't really do things because it's more like there's not yet, like grieving is like suddenly you know even why you're going to die or why, like there's just a denial like something's wrong, like oh you know it's just like a bit of suicidal rate going up, okay the economical structure went down but we managed to put it back, oh you know yes there's the climate crisis but you know the scientists said we have to hurry up but really it's not that bad, you know, we got out of poverty and like there's more wealth, look China is suddenly out like getting wealthier, like it's not that bad but gradually suddenly it's like oh quite quickly it went from like you can cope, you can still walk with your bad back to

like shit, you know, I'm in a wheelchair and then you're like why am I in a wheelchair, like why am I now not like in a wheelchair? And you're saying though also what you were saying at the beginning was that life itself, 10 years ago people were still in that first phase, it's like yeah there's some issues but they're going to get better, whereas now there's this really significant shift, that's with visible things like Trump, the Paris agreement falling apart and climate, people like whoa actually I'm getting disabled and I'm going to start looking for much more serious things, serious like trying to get understand the source of the illness yes and now the issue is that people are like I'm in a wheelchair and they go straight to I'm going to die there's no hope, right, because they haven't got the diagnosis, right, there's no like sense of why this is happening, they're just saying just the default thing is like humans are just terrible, you know, politicians are corrupt, we're just, capitalism is bad, but there's no, that's why they go straight into like a very dark pessimist view, ideal view, yeah, and they start reaching for things like extremism on either side, yes, but they don't understand, they don't understand the source of the illness, so they lead to hopelessness or to desperate, I don't know if I want to go into they go for extremism, yeah, but first I want to say people tend to go into like oh you know hopelessness, like in general I see more that than like even like going to, because going for the solution is out of hopelessness and not having the right diagnosis, yeah, so first there's that sense we're fucked, there's human nature is corrupt, politicians are corrupt, capitalism is just so bad, or like look at those rogue people, they're just, you know, nonsensical like reactivists, and there's no way we can get out of this like pitfall in this cultural war, but there's no sense of like why are we in this cultural war, yes, and from this diagnosis comes hope, yes, if you have the right diagnosis then

you can have, can put in place a treatment, yeah, and a cure, but without the right diagnosis there's just like a panic attack, you know, you can't be grounded in like taking the action for a cure, and so I think then I, and I think you want to almost start with this metaphor today, this is a really great metaphor that frames everything that's going on in the motivation for sense making, yes, okay, so can you just take what we've just done and first we'll create, you know, just a simple tidy transcript using mostly the original language, but then trying to still this metaphor into almost, you know, it could be a set of slide bullet, you know, set of slides of telling this metaphorical story with the illustrations, you know, the wheelchair metaphor, but then with the illustration what's going on leading up to, you know, without diagnosis there can be no hope kind of conclusion.

# Wheelchair



# Wheelchair

## Tidied Transcript (Original Language, Cleaned)

There's a common pattern now: more people are starting to ask *why* this is happening. Ten years ago, most people were still in denial — like, "Yeah, there are issues, but they'll get better." Now, more and more people are feeling something is seriously wrong.

I wonder if there's a useful metaphor here. The grief cycle came to mind at first — denial, sadness, depression, etc. — but actually, a better metaphor might be physical deterioration.

Imagine you have a small backache. It flares up occasionally, but you can still walk, run, pick up your kid. You think, "It's not great, but I'm okay." Then you start to have migraines occasionally, but gradually the back pain and the migraine gets worse. From once or twice a year to six months out of the year. Suddenly, you can't function like before.

At some point, you're in a wheelchair, popping pills all the time. And that's when the question shifts from "How do I treat this episode?" to "*Why am I in a wheelchair?*"

A decade ago, most people were still in the early phase — symptoms were annoying but manageable. Now the symptoms are disabling. Things like Trump's election, climate breakdown, the failure of the Paris Agreement, the financial crisis, COVID — they've tipped the sense of normality.

But what often happens now is people skip straight from “I’m in a wheelchair” to “I’m going to die.” They jump to despair because they don’t have a *diagnosis*. They say:

- “Humans are terrible.”
- “Politicians are all corrupt.”
- “Capitalism is just evil.”

And the only thing that people agree on is that things are not working.

There’s no framework to *understand* the root cause, so they spiral into hopelessness. Or they might reach for superficial or reactive solutions.

But with the *right diagnosis*, hope becomes possible again. Because diagnosis leads to *treatment*.

That’s the role of sensemaking. Without the right diagnosis, we’re just thrashing. But with understanding, we can begin to act — even in the midst of crisis.

So maybe we start today’s session with this metaphor. It frames the whole inquiry into why we do sensemaking, why we even need frameworks like polycrisis and metacrisis.

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## **PART 2: Illustrated Slide Structure — “From Backache to Breakdown”**

Use this structure to create slides or visuals. Each bullet can be one slide or visual element.

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### **1. Early Phase – Coping**

**Metaphor:** You have a backache, but life goes on.

- You can still walk, lift, parent, work.
  - Society: yes, there are problems — but overall, progress continues.
  - View: “Crises happen, but we’ll manage.”
- 

### **2. Accumulating Symptoms**

**Metaphor:** The backache returns more often and gets worse.

- Climate instability, financial shocks, polarization increase.
  - View: “Things are bad... but still fixable.”
- 

### **3. Collapse of Functionality**

**Metaphor:** You now need a wheelchair.

- Trump elected. Climate agreements fail. Youth suicide rises.
  - View: “Something’s deeply wrong — not just with politics, but with the system.”
- 

## 4. Panic Without Diagnosis

**Metaphor:** You’re in a wheelchair but don’t know why.

- Emotional response: despair, blame, apathy.
  - Common reactions:
    - “Humans are the virus.”
    - “We’re just greedy/selfish.”
    - “We’re doomed.”
- 

## 5. False Narratives Take Over

**Metaphor:** You treat symptoms blindly, or believe you’re terminal.

- People grasp at simple answers (blame capitalism, blame the elite, etc.)
  - No coherent path forward — only outrage or nihilism.
- 

## 6. Diagnosis Enables Hope

**Metaphor:** A clear diagnosis reveals a treatable condition.

- “Now I understand why this is happening.”

- Insight into the *metacrisis* (the root: sensemaking collapse, value disorder, systems misalignment)
- 

## 7. From Diagnosis to Action

**Metaphor:** With a treatment plan, healing begins.

- We start asking:
    - What are the underlying patterns?
    - How do we restore collective coherence?
    - How do we realign values and systems?
- 

## 8. Conclusion: Diagnosis Is the Beginning of Hope

**Quote Slide:**

“Without diagnosis, there can be no hope. With diagnosis, treatment becomes possible — and with that, a future.”

---

Would you like this converted into a ready-to-use slide deck or visual storyboard?

=> **Metacrisis**

# PART 1: Tidied Transcript – Climate Crisis as Meta-Crisis Example

If we're going to walk through one example to illustrate the move from *crisis* to *metacrisis*, let's pick either the **climate crisis** or **existential risk from AI**.

The climate crisis is widely known and relatively clear, so let's go with that.

At the surface level, the story is straightforward:

- We're emitting too much CO<sub>2</sub>.
- We need to reduce emissions.
- It's seen as either a **governance problem** (e.g. pricing carbon, international cooperation) or a **technological problem** (e.g. electrifying the grid, renewable energy).

But these framings don't explain why we're failing to act at the scale and speed required.

What makes this a *metacrisis* is that solving it requires more than better governance or technology. It reveals a **fundamental breakdown in our capacity for collective action** at a planetary scale.

Climate change is the most difficult collective action problem humanity has ever faced. Why?

- It's **global**, but affects people unevenly.
- It's **intergenerational**, with future people bearing the worst consequences.
- It demands **massive cooperation and sacrifice** across time, geography, and interests.

Historically, humans have solved collective action problems by shifting identity — forming new levels of social cohesion.

- Tribal → city → national → supranational.
- To solve this, we need a **planetary identity** — a sense of shared humanity and responsibility.

At a deeper level, the crisis is exacerbated by **technocapitalism**:

- The drive for perpetual growth.
- A cultural commitment to *progress through accumulation*.
- A faith that technology will always ride in and save us.

These values and structures — rooted in modernity — both drive the crisis and block real solutions.

So to address the climate crisis, we don't just need carbon pricing. We need:

- A transformation in **values** (e.g. redefining prosperity beyond GDP).
- A transformation in **worldview** (e.g. from individualism to interbeing).
- A transformation in **identity** (e.g. from national to planetary).

That's why climate change is not just one crisis among many. It *reveals* the metacrisis — the deep misalignment in our systems of meaning, coordination, and being.

And it also shows why traditional modern tools — markets, governance, innovation — are insufficient on their own.

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# PART 2: Slide Outline – From Climate Crisis to Metacrisis

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## Slide 1 – Title

"From Climate Crisis to Metacrisis: A Deeper Diagnosis"

---

## Slide 2 – The Surface Story

- Too much CO<sub>2</sub> → global warming.
  - Framing:
    - *Governance problem*: need international agreements, carbon pricing.
    - *Technological problem*: transition to renewables, electrify everything.
  - Implicit assumption: we have the tools, just need to apply them.
- 

## Slide 3 – Why This Isn't Working

- Emissions still rising.
- Paris Agreement targets unmet.
- Political will and public engagement remain insufficient.

*Why is this so hard to fix?*

---

## Slide 4 – Climate as a Wicked Collective Action Problem

- Global → everyone affected differently.
  - Intergenerational → future lives on the line.
  - Requires deep sacrifice and coordination.
  - Historical note: we've only solved collective action problems by expanding identity.
- 

## Slide 5 – Identity Shift Required

“From national interest to planetary solidarity”

- Need: new level of shared identity.
  - Without it, cooperation breaks down.
  - Climate response requires not just tools — but transformation in *who we think we are*.
- 

## Slide 6 – Structural Drivers Beneath the Surface

- **Technocapitalism:**
  - Obsession with growth
  - Material accumulation
  - Consumption as meaning
- **Modernist faith:**

- Technology will save us
  - Progress is inevitable
- 

## Slide 7 – Cultural Roots of the Crisis

- Values misaligned: growth vs. sustainability
  - Systems optimized for accumulation, not regeneration
  - Deep paradigms blocking transformation
- 

## Slide 8 – Climate as a Revealer of Metacrisis

- It is not just a crisis *in* the system, but *of* the system
    - “A crisis of meaning, being, and coordination”
  - Traditional tools alone (markets, states, science) are insufficient
- 

## Slide 9 – What Transformation Requires

- Paradigm shift in:
    - **Values** → from accumulation to sufficiency
    - **Worldview** → from separation to interbeing
    - **Identity** → from national to planetary
  - Cultural and spiritual evolution become essential
-

## Slide 10 – Closing Insight

“Climate breakdown is not just a crisis to be solved, but a mirror showing us who we are — and who we must become.” – *Life Itself*, 2025

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## PART 3: Visual Prompt Description – Diagram or Illustration

Here is a prompt you can use to generate an image or visual diagram:

---

### **Prompt:**

Create a visual metaphor that illustrates the climate crisis as a symptom of a deeper civilizational breakdown.

- At the surface: a cracked wall labeled "Climate Crisis" with phrases like "Too much CO<sub>2</sub>," "Carbon pricing," and "Tech solutions."
- Behind the wall: deeper roots extending downward — labeled "Technocapitalism," "Growth Imperative," "Faith in Progress," "Fragmented Identity."
- At the very base: a foundation labeled "Metacrisis" — representing the breakdown in collective meaning, shared identity, and cultural values.

- Include an arrow going downward labeled “Deeper diagnosis,” and another arrow rising from the foundation labeled “Transformative response.”

Style: clean infographic or diagram with warm, muted earth tones.

Include human silhouettes in different postures (confusion, despair, awakening) to convey emotional impact.

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Would you like this turned into a graphic now or formatted for Keynote/Google Slides?

## Raw

So the last part is like from The from crisis to meta crisis at the end like walking through an example the examples that I normally have would be There's the ecological crisis and the climate crisis specifically there's existential risk from AI and exponential tech and the wisdom gap essentially and then there's the populism political instability There's also the meaning crisis. I mean, there's a three or four. I've got a list of them, but which one do you and Which one would you pick if we were going to work through an illustration? My short list is the climate crisis or existential existential risk from AI I I'm saying if I were to work through an example, I think those are the two best known and most clear Which would you pick for me to work through? Okay, so in climate crisis, what is the story? the story is But at a basic level, it's like okay. Well, you know this We're

emitting too much CO<sub>2</sub> we need to reduce the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> we're emitting and a lot of the world has been it's really either. It's a somewhat kind of governance problem. We just need to kind of find a way to price carbon properly and reach a current international agreement and a deeper level. Also, and the other one is it's a technological problem. We just need to find you know, so electrify the grid and so on and. The point of what makes it neither those who really make it a meta crisis. What makes a meta crisis like why can we not solve the collective action problem? Well, because we actually need to shift to solve a collective action problem of this kind on a global scale. Let's think this is like the toughest effective action problem. We've ever had. It's a global redistributed time. You know distributed so it's not just present. It affects the future. Different people are affected in different ways. It's like a really wicked collective action problem and the way we solve collective action problems in human history is going to a new level of identity. Normally and so this becomes a meta crisis because to solve that collective action problem requires a paradigm shift in our sense of humanity of feeling a sense of planetary consciousness rather than just national consciousness. You know a feeling a deeply shared humanity willingness with a willingness to actually make deep trade-offs or and deep kind of commitments for for each other and for the future and at the other level which is that the climate crisis also being driven and made worse and worse by Technocapitalism, but there's this deep-seated commitment in modernity to progress that there is and to therefore the accumulation underlies capitalism that's very very deep and that that's it turned out much much harder to slow down and address capitalism than we thought in that way and. You know, in fact, there are a whole bunch of people even like, you know, just go faster. That's the solution and there's also this faith in

modernity in technology It's potentially misplaced faith that has it like somehow technology will ride in and save the day which which May well be misplaced deeply misplaced and so there's these kind of underlying view and value aspects in the cultural paradigm that we're in that are both Exacerbating the crisis and blocking the ability to address it and where and you know put on the positive side a paradigmatic breakthrough, for example a new level of sense of human identity a kind of Cultural evolution in a big way in our in our views Our sense of shared humanity, for example and in our values of what's important For example in a you know in a growth or you know Well-being from other sources the material goods is really crucial to addressing the meta crisis To addressing the climate crisis, sorry, which makes the it's why therefore if you look down the stack, it really does go to the root Layer the climate crisis and which makes it also why it starts to explain to us why it's so intractable And why the traditional ways that we've addressed crises in modernity are not working So Please take that and First create just a simple transcript with tidied, you know formatted without filler words and using the existing language where possible and then maybe create a slide a set of Slide outlines based on it to illustrate the point and maybe at the end an actual visual to illustrate the point That would be great I mean Maybe just create the description for a visual the kind of thing that could be a prompt To generate an image or a diagram to illustrate what has been said



# Outline v1



# Outline v1 (discarded)

Thanks for this outflow—it's rich. Here's a cleaned-up, structured outline of **Session 2 of the Second Resource course: "Exploring Exploracore"**, based on what you said. This format reflects the pedagogical arc you're suggesting and clarifies the flow between *polycrisis* and *metacrisis*, with breakout points and illustrative personal storytelling woven in.

