

The Future Is Calling Us to Greatness

with Michael Dowd + 56 Experts



The Promise of Conscious Evolution

with Barbara Marx Hubbard

Big ideas from this session:

- The story of a prophetic pioneer and grandmother of a global movement
 - Why conscious evolution matters: our global crisis as a birth moment
 - The marriage of science and spirituality for personal and planetary transformation
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Michael: Barbara, thank you so much for joining me on this conversation related to the *Future is Calling Us to Greatness*.

Barbara: You know, I totally feel it is calling us to greatness. I love that title and I personally think you are great, so there we go.

Michael: The feeling is mutual. Thank you. As you know, because I've shared it with you but I want to share this in case any of our viewers or listeners are not aware of this, I've known you since 1989, where we met at Omega, in David Gershon's Gaia Leadership Class and I've considered you just a precious older sister on the path ever since, so it is a delight to have this conversation.

Barbara: Thank you. Yes, indeed. I feel this is truly an evolutionary family.

Michael: Yes, amen. That is one of the things that I really appreciate. I am going to share this even though it's a little bit intimate or personal but Barbara and I have had conversations regularly on various holidays because we want to speak with our mimetic family, not just our biological families.

Barbara: Yes. Just for a second on that subject. I am 84, Michael and I've discovered a new pattern of aging.

Michael: Okay, say more.

Barbara: Which I did and it is called emerging.

Michael: Yes, exactly.

Barbara: When you are an elder, there is an old pattern of how you could be maybe with your children and your grandchildren or something but instead, if you are moving forward with others into an absolutely new condition for planet earth, something is happening to me, I just want to say this because you mentioned family that really I feel is deep in the soul of evolutionary humans right now which I'd like to discuss at some point with you.

Michael: That's great. I want to get into a whole lot with you but I realize, before we do, in case there is anybody which I doubt there will be too many people but in case somebody is not familiar with your work, could you just please just give a little short introduction to who is Barbara Marx Hubbard and what are you particularly passionate about?

Barbara: I feel I am a genuine evolutionary soul that was coded with the quest to discover the evolutionary process and be part of it and that I have been awakened by awareness of the whole story of evolution to become an evolutionary human which means I am evolutionary educator.

I've spent a lot of time on educating on the new story of creation and our part in it. I have been a candidate for the Vice President of the United States. My name was placed in nomination to map, track, connect and communicate what's working in the world which I still think the vice-president should do.

Michael: Yes, I agree.

Barbara: I have been mother of five, a grandmother of eight and right now, as I was saying, at this stage in my life of being 84 and also, since I celebrated the planetary birth experience which I had been motivated to celebrate since 1960s, I am living out the vision of a planetary emergency, a planetary birth, a planetary evolution and still am part of it, and this is a part of what my life is about now at this stage of evolution.

Michael: Amen. That's one of the things where I felt such a soul-heart purpose communion or connection with you around is that this whole notion that we are the universe. We are evolution become conscious of itself and then how do we honor the past, how do we live our lives and recreate our institutions with the sense that the past is rooting us on and the future is calling us to greatness?

How do we then move consciously into the future and create conscious social structures so that our politics or economics, our education, our systems of governance, our systems of everything become every wiser, to use Tom Atley's language and become more

conscious so that we participate in a mutually enhancing human-earth relationship, which as we all know is lacking in many cases now?

Barbara: Yeah.

Michael: Could you share Barbara, because I find your thinking so fertile and so rich, and you have such a way with language? Share some of the core means, the core ideas that you have been carrying and still are carrying in ways that help again people who are participating in this conversation series who have not immersed themselves in your work. Help bring us all up to speed at this point.

Barbara: Here is some basic thoughts. Our crisis is a birth of a co-creative universal humanity. Our planet earth is in a crisis where we can't continue to grow as we have in the past and survive.

Particularly in the lives of human who used to reproduce up to maximum, there is a huge shift from what I call procreation and self-survival to co-creation and self-evolution and I think that this change is being triggered by the actual stage of life our planet is at.

We are actually midlife in the life cycle of a planet. We are about four and a half billion years old and I've been told that in approximately that length of time our sun will expand and destroy all the planets in this solar system.

I feel that our crisis is the birth of a co-creative universal humanity and that the way the shift is actually happening is problems are evolutionary drivers. Crises is preceding transformation and the members of our species that are attracted to participate in that emergence, in giving their creativity to evolve themselves in the world are what I call pioneering souls of earth and they are in every culture, every religion, every size, shape and age.

They have a similar quality of attraction to the future as an organism progressing toward the unknown. Now, we are scattered in all our systems, in education, in health, in science, technology and what we really, I feel, to shift any of the systems to a co-creative, co-evolutionary quality, one of our greatest needs is to connect with each other to find out what each other knows.

I am involved with a partner now working on an attempt to create a meta-system that identified people who feel they are evolutionaries and you know my wheel of co-creation.

