

Practical Animism Online Course: Live Call #2, May 29, 2019

Please excuse any typos and inaccuracies in this transcript.

Daniel: Thanks, and in general, don't push too many buttons because people who are supporters have the option to turn off the recording. Don't do that. No need to share your screen, stuff like that. And having said that, I'm about to share my screen because I want to share one feature that we added to the course, which is great. Seyta did that. I'll have it up for just a minute visually.

Daniel: It is a map. I assume folks can see that. But if you log into the course, if you wish to, totally optional, you can share where you're at. This is just an image, so I can't click on it right now. But it's a way that if you want to know if there's folks who are also in your area and, of course, find them, if they want, [inaudible 00:00:49] sure to do that. So, that's an option if it pleases you.

Daniel: We have a lot of questions that have been submitted in different ways, about 15 or 20 questions. I will be drawing from some. And I want to make a lot of space for what you all are bringing here, and honor that we have just about 40 minutes or so before we head into small breakout groups with the supporters.

Daniel: First off, the second lesson that was released around food and the intimacy of killing to eat, it's among the more psychologically lit or charged or potentially, I going to say controversial, but stark and maybe jarring of topics. And so, I want to honor that if anybody has felt lit up or just ... yeah, lit up emotionally by it, whatever is happening for you is welcome, is part of the learning. There's a [inaudible 00:01:45] like this from my side. I don't have the view that you need to agree with me on the topics or anything like that. So, just holding a big, kind container for whatever is present for people.

Daniel: And there is something I want to speak to that Sasha presenced, and it's a topic that I didn't focus on in the lesson per se which feels important to add, is that one of the topics I'm emphasizing there is that animals and plants are not ... one is not morally above the other. When we kill plants to eat their bodies, we're still choosing to kill a relative of part of our extended family, and that warrants consideration and accountability and a sense of gratitude and awareness when we do that. That we should do that not only with plants, but also with animals.

Daniel: And in saying that, I'm not saying that we shouldn't consider the ecological impact of eating, because obviously that matters a great deal. But what I don't want to say is it's just based on animals and plants, and that eating plants is always better than eating animals ecologically. I spent time in Alaska, and eating locally sourced mountain

goat or salmon is going to be less of a carbon footprint or less ecologically harmful than eating imported avocados or mangoes in that situation.

Daniel: People live in a lot of northern places or rely a bit more on animal proteins. And people in the tropics might have animals that are just hanging out, and they're not needing imported grain, necessarily. I see that when I'm in Nigeria. And so, I don't want to have the view that eating animals is always more ecologically impactful or straining on the system. Having said that, it's often true. It's not always, but often true in modern western situation where there's a lot of industrial farming and agriculture.

Daniel: And so, my basic guideline is eat in a way that's good for your body and your life. Try to do that really responsibly in terms of the ethics on all the levels, including ecological impact. And say thanks, like whoever you're eating. I took our cat to the vet this morning, and there were Starbursts, and I like them. I don't buy them, but there's one there, and I had it. It was so good. And I didn't even feel guilty about it. And I didn't do a whole prayer. But we want to have a sense of appreciation for the beings that we're eating, even if they're not high vibration all the time. So, let me speak to that. That's good. I wanted to name that up front.

Daniel: If you have a question, it's okay to raise your hand now. And I'm going to start to chew through some of the questions that people submitted, because some of them are really interesting.

Daniel: There's a great question that a couple folks have asked around what do I mean about dropping in. Can I say something about that? When I'm like, "Okay, tune in and notice a connection with this plant" or "Tune in and ... " something like that. So yeah, I'm making an assumption that if you're familiar with ritual or ceremony or work with the spirits or something like that, then you have a practices that works for you most of the time to tune into the others. Now not everybody has that, necessarily. And it's something that you can cultivate and reclaim.

Daniel: And there's not just one way to do it. I did respond in the FAQ section, so there's some tips in there to reference. But in general, it helps to drop your attention into your heart and belly and hips and feet if you tend to be a little more mental or upper body with your energy. So, being physically active in some way just for a minute, shaking it out, stretching, shaking it off. Attend to your own energy a bit so you're dropped in a little more.

Daniel: Set the space with some intentionality with a candle or aromatic smoke, plants or sound, prayer, whatever it is. Set a bit of ritual intent. And from that place, often it's about allowing yourself the permission to feel out how you get to a sense of contact with the beings you're trying to contact. And if you notice that you feel a little

shaky or afraid or on edge about doing that, giving attention to ritual safety can be important as well. It depends how much you're endeavoring. It's a big topic here.