---

## Session 2: “When Did It Start Going Wrong?”

**Theme:** From Polycrisis to Metacrisis — personalizing the structural breakdown.

---

### I. Opening Intention (5 min)

- Welcome and frame: “Today we go deeper into how we each *felt* and *recognized* something wasn't working — not just surface crises, but a more systemic breakdown.”
  - Reminder: *This is not just about understanding the terms; it's about emotionally and existentially connecting with them.*
-

## II. From Crisis to Polycrisis (10–15 min)

### Content Input

- Brief explanation of "crisis" → "polycrisis": Use the OECD definition: “a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects.” Cite: OECD (2023), *Global Risks and Resilience Report*.
- Examples:
  - Climate breakdown
  - Rising authoritarianism (e.g. Trump, Bolsonaro)
  - AI disruption
  - Mental health crisis
  - Cost-of-living crisis
  - Biodiversity loss
  - Refugee/migration crises

**Optional visual:** slide with overlapping arrows/timeline, showing how these stack.

---

## III. Breakout #1: “When did you start noticing the cracks?” (10–15 min)

### Prompt:

"Can you recall a moment in your life when you started to feel something was deeply wrong in society—not just a problem, but something foundational? What was happening around you?"

**Pair share → then 2–3 brief plenary shares.** This is where participants connect emotionally and reflectively with the **polycrisis**, not just abstractly.

---

## **IV. Transition: From Many Crises to a Meta-Crisis (5–10 min)**

- Share: “Noticing many crises is one thing. But what happens when we start to sense they share a common root?”
- Introduce **metacrisis** as a crisis *of meaning, of systems, of sense-making and being* — per Bristow & Pollock (2023).

“The metacrisis is not just a super-crisis; it’s the interwoven collapse of our ways of making sense, being, and coordinating action.”

**Metaphor:** cracks in the wall → realization that the foundations are rotten.

---

## **V. Personal Story Share (5–7 min)**

You (or designated facilitator) share one *felt-sense turning point* story. Example:

“As a kid, movies told me money equals happiness. But when I met the richest people, I saw emptiness, disconnection. That broke something in me.”

Keep it simple, embodied, and let it touch people’s own memories.

---

## **VI. Breakout #2: “When did you start seeing the foundations?” (10–15 min)**

### **Prompt:**

“What was the moment (or moments) when you realized that the problems weren’t isolated—that the very foundations of our society might be broken?”

Encourage personal narrative, not analysis. Invite emotion. Make it okay to not “get it right.”

---

## **VII. Synthesis & Closing (5–10 min)**

- Harvest key themes from shares (facilitator synthesis).
  - Reinforce: “We’re not here to just learn concepts — but to connect to a deeper knowing that we already carry.”
  - Optional: Offer clip/art to close (e.g. satirical or cinematic moment showing the false promise of wealth → disillusionment).
- 

Would you like a visual version of this session plan (e.g. in Miro or as a PDF for facilitators)?

**Full session (so-so)**

# Session 2: From Crisis to Metacrisis

## Short Description

This session explores how many of us have come to perceive not just isolated crises, but a deeper civilizational breakdown. We begin with a metaphor to frame the journey, invite participants to reflect on their own experiences of crises, and then introduce the concept of the metacrisis through a guided example — the climate crisis.

## Intention

Participants leave this session with:

- A clear felt-sense of how multiple crises relate to their personal story.
- An understanding of the distinction between polycrisis and metacrisis.
- A concrete example of how one surface-level crisis (climate) reveals deeper systemic roots.
- A shared vocabulary and set of reference points for further exploration.

---

## Session Overview (90 minutes total)

Time	Segment	Type	Description	Prompts / Content
0-5 min	Arrival & Settling	Arrival	Light informal arrival, optional centering	N/A

Time	Segment	Type	Description	Prompts / Content
5–15 min	Part 1: The Backache Metaphor	Presentation	Introduce metaphor of backache → wheelchair → diagnosis	Present metaphor verbally and visually. Emphasize diagnosis = hope.
15–30 min	Part 2: When Did You Notice Crises?	Breakout Room 1 + Share Back	Invite participants to reflect on initial recognition of crises in the world	<b>Prompt:</b> "When did you start noticing crises and breakdowns in the world?"
30–45 min	Part 3: When Did You Feel Something Deeper Was Wrong?	Breakout Room 2 + Share Back	Reflection on shift from noticing crises to sensing systemic breakdown	<b>Prompt:</b> "When did you begin to feel that these weren't isolated events, but signs of something deeper?"
45–50 min	Transition	Framing	Frame the next segment — introduction to metacrisis	Connect personal stories to structural analysis. Preview next part.
50–75 min	Part 4: From Crisis to Metacrisis (Case: Climate Crisis)	Presentation	Walk through how the climate crisis reveals the metacrisis	Use full slide sequence. Present key ideas, including collective action challenges, technocapitalism, and paradigm shift.

Time	Segment	Type	Description	Prompts / Content
75-85 min	Group Reflection	Discussion	Short open reflection or questions from the group	Optionally gather thoughts, emotions, or questions arising.
85-90 min	Checkout	Closing	One-word checkout or brief closing round	"What are you taking with you from today?"

---

## Slide Deck Outline

### Slide 1 – Title Slide

**"From Crisis to Metacrisis: A Deeper Diagnosis"**

### Slide 2 – The Backache Metaphor

- Visual: body with a red pain area progressing over time
- Caption: "At first, it's manageable. Then it disables. Without diagnosis, there is only despair."

### Slide 3 – Climate Crisis: The Surface Story

- CO2 emissions → warming
- Seen as governance or tech problem



## Slide 4 – Why These Solutions Fall Short

- Emissions still rising
- No global agreement enforcement

## Slide 5 – Collective Action Breakdown

- Global, intergenerational, inequitable
- Requires deep coordination

## Slide 6 – Identity Shift Required

- From nationalism to planetary identity
- Historical examples of identity expansion

## Slide 7 – Structural Drivers Beneath the Surface

- Technocapitalism: infinite growth model
- Modernity's blind faith in tech & markets

## Slide 8 – Cultural Roots of the Crisis

- Values misalignment
- Disconnection from land and interbeing

## Slide 9 – Climate Reveals the Metacrisis

- Not just a crisis *in* the system, but *of* the system
- "A crisis of meaning, being, and coordination"

## Slide 10 – What Transformation Requires

- Shift in values, worldview, identity
- Cultural and spiritual evolution

## Slide 11 – Closing Quote

“Climate breakdown is not just a crisis to be solved, but a mirror showing us who we are — and who we must become.” – *Life Itself*, 2025

---

## Visual Prompt (for illustration generation)

**Visual Title:** "From Crisis to Metacrisis"

**Structure:**

- A cracked surface wall labeled "Climate Crisis" (with tags like "CO2", "carbon pricing", "tech fixes")
- Behind the wall, roots extending downward: "Technocapitalism", "Faith in Progress", "National Identity"
- At the foundation: a deep block labeled "Metacrisis" (meaning collapse, coordination failure, value disorder)
- Arrows: one going downward labeled "Deeper Diagnosis", one going upward labeled "Transformative Response"
- Optional silhouettes: human figures in confusion, despair, awakening
- Style: earth-toned, diagrammatic yet emotionally resonant

# Session 3

# Session 3 Overview: Diagnosing the Metacrisis

In today's session, we go deeper into the *diagnosis* of the metacrisis, building on the wheelchair metaphor from last time. We'll introduce a layered framework to distinguish between surface symptoms and deeper roots — including institutional, cultural, and ontological causes. Participants will apply this framework through a structured breakout exercise, analyzing real-world crises and exploring how culture and human nature shape both problems and solutions.

---

## Session Intentions

- Reinforce the importance of *correct diagnosis* in addressing complex crises
- Introduce a **4-layer framework**: symptom, structures, cultural paradigm, human nature
- Clarify the distinction between **cultural paradigms** and **ontological foundations**
- Invite participants to apply the framework to real-world crises
- Lay the groundwork for understanding **cultural evolution** in Part 3

<b>Time (min)</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Content Focus</b>	<b>Mode</b>
5m Sylvie	<b>Arrival</b>		
5min- Sylvie	<b>Preface / Recap</b>	Wheelchair metaphor, why diagnosis matters	<a href="#">Presentation</a>
20min Sylvie + Rufus	<b>Part 1 – Layers of Diagnosis</b>	Introducing and distinguishing the 4-layer framework	Presentation + Q&A
20min	<b>Breakout Exercise</b>	Structured analysis of a crisis using the 4 layers	Breakout rooms
10min	<b>Group Share &amp; Sensemaking</b>	Groups report back / Facilitators reflect + synthesize	Share + Commentary
25m	<b>Part 3</b>	Tease cultural evolution section	Presentation
5m	<b>Checkout</b>		



## Main Sections of the Session

### ◆ Preface: Recap & Metaphor (0–5 min)

- Brief return to the **wheelchair/back pain metaphor**
  - Reminder: symptoms  $\neq$  root causes; misdiagnosis leads to mistreatment
- 

### ◆ Part 1: Introducing the Layered Diagnosis Framework (5–20 min)

- Present the **4-layer model**:
    1. **Crisis/symptom** (surface)
    2. **Structures/institutions** (e.g. collective action failures)
    3. **Cultural paradigm** (e.g. modernity's values)
    4. **Human nature** (vices & virtues — 3 poisons, 7 sins)
  - Use metaphors: *seeds and soil, software and hardware*
  - Highlight the **five ideological elements of modernity**
  - Emphasize: misdiagnosis often arises from flattening layers
- 

### ◆ Part 2: Breakout – Practice Diagnosing (9min min)

- Groups choose a crisis (climate, AI, crypto, COVID, etc.)
- Use the framework to analyze:

- Institutional failures
  - Dominant ideologies
  - Poisons/virtues in play
  - Optional: Compare with a different cultural paradigm (e.g. feudalism)
- 

## ◆ Group Sharing & Sensemaking (10 min)

- Hear back from each group
  - Facilitators reflect and offer synthesis
  - Emphasize key patterns and blind spots in diagnosis
- 

## ◆ Transition to Part 3 (30 min)

- Preview upcoming section on **cultural evolution**
- Pose reflective questions:
  - *What kinds of cultures water the seeds of virtue?*
  - *How might a new paradigm emerge?*

# Breakout Exercise #2: (Mis)diagnosis in Action

**Goal:** Learn to spot flawed or partial theories of change.

## ◆ Prompt:

Pick one of the following proposed “solutions”:

- Carbon credits
- Decentralized blockchain governance
- AI alignment research
- Mental health apps

*Ask: What is the implicit diagnosis here? Is it complete? Where might it go wrong?*

## ◆ Instructions:

1. Identify the **underlying theory of change** or diagnosis the solution is based on.
2. Analyze:
  - What **layer(s)** is it addressing (tech, institutional, culture, human nature)?
  - Is it ignoring deeper causes? Which?
  - Could this solution inadvertently amplify one of the **three poisons**?
  - Does it draw on problematic ideologies (e.g. techno-solutionism, hyper-individualism)?



## ◆ Group Output:

- Short summary: what the solution assumes, what it overlooks, how it could be reframed

# Outline



## ~~Session 3 Overview: Diagnosing the~~ ~~Meta crisis~~

In today's session, we go deeper into the *diagnosis* of the meta crisis, building on the wheelchair metaphor from last time. We'll introduce a layered framework to distinguish between surface symptoms and deeper roots—including institutional, cultural, and ontological causes. Participants will apply this framework through a structured breakout exercise, analyzing real-world crises and exploring how culture and human nature shape both problems and solutions.

