

Integral political practice: Enduring Ted Cruz. Plus, Mormon faith crisis

Jeff: Hello everybody. Jeff Salzman here and welcome to The Daily Evolver Live. It's Tuesday night, February 9th, and I'm coming to you from beautiful Boulder, Colorado and I am joined as always by our Daily Evolver producer Brett Andrew Walker. Hey Brett, want to say hi to the folks?

Brett: Hey everybody.

Jeff: All systems go?

Brett: All systems go. Good to be here.

Jeff: Cool. Also want to give a shout out to Corey deVos who is over at Integral Life where he is manning Integral Radio which is our live outlet.

We have a lot to get to tonight. I'll start with a little politics, of course. It's the evening of the New Hampshire primary election, which is the first real primary of the presidential election here in the states, and so it's a big day. The results are just coming in as we're talking. I think the last time I checked, it was about 10 minutes ago, there were 30% of the results in and Bernie Sanders is beating Hillary Clinton, which is expected, and Donald Trump is winning on the Republican side, with second currently John Kasich and after that, Ted Cruz.

We'll talk more about that next week or when we actually know what happened, but tonight, I want to talk about politics a little more generally in a way, About how it is really potent means of integral practice. There's a reason that politics and religion are considered to be the 2 impolite topics of conversation; it's because they express very deep patterns of our thinking, our feeling, what we're identified with. If you start screwing with my spiritual beliefs and my politics, you're screwing with me and my whole sense of identity. So I want to talk a little bit about that ... and then I want to go from the political to the religious and welcome a very special live guest tonight, Thomas McConkie who is one of my favorite young integral thinkers. He's here to talk tonight about the Mormon faith crisis, which he just wrote a book about.

And then at the end of the podcast, we will hear from listeners, so that's the plan.

Let's see. There are a couple of ways that you can get in touch with me. I always love hearing from you. One is go to our website, dailyevolver.com, and click on the orange button which is right at the top of the home page. It's the Speakpipe button and you can leave me a voicemail, you can also email me at jeff@dailyevolver.com, and what's the other way, Brett? There's something they can do in their phone?

Brett: If you don't want to use the Speakpipe button, you can actually record a message using the voice recorder on your phone and then email it to Jeff@dailyevolver.com. The Speakpipe button is great, though. It lets you record something and then you can listen to it. If you don't like it, you can re-record it. It's great. It's super easy.

Jeff: All right. Before we get into all of this, I want to encourage you, as I always do, particularly if you're not really fluent in integral theory to check out a couple of charts that we've prepared for you that can really help you follow along what we're talking about. You can find them at my home website, dailyevolver.com where you can just scroll down the home page a bit and you'll see a section called "About integral theory." Click on that and right at the top, you'll see 2 charts. One is the levels of development, the other is the quadrants of reality. These are 2 of the 5 integral maps that are part of Ken Wilber's AQAL model and they're all in there, but these are the 2 most important so we put them at the top.

Integral political practice #1: Making subject into object

Politics so much a part of our deep structure of identity that it's a really juicy means of integral practice. Of course integral practice can be done with anything. Basically, we're practicing being integral, that is we can

do that regarding parenting or intimacy, spirituality, how we do our work, how we do our hobbies, whatever.

One of the ways that we practice integrally is to do something that we call "turning subject into object." I know that sounds terribly abstract but it's really quite simple. With politics, for instance, I notice that I, Jeff, have my opinions. I can also *watch* myself have my opinions.

I can have my attractions and my aversions to different political ideas. And I can watch myself have attractions and aversions to different political ideas. Like guns, for instance. I just have a natural aversion to guns, and I was born in Gun Country, but there you have it. Sexual liberation, I was for that, while many people I grew up with are not. I can watch these things arise in my psyche. I can watch my tribal nature arise in defense of my political team.

This is the process of turning subject into object. It is to take what I thought was me, Jeff, my political identity, which I would argue for and fight for and believe in, and see it as something that I can actually witness as it arises in its component parts completely under its own power, without any effort on my part, and it's really interesting to do that.

One of my favorite practices if you will is what I call "the remote control test," and that is which candidate, when he or she appears on the television screen, makes me want to leap for the remote control to mute them or turn them off because I literally can't stand to hear their voices. You know that kind of aversion, that kind of hatred? I remember after college, when I had roommates and I just got to hate them so much that I hated to watch them eat or brush their teeth. Everything about them became repulsive.