Michael: I know. I love it.

Barbara: It's a diagram of our turn on the spiral is a wheel with 12 sectors, health, education, economics, science and technology and what we are saying is that has to be filled up

now with people who are evolving the health system, evolving the governance system, evolving the economic system through innovations and creative solutions.

If we could do just that as a movement, we would see the emerging world already in our midst and through our internet and our communications and our wonderful speakers like you, it would be I think the most attractive option open to the world is the connection of that which is creative, loving and emergent, and we are all here, and we don't have much time to connect.

Time is running out on this phase of evolution and far from seeing that as a tragedy, even though it could be and it is if you are not participating in emerging, far from seeing it only as a tragedy it is the way evolution causes jumps.

Michael: I know.

Barbara: By the crises being unable to be resolved the way, because if we could resolve it like we have done before by more of the same, we would but we can't. That's Mother Nature's effort to really evolve the species or let us go extinct.

Michael: That's one of the things that I find myself so aligned with you. There is actually several dozen but one of them is this sense that chaos, breakdown, destruction is not necessarily a bad thing that when you look at the whole history of big history, when you look at physical, biological and cultural evolution as our first globally produced, evidence-based sacred story, creation story, you see countless examples of chaos, breakdowns and destruction being precisely what's most necessary to catalyze creative transformation and the next stages or the next evolution of life.

That is certain that we are going to have no shortage of chaos and challenges, and breakdown in the coming decades and in the centuries. Do we see that as a birth, do we see that as a womb to call forth our creative response, or do we just despair and say the whole thing is going to hell in hand-basket?

I think that our response to that, and again having the big picture, having this epic of evolution or big history or the universe story, or this whole sense of cosmic conscious evolution is the big picture that allows at least me, let me speak just personally, it allows me to deal with the chaos of my life, the chaos of our culture, the chaos of our times, not from the place of, "Oh, no!" but from a place of, "Okay, wow!" Like curiosity, what is emerging?

How can I participate in something so grand and so majestic that we may not even be able to see the full scope of it for another 200, 300 or 400 years and yet, we are in these early stages of something truly magnificent or at least potential magnificent or potentially of true evolutionary significance.

Barbara: Yes. I want to try out an idea on you.

Michael: Okay.

Barbara: I've mentioned it many times but I am getting more serious about it.

Michael: Okay. I'll probably do the same too.

Barbara: Nature does not have any respect for species. Billions and billions of species are extinct and we are now participating in the sixth mass extinction ourselves and we know we need to stop that.

It is my intuition that out of the extinction not only of other species that a new human species is growing and the new human species has so many characteristics that we are familiar with but we haven't added them all up and I am currently calling it homo universalis.

This is a species that sees the crises as an evolutionary driver that is activated from within to find our part in helping something to evolve that has an innate quality of hope and expectation for the future emerging into the unknown, who recognizes also that we are an earth-space species already that as we restore Mother Earth and attempt to free ourselves from hunger, disease, poverty and tyranny, and war here.

This is only the beginning of homo universalis who is probably in a universe filled with life but that until we get our life story together here and begin to be aware that we are universal beings we won't have the attractor required to excite us forward because we are a species who is always evolved and we can't just say our goal is to sustain life as it is.

We will never do it and even if we got sustainable, we get terribly distressed and make a mess of it.

Michael: As we are doing.

Barbara: If you see our turn on the spiral, here is my big wheel of co-creation, and then of course there is a next turn on the spiral and I have placed in there homo universalis and homo sapiens emeritus.

Homo sapiens emeritus is glad to hear that this self-conscious, to some degree self-reflective and self-centered species is going while a new species is evolving everywhere on this earth now and I am a homo sapiens emeritus and that I sit up there on the next turn on the spiral and cheer us onward because I would like to be truly a homo universalis.

Michael: Amen. You are. In my experience, you are one of the shiny examples of homo universalis and one of the things Barbara, this whole theme of the *Future is Calling Us to Greatness*, what I was hoping to do in this was to have conversation with people like yourself who are well aware of the challenges that we are now facing and that we are likely to face, or inevitably will face and yet who have a way of holding this scary challenging information in ways that motivate and inspire us to connect with others, to work with others, to learn from others and to co-create the next stages in human evolution or just the next stage of human evolution where we work together and we are not fighting and killing each other over our respective beliefs of metaphysics.

We are realizing that where we can find common ground is good enough. We can find common ground in a deep time understanding of reality and evolutionary understanding of reality that goes forward millions and billions of years, as well as in the past.

We can find deep commonality in our profound commitment to ensuring a just, healthy and sustainably life-giving future that is not just about us or our enlightenment, our salvation, our anything. It is about the collective, it's about the humanity and the body of life and ensuring a healthy future for all of us.