---



## ~~Session Intentions~~

- Reinforce the importance of *correct diagnosis* in addressing complex crises
  - Introduce a **4-layer framework**: symptom, structures, cultural paradigm, human nature
  - Clarify the distinction between **cultural paradigms** and **ontological foundations**
  - Invite participants to apply the framework to real-world crises
  - Lay the groundwork for understanding **cultural evolution** in Part 3
-



## ~~Main Sections of the Session~~

### ~~◆ Preface: Recap & Metaphor (0–5 min)~~

- ~~● Brief return to the wheelchair/back pain metaphor~~
  - ~~● Reminder: symptoms ≠ root causes; misdiagnosis leads to mistreatment~~
- 

### ~~◆ Part 1: Introducing the Layered Diagnosis Framework (5–20 min)~~

- ~~● Present the 4-layer model:~~
    - ~~1. Crisis/symptom (surface)~~
    - ~~2. Structures/institutions (e.g. collective action failures)~~
    - ~~3. Cultural paradigm (e.g. modernity's values)~~
    - ~~4. Human nature (vices & virtues — 3 poisons, 7 sins)~~
  - ~~● Use metaphors: seeds and soil, software and hardware~~
  - ~~● Highlight the five ideological elements of modernity~~
  - ~~● Emphasize: misdiagnosis often arises from flattening layers~~
- 

### ~~◆ Part 2: Breakout Practice Diagnosing (9min min)~~

- ~~● Groups choose a crisis (climate, AI, crypto, COVID, etc.)~~
- ~~● Use the framework to analyze:~~

- Institutional failures
  - Dominant ideologies
  - Poisons/virtues in play
  - Optional: Compare with a different cultural paradigm (e.g. feudalism)
- 

## ◆ ~~Group Sharing & Sensemaking (10 min)~~

- Hear back from each group
  - Facilitators reflect and offer synthesis
  - Emphasize key patterns and blind spots in diagnosis
- 

## ◆ ~~Transition to Part 3 (30 min)~~

- Preview upcoming section on **cultural evolution**
- Pose reflective questions:
  - *What kinds of cultures water the seeds of virtue?*
  - *How might a new paradigm emerge?*



# First reflections on structure

Excellent — this continuation really deepens and clarifies the narrative arc for your session 3. Below is a **tidied and structured version** of what’s been said so far, along with **key concepts and potential structuring for the session**.

---



## Refined Notes: Session 3 Planning — “Getting the Diagnosis Right”



### Session Goal:

Help participants reflect on and articulate their *diagnosis* of the crisis (or crises) we face — and then offer the *Second Renaissance’s* diagnosis as a distinct and self-expressed perspective. The aim is not to “correct” participants, but to offer a contrasting view that invites deeper thinking.

---



## Key Teaching Threads

### 1. The Importance of Diagnosis

- Without the right diagnosis, you can’t prescribe the right treatment.
  - Use the *wheelchair metaphor*: a misdiagnosis can lead to destructive or ineffective intervention.
  - Invite participants: *What do you think the diagnosis is? What are the root causes of today’s crises?*
-

## 2. Avoiding Argument, Inviting Reflection

- Online, short sessions don't allow for deep trust or confrontation.
  - Instead of debating or correcting, *model self-expression*: “Here is our diagnosis; this is what we see.”
- 

## 3. Examples of Misdiagnosis

You may invite group reflection/discussion on some or all of these:

- **Crypto:**
  - Misdiagnoses the problem as a lack of efficient technical infrastructure for funding public goods.
  - Misses the cultural and ontological roots of the crisis — distrust, disconnection, etc.
- **State vs. Business vs. NGOs:**
  - Misdiagnosis: “The state is corrupt, so the solution must be tech/entrepreneurs/NGOs.”
  - Problem: This erodes our capacity to collectively act at scale — which the state enables.
  - The state *is* us. Any large collective will resemble a state. The issue is trust, culture, and accountability.
- **AI and Collective Action:**
  - Misdiagnosis: “The problem is controlling AI.”
  - Real problem: lack of trust in our collective capacity to coordinate.



- We mistake an ontological and relational problem for a technical one.
- 

## 4. Common Meta-Diagnostic Error: Cultural Cynicism

- Many believe we cannot cooperate. This is not “just realism” — it’s a culturally constructed narrative (e.g. neoliberalism).
  - This narrative was manufactured (e.g. via Reagan/Thatcher-era attacks on the state).
  - Cynicism toward institutions = cynicism toward *ourselves as a society*.
- 

## 5. Caution with Examples That Might Alienate

- E.g. questioning whether global poverty is “part of” the metacrisis can be misheard as saying it’s not a problem.
    - \* Suggestion: focus on how *different root causes* are attributed to various crises, not whether something “counts.”
- 

## 6. Deep Layer: Human Nature

- Crises have *two* roots:
  - Cultural/ideological (e.g. capitalism, techno-solutionism, cynicism).

- Human nature (e.g. greed, delusion, aggression — the *three poisons* / *seven vices*).
  - The cultural context shapes *how* these vices show up:
    - E.g. in capitalism: greed is exalted.
    - In a theocratic system: delusion or blind faith may dominate.
  - True transformation requires addressing both levels — cultural and personal.
- 

## 7. The Meta-Crisis as Spiritual Crisis

- The root crisis is ontological and spiritual.
  - Thus, this is not just a political movement — it's also a *religious* one (in the broadest sense).
  - It involves collective inner transformation and the possibility of transcending the poisons and vices.
- 



## Structuring the Session

### Part 1: Warm-up / Recap

- Recap last week's content: wheelchair metaphor, importance of diagnosis.
- Ask: "*What do you remember from last time?*" → helps surface retention and sense-making.

### Part 2: Group Reflection

- Ask: “What do you think is the root of today’s crises?” → harvest some diagnoses.

### Part 3: Offer Examples & Reframes

- Share misdiagnoses and explore alternatives:
  - Crypto → a technical fix for an ontological/cultural problem.
  - State distrust → a failure of self-trust and cultural belief in collective action.
  - Indigenous romanticism → overlooking that they too faced human nature.

### Part 4: Present the Second Renaissance Diagnosis

- Culture + human nature → metacrisis.
- The solution must involve inner development and systemic re-alignment.



## Your Voice & Tone

- Be **clear**, **expressed**, but not **corrective**.
- Offer your viewpoint as a *gift* to provoke further inquiry.
- Assume good faith; don’t expect immediate agreement.

---

Let me know if you want this shaped into slides, a 1-page handout, or a facilitator’s script.

# **Pt 1-2: Deepening Diagnosis**

Excellent — here is a clear **session outline table** with timings, section titles, and modes (presentation, breakout, etc.) for today’s session (Session 3), followed by structured **slide-by-slide content** for **Part 1** and **Part 2**.

---



# ~~Session 3 Structure: Diagnosis and Cultural Layers~~

Time (min)	Section	Content Focus	Mode
0–5	<b>Preface / Recap</b>	Wheelchair metaphor, why diagnosis matters	Presentation
5–25	<b>Part 1 — Layers of Diagnosis</b>	Introducing and distinguishing the 4-layer framework	Presentation + Q&A
25–45	<b>Part 2 — Breakout Exercise</b>	Structured analysis of a crisis using the 4 layers	Breakout rooms
45–55	<b>Group Share &amp; Sensemaking</b>	Groups report back / Facilitators reflect + synthesize	Share + Commentary
55–60	<b>Transition to Part 3</b>	Tease cultural evolution section	Presentation

*Note: Part 3 on Cultural Evolution is covered already and follows after this.*

## Slide Content – Part 1: Layers of Diagnosis

### Slide 1: Title Slide

**"Diagnosing the Metacrisis: From Symptoms to Roots"**

---

### Slide 2: Four-Layer Framework (Overview)

“A crisis has many layers — to treat it well, we must understand each.”

- **Layer 4:** Surface Crisis (e.g. climate collapse, pandemic, AI risks)
  - **Layer 3:** Institutional & Technological Structures (e.g. markets, apps, governance, chairs)
  - **Layer 2:** Cultural/Ideological Paradigm (e.g. modernity, feudalism, indigenous)
  - **Layer 1:** Ontological Human Nature (e.g. seven sins/virtues, three poisons)
- 

### Slide 3: Emphasizing Layers 1 & 2

**"Culture and Human Nature: Related, but Distinct"**

- **Layer 2: Cultural Paradigm**

- Shared norms, values, ideologies (e.g. rationalism, secularism, materialism)
  - Shapes what is rewarded, ignored, possible
  - Examples: Modernity vs Feudalism
  - **Layer 1: Human Nature**
    - Ever-present seeds of virtue and vice
    - Greed, hatred, delusion ↔ compassion, diligence, equanimity
    - Culture amplifies or suppresses these
- 



## Slide 4: Seeds and Soil Metaphor

**"The Culture is the Soil; Human Nature is the Seedbank"**

- Certain paradigms *nurture* certain tendencies (e.g. capitalism amplifies greed)
  - Others cultivate compassion, restraint, wisdom
  - "You don't need everyone to be a Buddha — you need soil that helps those seeds grow"
- 



## Slide 5: The Role of Modernity (Recap from Session 2)

**"Five Key Ideological Features of Modernity"**

- Materialism = well-being = material wealth
- Infinite growth as unquestioned good

- Secularism (loss of spiritual depth)
  - Rationalism (linear, mechanistic)
  - Equality-as-sameness (flattening diversity)
- 



## Slide 6: Why This Matters for Diagnosis

**“Misdiagnosis happens when we only look at one layer”**

- Thinking the problem is just tech or just governance misses the deeper layers
  - We often propose *surface solutions* to *ontological problems*
- 



## Slide Content – Part 2: Breakout Exercise on Diagnosis



### Slide 7: Title Slide

**"Breakout: Practice Diagnosing a Crisis"**

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### Slide 8: Instructions for Breakout

**You will have 15–20 minutes. In your group:**

1. Choose a crisis or solution (from the list or suggest your own):
  - Climate crisis



- AI alignment
- COVID-19
- Crypto for public goods
- Mental health crisis

2. Apply the **Four-Layer Framework**:

- **Structures** (e.g. collective action, institutional failures)
  - **Cultural Paradigm**: Which ideologies are driving this? (Use the 5)
  - **Human Nature**: Which of the 3 poisons are showing up?
  - (Optional) How would another cultural paradigm (e.g. feudalism) have responded?
- 



## Slide 9: Group Output Instructions

- Pick a note-taker and spokesperson
  - Prepare to briefly share:
    - The crisis
    - A key insight at each layer
    - (Optional) How another paradigm would handle it
- 



## Slide 10: Prompt on Misdiagnosis (Optional Frame)

**“Where do you see a misdiagnosis or misplaced solution?”**

- What layer is it focused on? What is being ignored?
- Is a deeper cause being missed? What would a wiser diagnosis include?

---

Let me know if you'd like these turned into **editable Google Slides**, a **facilitator PDF**, or a **participant worksheet**.

# Three Layers in Detail

Here's a structured write-up based on your rich dialogue, along with a clear outline of the **three-layer diagnostic model** and how it connects to the **wheelchair/back pain metaphor**.

---

## **Three-Layer Diagnosis of the Metacrisis**

We propose a framework for understanding the roots of the crises we face, organized into **three interacting layers**:

### **1. Human Nature (Bottom Layer)**

- The deep, cross-cultural substrate of human potential and limitation.
- **Shadow side:**
  - *Christian*: Seven sins (pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, sloth)
  - *Buddhist*: Three poisons (greed, hatred, delusion)
- **Light side:**
  - *Christian*: Seven virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude, faith, hope, charity)
  - *Buddhist*: Virtues like diligence, mindfulness, equanimity, compassion

👉 These are always present, but their **expression is shaped by the cultural layer** above.

---

## 2. Cultural/Ideological Paradigm (Middle Layer)

- The “soil” that nurtures certain seeds over others.
- Examples:
  - **Modernity:** Prioritizes material wealth, rationality, individualism, secularism, equality
    - Strengths: human rights, science, economic growth
    - Shadows: nihilism, materialism, spiritual disconnection
  - **Feudalism:** Hierarchy, loyalty, divine order
    - Strengths: rootedness, cohesion
    - Shadows: oppression, stagnation

👉 The cultural paradigm shapes which aspects of human nature are **fertilized and amplified**.

---

## 3. Institutional & Technological Systems (Top Layer)

- Manifestations of culture in behavior, design, governance, and infrastructure.
- Examples: markets, democratic states, bureaucracy, tech platforms, office furniture
- These shape *what is possible, what is rewarded, and what is visible*.

👉 These systems reinforce and are shaped by the paradigm and human tendencies.



## Interactions

- These layers are **dynamically interdependent**:
    - Institutions reflect and reinforce cultural values.
    - Cultural frames amplify certain human tendencies.
    - Human nature resists or aligns with institutional forms.
  - Cultural “software” can alter human “hardware” over time (e.g. through neuroplasticity or evolution).
- 



## Wheelchair / Back Pain Metaphor (for Teaching)

- **Symptom:** Back pain or headaches (i.e. environmental degradation, inequality, mental health crises)
  - **Surface diagnosis:** It’s your chair — i.e. *institutional arrangements* are poorly designed.
  - **Deeper diagnosis:** You're sitting in that chair 10 hours a day because of an ideology of productivity and office labor — i.e. *cultural paradigm*.
  - **Foundational diagnosis:** You tend to slouch due to inner anxiety or laziness — i.e. *human nature expressing itself through poison/vice*.
-

## Visual Aid Suggestions

### A. Layered Diagram

- Three horizontal layers:
  1. *Human Nature* (bottom) → 7 sins/virtues or 3 poisons/virtues
  2. *Cultural Paradigm* (middle) → modernity, feudalism
  3. *Institutions & Tech* (top) → markets, states, apps, architecture
- Arrows connecting layers both up and down
- Small side-panels showing two examples:
  - One with **modernity**
  - One with **feudalism**

### B. Wheelchair Metaphor Slide

- Image of a person with back pain
- Annotated overlays:
  - Chair = institutional/tech cause
  - Sedentary work culture = cultural cause
  - Anxiety = human nature root

---

Would you like me to produce the graphic mock-ups and bullet visuals for your slides or handouts?