So how is it that that happens with a political candidate? There are a couple of candidates in this category for me, but the reigning king for me is Ted Cruz, who I just don't experience as being sincere. For me, he's a textbook sociopath. We have the relentless ambition that we've seen since high school with him. We see this wake of political enemies that he leaves behind, and the dearth of friends and supporters, especially among the people who actually work with him and know him well.

And then there's this special flavor in Ted Cruz of fake sincerity. The conservative columnist, George Will, used the word "oleaginous" to describe him. "Oleaginous" is oily, but oily in an artificial way even. It's "oleo." It's what margarine used to be made of.

I see that with this dirty trick he pulled on the day of the Iowa caucuses where he mailed a "Voter violation" mailing, which looks official, looks like it's from the state of Iowa and it proceeds to lay out the number of times that you and your neighbors have voted in the last elections. The implication is that the government's watching you and your neighbors so you've got to go vote.

He got a smack-down from the Secretary of State in Iowa for false representation of an official act and it just struck a lot of people as very smarmy to do that, and then of course the night of the primaries where he tweeted to all of his followers and his field operation that Ben Carson who is his number one challenger for the evangelical vote, that Ben Carson was leaving the election, and that of course encouraged people to go vote for Ted Cruz because Ben Carson was no longer in the running, Then he gives this slimy apology the next day, and then when he wins, he praises God.

So far, as I notice this, I'm noticing that I'm a fairly typical liberal. I don't think I have one friend, at least not in Boulder, who would disagree with anything that I just said about Ted Cruz or the conclusions that I come to. I bet that most of the people listening to this podcast would agree.

But we just don't want to stop there. This is where we begin the integral practice where we turn subject into object, so again, the integral practice is to watch this whole constellation, this whole system of "Jeff contemplating Ted Cruz" arise under its own power. So I sit and I watch the thoughts arise and they coalesce into an argument that adds up to *the case against Ted Cruz*.

I see his face in my mind's eye or I see his face on television and I notice my body sensations. I notice a revulsion in my belly -- the same kind of revulsion I would have if I had just eaten a whole tub of margarine. He really is oleaginous. It's such a great word for him. I'm slightly nauseous and my bowels are a little loose,

I see in my mind's eye the pictures that arise, I hear the narration of my inner voice, I feel my body sensations ... and I knit those all together and I end up with "my opinion." And that opinion is not only my opinion, it's a big part of me, it's who I am.

And so with this practice, all that "I", all that first person *subject*, becomes "it" or a third person *object*. And they steadily arise ... these thoughts, these body sensations, these images ... they arise, they torture me, and they pass away. That's paraphrasing the Buddha's path, but it's true. With this practice, I can see them instead of *be* them, and that just loosens the whole thing up. It aerates the situation. It allows me to expand into a greater space where I can see what I thought was my "self" as a series of objects in consciousness.

We say that "the subject of one level of development becomes the object of the subject of the next level of development." That's a very important principle. We watch ourselves and then we realize that, "Wait a second. If I can see what I thought was me as thoughts and feelings and images arising, then who is this new me that is seeing that?" That's a bigger me, a me with a bigger consciousness.

Integral political practice #2: Polarity thinking

Another integral political practice that I can do is the practice of polarity thinking. We'll still work with Ted Cruz here. With this practice I want to, as a thought experiment, take on the perspective that Ted Cruz is not a complete lying, sleazy, slimy, oleaginous hypocrite ... that he is actually a sincere person who deeply believes in his positions.

Now that's a big hurdle for me and probably a lot of people, because it doesn't naturally flow that somebody who has been through the Ivy League, as he has, worked very successfully in Washington DC, his wife works for Goldman Sachs, they live in a high rise in Houston, Texas ... that someone with that background can also have these deep evangelical beliefs.

But integral theory shows that this is absolutely possible. One of Ken's most powerful realizations, with his AQAL model is that people evolve not as one blob but we evolve in various lines of development. So people can be at a high level in terms of human relations or in terms of cognition or mathematics or how the world works and all of that good stuff but still be, in terms of their spiritual line of development, or the emotional line or interpersonal line, still be down in the traditional stage or even earlier. So that helps me to maybe loosen up a little bit and allow Ted Cruz to maybe be a sincere person.