What I think I am finding also common ground in so many diverse people of different backgrounds, religions, philosophies, metaphysics is a valuing of science not just as a secular thing but science in some very real sense reveals the divine, that science reveals the evidence, the evidence can help us have a more intimate, personal, I-thou relationship with nature, with time, with mystery. These are things that are fundamentally real whether we believe in them or not.

I am wondering, since you have been a pioneer on this and really, a grandmother to so many of us in this movement, could you share a little bit about where you find inspiration in time – before we shared a little bit of that – but where do you find inspiration, specifically in time, nature and mystery which I see the time, nature, mystery as the three faces of reality.

That is what is real independent of whether we believe it is real or not, and so I am just curious where do you find inspiration for time, nature and mystery?

Barbara: The first great inspiration is to notice the 13.8 billion years of evolution. If you look at it from the outside, you see this amazing creativity of quarks and electrons all the way on up you and me having this conversation, number one. I get inspired.

Number two, I see a tendency in evolution to more complex systems with higher consciousness, greater freedom, greater order and connectivity. I like that because that's what I want for myself.

Number three, I feel that I and all of us are the universe in person, so that the feeling for wanting more life, more love, more creativity is the universe in us and me, calling us to that. So instead of feeling like I did when I was a housewife, feeling this way as a neurotic housewife, I realized I was the universe in person and I got affirmed in the evolutionary tendency within myself for more life, more love and more creativity.

This then I would say the most important thing, I am currently calling it the impulse of evolution within because whatever and however you want to call the impulse that got us from no-thing at all to you and me here, that is within every single person as their impulse to express what? More of who their potential self is.

Nature realizes potential. It is totally stunning how it gets more and more potential and more consciousness out of every crisis we've ever faced. So since we now know this, my impulse of evolution and that as a teacher and educator with everybody else's impulse that I am working with is to take us on a trajectory where we activate ourselves as expressions of the impulse of creation with the genius of evolution that's 13.8 billion years of genius.

I love your idea of the evidential reality as an expression of the divine and particularly that you and I are incarnate with the evidential reality of the billions of years of evolution and act on it now. The call for greatness is really the call for evolution itself.

Michael: Amen. One of the things I want to ask you about relates to one of the criticisms that sometimes people have leveled at me and others that are speaking about conscious evolution and the evolution of culture.

It is sort of too much of a sense of one trajectory, one line. It is all getting better and better without an equal appreciation or in honoring or respecting of the fact that we do also see rising civilizations and contracting civilizations.

We see technologies becoming more complex and occasionally, some of those technologies are lost in cultures that are either population overshoot or they over-use resources, and it is quite possible that we are in one of these phases of peak oil and the downhill slide where we could be in the early stages, as John Michael Greer and others speak about, Richard Heinberg, I had a conversation with him the other day. James Howard Kunstler, *The Long Emergency*, these are folks who are just as committed as you and I to this evolutionary sense of reality and are participating in that and that we are that process become conscious of itself.

They also point out that there is a fallacy that should be avoided or that they caution should be avoided in terms of just assuming that we don't also have periods of inhale, contraction, breakdown and that we may be in the early stages of contraction of industrial civilization in the way that we have been extracting and that sort of thing.

Is there anything you would like to say in terms of that, because I actually find myself defending you at one point? A month or two ago somebody was saying, “Barbara Marx Hubbard, the sense that things are just going to keep getting better and better and she doesn’t have a respect for this breakdown and contraction.”

I was saying no, you don’t get her at all. So anything that you would like to say about that because I think that’s also something that’s important?

Barbara: I am so aware of breakdown and breakdown as very dangerous now because to some degree, we are the first species responsible for the breakdown as well as for the breakthrough, and what’s new now is not breakdown since we’ve had five mass extinction yet nonetheless it seems to have kept moving to higher order.

If you look at the 13.8 billion years, however many extinctions and losses of species there is a tendency which I think is the most apparent thing if you look at the billions of years. I don’t care what anybody says, there is a tendency to higher order but your consciousness is the greater freedom.

The big difference is we are now responsible for the extinctions we are causing. We are also responsible for the evolution we could develop and conscious evolution is not just an inevitable progress, it’s been aware that you are evolution and you have some choice as to how you evolve, and I think that’s the greatest gift that any species has ever been given is a choice about our own actions as to how we can evolve or devolve.

We are devolving but I also feel that industrial society as it was in the last hundreds of years is not what we would like to see forever continuing.

Michael: Yes, I know.

Barbara: I love the book *The Great Disruption* by Gilding which he calls this breakdown a once in a civilization opportunity to consciously create a culture that you consider to be more co-creative.

Now anybody who turns against that opportunity is just simply not taking the chances that were given and I think that you can be extremely aware of breakdown by being aware of the newness. I think conscious evolution is as much a step forward as self-reflective consciousness was 50,000 years ago.

We realized we had a self that created all the civilization. Now, in the last maybe 25 – 50 years, since cosmo-genesis was discovered as a process is that we are aware that we are affecting our own evolution by the crises we faced and the new capacities we have, spiritual,

social and scientific, technological and if we can ever use our scientific and technological new capacities with love and creativity, we will be a universal species.