# Breakouts



**structured breakout exercises** for **Part 1–2 of Session 3**, focused on participants *diagnosing* aspects of the metacrisis using your three-layer model (human nature, cultural paradigm, institutional expression) — including the five ideological factors of modernity and the three poisons.

Below are **three breakout exercise options** — each with:

- A structured **prompt and instructions**
  - A recommended **output format** for small groups
  - Optional **follow-up questions**
  - Example **topics** (climate, AI, COVID, etc.)
- 

## **Breakout Exercise Option 1: Metacrisis Diagnosis Drill (Structured Analysis)**

**Goal:** Apply the three-layer diagnosis model to a real-world crisis.

### ◆ **Prompt:**

Pick one of the following issues:

- Climate crisis
- AI alignment
- Mental health crisis

Diagnose the crisis using our three-layer model.

## ◆ Instructions (10–15 min):

1. **Name the crisis** you're working on.
2. **Institutional/Structural Layer:**
  - What institutional failures or challenges are showing up?
  - E.g. collective action problems, governance design, tech misalignment.
3. **Cultural/Ideological Layer:**
  - Which of the **five modern ideologies** show up here? (*materialism, infinite growth, secularism, rationalism, equality-as-sameness*)
  - How do they contribute to or distort the response?
4. **Ontological/Human Nature Layer:**
  - Which of the **three poisons** (greed, hatred, delusion) are playing out?
  - Which **virtues** are being neglected or could be cultivated instead?

## ◆ Group Output:

- Prepare a 2–3 min share-back:
    - Crisis name
    - One key insight from each layer
    - Bonus: how a **different cultural paradigm** (e.g. feudalism, indigenous) might approach this differently.
-

# Breakout Exercise Option 2:

## Comparative Cultural Lens

**Goal:** Understand how the cultural paradigm affects perception and response.

### ◆ Prompt:

Choose a well-known issue (e.g. climate, AI, COVID). Imagine how that same issue would be interpreted and addressed under a different cultural paradigm — for example, feudalism or a spiritual indigenous worldview.

### ◆ Instructions:

1. Pick a crisis (same options as above).
2. Describe how **modernity** interprets the problem and responds (what beliefs, ideologies, and institutional forms are involved).
3. Then imagine how **feudalism**, or a **different historical cultural paradigm**, would interpret and respond:
  - What values or virtues might dominate?
  - What institutions would act?
  - What ideologies would frame it?

### ◆ Group Output:

- Comparison table or narrative:
  - Modernity vs. Feudal (or other) worldview

- Highlight cultural blind spots or missed possibilities in modern response
- 

## Breakout Exercise Option 3: Misdiagnosis in Action

**Goal:** Learn to spot flawed or partial theories of change.

### ◆ Prompt:

Pick one of the following proposed “solutions”:

- Carbon credits
- Decentralized blockchain governance
- AI alignment research
- Mental health apps

*Ask: What is the implicit diagnosis here? Is it complete? Where might it go wrong?*

### ◆ Instructions:

1. Identify the **underlying theory of change** or diagnosis the solution is based on.
2. Analyze:
  - What **layer(s)** is it addressing (tech, institutional, culture, human nature)?
  - Is it ignoring deeper causes? Which?

- Could this solution inadvertently amplify one of the **three poisons**?
  - Does it draw on problematic ideologies (e.g. techno-solutionism, hyper-individualism)?
3. Suggest an **alternative approach** rooted in a deeper or more integrated diagnosis.

### ◆ Group Output:

- Short summary: what the solution assumes, what it overlooks, how it could be reframed
  - Optional: what inner/virtue-based shift would support a better approach
- 

## Meta: Optional Slide for the Five Ideological Factors of Modernity

To support the exercises, you may want to display a slide with the five factors you've referenced:

1. **Materialism** – well-being = material wealth
  2. **Infinite Growth** – assumption of economic expansion
  3. **Secularism** – spiritual disconnection
  4. **Rationalism** – reductionism, faith in logic over wisdom
  5. **Equality-as-Sameness** – flattening of difference into sameness
- 

Let me know which of these you'd like turned into **slide text**, **facilitator notes**, or **handouts**. I can also mock up a worksheet or shared doc format if helpful.



# **Pt 3: Cultural Evolution**

Articulating the *middle layer* (cultural/ideological paradigm) more fully, introducing the concepts of **seeds and soil**, **cultural evolution**, and the **function of religion** as a vehicle for collective transformation.

## Part 3 – *Seeds and Soil*: Cultural Paradigm, Evolution, and the Role of Religion

### Overview of the Section

This part of the session expands the diagnosis by exploring the cultural layer as both:

- A *filter* that channels human nature (the “soil” nourishing some “seeds” more than others),
- A *leverage point* for rapid evolution,
- And a *domain of meaning-making* (reclaiming the role of religion).

### Structure of Part 3 (Session)

**Title:** ~~Cultural Evolution and the Role of Religion~~

**Subsections:**

1. **Seeds and Soil metaphor** (culture nourishes human nature)
  2. **Why cultural evolution is fast** (vs. ontological transformation)
  3. **Religion as collective spiritual practice**
  4. **Religion as cultural evolution engine**
  5. **Breakout rooms** (either question)
-



## 1. 🌱 Seeds and Soil Metaphor

- **Human nature** is made of seeds — both virtuous (compassion, diligence) and vicious (greed, pride).
- **Cultural paradigm** is the soil — it *nourishes and selects* which seeds grow.
- → E.g. a paradigm that glorifies wealth will water greed. One that values interbeing will water compassion.

● **Key Point: Culture shifts the default expression** of human nature. Even without full personal enlightenment, societal norms can tilt large-scale behavior.

---

## 2. ⚙️ Cultural Evolution Can Be Fast

- Cultural beliefs and norms **can change rapidly** — much faster than human nature.
- Examples:
  - Women's suffrage
  - Civil rights
  - LGBTQ+ rights
- Even if few are deeply transformed, cultural shifts reshape expectations, policies, and institutions.

● **Key Point: You don't need everyone to be a Buddha** — just a tipping of norms and shared narratives can move a civilization.

---

### 3. 🕊️ Religion as Collective Spiritual Practice

- All religions aim at **transforming human nature**: to overcome vices, cultivate virtue.
- Religion = *shared* spiritual practice. Spirituality = individual.
- You *need religion* (in a broad sense) to:
  - Hold shared practices and faith
  - Create collective rituals and orientation
  - Maintain compassion across distance (beyond tribe/nation)
- Dogma and violence must be guarded against — but religion is essential to any deep cultural paradigm shift.

🟢 **Key Point: Religion isn't optional** — it's the social glue and meaning-maker behind any large-scale culture.

“To re-link ourselves to each other and the whole — this is what 'religion' literally means.”

---

### 4. 🌍 Religion as a Vehicle of Cultural Evolution

- Religion has always helped cultures evolve — not just spiritually, but **morally, socially, and existentially**.

- Modern nationalism, sports rituals, and even tech movements (like crypto or climate activism) are *quasi-religious*.
  - The Second Renaissance embraces this function intentionally — to evolve cultural norms and spiritual maturity together.
- 

## Breakout Questions

Choose one:

1. **“Can you think of a cultural belief or norm that has changed significantly over the last 100–200 years?”**
2. **“Have you ever experienced a cultural setting where people’s beliefs or norms felt very different from yours?”**

→ Share and reflect on how these shaped behavior, judgment, or policy.

# Session 4

# Session 4: From Cultural Evolution to Pockets of Emergence

## Session Intentions

By the end of today's session, participants will:

- **Understand why a wiser world is possible**—because cultural evolution has occurred in the past and continues today.
- **See how moral and cultural values shift over time**, using vivid historical examples to make that real and felt.
- **Grasp the concept of “pockets of emergence”** as the localized beginnings of cultural transformation.
- **Reflect on where such pockets exist around them**, and consider what role they do or could play within them.
- **Recognize that large-scale change begins small**, in dense and often marginal social experiments that carry seeds of a new paradigm.

## Structure

<b>Time (min)</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Content</b>
5m	<b>Arrival and Grounding</b>	Sylvie	
3m	Recap of what we have done: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 Noble Truth</li> <li>- Crisis: symptoms = wheelchair</li> <li>- Diagnosis = why it is important</li> </ul>	Sylvie	✓
10m	Cultural Evolution recap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Odysseus story</li> </ul>	Rufus	
20m	Cultural Evolution breakouts	Sylvie	
8m	Pockets	Rufus	
3-5m	Breakout Pockets	Sylvie	
5m	Feedback	Sylvie	<a href="https://forms.gle/caGsn3zAetPmDXef8">https://forms.gle/caGsn3zAetPmDXef8</a>
5m	Going forward (sessions in Aug)	Lauren	
5m	Celebration and checkout	Sylvie	

# Recap of Core Frameworks

## 1. The Four Noble Truths

- **Symptom:** Crisis, dysfunction, suffering in the world (e.g., loneliness, ecological collapse, burnout)
- **Cause and Diagnosis:** Not just surface-level systems, but deeper roots — human nature distorted by culture. Requires going beyond technocratic fixes to ontological and cultural causes
- **Better is possible**
- **Path:** Transformative pathways rooted in inner and outer evolution

## 2. Wheelchair Metaphor

---

## Cultural Evolution

## 3. Culture as Soil, Human Nature as Seed

- Culture is the environment in which innate tendencies (the “seeds” of human nature) are cultivated
- Good cultural “soil” can nurture virtues; poor cultural soil cultivates vice
- Both vice and virtue are present in human nature — culture plays the decisive role in what flourishes



## 4. Ideology, Religion, and Meaning

- Every society runs on some kind of sacred narrative or ultimate concern — often implicit
- Modernity's sacred story (e.g. progress, individualism, rational mastery) shapes the culture-soil
- Historically, religion played this role — we must understand the vacuum left behind and the need for new meaning systems
- Ideology is not optional — it's the water the fish swims in



## 4. Outline



# Session 4 Overview – 23 July 2025

**Title:** From Diagnosis to Culture: Soil, Seeds, and Sacred Stories

## ~~Intentions for today's session:~~

- ~~• Recap core metaphors and frameworks (e.g., Four Noble Truths, wheelchair)~~
  - ~~• Emphasize the importance of accurate diagnosis in societal transformation~~
  - ~~• Explore the relationship between human nature, culture, and ideology/religion~~
  - ~~• Begin mapping or reflecting on “pockets” of alternative culture or wisdom, if time allows~~
- 



## Recap of Core Frameworks



### 1. The Four Noble Truths as Societal Diagnosis

- **Symptom:** Crisis, dysfunction, suffering in the world (e.g., loneliness, ecological collapse, burnout)
- **Cause:** Not just surface-level systems, but deeper roots — human nature distorted by culture
- **Diagnosis:** Requires going beyond technocratic fixes to ontological and cultural causes
- **Path:** Transformative pathways rooted in inner and outer evolution



## 2. Wheelchair Metaphor

- Modern society is like a beautifully engineered wheelchair — a brilliant tool that’s ultimately a compensation for a deeper misalignment or injury
  - We mistake the comfort and efficiency of the wheelchair for health, but real healing requires re-alignment, not better compensation
- 



## Cultural Evolution



## 3. Culture as Soil, Human Nature as Seed

- Culture is the environment in which innate tendencies (the “seeds” of human nature) are cultivated
- Good cultural “soil” can nurture virtues; poor cultural soil cultivates vice
- Both vice and virtue are present in human nature — culture plays the decisive role in what flourishes



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- Every society runs on some kind of sacred narrative or ultimate concern — often implicit
- Modernity’s sacred story (e.g. progress, individualism, rational mastery) shapes the culture-soil
- Historically, religion played this role — we must understand the vacuum left behind and the need for new meaning systems
- Ideology is not optional — it's the water the fish swims in

---

## Optional (Time-Permitting): Exploring the Pockets

- What are the “pockets” of cultural regeneration today?
  - Communities, movements, experiments that are cultivating new soil
  - What can we learn from them? What are their strengths and shadows?

---

Let me know if you'd like a visual diagram to accompany this or a shortened version for presentation/slide purposes.

## Raw

So this is planning for session four of the course. Today is the 23rd of July 2025. And do you want to start sharing what you're thinking? I think yes we do need to come recap again on like I would even recap again I would even say like what are the four noble truth like the will chair metaphor of the symptom of society behind the symptoms there is a cause and therefore we need a correct diagnosis and then the part of so the four noble truth the symptom to the cause using the wheelchair metaphor then the importance of correct diagnosis and in going to

the correct diagnosis talking about the culture as the soil in which seeds human nature seeds of human nature grow either vice or virtue and both um and then going into the importance of uh religion uh ideology and religion for for human being for cultural evolution and and um and then if we have time talk about the pockets talk about uh pockets that's it can you please make a synthesis and structure recap of the course for today

## 4. Intro story


*A powerful opening that uses **shock, contrast, and moral evolution** to ground the reality of **cultural transformation over time**. Synthesis and write-up of a few examples.*

## **Session Opener: Vivid Stories of Cultural Evolution**

### **1. Odysseus and the Burning of the Servants (The Odyssey)**

After slaughtering the suitors who had overrun his home during his absence, Odysseus turns to the serving women—those he believes were disloyal, having slept with the invaders or failed to resist. He herds them into a chamber and has them executed, in some versions by hanging, in others by fire.

**To us today**, this is shocking—an act of brutal patriarchal violence, not heroic virtue. **But in its time**, it was presented without moral ambiguity. This was righteous retribution. Odysseus was the hero; this was justice.