I think of his family history and karma—he was born of a Cuban expatriate couple, exiled from Cuba. His father left his mother when Ted was a baby; he was a drunk and he abandoned the family. And then he found the Lord. He got religion and he came back and took care of the family and actually became a pastor and a good dad and everything turned out well. This is a classic red to amber move. The man who's drunk who's unable to keep his commitments, unable to keep a job, to delay gratification, and basically just unable to be responsible ... he gets psychically organized disciplined by getting religion. So this is deeply installed in Ted Cruz. It's part of the deep history and identity of the family, and yet Ted Cruz is this young, bright kid who's naturally smart and high achieving and actually living in a modern world despite his very traditional, red-amber family. So maybe he's as interested in being successful as he is in being faithful. Maybe even more so, and so looking at his karma as best as I can, that helps me loosen up a little bit.

Integral practice #4: Take typology into account

As another practice, I may I realized that his problems with people, the fact that nobody likes him -- it's not easy to go through life with nobody liking you, and it appears to be a long standing pattern with this poor guy -- is that maybe he's some version of being what we loosely call these days as being "on the spectrum." The autism, the Asperger, the missing a piece of the antenna where you can relate to other people. Or maybe he's actually, worse case scenario, he's a sociopath.

We often use that term as a pejorative, and it is because you don't want to hang around sociopaths any more than you have to, but it is actually a technical description of somebody who is unable to see other people as subjects; they see people as objects. So they live in a world of *I-It* relationships rather than *I-Thou* relationships. Everybody is a piece on their chessboard. They can be very successful; there was a study in Forbes magazine that showed that CEOs exhibit characteristics of sociopathy at four times the

rate of the population as a whole. So there's a certain sympathy that arises and you realize these people are actually doing the best they can.

Finally, I look to where can I find common cause, with Ted Cruz. Where does the Venn diagram between me and Ted Cruz overlap? He appears to be very sincere in his fundamental beliefs that there is, as he puts in his term, a Washington cartel that is so entrenched and so corrupt that it can only be broken up by sheer force. That you can't work within the system, the system itself has to change.

I'm sympathetic with that actually. If you look at the two apparent winners of the New Hampshire primary tonight -- Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump -- they're both also running on a position where they want to come in not to evolve the system but to revolutionize it. Not evolutionary but revolutionary.

I'm sympathetic with that and there are a lot of people in this country who are sympathetic with that, a growing number, particularly in states like New Hampshire which is not unlike where I grew up, in Western Pennsylvania. I think of what's going on in my hometown since I left in 1976 versus now, so whatever that is, 40 years. The place is falling apart in many ways. When I was a kid, my dad and my uncles (it was a traditional place, men worked and women didn't generally), with 1 job and no college education ... my dad didn't have a college education, he worked at the power plant, my uncles worked at the steel mills or they drove truck ... but they could all support a family with kids and vacations and cars and the whole bit, and everybody was in reasonably good shape.

These working class people, they had a sense, and that's just the exteriors. The interiors, they have a sense of pride and they have a sense of accomplishment and meaning and identity, and their work is really, really important, so that's generation 1.

Generation two, my peers. I'm thinking of my cousins and my friends. They could get by in my hometown. They could work a couple of jobs and maybe they got fired, they got laid off, the unions fell apart, the steel mills left. But they can work for the print shop or they can maybe work two jobs at Walmart and doing some handyman work or something like that and they could get by. The place was so depressed that you could get a house for \$25 or \$30 thousand dollars ... and that works, but not like it did for their dads.

Then you get generation three, and these are my peers' kids and grandkids, and you see really a very significant, other level of degeneration where first of all, and this is a big issue in New Hampshire, there's a lot of addiction, particularly heroin addiction. That was unheard of when I was a kid.

But for the current crop of kids with no college education, maybe not even a high school education, there's really just nothing. There's the dole, there's basically a very, very difficult level of getting by. But there is hopelessness, and a lot of distress among the older generations who are watching this happen. And you can see why people who are good Americans, who, as Bill Clinton used to say, *worked hard and played by the rules* that there's no longer a way forward for them.

And that it makes me more sympathetic to these politicians who want to come in and do one version or the other of blowing up the system.