I think it is extremely important to keep a direction of hope and greatness in front of us. Otherwise, you are personally responsible for deflating evolution.

Michael: I agree and one of the things that I am going to mention this to viewers and listeners that I too have found Paul Gilding's work, both his blog, *The Cockatoo Chronicles*, if you just put Paul Gilding in Google you will get there. He only writes a blog post once every few months but the last four or five of them are stunningly hopeful.

Few people are able to look at the bad news in a more unflinching way and yet nonetheless interpret it in ways that motivate and inspire people. In fact, Tom Freeman at *New York Times* I think he said that if you only read one book on climate change, make it Paul Gilding's *The Great Disruption*, so I recommend that book and I recommend his blog as well.

Barbara, is there anything more that you would like to say in terms of where you are inspired by time, nature and/or mystery?

Barbara: I am inspired deeply by mystery, time and nature and I have come up with a phrase for a state of consciousness which I am calling deep time present.

Michael: Deep time present.

Barbara: Deep time present is I am sitting in my own inner picture at the hub of the wheel or co-creation, of our turn on the spiral. I am aware that I come from the origin of creation before time began. You might call that the eternal or the infinite, or the One.

I am aware that every atom, molecule and cell in my body is embodying the whole story of creation, so I am aware of that, deep time present.

Third, I am aware that I am emerging as is every person on earth, no matter whether they think they are or care or not, because that's what nature does.

Deep time present is to accept all of that as the present incarnation of myself and when I do that with two or more in resonance in an experience of wholeness and connectivity, it becomes revelatory.

Deep time present reveals pattern, reveals the emergent design of our society to be a society of co-creators and I really think whatever you want to call this process of creation, its intention is to create co-creators that the creative process is creating those who can create with it.

If we do not, we can easily become and extinct species which I think we would like to avoid.

Michael: Yes, exactly. Especially when you have already expanded your sense of self, when yourself no longer stops with you --

Barbara: Irritated.

Michael: I am sorry, I think I spoke over you.

Barbara: No, I am just irritated with people who don't see that conscious evolution is a tremendous responsibility and opportunity not an optimistic non-sense and I say a lot of people are prejudiced against optimism because nature optimizes.

Michael: I've gazillions of conversations with you and every single time, you come up with new stuff and I think damn, I love what you do with language. That is fabulous. I am with you.

Barbara: Don't you think from no-thing at all to everything it is, if that's not optimizing, I don't know what is.

Michael: That is optimizing. Yes, exactly.

Barbara: If you are optimistic, you are optimizing and Norman Cousins once said to me, "It is arrogant to be pessimist in the light of the creation that has created you."

Michael: I love it.

Barbara: If you sit there in arrogance of being pessimistic, every atom, molecule and cell in your body was created by this incredible story and you are pessimistic?

Michael: That is a wonderful reframe because yes, most people don't think of pessimism as arrogance, but it really is in the light of 13.8 billion years of creativity and all of this complexification of matter, energy, consciousness and culture, in the face of that to be pessimistic is definitely arrogant. I love it.

Barbara: It is arrogant.

Michael: Yeah, and what you are pointing to also Barbara is to have hope, to be inspired, what Johanna Macy calls active hope, to have this sense of hope and inspiration based on the big story, based on big history, knowing who we are, knowing how related we are to all of life, knowing what the future is calling us to greatness, to be in action in the face of that is anything

but Pollyanna, it is the opposite of simply assuming things are going to get better because we know that chaos keeps driving creativity.

We are conscious, alive today and the only place that we can honor these billions of years of creativity is in the present and the only place that we can be a blessing and of service, and a contribution to the future is in the present.

To connect with others who are conscious of that and to work together is I think the holiest work on the planet. It is certainly where I find my deepest sense of kin or family.

Barbara: Absolutely. The tendency in nature to realize potential is really a part of the implacable mystery is that every creature, every part of the creation wants to realize but the humans, the great thing about us is that we realize our potential is still way under-used.

You see, I don't think a cow or a cat feels it needs to realize more of its potential, whether it is going extinct or not but we – every one of us, most of the discontent we feel is we are not realizing our potential. Most of the joy we feel is when we find the impulse within us that has unique life purpose for every person. Then we start expressing it and we can be truly great when we do that.

Michael: What this reminds me of is what of course Joseph Campbell the great mythologist spoke about so often is the need to find and follow your bliss, follow that path where your joy and the world's needs intersect and then pursue that with all that you've got. That's where you find your greatest sense of purpose, meaning and inspiration, and can overcome challenges and difficulties.

I think that's exactly what you've been calling all of us to.

Barbara: I actually think for the type of what Teilhard calls homo progressivus, attracted to the future as an organism progressing toward the unknown and yearning to be part of that. That type is totally turned on by the need to realize their potential and the crisis is an evolutionary driver for us.