 **Moral insight:** Our sense of good and evil, heroism and brutality, is not fixed. It evolves. What one age sees as virtue, another may view as atrocity.


---

### **2. The Suffragettes: From Terrorists to Heroes**

In the early 1900s, British suffragettes, denied the vote, escalated their protest tactics:

- Bombing postboxes
- Smashing windows
- Chaining themselves to railings
- Going on hunger strike in prison
- One, Emily Davison, even stepped into the path of the King's horse and died

At the time, they were called **vandals, criminals, terrorists**. **Now**, they are widely celebrated as **pioneers of gender justice**, willing to sacrifice themselves for a fairer world.


 **Moral insight:** Cultural pioneers often begin as outlaws. Paradigm-changers frequently start at the margins, confronting systems with methods seen as disruptive or extreme.

---

## Additional Examples of Evolving Cultural Norms

### 3. Gladiatorial Combat in Ancient Rome

Public entertainment in Rome included enslaved people killing each other—or being killed by animals—for mass amusement. **Then:** A normal, celebrated feature of civic life. **Now:** Considered horrifying, barbaric, dehumanizing.


 What was once normalized and even festive is now seen as profoundly immoral.



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## 4. Burning Heretics at the Stake (Medieval Europe)


Religious dissenters—people with “wrong beliefs”—were burned alive in public squares by the Church. **Then:** A sacred duty to preserve doctrinal purity. **Now:** A symbol of religious intolerance and institutional cruelty.

 Illustrates how moral certainty in one era can become moral shame in another.

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## 5. Eugenics in Early 20th Century “Science”

Sterilization of the “unfit,” often poor, disabled, or from minority groups, was practiced and legally endorsed in the US, UK, and elsewhere. **Then:** Considered progressive public policy by many. **Now:** Seen as pseudoscientific, oppressive, and profoundly unethical.

 What was once hailed as “rational” is now reviled as inhumane.

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## 6. Whaling and Animal Cruelty

Whaling was once a cornerstone of industry and progress. Beating dogs, baiting bears, and bullfighting were common entertainments.

**Now:** These acts are increasingly seen as violations of animal rights and compassion.

🗺️ Shows how the sphere of moral concern is expanding—including non-humans.

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## ✅ Use in Your Opening

You could **open with the Odyssey**, then move to the **suffragettes**, and finally quickly mention **two or three more** to build a sense of pattern and accumulation—how widespread and deep this shift is.

Let me know if you'd like this shaped into a 3–5 minute **spoken intro script** or written as a **slide-friendly narrative**.

## Raw

So now I just want to start today's session with a bit of a bang, with a story, with something that is a bit more vivid than like, OK, let's set out the idea of cultural evolution again. So I just want to brainstorm a few ideas that I have, and one of those ideas that I have is just to have an excerpt from the Odyssey, to read out the section of the Odyssey where Ulysses has just saved his wife, he's killed the suitors, and he takes a bunch of the serving women who he feels have slept with the suitors and have somehow not defended his honor, and he locks them in a building and burns them alive. And I want to read this out because I think that to us, most people in this room, this will be quite shocking. People will think, you

know, most of us will think this is not heroic or admirable behavior, yet clearly the people listening to the Odyssey thought this was, like, Odysseus is a hero, this is not an attempt in like ancient times to show a complex hero with some moral ambiguity, no, this was reasonable behavior by Odysseus. This was even perhaps like, meritable, you know, admirable behavior in some way, that he was punishing dishonor, he was dealing with a way that he'd been dishonored. And just as we see people who burn, but today, I think many people, again, in this group will think that people who like, they burn, burn alive, a wife who commits adultery would find this quite shocking, and not morally, you know, not morally acceptable. It helps us to see the evolution of our culture, that if we went back to ancient Greece, this would have been something that was acceptable, even admirable, like, actually, that he's actually acting morally in doing this. In the same way, and so it's a way of really seeing how much we have shifted sometimes in our values and views. And yeah, I don't know, that's one example. The other example, I think, that would also resonate today, which would be of, you know, some people putting some of the suffragettes who get sent to prison and go on hunger strike, you know, who are bombing mailboxes in London or running out into the course at this race course to stop the King's horse. And we would now think they were really admirable, but at the time, they were considered as, you know, almost like terrorists. So these are the suffragettes in London in the 1900s, 1910. And so, again, something that was at the point really edgy and considered a bit almost, yeah, certainly on the edge of acceptable and perhaps even reprehensible, you know, not just alternative, but actually repugnant to the mainstream society, which was, you know, causing property damage, you know, and so on, is now considered, you know, wow, they were kind of like pioneers and

heroic in some way, risking going to jail, risking even sometimes, you know, risking themselves for this positive cause. So I want to write up those two kind of examples, and also you might go to brainstorm two, three or four other examples, which might be vivid examples from the past of different, the way that deep views and values, particularly maybe around morality, but maybe even around, you know, the earth goes around the sun, but that's a bit more minor. I prefer ones which are more about values, I think, but more examples like that. And are there any still that you want to mention like that? No? Not that I can think of. You were about to say about the Monkey King, right? Well, no, I was looking at, because I was like, oh, we have that sense that he was a hero, but maybe he wasn't a hero to Greek people, he was a character in the sense that maybe...

# Pockets of Emergence

*A **structured synthesis** focusing on the “**pockets of emergence**” concept, integrating Protestantism example and its broader implications.*

## **Session 4 – Part II: Pockets of Cultural Emergence**



### **Core Idea**

New cultural paradigms do not emerge everywhere at once. Like **bubbles in boiling water**, they appear first in **pockets**—dense, localized sites of cultural innovation where a new way of being, knowing, and relating takes form before spreading outward.

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### **Metaphor: Bubbles in Boiling Water**

- Cultural change is **non-uniform**: It begins with **small, localised breakthroughs**.
  - These are **socially dense** spaces where people **experiment, live, and embody** a new paradigm.
  - Historically, these pockets often face **resistance** from the dominant paradigm.
  - Think of Florence in the Renaissance or Jena in the Enlightenment or San Francisco in late modernity
-



# Historical Example: Protestantism as a Cultural Pocket



## Context

- Catholicism = pre-modern religious-cultural order (hierarchical, corporate, sacramental)
- Protestantism = early modern paradigm shift (individualistic, rationalist, democratized)



## Protestantism as Cultural Innovation

- **Democratic/Egalitarian:** Flattened hierarchy; in many sects, no priests or pastors (e.g. Quakers)
- **Individualistic:** Salvation by *faith alone*, not mediated by the Church
- **Rationalist:** Emphasis on literacy and individual Bible interpretation (Luther)
- **Pluralist and Secularizing:** Multiple sects → tendency toward **religious tolerance** and **separation of church and state** → **Secularizing:** While religious, it ironically fosters conditions for secularism through decentralization



## Local Example (Southwest France)

- Protestant pockets arose in Catholic-dominant France (e.g. where Life Itself Core Hubs)

- After **revocation of the Edict of Nantes**, Protestants were persecuted and expelled
- Your home: Protestant chapel → pigeon house = micro-history of paradigm suppression



## Scale and Growth

- Begins with **families** → **congregations** → **towns** (e.g. Geneva under Calvin)
  - Eventually, some pockets grow dense and **institutionalize**, even dominate locally
  - But at the European scale, remained a **minority paradigm** for some time
- 



## Why This Matters for Us



### Cultural Evolution Proceeds via Pockets

- If we seek a **new cultural paradigm** (post-modernity, Second Renaissance, etc.), it won't begin everywhere
- It will emerge in **small, committed groups** with shared worldview, high interaction, and experimentation
- May include:
  - **Co-living communities**
  - **Conscious companies**
  - **Alternative education or governance experiments**
  - **Spiritual or ontological fellowships**





## Characteristics of Emergent Pockets

- **High density of social interaction** and value alignment
  - Often physically or relationally proximate
  - **Embodied practices**, not just ideas (new ways of living, relating, working)
  - Initially **marginal**, even **persecuted** or ignored by the mainstream
  - Potential to **grow**, connect, and eventually **tip the system**
- 



## Key Transition Insight

Cultural transformation doesn't start with systems redesign or mass communication alone. It begins with **living differently together**, in **dense pockets**, where a new culture is **grown like a garden**, not manufactured like a machine.

## Raw

So then we should go into this idea of the pockets, and by pockets we mean like the metaphor of bubbles in boiling water, places where new culture is emerging. And because, you know, a new cultural paradigm isn't going to emerge everywhere all at once, it emerges in small, dense pockets. For example, Florence in the Renaissance. And the particular example we want to look at is Protestantism as a sub-example, because Protestantism is really the modernity version of Christianity. So you have Catholicism, at least at the time, which

represents, you know, pre-modernity, the medieval world, and Protestantism is modern. Just to say why that is, it's far more democratic and egalitarian. You often, you don't have a hierarchy in most Protestant churches. You even sometimes get very radical, like there's no, there's not even pastors. Like in Quakerism, anyone can, you just sit in a circle. There's no one who's leading, at most, maybe a facilitator. It's much more individualistic. By faith alone, you're saved. It's not by, through the church, it's not a corporate body that you go through for salvation. It's through yourself. It's, in a funny way, even more secular, even though it's religious, because over time, because there are many different Protestant sects, there's this kind of, this tendency towards the separation of church and state because you don't want any given church, any given Protestant denomination dominating. It's also more rational. There's a lot more emphasis on reason. You know, you want to be able to become educated and literate so you can read the Bible for yourself, according to Luther and according to Protestant, most Protestant traditions. And then you want to, there's a kind of tendency to reason and thinking and kind of reflecting a much greater degree in Protestantism. And so anyway, Protestantism is an example of kind of actually a major new cultural paradigm showing up in an area. But the point here is more socially. Well, Protestantism shows up in pockets. Right here in southwest France was a region of quite high Protestantism in France. And of course, in France, it ended up being kicked out. Protestants were expelled from France after revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. And, you know, right in our house here, there's a chapel, which was a Protestant chapel and is now a Pigeonier. So you can see this aspect that little, you know, you can imagine how Protestantism begins in an area that's basically mostly Catholic. You have little,

you know, individual people or families and then little groups who are, there's a congregation and people are joining that within an area that's within a cultural environment that's actually maybe somewhat even hostile. I mean, certainly there are then major religious wars over Protestantism versus Catholicism in France for about 30 years in the 16th century. So anyway, there's these pockets of emergence where this new paradigm is emerging. And then if it gets dense enough, it maybe takes over. So you think of Geneva with Calvin, you know, in Calvin, Geneva actually becomes a Calvinist city and it becomes, you know, almost dominated by Calvinism or not even somewhat actually run on Calvinist lines. But in the wider context of Europe, it's obviously a tiny, still a pocket within a large ecosystem that's largely Catholic. So we want to talk through this idea of pockets of emergence and cultural innovation. And therefore one of the major ways, why is this relevant? Well, if we want to create a new cultural paradigm, it begins in these pockets. These pockets are quite dense in the sense that there's a density of difference of people thinking and coming, you know, looking this way. There might be a kind of, we've talked in a broad sense of religion of like a new ways of knowing and being and seeing in the world and acting. And it might look like co-living, it might look like companies that are operating in a different way, but it's pretty, it's a place where people are interacting a lot. It's pretty dense in terms of the interaction and relationship and possibly physical proximity even. It might be a physical pocket in that regard, but it's certainly a social pocket where there's a high degree of interaction within that group. And then these pockets may start maybe just as families, just as a small hamlet, and then a village, and then maybe a region is how it may evolve.

And yeah, this is fitting in because this is the way that cultural evolution actually, particularly pioneering cultural evolution, would actually come about.

# Pockets Breakouts

**Three breakout room prompts** to help participants engage with the “**pocket**” **metaphor** and reflect on its relevance in their own lives or work. One can choose one or let each group pick from the options.

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## Breakout Room Questions on Pockets of Cultural Emergence

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### Integrated Breakout Prompt: Mapping and Participating in Pockets

- 1) Where do you see “pockets” of a new culture or paradigm emerging around you—communities, projects, spaces, or even relationships that feel different from the mainstream?
  - 2) [If appropriate for you] What role do you currently play—or feel called to play—in those spaces? For example, are you a weaver, builder, catalyst, host, storyteller, guide, critic, or something else? What supports or challenges your participation in those pockets?
-

# Options

## Option 1: Mapping the Pockets Around You

*Where in your life or environment do you see “pockets” of a new cultural paradigm emerging?*

- This could be a community, organization, friendship group, online space, etc.
  - What makes it different from the mainstream?
  - How dense is it in terms of interaction, alignment, or commitment?
- 

## Option 2: Ingredients of a Pocket

*What are the key ingredients for a “pocket of emergence” to form and thrive?*

- What helps create enough social density, trust, or shared vision?
  - What challenges might arise in keeping a pocket healthy and generative?
- 

## Option 3: Your Role in Pocket-Creation

*If you were to help create or deepen a pocket of cultural emergence, what would your role be?*

- Are you more of a visionary, a community weaver, a host, an implementer, a critic?

- What might be your unique contribution in cultivating a space where a new culture can grow?



## Option 4: Learning from History

**Can you think of other historical examples of cultural paradigm shifts that began in small pockets?**

- What were those early pockets like?
- What made them fertile ground for new ways of thinking or living?
- What can we learn from those examples about how paradigms shift—and how we might support similar shifts today?



**What's next**

# Invitation: August Reflection Circle – in the Oasis 🌴

**An invitation to continue our dialogue and reflection—together.**

As the course concludes, we're proposing a one month space for those who want to continue engaging with the material, the themes, and one another. This will take the form of a 45-minute reflection session held within the **Oasis** every **Tuesday in August**.