That's my integral practice with Ted Cruz, and so what happens with that? Yes, I am more friendly to Ted Cruz after having done that. I can actually listen to him now. I can actually open my heart to him. A little bit, I can see him as a fellow human being. I can see that a lot of his patterns of behavior that turn me off like that relentless ambition, the opportunism ... that these are basically characteristics that are shared by high achievers everywhere and a lot of people like Obama that I love.

What it doesn't do is make me support Ted Cruz any more, or resist him any less politically. In fact it probably makes me a more effective opponent, because I am not blinded by the mind/body contraction that Ted Cruz used to evoke in me. I have deconstructed it, and thus liberated my own capacities for creativity and action.

By the way, when talking about Obama, I hope you all saw David Brooks' column today. David Brooks of course is the conservative columnist from New York Times. He wrote a column today called "I Miss Barack Obama" and he just talked about what I often talk about ... which is that we're going to miss this Obama guy when he's gone. Brooks wrote about Obama's integrity and rectitude and how the administration has been remarkably scandal free and the sense of basic humanity. As Brooks wrote, he said Donald Trump

has spent much of his campaign vowing to block Muslim immigration. You can only say that if you treat Muslim Americans as an abstraction [*and notice that treating people as an abstraction is an I-It relationship rather than an I-Thou relationship*].

President Obama meanwhile, Brooks writes, went to a mosque, looked into people's eyes and gave a wonderful speech reasserting their place as Americans. And then he wrote, "Imagine if Barack and Michelle Obama joined the board of a charity you're involved in. You'd be happy to have such people in your community. Could you say that comfortably about Ted Cruz?"

Then he talks about his decision making, his grace under pressure, his resilient sense of optimism, and then the last line of his column, he said, "Obama radiates an ethos of integrity, humanity, good manners, and elegance that I'm beginning to miss and that I suspect we'll all miss a bit regardless of who replaces him."

Brett: Hear, hear.

Navigating the Mormon faith crisis—A conversation with Thomas McConkie

Jeff: Hear, hear indeed. All right. I think we should shift gears a little bit and move from politics to the other impolite topic, and that's religion, and welcome to the show my friend Thomas McConkie who is phoning in with us tonight from Salt Lake city. Hey Thomas, how are you doing tonight, man?

Thomas: Jeff Salzman, how's it going?

Jeff: Doing good. Let me just tell the folks just a bit about you. You've been in the integral scene for a long time, you're part of Diane Hamilton's zen sangha in Salt Lake city, you've been part of the faculty at Pacific Integral which is one of the leading integral organizations in the country and you've been part of their Generating Transformative Change program.

What we want to talk about tonight is your latest achievement and that is your new book called "Navigating Mormon Faith Crisis." I loved the book not only as an insight into Mormonism, which I find quite fascinating, but also as basically a guide towards integral spirituality. And so I congratulate you on the book and welcome you to the show.

I guess first, Tom, I'd ask you what is the Mormon faith crisis? And how does integral theory help us understand the Mormon faith crisis?

Maybe I'll just start with you because you're a Mormon who went through a faith crisis, so why don't you just start there?

Thomas: Thanks so much for that generous introduction and yeah, I'm just trying to feeling to where to jump into that. I am a Mormon. I was born and raised in Salt Lake City and I come from pioneer ancestry. My relatives crossed the plains, are faithful Latter-day Saints, and so it's deep in the culture here. And in my own shift into the modernism at the age of thirteen, which I think happens for a lot of people, I decided to ask questions that thirteen year old asks, like "what's the story about the boy in upstate New York who discovered golden plates that were written by a prophet of ancient American and an angel told him where to excavate these plates?"

The story broke down for me and I think it's quite normal in secular America for a teenager to wonder about these kind of miraculous accounts from the Christian tradition, but I grew up in a place where that wasn't smiled upon, so it lead to a massive faith crisis and a falling out in my family, and I took refuge with Genpo Roshi's center at Salt Lake City, and that set me on my path in Buddhism and eventually integral adult development and so forth. It has been just in the last few years that it felt like a deep soul urge of mine to really, on a personal level, integrate my own Mormon identity.