When I started out with our crisis is a birth and I've had five children, I can tell you birth is a crisis.

Michael: Sure.

Barbara: If you don't respond exactly right, you can kill the baby and the mother. So, Mother Earth, to be poetic and I dare to with all these sophisticated scientists, Mother Earth is giving birth to a co-creative species and I believe that Mother Earth's purpose is not that she

should stay all the same. She has not for four and a half billion years, if she is going to continue through us but we are vehicles of the potential of earth itself.

Michael: Yes. One of the things that I find myself speaking a lot in is science settings and the groups of skeptics, free thinkers and atheists and nonreligious folk who are wanting to find more inspiration in what science offers and what traditionally gets associated with spirituality.

I found a way and I want to share this with you because I don't know that I have ever shared this with you and I have been speaking a lot about this recently is I found a way I think that's been very effective in helping the less religious among us, the less spiritually inclined among us to not bristle and to in fact to embrace language such as you have just been using.

That is that I think the most important – I would consider the single most important scientific discovery about religion or spirituality in the last hundred years, and I realize that's a huge claim I am making, but I think it is true nonetheless is the recognition that our brains are inherently relational.

We can't not relate, that's the way our brains function is that we relate, and the primary way that we relate is through giving human characteristics, human attributes to what is more than human. What's other than human?

It is often called personification or anthropomorphism but it's really having an I-thou relationship, a personal intimate I-thou relationship with something that is more than human or un-human, and so whether you speak of mother earth or father earth, sister earth or sister sky, all these are relational metaphors and so when we relate to nature and to time, and to mystery, in other words, when we relate to reality in a personal way, our lives work, our cultures work.

We don't actually know of any culture in the history of humanity that survived for very long that didn't have an I-thou relationship with reality, but we've of course in our nature as an "it" to be exploited or abuses for several hundred years.

One of the things that I find common to all indigenous cultures, all native peoples, all tribal people , all Pagan peoples and all peoples that have an intimate rapport with nature, with time and mystery is we freely use personal metaphors.

I personally love Mother Earth language and I don't have to take it literally because it is like if we are going to have – Thomas Berry said it well. Thomas Berry, of course one of my great mentors, he said, "The world we live in is an honorable world. To refuse this deepest instinct of our being, to deny honor where honor is due is to place ourselves on a head-on collision course with the ultimate forces of the universe."

He said, “This question of honor must be dealt with before any other question. It is ultimately not a political, economic or even an environmental issue, it is ultimately a question of honor. Only the sense of the violated honor worth and the need to restore that honor will awaken in us the energy needed to co-create a just and healthy future,” and I think that sense of honor is what native peoples have had and what Mother Earth language and other kinds of personal language helps us get at.

Barbara: Yes, I totally agree. There is a phrase, I think it’s Martin Luther King that, “The ark of history moves slowly but it bends towards justice.”

If you look at the even the rise of morality, just to take that, and *The Rise of Violence* is an excellent book by Steven Pinker on I think it is called a better nature, the angels of our better nature.

Michael: Yes, exactly. The better angels of our nature.

Barbara: Yes, the better angels of our nature and he has very scientifically and statistically recorded our violence to each other.

Michael: Has decreased over time.

Barbara: Including the two world wars that it lessens and the way people used to treat each other without even thinking about it, torture and a debtor’s prison, cutting people, awful.

The Queen of England would ask for somebody to be tortured in front of her, absolutely the ark of history moves slowly but it bends towards justice, morality and in most human beings, not everybody but by far the vast majority and I would say that we are not trying to preserve culture as it was.

I think we did a great job in self-preservation, self-reproduction and the building of civilization. I don’t think anybody is saying we want to preserve it the way it was, it is too much inequality, too much violence, too much unconsciousness.

We are hitting an absolutely essential crisis to evolve our species or not and if we do not evolve, we will become devolved and maybe even extinct.

Michael: Yes. The way that I’ve begun speaking about it recently, in both religious and nonreligious settings is that we are about to experience the great reckoning which also I think is the great homecoming. The great reckoning is that where we have been out of right relationship to reality, to use mythic language where we have been out of right relationship with god.

We are about to experience the natural consequences of that but it's also the great homecoming. It's like the prodigal species waking up to the fact that we've squandered our inheritance and we are waking up to our predicament and hopefully, we are coming home to reality.

Again, I am speaking mythically but I imagine the entire body of life, the entire community of life cheering us on because they know that their survival, their thrival, their ability to even move, to continue into the future is largely related to how we relate to them and so to the degree that we come home to reality, come back into a mutually enhancing relationship with life, with nature and respectful, honorable relationship to time and nature, and mystery, the whole body of life is cheering us on and saying, "Yes, come on. You can do it, humans!"

Barbara: When I graduated from college in 1951, one of my professors said, "I think all the problems have been solved." The major problems of humanity had been solved, he thought, in 1951.