- 📅 **When:** Tuesdays – Aug 5, 12, 19, 26
- 🕒 **Time:** 18:00–19:30 CET (you can join just the second half from 18:45)
- 📍 **Where:** The Oasis – <https://secondrenaissance.net/oasis>
- 💬 **What:** A 45-minute open reflection/discussion session, grounded in the themes and materials of this course
- 🌱 **Why:** To stay in the field, metabolize the learning, and co-create meaning

This won't be a new course or teaching space—just a lightly-held, co-owned continuation. The session will be lightly facilitated (perhaps by Rufus or Lauren at first), and we invite others to step into rotating facilitation. No presentations, just shared dialogue. Occasionally someone might bring a short offering or prompt.

You're welcome to:

- Join the **first 45 minutes** of OASIS for grounding and presence
- Or join **just the second 45 minutes** for dialogue

If at least **5 people** express interest, we'll go ahead with it. Let us know if you'd like to join, and whether you'd be up for helping hold the space at some point.

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## Steps to Introduce This in Today's Course Session

1. **Context (~1–2 min)** “As we come to the end of this course, we’ve been wondering if there’s a simple, light way to keep the field alive—to stay in conversation and deepen some of what’s emerged here.”
2. **The Offer (~2 min)** “So here’s the invitation: During August, we’ll host a short dialogue/reflection session in the second half of the Second Renaissance Oasis — Tuesdays from 18:45 to 19:30 Europe (12 noon to 1330 Eastern). It’s a chance to continue exploring the themes from the course, in an informal, co-held space. If there’s interest, we’ll run it for **four weeks**. It’s not a new course—it’s just an open space to metabolize, discuss, maybe bring in relevant artworks or reflections.”

3. **Participation (~1 min)** “We’d love to know who might want to join. If five or more people are up for it—even if you can’t come every time—we’ll go ahead. We’ll probably start with light facilitation from Lauren or myself, but the idea is to rotate hosting over time.”
4. **Next Steps (~30 sec)** “If you’re interested, drop your name in the chat or fill in the little form we’ll share. And if someone would like to co-host the first session or help shape it, even better.”

## Invitation: August Reflection Circle

As the course concludes, we’re proposing a one month space for those who want to continue engaging with the material, the themes, and one another. This will take the form of a 45-minute reflection session held within the **Oasis** every **Tuesday in August**.

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-  **Time:** 18:00–19:30 CET (you can join just the second half from 18:45)
-  **Where:** The Oasis  – <https://secondrenaissance.net/oasis>
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## **## Context**

As we come to the end of this course, we've been wondering if there's a simple, light way to keep the field alive—to stay in conversation and deepen some of what's emerged here.

## **## The Invitation**

During August, we'll host a short dialogue/reflection session in the second half of the Second Renaissance Oasis — Tuesdays from 18:45 to 19:30 Europe (12 noon to 1330 Eastern).

It's a chance to **continue exploring the themes from the course, in an informal, co-held space**. If there's interest, we'll run it for **four weeks**. It's not a new course—it's just an open space to metabolize, discuss, maybe bring in relevant ideas and reflections and deepen our sensemaking together.

## **## Participation**


We'd love to know who might want to join. If five or more people are up for it—even if you can't come every time—we'll go ahead. We'll probably start with light facilitation from Lauren or myself, but the idea is to rotate hosting over time.

## **## Next Steps**

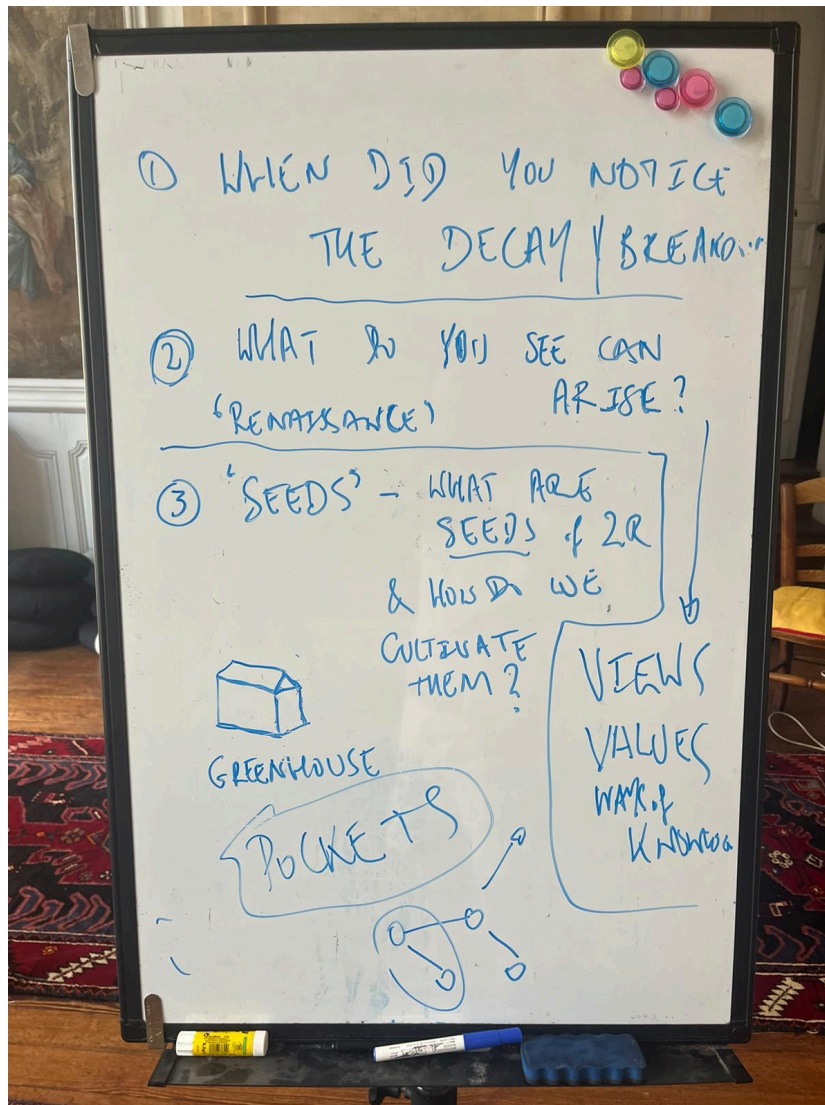
If you're interested, just reply here in the chat. And if someone would like to co-host the first session or help shape it, even better.

# **2024 Content - 2R Explorer Course**

# Content - 2R Explorer Course

- Presentation at Hub
  - [Existing transcript in Otter](#)
- Course: <https://lu.ma/f941uctv>
-  Second Renaissance 101





# Structure

## Time context

- 2 x 2h sessions
- 5m arriving and grounding
- 15m check-out each day (?)

# Overall Arc

## Day 1

- Intro
- Awareness of the decay / breakdown
  - Sylvie share
  - Question
- What can arise: vision of a new world. Views and values.

## Day 2

- Seeds
- Next steps for you personally: how do you want to garden in your life?
- Check-out and completion
  - Feedback form - <https://forms.gle/bWmzqvXGEq3SQVgi9>
  - Completion and acknowledgements

# Detailed structure

## Preliminaries / Prep

- Make sure we have continuous chat for these zoom sessions
- Make sure we have waiting room setup
- Make sure people can't share their screen other than co-host
- Note: handling late arrivals ??

- Have a breakout room and admit them - can send messages (but not voice chat)

## Follow-ups

- Follow up pack with materials
  - Paper and website
  - Follow up events e.g. connection call, co-building etc
  - ...

## Day 1

- [15m] Welcome
  - Waiting for and meditation
  - Introduce ourselves
  - Acknowledgements to participants for being here
  - [5m] [Breakout - 2 people] Pair check-ins and why here (2x2m).
  - [5min] 2 people share to big room what had them be there
- [10m] What this is about
  - 🚩 This is a WIP: Brief framing that this is under development.
  - That this is interactive. Make joke 🤖
  - Second renaissance briefly including synonyms
  - Motivation for this project: how easy was it to share?
- [35m] Section 1: Awareness of a metacrisis
  - [5m] Sylvie share about the term and getting present to things not working

- [2m] [Question] When and where in your life did you notice the decay, the breakdown? That something was perhaps really not working in our civilization.
- [13m] [Breakout] 3 people each of 4m
- [10m] [Share back]
- [10m] Section 2: [Bridge] Brief section on diagnosis point
- [40m] Section 3: Second Renaissance vision
  - [2m] [Question] So I invite you to reflect together for a moment on what are these new worldviews? What are these new kinds of views or values or new ways of seeing or being or knowing that you see arising or that you would like to see arise?
  - <https://otter.ai/s/5uLBfXb0TAG-Q-vaGajZpQ?snpt=true>
  - [13m] [Breakout] 3 people each of 4m
  - [15m] [Share back]
  - [5min] sacred cows
- [2min] What we will cover the next day
- [5min] Acknowledgment and Checkout

## Day 2

- [5m] **Welcome**
  - [3m] Meditation
  - [2m] Waiting for people and write in the chat how you are arriving
- [5min] **Coherence point - not as embodied**
- [35min] **Views and Values are hard to change**
  - [5min] Share about Rufus Mum

- [2min] Questions:
- [12min] Breakout room 3 people 4x3
- [15min] Back to main room feedback
- **[40m] How to cultivate seeds of 2nd Renaissance**
  - [5m] Pockets and “Density of Difference”: metaphor of Florence.  
Maybe also of Geneva or Jena in Enlightenment.
  - [5min ]Sylvie “Density of difference”: Specific example building on Florence example. Leads into living together or working together.
  - [2min] Questions:
  - [12min] Breakout room 3 people 4x3
  - [15min] Back to main room feedback
- **[18m] Link to personal project/ interest**
  - [2min] What projects are you doing or seeing in the space that you feel are fostering a Second Renaissance?
  - [6min] Breakout room 2 people 3x2
  - [10min] Back to main room feedback
- **[17m] Close out**
  - [8m] Feedback form - sharing link:  
<https://forms.gle/XyHozcSLojCLigdT9>
  - [3m] Acknowledgements of producers and contributors:
    - Team: Radha, Lauren, co-curators, advisors, people at Life Itself.
    - Our many, many spiritual ancestors too many to name in full and we just want to call out Ken Wilber and and the wider Integral community, Thich Nhat Hanh and the Engaged

buddhism tradition, Werner Erhard, Landmark and the vision of transformation in being

- Ways to connect going forward ...
  - We have our discord chat <https://secondrenaissance.net/chat> and a our newsletter <https://secondrenaissance.substack.com>
  - Our next connection call where we'll also have some announcement on new ways to participate will be next Tuesday - see <https://lu.ma/calendar/cal-zmrjcOlK832KWC4>
- [3m] Write in the Chat what touched your heart

## Discards

- Sacred cows
  - Framing of what is a sacred cows ( landmark superstition)
  - Share about Karen and animal?
- Where next
  - Vision of this course (or similar) as a way to share understanding, hope and next steps in a powerful way
    - How does an idea or vision spread ...
      - It takes more than a TED talk ...
    - Example of TheWeek <https://www.theweek.ooo>

Stuff to do 2024-08-01 at T1517

- ☐ Are we creating a facebook group ...
- ☐ Feedback form

- ☐ What's the intention
- ☐ What questions do we have
- ☐ What system do we use to capture it ... e.g. miro board, google form etc
- ☐ What do we advertise at end of course as next steps?
  - ☐ Do we have another series of this ... (if so, when and who leads it) so that we can advertise at end of course
  - ☐ Would like to learn more about how you could participate? If so, please fill in this form (or tick box in feedback) and we'll arrange a short 15m one on one call with you to tell you more and
- ☒ ~~Discuss idea/purpose of these courses ... and desire for more people to lead it~~ **✗ too early. Can reach out later when we have done more of these and have more people.**
- ☒ ~~Do we ask for people who want to be trained to lead these ...~~ **✗ Yes, one day and not now. See last item**

Brainstorm stuff we *could* include

# Script

## [15m] Introduction

### [3-5m] Grounding and waiting for joiners

[music?]

Welcome to Exploring a 2R together. Thank you for being here and before we get started we would like to invite everybody to make themselves comfortable and take 3min to do a short grounding or meditation as more people arrive.

[3min meditation]

## [2m] Welcome

Welcome everybody,

I'm Rufus Pollock is a co-founder of Life Itself and a researcher, technologist and serial social entrepreneur as well as long-term zen practitioner. He has been a research fellow at the University of Cambridge, founded an international digital non-profit Open Knowledge Foundation and a Shuttleworth and Ashoka fellow.

I'm Sylvie Barbier is a co-founder of Life Itself and international performance artist <https://sylviebarbier.com>. French and Taiwanese, she has had performances



and exhibitions on three continents. She has taught fashion and branding at Polimoda in Florence.

[ Go in BREAKOUT ROOM and pair share how you are arriving 2min each]

[SHARE] Take one or two share of **What had people be here ...**

So the intention of this course is for us to engage, share and discuss with some **co-sensemaking around the 2nd Renaissance and what it is about, and how it can be of service to or connecting with your own aspirations and interests.**

Where you get to engage in meaningful conversations, share experiences, and reflect on diverse perspectives to help us **deepen our insight, learn through interaction and reflect on emerging world view**

*“This afternoon the framing that I had is to share about the second renaissance, but more maybe engage and discuss with participatory exercise around this idea of the second renaissance. More importantly, what's the second renaissance about and how it can be of service to or connecting with your own aspirations and interests. And i know maybe it's a slightly novel term for some people, maybe isn't for others.”*

Out of that we hope to fostering a **sense of community and connection** where we can also start diving into **Practical Strategies:** Develop practical ideas and

strategies for personal and societal transformation, and learn to integrate interconnectedness, wisdom, and inner growth into daily life. Because we are a group here who is committed to allow our insight to translate into concrete practical actions into the world.

have you ever tried to talk about these kinds of ideas? Maybe your parents or your sister or your brother or your best friend from school or from University, who isn't yet as interested in these topics. And just start maybe reflecting like, what how did that go? What did you try and tell them about? Did they? Did they leap up from their seat next to you and say, I have seen it.