As I started to do that as an integral practice, I realized that all of my pain, all of my falling out and loss of identity in the Mormon church ... that wasn't just individual, that was collective. There is an entire generation of people who are going through similar growing pains, so that's what really led me to write this book. It really is a bridge, a pathway into a more integrated, a more integral kind of Mormonism.

Jeff: What's so fascinating to me about Mormonism is that, well I was raised Christian and at some point, I was about thirteen years old as well, when I realized, "Wait a second. This couldn't be. None of this could have happened." That's just a natural state of development where you become scientific and all of a sudden, facts start trumping myth. For Christians like me, it's a little easier to fudge it all because all of the claims in archaeology and so forth are 2,000 years old. In the case of Mormonism, they're 200 years old or less, right?

Thomas: Yeah, that's right.

Jeff: All of these miraculous claims and so forth are really hard for a scientific mind to buy. The faith crisis, is that why people are leaving the church? How do you see that, Tom?

Thomas: I think absolutely, that's a big part of it, maybe that's the primary part of it. It's that shift into a more factual orientation with reality. There's a growing number of Latter-day Saints or Mormons who have spent their whole lives in the tradition. They've married in the tradition, they've raised families in the tradition, they've given 10% of all of their earthly belongings to the church. That's a part of what active Mormons do to support the church and to express their faith, so they've given everything. And all of a sudden, we're having outbreaks of stories about polygamy and how that played out in the early days of the Mormon Church and how there may have been some cover up around those practices.

The Book of Mormon itself ... there's a growing number of people who are thinking, "Okay, how is this book that has inspired me for so long all of a sudden appearing as made up, totally fabricated?" It's a massive identity shift and what I'm hopeful for is that the Mormon culture and the church finds a way to hold the broader spectrum of humanity so that people who are really comfortable in a traditional orientation with it are honored, and they can do that because it works for them. It supports them, it feeds the. And then for other people who are transitioning into, what we would call in integral, a different altitude, different stages of development, they're going to have a radically different relationship with Mormonism.

But can we still call that Mormonism and can we still worship in the same tent, so to speak?

Jeff: One of the things that you argue for that is so fascinating to me is that Mormonism is actually particularly suited for further evolution because a of couple of tenants of the doctrine. One is the idea of continual perfection. After this life, we continue to hold our identity. I'm still Jeff and I'm still surrounded by my family and friends and I continue to grow and perfect myself. And then also the doctrine that the scriptures of Mormonism itself are fluid and that the Holy Spirit is welcome in at any time to change things up. Wow. Those are two really interesting, from a developmental standpoint, interesting doctrinal tenets that other religions don't have, particularly that second one where scripture can evolve. Scriptures are like balls and chains for traditionalist, axial religions.

Thomas: That's right. Mormonism is a different evolutionary critter in other times of Christianity and it's got a rich theology and a rich background but the two things you named, we could just home in on for a moment.

Jeff: Yeah.

Thomas: Ongoing progression, that is central to the theology of Mormons and the experience in being a Mormon, which is we believe that mankind will progress in an ongoing way infinitely, with no ceiling on it. So the way that gets languaged in the church is that we will become divine. We will grow into our divinity and godhood. Gods and goddesses, a plurality, a multiplicity of unique selves, to put it in integral terms. And to pair with that, we have scripture which has a peculiar definition in Mormonism: at any time a prophet, an apostle, a leader is moved upon by the holy spirit, that is scripture. That alone, imagine the body of holy writ ... the canon of Mormonism is as fluid as water, right? You can hardly study it because it's changing day to day.

It's fascinating. I'm intrigued by what continues to evolve in the Mormon tradition, notwithstanding its challenges currently.

Jeff: That's true and we've seen certainly evolution in terms of race and evolution even in terms of gays to some degree but it seems like we hit a little bit of a wall the other day where the doctrine that children of gay people can't join fellowship.

Thomas: Yeah, that's right. That happened the other day and let's see what happens in another couple of days, right?

Jeff: Absolutely, for sure. Does anybody ever doubt that that will change as culture does but at the same time, there's a huge center of gravity of Mormons who are traditionalist. They really don't, in their hearts, believe that the sexual revolution is progress in any way, shape or form. So that means all of it: divorce, gays, sexualization of the culture, pornography, they don't see any of that as progress. And these people, that's their religion too. They have to be served as well. Not to mention the cultures where Mormonism is actually really taking off because it's providing a traditional spiritual structure for pre-traditional cultures such as in Africa.