Everything that my generation, which was the last, was told to do we now find is wrong. We were to get married and have as many babies as possible. The men were to fight to grow and to build and we'd just won a second world war and we thought we were really great.

Humans who started with no fur, no fang, no teeth and no claws, in 50,000 years of growth had developed this incredible capacity to prevail until they saw it could destroy them and they didn't know, we did not know that over-reproduction and over-capabilities, we did not know that was wrong.

I do not feel guilty. I think the casting of guilty too far back there, when we were trying to survive and I truly honor the indigenous people for having developed a let's say more compatible sustainable lifestyle but they too, the minute they get a chance, begin to see they want to grow, so I would get rid of the guilt.

Michael: I am not sure what I said that had you think that that was guilt.

Barbara : Not you so much, but people who say we've done it wrong, we have overgrown, we are no longer going to do that. We didn't know we were overgrowing in the womb. We didn't know having too many babies was going to destroy our environment. Now we do.

I just feel there is so much by getting back to something. I don't know what we would be getting back to I think looking forward.

Michael: I agree and whatever it was that I said that had you think that I was meaning that we could have done it differently or should have done it differently in the past, that's not accurate.

When I speak of the great reckoning, all I mean is that life is a certain way. Nature is a certain way. Ecology in some ways is the science of what it means to be in right relationship to reality and if you are not, the consequences of that.

We have been out of sync with many ecological laws but we didn't know better. We were not intentionally doing the damage. It's just that now we are waking up to the fact that we need to come into alignment with the air, the water, the soil, the life of this planet and it is a terrifying prospect because so many of our institutions, our ways of doing economics, law, medicine and politics are human centered but not life centered, and so it is a huge quest.

Barbara: That's right and we have to change in order to stop one form of growth and to cultivate yet another form of optimizing life potential which I believe is in human creativity, in love and eventually, in the exploration of the universe beyond our planet.

When I say we are being born as a universal species, that's not poetic actually. I think it is literal. We are already extra-terrestrial ourselves in the solar system and we are going to go way beyond that.

I think there is a tendency for guilt that came right from also that Christian religion and the idea of us, original sin and needing salvation from original sin, if I thought Michael of anything that I would want to say might be wrong with our species, I have felt we've had an abnormal illusion of separateness from nature, from each other and from spirit or whatever is the mystery there.

It is abnormal I felt about 6-years old, I said to my parents, this is not normal here. The violence against nature, each other and the disconnect that would allow us to be violent.

Michael: I think I found Paul Shepherd's work a dozen years ago but he spoke about the fact that we are tribal creatures. We only thrive in community in the way that same way that bees need a hive to thrive and other species have their context, their social context that allows them to thrive and they simply can't thrive without that social context.

Having a community of 200 or less people who know me, who love me, who are interacting with, that's what native to the human tribing and the fact that we've now been isolated from community in most cases, isolated even from extended family and most households don't have three generations living in the household anymore and I think some of the craziness and some of the depression, some of the overwhelm and some of the terrifying sense of reality comes from our being estranged from the only context that humans have ever been able to thrive, which is community.

Barbara: Michael, I totally agree and I want to tell you something about a step in my own work. I have been teaching on the Shift Network for example for about four years and have a couple of thousand students that have taken agents of conscious evolution and all of these types of things.

I have a new executive director of the foundation who has come in to help build community among these thousands of students who have been excited by this as well as many others who are like yourselves to see, because I felt so lacking in community doing things on internet all the time and having lost my partner Sydney, I suddenly got the shock that even though I have people like yourself that I love, I don't see you.

Michael: Right.

Barbara: I realized I can't go on. You have Connie. It's a very different thing if you have a really close partner. If you do not, as many people that I am also teaching do not, because when you get to be older, very often, for example the women don't have partners and nor do they have a real sense of how to do their vocations because it's not so easy to go into the government or the health care system or something with an evolutionary perspective and think you are going to get very far right now.

I would like your help in really conceiving of and communicating the call to community of those with an evolutionary tendency, however they see it, who need each other to express and be and learn and love, and I am looking for a way to do this even for my own life, much less anybody else's.

Michael: I think what you have put your finger on is so timely and important for so many people. I actually think that you are right, Connie and I are in a very weird position because we have such an amazing, intimate, heartfelt, mission driven, evolutionary mission partnership and life and marriage.

We are always traveling. For 12 years, we have been traveling in North America, living in other people's homes, sometimes with them there or sometimes not with them there, so we've got this weird sense of continental community but we are never in one place for very long, so the true authentic deep intimate community we have with each other, but I am seeing more and more people express just what you did, which is there is this craving for genuine, authentic intimacy that's not stifling, that's actually enhancing or co-creative.

As we all know, there are some forms of community that can be very stifling of our creativity and stifling of our own emergent possibilities and I think that peak oil and climate change, I think that the current contraction of our economy where for most people in most sectors of society we are not in a growth phase, we are in a contraction phase, unless you are in the very wealthy.