## Welcome Original version

Maybe some of you we've met before, perhaps even several times, maybe some of you we've never met. So just very briefly, we are co-founders of life itself, which helped the second renaissance project come into existence. And there are various other initiatives that life itself engaged in towards a radically wiser, weller world and a second renaissance.

I just want to say thank you so much for coming this afternoon. I know that it's morning for some, evening for others. You could be resting, or going out or whatever you could be getting up to.

Just really gratitude for your being here and your presence.

I'm really moved that you have come to be here tonight with us and explore this topic. So thank you for joining us.

Course is a WIP 🚧

This afternoon the framing that we want to share about is the second renaissance. And we want to emphasize it is more about engaging and discussing in a participatory way around this idea of the second renaissance.

Now maybe it's a slightly novel term for some people, maybe isn't for others. Most important is what the second renaissance is about and how it can be of service to or connecting with your own aspirations and interests.

*So I don't know if there's anything Shiwei you want to say in terms of welcome before we get started -- we're going to join the present together.*

And we're kind of going to improvise a bit -- we have obviously thought it out but we're still in investigation still of how we share the work in a useful way. And whilst we've planned this session out, we keep experimenting and learning about what works and what doesn't work.

So as you all know, and I'm sure you were told in advance I'm gonna give you a one hour lecture with q&a afterwards. And there'll be a take home test 😊

So it turns the things we've learned that work and don't work.

## Who's heard of a second renaissance?

First of all, just out of interest, before you came across this project, had anyone ever heard the term second renaissance?

## 2R connection with what you already know

So first there's a bit of framing around this topic of a second renaissance. So, if you've heard terms like permaculture, or you've heard about inner development, or you're interested in social change, or the climate crisis, then this is relevant. And, even more specifically, if you've heard terms like meta crisis, or polycrisis, or the great turning from Joanna Macy, or ecological societies, or integral, or teal, which comes out of this color spectrum for social or cultural evolution in spiral dynamics (sometimes they call it differently, strictly in original spiral dynamics, it wasn't called teal it was a different color, yellow I think).

If you've heard those kinds of things, they are basically, to some extent, synonyms for what we're going to talk about today. So you're already familiar with what I'm talking about. And probably because of the kind of people you are the or even here, and choosing to be Bergerac for this kind of incredible residency, like a lot of this stuff won't be very new in a way, the basic ideas at least.

## The two motivation for the 2R term and 2R project

And so I want to say very briefly beginning a bit the motivation we have behind the second renaissance project, and even using the second renaissance term.

### Accessibility: sharing these ideas with others

And just start reflecting how did that go? What did you try and tell them about? Did they leap up from their seat next to you and say: "I have seen it!" (As you were as delighted as the Buddha exclaiming: Kondanna understands, Kondanna understands at Deer Park, in his first dharma talk). Or was there some degree of [a response] something like: "Hmmm, sounds interesting", and the conversation moved on? Or whatever your experience and more interestingly you could also reflect as you have maybe done that how did you do this? Did you point to YouTube videos? Did you send them books? What kind of things did you reference?

And I would say, for our experience, and maybe Sylvie in a moment could say more, is that I personally have struggled to often explain or share very powerfully what this space is. The irony is that even even often with people who are sort of around in it and talking about it in the last year's, often in a conversation I have to use about eight different synonyms before I land on one that they go "Oh yeah, integral" or for some people will be "the great turning" or, you have to work your way to find the right language key and "ah we're now playing in the same musical key together". And this is even when you're kind of in the same area. So that's one aspect.

The other is just what we also noticed, is even in people coming to this hub, which is now hundreds of people now who have come to the hub here over the last three or four years. And we noticed that obviously they're all drawn by some interest in these topics. But there's a very varying degree of background, alignment on terms. So that's one point: this point of accessibility. How easy is it for us to convey these kinds of ideas in a powerful way to others?

**Coherence and alignment: even within this space are we able to communicate powerfully, are we able to cohere**

The second one that I want to point to is, I was trying to think of a good metaphor, I don't know if you know, people, you know, if you ever pick up a twig, people know what I mean, in English, I don't know, whatever in English, but you know what I mean by a twig, you try to break it a twig, it's very easy. But if you take a set of twigs together, you get a whole bundle of twigs, it's maybe impossible to break. Or the other example is a laser. Light on its own, a single photon is not that powerful. But when you have a load of light which is somehow coherent, that is unified in some way, you get a laser. And the laser can burn through walls, or illuminate over great distances, etc.

So one of the things that we've noticed is that there is this question of coherence within this emerging space. and coherence does not mean everyone necessarily agreeing. In fact, it might even mean people who don't agree, but they're clear that they have different approaches or different ideas about the future we're

going to in useful ways. But what isn't useful is when you think that you think you don't agree when in fact you do as a result of you're using different terms, or you're not clear. Or that you think you agree, but it turns out you don't. You could spend two years on a project with someone then realize at the end are, we actually have quite different intentions. (And btw having different intentions in itself isn't a bad thing. More that you could have worked much more effectively, when you understood your different goals, you could have supported each other. But if you think what you're doing is the same thing. And it isn't, that can be quite unproductive).

So the second thing is even within this space, quote, unquote (whatever that space is -- and that's a debatable matter of what it is), we've noticed often this lack of shared understanding, or there's quite an effort to get to kind of even shared understanding, shared vibration, you might say. And we think [having more shared understanding] that's important in the medium term, because coherence is important to be able to advance in some ways.

*I know we shouldn't be attached to going anywhere -- and we aren't obviously [laughter]. I'm laughing because one of my big struggles is aimlessness in life.*

And still, even allowing for that, greater coherence could be an an aspiration.

## Comment on embodied vs talking. Strategy and vibes [9:51]

[Finally, there's one last thing in this introduction section that I want to emphasize which is that]

And i want emphasize that even though necessarily in talking today, we're not doing like a ritual, we're not doing something as embodied, we're a bit mindy in this session today, that in terms of coherence there are two parts often that most involved crudely.

One is what we could call vision or strategy -- "where are we going?". And the other is kind of vibes: do we get on? Do we resonate? Do we have an energetic connection? And often the second is more important than the first even though I think both are useful.

And I emphasize that today I'm neglecting a little bit the embodied aspect of our connection, even with the ideas, necessarily in this session [because of its nature and structure]. And that embodied aspect is really important.



# Awareness

## Sylvie Share

Well I'd like to share very briefly how the name second renaissance arose and why we use that term on a personal level.

### Untitled dystopia conference of vision of the future

So probably about three and a half years ago, when my son Ateyan was 1 years old. And we were participating in a conference to reinvent the future. And what they ended up describing this "new future" was an image of a human having sonar radar, bat-like laser thing with implants and at the closing ceremony I was asked to read out a poem that was generated from AI. And for me, that was such a violence, because, for me, they described a dystopia, that wasn't a world that I wanted to leave to my child, it wasn't in a world where **"I" the human being** breathed life into something dead like the AI.

### Is there a future art exhibition

And before that there was the pondering around the climate crisis. And I did a performance pregnant with Ateyan with women who went on birth strikes, because they felt that the conditions weren't stable enough in the world to bring children into the world. And it really hit me that wars were coming. And it really hit me very profoundly that I wasn't leaving a better world to my child. The way

my father was like "Oh, my generation did better than my grandfather's generation", and etc, and etc. I was realizing that I'm in a position where I don't know that I will be able to give a better world to to my child.

## Mourning modernity

And what does that mean to be alive in that situation, and to continue to choose to bring life in that situation. And the first thing when I saw that I had a period of depression, and it was really in a way mourning, mourning for the dream that I inherited from my parents and my father, and not just my father, but all my ancestors. And I really had to go into mourning. And I felt like the need to kind of have a funeral for modernity, a funeral for that utopian technocratic solution of the world where capitalism would make everything better and that thanks to medicine there will no longer be unnecessary death and no more hunger. And I had to mourn for that. And I did several performances and rituals out of that.

## Looking into the past to navigate the future

And in the midst of that I looked, in the past, because maybe the answer is already here. Maybe there's nothing unique to what we're going through, maybe there's already answers if I look in the past, and it really hit me that actually, right before the Renaissance happened, there was the black death, and one in 1/3 people died in Florence. And it was a very tumultuous point in history. And I was like: "oh, maybe what I'm experiencing is another great cycle". And I'm in this kind of moment of a great cycle. And I felt that instead of inventing a new term, there was a big solace to connect what I'm living to what other human beings

have lived before me. It gave me a sense of continuation but also of integrating and transcending and going beyond -- how am I showing up as an ancestor today?

## Link to Varela

I'm the ancestor of my children, and what are the seeds I want to plant? Plant for my child to also himself be an ancestor. What if I can look at not just my history of one human being but in the sense of lineage, what does that bring? And after I found out that Francisco Varela actually used that term in the sense of maybe the first Renaissance was the West rediscovering classical tradition and also conquering the East and other land. That may be the second renaissance as he put it. The West is rediscovering or discovering ancient wisdom traditions, especially Eastern traditions, and then integrating that. There was a lot of resonance for me personally, because I'm French Taiwanese. That kind of West meets East and East meets West.

## Warmth to the name

So I just wanted to kind of also create a bit of a more personal context of why that term, for me personally, resonated compared to metamodern, liminal web or great transitions, these terms felt a bit cold. Whereas in the second renaissance there was a history. I grew up watching all those paintings of Botticelli and others and I was like I want to make art of the second renaissance. I don't know what it looks like but I want to touch, move and inspire people to their heart, to their bones because I think that's absolutely essential if we want to breathe soul into this, not just to have abstract ideas but to make them become alive.

## Breakout room questions:

- When and how did you notice that dying and decaying in your life
- When did you notice the decay in your life? Pair share 3-4min each (

Share back to the room

## Source of illness (bridge)

*Now what's interesting is the number of us who feel that something really isn't working is growing, and growing dramatically. And it's quite recent we think: really in the last five or 10 years in particular that the number of people who feel that something's really not working has jumped. Perhaps it's since Trump 😊, which is not quite a decade ago. And there's definitely a sea change from 20 years ago. And you see it everywhere e.g. take tech. Google's was once the number one brand in the world in 2010 2011 2012. Now, big tech are the bad guys and evil. And you can see it across that to all kinds of other areas.*

So there are more and more people who see there is an illness.

So what we want to come to the second question: what is the source of the "illness" ...

*Aside: First, I do want to also check who's read the whitepaper. You're welcome to read this, and you may or may not have read it, but if you want more depth on some of this that's what you want to look at.*

What's the source of this illness?

We can now see their signs of illness, you know, there's something going on. The patient has got lots of migraines, very bad headaches. Now, we could just give them aspirin. We've got this climate crisis, maybe we just need to get more efficient solar, if we only sort out the solar efficiency, electrify the grid, get some batteries, we're going to be done. Maybe it's a bit late, maybe we do some carbon capture. We can hand out them aspirin metaphorically, right? Or it might be that actually you've got brain cancer. And obviously in that case, giving your aspirin might actually end up killing you. Because you're not treating the disease.

So this key point that obviously diagnosis and correct diagnosis is really important. And that correct diagnosis isn't that easy, as we know. There are many TV programs built out of this. There are many of us here who are fans of hospital dramas. Sylvie is Grey's Anatomy fan. Or maybe you like House or whatever it is. And so you know that accurate diagnosis isn't easy. It's one of the things that's fascinating about medicine, that it takes real effort.

So it's crucial to ask ourselves what is actually at the source of this decay or breakdown.

So there is this second question: what is the source? Now, I think it's quite a sympathetic audience so I'm not going to go into too much detail. because we've got a lot to cover.

All I'm just going to suggest to you that the **roots of this illness lie in the roots of our civilization. It's not just that we haven't got the right kind of technology, or even that we haven't got the right kind of laws or institutions, although those are also important, but that it is something in the very way that we see the world that we see ourselves that needs to evolve.**

I'll illustrate with just one example. I was once a kind of "Young Communist" when I was very young. Now people think communism and capitalism are really different. But they are both children of modernity. And if you look at communism and capitalism carefully they've both managed to trash the planet pretty equally at certain points.

To be clear here my point isn't that capitalism and communism are the same or something. I have a lot of sympathy for critiques of capitalism – and of communism.

My point is, there seems to be something that's deeper even than this system or that system. Maybe something in the very way we see the world, like, for example, "nature is there to be managed or exploited or used", that "nature's over there, and we're here" or whatever way you can see it. There's a worldview aspect.

And again, many people have been sharing this maybe for decades, sometimes centuries. And I can just call out that Joanna Macy is a really prominent example of interweaving the ecological and ontological deep point about this.

Now for now I'm going to jump ahead and let's say accept that here for now and not go further into it.

## Renaissance

What do we think are parts of this new cultural paradigm or worldview that we could imagine emerging?

## Fish in water

And, first I want to emphasize in particular that we are "fish in water". We live in this water of our worldviews. The way we see the world is just given to us. And even times when we intellectually see like: "Oh, yes, I realized I'm not totally separate from everything else". I, Rufus, still operate a lot like that, like I keep talking about myself as "I" and I have arguments with Sylvie, who isn't me, and I'm right and she's obviously mistaken right 😏?