I love what you said in your book, *Navigating Mormon Faith Crisis*, I think it's one of the first lines in your book, I'm going to mangle it a little bit, but you said something like, "I'll grant you that there's a faith crises as long as we stipulate that there's always been a faith crisis."

Thomas: Yeah. That's right. I start with the term "faith crisis" because it's becoming more common in Mormon culture these days. But that's the beauty of integral and looking at the ways adults continue to develop throughout the lifespan, right? That crisis can just represent a dissolving of a former identity, like you were really beautifully speaking to earlier on the political section of tonight's show where you take the perspective on the self, you dis-identify it with a certain Jeff, and that coalesce, you created space to become a new Jeff. What if the faith crisis is just a natural cycle of spiritual growth that we undergo ... and it's ongoing with no ends to crises and no end to the beauty that emerges from the crises?

Jeff: Well said. I think that's actually one of the integral moves: we start seeing crisis as opportunity and we start thinking, "Oh, cool. This isn't working. What's next?" That's a whole new ball game when you start embracing your crisis and embracing your unwanted development, so to speak, instead of hiding from them or explaining them away or having another vodka.

Thomas: That's right. Embracing your own crisis, and also embracing those at the different stages of development who may not identify with that category of crisis, and are still perfectly fine on their perch, their stage of development, their station in life? Like you were pointing to earlier, it's a deep shadow practice to honor people exactly where they are, particularly when it gets under our skin.

Jeff: What a relief to do that instead of just continuing to argue for our contractions.

Thomas: Right.

Jeff: Well Thomas, thank you so much for joining us live tonight. Thomas and I, did a talk the other day for an hour or so what that we'll be publishing here in the next couple of weeks and I really enjoyed and I really recommend your book, *Navigating Mormon Faith Crisis*. Thank you so much, Thomas.

Thomas: Thanks so much, Jeff. It's great to be with you tonight.

Jeff: Indeed. All right, that was Thomas McConkie. You can find out more of his work on mormonstages.com. All right, Brett, I think we have a question from one of the listeners that came on Speakpipe and I believe it's on a topic that is interesting to a lot of integralist and that's that topic of Big History, so do you have that ready to go, Brett?

Brett: Yeah, sure. Here we go.

Question: I've been listening to your podcast, for years, I would say, and I'm not sure if you ever covered the concept of Big History and I wanted to ask you if you thought it might be useful to compare integral and integral movement to the Big History buzz. To some extent, it demonstrates both the potential as well as the shortcoming of the integral movement. Big History is trying to answer some of the same questions that integral theory does. However, it doesn't have nearly as good of an explanatory power. Nevertheless, they have a very good brand and public relations I should say.

They are in the TED Talks, they're being discussed on NPR, they got a grant from the Bill Gates Foundation, and I'm a little frustrated about the inability of integral, the integral movement, the integral theory and

integral life practices to penetrate public discourse in a similar way. This is not to belittle integral at all, and the wonderful work that you've been doing and everybody else in the integral movement. But I often feel frustrated when I tried to explain integral on my own to so many other people, feeling that otherwise I can't really have a full discussion with them about even daily events such as The Daily Evolver does or certainly more meaningful issues. So people are talking about Big History as far as it looking at the big picture, connecting the dots, helping them understand the universe better. I wish they were talking about integral theory the same way.

Brett: I can relate to that.

Jeff: I can relate to that too and it's very frustrating to me as well and has been for a long time. I am right with you that the explanatory power of integral is much greater than Big History, and I think I'll explain why that is in a second. But for those of you who don't know what Big History is, it's a new intellectual movement in the country that has gotten a lot of attention. It's like our caller said, there are TED Talks, there are many websites devoted to it. Bill Gates is a big proponent and has given them lots of money. Big History tries to tell the biggest story of human history that we can tell, from the Big Bang on, so it integrates physical science, chemistry, biology, human sciences, anthropology, history, economics into one story from the Big Bang. And that's really, really new and really, really great.

Actually, Brett, don't you have an excerpt from the Big History website where they explain what they're doing?