I think that's beginning to force people to move in together or move next door and share items. We are finding we are being almost forced by our economic situation to find ever more ways of regaining and reclaiming various aspects of community and I think that's also going to be a really healthy thing.

Barbara: I think it is really a human necessity in many ways, including survival through this great disruption is that I don't think you can do this all by yourself.

Michael: Yes, exactly.

Barbara: Nobody even wants to be all by themselves, so particularly those of us who have reached out beyond our local environments, like I have, all over the world.

I am looking at this woman, Nina Patrick who has come in. She has been one of my students and she is a business woman for the Foundation for Conscious Evolution to cultivate community and communion among pioneering souls and then to sustain us through the great disruption so we can be at our best to serve ourselves and others.

If we are isolated, there is not a lot that any of us can do.

Michael: Exactly.

I just want to remind you of something and not so much remind you but remind whoever or just share for the first time whoever is watching and listening to this. My book, *Thank God for Evolution*, I think one of the reasons why it was widely endorsed by people in the sciences, religion and across the spectrum is because it doesn't just focus on the theological-theoretical stuff but the real practical stuff.

How do we live together? How do we relate and communicate in ways that allow us to have a mutually thriving relationship, and so Chapter 12 of my book is just practical exercises for couples and groups of people to help create a mutually thriving context.

I just want to mention that if anybody is watching or listening to this, Chapters 11 and 12 of my book, *Thank God for Evolution* are practical tools, exercises and practices to thrive in right relationship to reality, individually and collectively, and there is just some really useful stuff there.

Barbara: Very good. Yes, thank you Michael. I think that we should all look at that. I love *Thank God or Evolution*. It is on my coffee table, so everyone has got to see it, whoever comes to see me.

Michael: That's good.

Barbara: I am really eager to recreate also at the aging end of the life spectrum of ourselves that when my partner died of dementia and I went to these dementia facilities that he was in, I couldn't stand it. I almost thought I would die because there was nothing but demented people there.

I don't even know but we have conscious birthing now and conscious conception, I think we are going to have conscious dying.

Michael: We have to. We absolutely have to. It is one of the things that I sometimes do in my evening programs is I do a segment on the gifts of chaos and death in an evolving cosmos and it is what we've learned scientifically or if you want to use religious language, what god, what reality has been revealing about the nature of death at all scales of the cosmos that radically transform how we hold our own mortality and death.

Connie and I, one of the things that I do is I have a slide that shows this guy in ICU. He is clearly unconscious but he is alive. The technology, the tubes and the machines are keeping him alive and I ask this question. I say, our ancestors never had to say no to this and yet we have to choose to say no ahead of time, otherwise this is the way most of us are going to do die, just by default.

That's the de facto way, and then I say now thinking about it from a legacy standpoint, we often don't ask the question who is paying for this? You would just think, our insurance is paying for it, but imagine this guy and he is clearly in his 80s.

I imagine this guy had a fabulous life. He had a wonderful legacy. He truly made a real and lasting difference in the world and yet, in the last seven months of his life, he was kept alive like this at the cost of 38 college educations. What is his legacy?

Barbara: I think that choosing to die at the right time is just like choosing to give birth. Evolution enhances freedom that has been going on for billions of years, more free choice. So the conscious dying and probably a conscious longevity is also going to be coming in.

I once had an audience where I said to people, you might be given the choice to go on living or to die by choice and the audience was really distressed because the whole thing, "Are you trying to play God, Mrs. Hubbard?" No.

It appears that we have been given the capacity to extend life unnaturally at great cost and great suffering, actually and therefore we are also given the choice not to.

Michael: Exactly. Connie and I have given and this is a little vulnerable and risky for me to share this publicly like this, but I'll do so, Connie and I have given both sides of our family an extensive living will that lets them know what our philosophy is that we don't see death as an enemy, we don't see that humans are responsible for the existence of death in the universe or a punishment from god for eating an apple.

We don't see any of that. Death is natural. It is necessary at all scales of the universe and thus, death is no less sacred than life and that if or when we get to the place where we can't in any meaningful way contribute to either society or to our families, like caring for kids or grandkids or whatever, when or if we get to that place, we are going to call our family members together. We are going to say our good-byes and we are going to honorably, responsibly take ourselves out in the most sacred of ways.

We do not believe that to just be kept alive for the sake of being kept alive when it is a cost to society, we think that is immoral actually.

Barbara: I agree. My son died of a brain tumor and he had a glioblastoma Stage IV and they were taking out so much of his brain and finally, the doctor said to me, "We could take him to rehab and keep him going." I said, going? Would he ever have his intelligence back? "No but he will be alive." I said, no. We are going to hospice.