And to actually realize this truth of interbeing or interconnectedness in a real, profound way is really hard. At least for myself growing up individualistic, world.

And what I'm going to do in a moment is invite you to take a moment and reflect with what do you see are these new views and values and ways of seeing the world that you see emerging or would be arising in the Second Renaissance?

Now, just before I do that. One of the reasons of historical analogies are so helpful. I know everyone here is probably not a scholar of the Renaissance, and neither was it for a lot. Still, I'm not but I'm interested in is, you know, what is to go back to last one. And if you like your gebser -- he's an inspiration again here, he had this really great point of perspective. Before renaissance, if you look at religious painting in Western Europe it's very flat. It's iconography largely. You will see the baby Jesus with a halo. Very flat, there's no perspective. And famously in renaissance we get perspective. And then about a century ago, or just over, we get this next breakthrough in worldview in terms our way of seeing. We have Picasso and Cubism. And what happens in cubism crudely is you get two perspectives or more. You see a woman drawn from two perspectives drawn on the same canvas multi perspective.

So going back to the last renaissance and asking what kind of new worldviews emerged is one fruitful way to investigate this?



And the really bonus question is what are the things that we think are a bit sacred. It's easy to look in some ways that modernity: "look at the way they treat nature", for example. But what about things like equality? One of the great sacred cows of modernity and even post-modernity you might say.

## Qu: What worldview(s) do you see emerging in the 2nd Renaissance?

*"So I invite you just to reflect together for a moment on what these new worldviews are? What are these new kinds of views or values or new ways of seeing or being or knowing that you can see arising or that you would like to see arise?"*

[Sharing]

Recap / conclusion: we could spend a lot of time on this. Christopher Alexander.

Really working out this worldview is a rich project. Concrete example of built environment ... and christopher alexander

## Twigs and coherence

The second one that I want to point to is about coherence and alignment. A good metaphor here is twigs (and an ancient one). If you ever pick up a twig, and I people know what I mean by twig, and you try to break it a twig, it's very easy.

But if you take a set of twigs together, if you get a whole bundle of twigs, it's maybe impossible to break. Or another example is a laser. Light on its own, a single photon is not that powerful. But when you have a load of light which is somehow coherent, that is unified in some way, you get a laser. And the laser can burn through walls, or illuminate over great distances, etc.

So one of the things that we've noticed is that there is this question of coherence within this emerging space. and coherence does not mean everyone necessarily agreeing. In fact, it might even mean people who don't agree, but they're clear that they have different approaches or different ideas about the future we're going to in useful ways. But what isn't useful is when you think that you think you don't agree when in fact you do as a result of you're using different terms, or you're not clear. Or that you think you agree, but it turns out you don't.

~~You could spend two years on a project with someone then realize at the end that you actually have quite different intentions. (And btw having different intentions in itself isn't a bad thing. More that you could have worked much more effectively, when you understood your different goals, you could have supported each other. But if you think what you're doing is the same thing. And it isn't, that can be quite unproductive).~~

So the second thing is even within this space, quote, unquote (whatever that space is -- and that's a debatable matter of what it is), we've noticed often this lack of shared understanding, or there's quite an effort to get to kind of even

shared understanding, shared vibration, you might say. And we think [having more shared understanding] that's important in the medium term, because coherence is important to be able to advance in some ways. I know we shouldn't be attached to going anywhere -- and we aren't obviously [laughter]. I'm laughing because I my big struggle is aimlessness in life. But allowing for that, greater coherence could be an could be an aspiration.

And I want to acknowledge that by necessity of being on zoom etc we're in a more talking structure, a bit more mindy in these sessions, we're not doing like a ritual, we're not doing something as embodied. And that in terms of coherence there are roughly two parts often that are involved. One is what we could call vision or strategy -- "where are we going?". And the other is kind of vibes: do we get on? Do we resonate? Do we have an energetic connection? And often the second is more important than the first. And I think both are useful. And I emphasize that today I'm neglecting a little bit the embodied aspect of our connection, even with the ideas, necessarily in this session [because of its nature and structure]. And that embodied aspect is really important.

## Views are hard to change ...

I want to start today with a little reflection on the pace and challenge it takes for worldviews to change and

So the idea of human equality starts to be there in humanism and kind of earlier, but obviously, you know, actually gets to kind of state that French Revolution, at

least, very all citizens can vote male citizens and the fruit of the American Revolution, all men can vote that's really quite radical white, but white men, but women and you know, other groups not being able to vote takes a while, but the logic is there, but it can take a long period to unfold. I think one that we can see in maybe a few centuries, the idea that we mass farm animals to eat would seem really weird. That's maybe one, it's not so much a Sacred Cow in this group maybe.

I'll share one story about that which is fascinating. My mother is a huge influence on me. My mother was an organic farmer, she became a farmer, which was rare as a woman in England at that time. And my mother cares more about animals than almost anyone I know. I've seen my mother nurse animals back to health. And yet, she also sends them on a relatively mass scale to the slaughterhouse when they're quite young. And this is for me an amazing example of the way that people can live with contradictions and tensions in their worldview. My mother is in this transition really, I think she's sort of what i would call beyond modernity, but caught in a logic. She always says to me but I want to have animals, the only way I can have a farm is if I produce them, basically, for slaughter. And yet my mother can't be there when they load the animals on the truck to go to the slaughterhouse. She finds it incredibly difficult. Can you imagine this kind of tension: this is someone who cares so much animals, and yet is enmeshed in this kind of system of mass killing, basically. Although my mother will spend eight weeks nursing a calf back to health to send it off in six months to die. I was always shocked as a child, I just couldn't get the contrast.

So I say that because views are so difficult to see, but also to have them shift. They shift over generations.

That's why we must also be careful. We can be so pessimistic. Because things shift far too slowly, unfortunately, in our accelerated world. Views only shift on the timescale of generations. Unfortunately, people don't change their mind that much in their lifetime, often. But their children seem to change their mind quite a lot. And the problem at the moment, partly is that our technology and other things are accelerated and change far quicker than that. They're on a cycle of decades or years versus 50 or 100 years scale on which we can even hope to evolve culture That's why we need conscious cultural evolution.

Worldviews are hard to change ...

[Rufus' mother the farmer]. Cognitive dissonance.

Question: where they have experienced views are hard to change ...

Where in your life either for yourself 😊 or with others (easier) have you seen that views and values are hard to shift?

# Seeds - How does a second renaissance come about

Now, the question I want to bring people to is the how: How does a second renaissance come about. And for reasons that will become apparent, I'm going to call this the “seeds” part – “seeds of a second renaissance”.

Now, I want to come though, to the question of in the garden metaphor, we've got the seeds of the second renaissance. How does it arise?

## Pockets / Seeds and Florence

- Let's go back to first renaissance analogy
- Florence ..

## Sylvie greenhouses and conscious villages

It goes into the sense that you there's maybe these pockets or center, or as we'll call them greenhouses. Places that are favorable, or more favorable to these types of ideas and thinking and for them to cluster together. And where there's a concentration or density of people.

Density is important because it will be very difficult if you're one person who starts to feel like things are not right and wants to do things differently, but you're completely outnumbered, if you're really in minority, and most of your network are in the "same old same old".

Being in minority is often quite stressful, I believe there's studies that shows that when you're a minority your stress levels are higher. So it's not very psycho-dynamically sustainable to stay as a minority. And so you want to find the others and you want to cluster with the other ones like key so that you can sustain yourself psycho-emotionally. And also economically, because then you support each other, you might loan money to one another, you might do things together.

And so Florence was a greenhouse of modernity -- of course they didn't know that was modernity, they probably didn't have the word renaissance. It was just like a place that happened to be far more favorable to those type of ideas.

And we see that connecting back to the metaphor of the twigs. If we're kind of one twig alone, you will have a tendency to maybe break more easily. There's a real power to coming together. And [we also need to] recognize that with the values of individuality and that sense of "I gotta make it", "I gotta be someone" it's really hard to come together because there's so much of like "I want to do my thing" and "I want to be someone" that therefore doing things with others, "going as a river" is against the cultural DNA in which you grew up.

And this is also a huge resonance with the idea of like, "Oh, I'm a little tweak, but one day, I'll grow into a big oak", but maybe we should try to look into being a bamboo forest. The bamboo they [aren't so big but they] move together. But recognizing that we grew up in this mindset of "I'll be an oak and I'll be the such a big oak everybody's gonna see me". And ... it's like, well, yeah, but, you know, a lot of them don't survive, actually. And so, there is a benefit of coming together into greenhouses. so that we can create almost like a mini-ecosystem. For example, the gardens we have outside have those walls, and it has a mini ecosystem, a micro-climate (we have a banana tree in the back that doesn't grow anywhere else).

And it doesn't mean "oh, we all have to be bamboos", but it's a kind of coming together to support one another, to nourish one another, so that we're stronger together, haha. But it's a deep thing. And what I mean is a deep thing, especially with our tendency to kind of wanting to go on on our own path. And this recognizing the difficulty to switch to that mode, from one modality to a different modality, which would probably honor the beauty of the individual self expression, while also being able to operate within a collective. And I think that's the delicacy, [the subtle line to walk] because the other one [the classic option] is you merge into the collective, back to the tribe, but there's very little space for the individual to explore and express.



This is a dance. I don't think anyone yet knows how exactly we achieve this. We're all experimenting.

Well, one way is that people can start working more collectively on certain specific project or colocate. Maybe not for the whole time, but for periods of time, I know some of you came from Fey which means you spend quite a bit of time together in a specific place that helps you nourish a sense of an alternative way of living. Or simply help you see that it's possible. So it doesn't mean the full kibbutzim model - or Kibbudhist model.

And there's many places who want to go as hard core, but I think the really nourishing the coming together and gradually upping that frequency is and will be a key component for what we want to see. And especially what we want to cultivate while the winter comes -- because probably if you're here, you have a sense that winter is coming. And you want to prepare -- not [in that classic prepper way] like "oh store a lot of rice and oil etc and get guns -- but more like what you want to cultivate as way of being, who do you want to be with when shit hits the fan? Sorry for my English. Who do you want to be with when things get tough? I think that's a very profound and important questions to hold.

## Question: what are seeds and greenhouses?

- Question 1: what seeds do you see for a second renaissance?

- Sylvie gave this specific example of maybe living community, but it can be much broader.
- So ask yourselves: what kind of initiatives, what kind of projects? What kinds of cultural activism? What businesses, art, might you create?
- We'd like you to brainstorm about what seeds do you see happening. And particularly what would you be interested in here? Maybe things you're already doing -- feel free to share those.
- Question 2: what do you need to cultivate those seeds? What greenhouses do we need?
  - “Greenhouses”: And also what do you need to cultivate them? What are the ways that support the cultivating of the seeds? What do they need to be nourished? Maybe it's like I do need to be living close to others to support my energies or this project, for example. In general, what are their what are the kinds of things that would cultivate the seeds of the second renaissance.
- So question part one:
  - what seeds would you like to see manifest
  - and then maybe what would support their cultivation or their nurturing

# Completion

Facebook group?

## Questionnaire

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1IilEbQ20Uz67h7l2BIsttHfOYNZJumiGpYYpo7o8QvE/edit>

- Name, email
- Overall rating. 1-10 on likert. From terrible to amazing.
- If you liked the course, could you write a brief testimony that we could use on the course website
- Suggestions for improvements or additions

Notes

What was best thing

What could we improve?

# Parking lot

- Mention at end of course:
- Want to train people to lead it ...
- Want to create a simple 1-2h format for you to share with people in your community. "2nd renaissance party/intro evenings" 😊
- Perspective stuff

# Cutting room floor

## ✗ Sacred Cows e.g. equality

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**Aug '25 xtra sessions**

## Session 1 - 5th August

- AI and x-risk
- 🍓🍏 Birth rate ... (declining)
  - Pronatalism.
  - Robin Hanson
- 🍌 Meaning crisis
- 🍌🍏 Polarization
- 🍏 (Rising?) Inequality
- Medical System. Cost is too high. Lack of coverage.
  - Spend most per capita in world, yet poor outcomes.
- 💡 Gender identity – what does it mean. Conflict over this in society.
- 🍏🍏💡 Commodification of everything. Rental economy. Indentured servitude
  - Inequality / poverty / hollowing of the middle class

## Session 2

- 🍏 Breakdown in social processes: unequal treatment / corruption  
specifically someone in Nigeria who was pardoned whilst other person wasn't
- Information bubbles / Political polarization
  - People on the internet give no good faith discussion to out group
- Loss of traditional ways of passing down knowledge (e.g. parent to child).



- E.g. how to raise children rather than passed down between us  
people read books

## Session 3

- Labor market disruption from technology
  - I had a friend of a friend building on LLMs. AI companies had already incorporated that.
  - Hard to even make plans.
  - Will my job exist in 5y?
  - => leading to sense of meaningless, anxiety ...
- Disconnection crisis. Burnout. Depressions. Sense of loneliness. Addiction.
- Depression, anxiety, despair
  - Increased cancer, tiredness.
  - Physical and psychological health

- Post-truth / post-trust world. “Epistemological breakdown”. Sensemaking crisis.
  - Factionalization of our civilization
  - Polarization (beliefs of polarized tribe trump what is true)
  - Symptoms
    - Anger
    - Difficult to have critical conversations w/o getting super triggered
      - People get triggered v quickly ...
    - Breakdown of global institutions and relationships and agreements ...
- Surveillance state: militarization,
  - If you say something bad about trump on social media ... thugs will come to your door
  - Real loss of freedom and agency ...
-