From Big History website: How did things get to be the way they are? How was the universe created? Why does it work the way it does? Why are the stars so big? Why are you and I so small? Why do we find ourselves in this particular part of the universe on this tiny planet buzzing with life? Why are humans so powerful? What does it mean to be human? These are wonderful questions and they've been asked by people in all societies, and they've also been asked by a lot of people with great expertise. Geologists asked them, biologists asked them, astronomers, physicists, historians, anthropologists. What we want to do in this course is to take the expert answers and try to blend them into a single coherent story that will explain how everything came to be the way it is.

Jeff: The Big Bang theory was theorized less than 100 years ago and it was proven to most scientist's satisfaction exactly fifty years ago. It's been proven with other proofs since, so it's pretty much accepted science at this point. And so that's the story: that the universe has the beginning and it has a trajectory. Before the Big Bang acceptance, scientists, everybody, thought that universe was a steady state, and of course, religious people thought it was created by God. Secular people didn't know how it was created it was perhaps infinite and eternal in some way that they couldn't understand,

But we know now that there was a beginning 13.8 billion years ago ... and there has been a move towards complexification in all holons, and that's a little bit of a technical term, but holons are atoms which integrate into molecules, which integrate into cells, which integrate into organisms and sponges and reptiles and fish and mammals, and finally, human beings. There's something going on here. Now despite what the Big History announcer just said—that they examine the question of why we're here and why the stars are so big and why we're so small and why we're here in this history, they actually don't really talk about “why.”

They talk about “what” and “how” and they give the story of what can be seen and measured, But the “why” part, the meaning of it all, is outside of the purview of this kind of intellectual inquiry. But still, even if we're looking at Big History in this way, it is still integral in the teal sense of the word (or in Spiral Dynamics) the yellow sense. It's sort of an entry level integral, which is really good in the sense that it brings everything together and it actually also gets the dimension of time, creating a true evolutionary story. Teal sees all of the human sciences, the physical sciences ... it sees the beginning, it sees the trajectory, it sees how everything relates to everything else. It basically indexes and organizes the cosmos, and that is a wonderful, fantastic thing and a great achievement beyond green.

But then there's another level of integral that we call "Turquoise," and this is when you realize once you get all of the pieces together, and you see the movements of events and consciousness through history ... you start to get the sense that the whole system is alive and that every molecule of it is dripping with meaning. And there's the “why.”

Again, atoms to molecules to organisms; there's something going on here and it's something that science really cannot penetrate because science is, to use the quadrants, if you looked at the quadrant diagrams, science deals with the exteriors (the two right hand quadrants), the materiality of the world, the stuff, the things that you could feel and touch and measure and compare.

Science collapses the whole world, all four quadrant, into the right hand quadrants, science doesn't just recognize consciousness but it thinks that consciousness and free will and beauty and all of the things that, from a left hand perspective, makes us human and again, are drenched in meaning ... that these are maybe useful to organize us and make us more successful as competing organisms ... and maybe it helps us to build organizations and communities and societies and brings us coherence. But there's nothing real about it. And that's not good enough for turquoise. Turquoise says, "Wait a second. There's actually something here. There's actually something real about this."

I was reading a book, I'm actually going to talk about it in one of the future shows, *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt, and he is a scientist but he goes a little bit off the reservation. He's so tantalizingly turquoise, it's really fun to read and I know a lot of people in the integral world really like him and his TED Talks and his books and I do too.

So Haidt is talking about self-transcendence. And he offers a metaphor of a staircase in the mind and that the staircase, as we evolve or walk up the staircase, it takes us from the profane levels of existence to the level of the sacred. What does he mean by sacred?

He answers, "So here's the million dollar question for social scientists like me. Is the staircase a feature of our evolutionary design? Is it a product of natural selection like our hands, or is it a bug, a mistake in the system. That this religious stuff is just something that happens when the wires cross in the brain," which is what a lot of scientists think. He uses the example of "Jill has a stroke and she has this religious experience. Is it a mistake?"

With integral theory, as we move into the Turquoise stage, we want to see, we *do* see that there's something going on here, that there is a movement towards, as Steve McIntosh writes in his book *Evolution's Purpose* ... there's a move towards goodness, truth, and beauty. And that these principles of goodness, truth, and beauty have an attractive force like magnetism and gravity have in the exteriors. Goodness, truth and beauty have gravity in the interiors.