Michael: That's beautiful and it is difficult. I can't make that decision for anyone else and I would never try to, and I know that there are some people, some dear friends of ours who precisely in the process of their taking care of a profoundly disabled son, daughter, a friend or whatever their own compassion has been evoked and they have seen it as a positive thing.

I don't have any negativity to say to any of that but I know that from just in terms of my will, my heart, my commitment and Connie's will and commitment, this is our stance and I think that we have a death-phobic culture and I think it's very unfortunate.

Hopefully, I think the baby boomers will shift that. I think the baby boomers will demand to die on their terms.

Barbara: They are not going to die in those horrible dementia facilities. Really, and I also think we probably will be choosing longevity but that has to be a really deep thing, if we do understand the telomeres and the reason for dying. There is a lot of effort in extending life and I am very interested in that too, dying by choice and extending life by choice, possibly.

Michael: Yes. I have less enthusiasm for the extending. That's fine. I understand that there are people who really value that but it is interesting, I've got an ongoing bet with Andrew Cohen, both with Carter Fritz and Andrew Cohen.

I bet each of them \$100 that I'll be alive when Ray Kurzweil dies.

Barbara: If I may say so, I believe the capacity to extend life will not make sense on this earth but let's assume that we do create space communities, for example in the solar system. Let's assume that we are going to be explorers of the cosmos, I am not vetted to the body of home sapien sapiens.

My choice would be continuity of consciousness in many different bodies as an explorer of the universe, that's what I would like.

Michael: Yes, and I don't know quite what to do with that, because I did see the movie *Transcendence*, the one with Johnny Depp recently, as well as I saw the movie *Her*.

Barbara: I saw *Her*.

Michael: Both of those deal with these sorts of themes but I am less confident in the sense of consciousness outside of a biological body. Maybe, maybe not, I don't know but I do know this, the thought that I would live forever or live even for hundreds of years is utterly depressing.

I am looking forward to being able to die and go back into the process.

Barbara: I am sure you'll get your wish.

Michael: I am sure I will too. Barbara, any last thoughts that you would like to share around this theme of the past rooting for us and the future calling us to greatness and then anything that you can share about how people can learn more about your own work.

Barbara: I think yes, you can contact me at Evolve.org. I am launching the next phase of the foundation for those who would like to be closer to one another and create evolutionary community as the emerging community. I would really love to hear from you. Thank you.

Michael: That's great. Any last thoughts on this notion of the past rooting for us and the future calling us to greatness?

Barbara: I think the impulse of evolution is the past in us that its whole tendency is to call us to emerge as more of our potential. That's the tendency of evolution itself that is calling us to greatness.

Michael: That's great, and I am curious, as you look at the next year of your life, assuming that you will continue to be graced with good health and economy and the world that is continuing to allow us to flourish, what do you see for yourself in this next year?

Barbara: I would like to become a global voice for the conscious evolution of humanity.

Michael: You would like to become that? You are that.

Barbara: I would like to be that at another level of creating a global community around that impulse that I have been relatively narrow recently in my communication via internet and I am not exactly sure how I want to do this or how I would be invited to do this but I feel that the feminine co-creator, the feminine evolutionary that I feel I am needs that my voice and our voices need to be heard to encourage humanity to evolve and create more community, regardless of all these differences.

The community is the communion of our spirit to evolve.

Michael: Amen. That actually leads me – I know you need to go soon but there is one other question that I just really wanted to ask you, just because it is timely.

It wasn't long ago you were in the news that the Vatican was criticizing you and some of the nuns. Where is this whole conversation at now in terms of conscious evolution within and your involvement in working with the nuns who are so deeply appreciative of your work?

Barbara: I am going to spend six days in a retreat on the evolutionary Christ with Catholics and I am going to put forward with the Catholics my understanding that the story of Jesus is the story of one of the greatest evolutionaries that humanity has ever known and that I believe that he is leading the way towards the conscious evolution of humanity.

I would like to personally see the Pope and I would like to have a conversation with Pope Francis and other Catholics. I am not Catholic. I actually had no religion. I was Jewish agnostic from my origins but I would like to see the Pope with other of my beloved Catholic companions and have him say what he once said to St-Francis centuries ago, "Thank you ladies, this is what we always meant."

Conscious evolution is what Jesus was all about when he said, "You will do the works that I do." Paul said, "Greater works than these will you do, behold I show you a mystery. You shall not all sleep, you shall all be changed."

I believe that the Christian impulse that was in Jesus and Paul is the impulse of evolution that actually is about to be fulfilled.

Michael: Amen, praise Darwin.

Barbara: If you have any chances to meet the Pope, I hope we could go together.

Michael: I would love that Barbara. Thank you so much for taking time to be part of this conversation on the *Future is Calling Us to Greatness* and blessings on your work.

Barbara: Thank you Michael for everything that you and Connie do. You truly are my evolutionary family.

Michael: Yes. Same here.

Barbara: Bye-bye.

Michael: Love you. Bye-bye.