That's not going to pass the scientific test because science can't go there. Science can't recognize the interior dimensions of reality that it can't explore, at least not explore in the ways that they're used to. Science has miraculously cracked the code of the right hand quadrants, of the exteriors, of the material world. But it doesn't know what to do with the interiors except explain them in terms of the exteriors, which is does. So "the sacred" is reduced to neurons and cohesion and reciprocal altruism and all of these things that basically explain the enchantment of the world away. To scientific modernists, like the Big History buffs, like Haidt, Sam Harris and the New Atheists and all these people ... for them there are two kinds of spirituality. One is the bible thumping of Ted Cruz and the fundamentalists all over the world, and the other is New Age Gobbledygook. Those are the only two options.

They don't get that there might be a post-mythic, post-postmodern spirituality that seeks to find a new, larger pattern in the teachings of evolution itself, in the obvious trajectory of matter? It's like the old joke: how do you get the complete works of Shakespeare? Take a big mess of hydrogen and leave it alone for 13 billion years.

That is not a series of accidents, but until science is big enough to either 1) recognize that they can't go the interiors or 2) figure out a way to go to the interiors on the interiors' own terms ... then we're going to have all of our integral books in the New Age section, which drives me crazy and keeps us in this New Age ghetto while Big History is getting grants from Gates Foundation. But that's why, in my opinion.

All right. Brett, I think we're right on the money here and you have an exit reel of some of the comments we've been collecting from those of you who clicked the Speakpipe button or sent us voice mails.

Nina: Hello Jeff, this is Nina Potter. I wanted to tell you how warm and fuzzy I felt listening to an audio that I thought I had listened to a long time ago, and it turns out I hadn't and I think I might have requested it, you and Dr. Keith Witt talking about midlife crisis. It was wonderful and I just wanted to share with you how

positively affirming it was to hear the two of you being such good buddies talking so intelligently and so deeply about such an incredibly pervasive and important topic. I'm a relationship coach so a lot of my clients, their spouses are going through exactly what the two of you were talking about, and although the integral perspective is probably more than advanced than most of my clients, I have been able to share it with a few of them that I thought were sophisticated enough to understand it. It made me feel so good about my own development and where I was in my life, and to be listening to the two of you talking about this important topic and just thinking, "It doesn't get any better than this."

Speaker: Hey Jeff. What a great episode on Bernie Sanders. I really enjoyed it. One of the things that you said, which holds a lot of truth, is that the economics lags the cultural development. The private sphere and the public sphere dichotomy has brought up a little clarity but that force that right economy had has totally distorted our social and cultural development. This red history that I think you mentioned it but you don't know it and I think you're still just looking at the show and not seeing a real bill that are going through and you're like, "I think that would cause every time to be like why is that happening?" We need either Bernie and not Hillary, like the less evil. Hillary, do whatever we need to do to make sure she doesn't get in, and right behind her is Trump. Do whatever we got to do to make sure he doesn't get in. That leaves us with Bernie or somebody else that comes in later.

Robbie: Hi Jeff. My name is Robbie. I'm currently a graduate student at Columbia in my first year. I'm in the religion department studying Judaism. I've been a follower of the integral world since I was about 17. I mentioned Wilber to my undergraduate adviser, I wanted to use integral theory in my honors thesis for undergraduate, but my adviser said, "So you're going to use a New Age guru as a source?" He wasn't very thrilled about me using Ken Wilber. Meanwhile, a few weeks later, I found Wilber's book sitting in his bookshelf, so he clearly saw there was something going on, he wasn't a usual guy. I would like to, in my academic life, be able to incorporate integral theory, so I'm wondering if you could maybe say something about who in which fields is doing some stuff with integral theory. I would like to hear your thoughts on the possibility for that kind of integral inroads into how we conduct academic life and how it could be incorporated into university education.

Speaker: Jeff, hi. This is David from Ireland and I just wanted to say, as a relatively young integralist, I'm 37, so I guess I'm rather young, that your podcast really provide a space of sanity for me, framing the wider issues through and into a lens just really feels like a space that I can relax into and feel like everything's okay and there is a deeper sense to things even when they feel a bit chaotic for me sometimes. I just felt I needed to say thank you.

Jeff: I thank you folks for the feedback and thank you all for listening!