Daniel: But drop into your body, set a good ritual container, make sure there's some ritual safety that is present for you. And then trust your heart on the situation. Know that your intuition is going to look a little bit different than other people's. And this reclaiming of our ability to relate with the others is itself an act of decolonization. It's an act of cultural repair and healing. So, let me say just that much for now because it's a big topic. But that's something for the moment.

Daniel: I'm going to look for hands up. I see one from Gail Louise. Let me take one other question from my stack here, which is one from Elizabeth. What pronoun do I use when speaking about other-than-human kin? That's good. I try to use they/them, because it is the best. It's not the only way, but it's the way that I feel for me is most authentic and most grammatically not a stretch in English to convey neutrality or ambiguity around gender, because I don't want to gender the entirety of the university.

Daniel: Now if I see a mother bear with cubs, I might say, "She's climbing the tree." And so, does that, in a sense, gender the bear? It does. But as a default, I'm going to try to use they and them to not reinforce like for our daughter and how we're raising her that everything must be in the binary in terms of how we approach the other than human world.

Daniel: It's a very personal question to feel out. And it's one that's very culturally determined as well. I studied Arabic. So in Arabic, even the second person, you, is gendered at times. And in Yoruba, in contrast, there's no he/she/it. It's all one pronoun. So, some languages do more gendering than others.

Daniel: And there's a question from Tom about rocks being referred to as grandfathers. And I'd be interested in the older language, which I think is [inaudible 00:08:56]. And if the word ... because it could be the word that means like a grandparent. And so, rather than grandfather/grandmother, or it might be [it's 00:09:08] gendered in the old language. But sometimes a gender neutral word will get translated into English with a gendering that wasn't there in the original language.

Daniel: But aside from that, there's a conveying of a status of elder with the Stone People. And in that sense, yeah, for one, they are the most stable thing in our physical environment along with metals and other aspects of elemental earth in general, and bone and the body. And so, they have the seniority and a status just in that regard.

Daniel: And it's been my observation, at least in the time I've gotten to sit in Lakota spaces and the Inipi ceremony of purification lounge, the stones are referred to

in English as grandfathers, [inaudible 00:10:05], and the sacred stones in [inaudible 00:10:11] in Lakota. But the sense is that they are ... The designation of grandparent, or even mother/father, let alone grandparent, can be a way of just conveying this being is your elder. This being is placed in a senior category to you. We're going to get into this in lesson seven.

Daniel: It matters a lot, because it is conveying something about what etiquette is going to get the best results in the relationship. So, if you encounter an elder, you're probably not going to be like, "Yo, what's up? How you doing? Let me show you this thing on Facebook." Maybe you will. But for a lot of times you might be like, "Hello, Grandmother. Good to see you. I bow to you. Can I get you anything?" There's a sense of deference and politeness.

Daniel: And so, if we call some other-than-human kin, let's say the Stone People, by a name that refers to them as old, we're also saying be polite. Recognize you're in the presence of power. And you're going to get better results if you approach with humility. And a term like grandfather denotes kinship. And so, it's saying we're ... If you want to know the story, we're very related. And you'll notice that these grandfathers are earlier generations than the humans.

Daniel: So, all that and the other things, too, are conveyed in a title like that. But otherwise, it's culture to culture how they get referred to. Again, in Yoruba culture, I don't think it's like that with the stones. But they speak. They just might not be referred to as elders or grandfathers necessarily. Yeah. Thanks.

Daniel: Let me see. There's some hands up. I saw Gail Louise first. I'm going to unmute you, and then if you would, just share where you're calling in from as well, and then go for it with your question.

Gail Louise: Hi Daniel. Gail Louise calling in from Yeppoon, Queensland, Australia.

Daniel: Great. Good morning. Yeah.

Gail Louise: Sorry to miss you in Mullumbimby. I was thinking of you when I really wanted to be there. But I'm sure you had a wonderful time and met a lot of wonderful people.

Daniel: We did, thank you. Yeah.

Gail Louise: Yeah. And I've been reading all your wonderful reference material that you sent out. Thank you so much for that.

Daniel: You're welcome.

Gail Louise: It's been great. And I wanted to ask you a question about the beliefs. And you touched on Protestant beliefs. Can you elaborate on that a little bit, please? Thank you.

Daniel: Yeah. No, I'm happy to. Yeah, thanks. Belief. The focus on belief per se is ... I don't know that it's unique to Protestant Christianity. But it's especially emphasized in a Protestant approach to reality. And then that focus on what do you believe becomes a way that people who have been raised in a culture influenced by Protestant Christianity, which is a lot of people on this course, a way that we start to think about other traditions.

Daniel: So, I say, "Okay, this person is Buddhist or this person, they're from this tribal nation or whatever. What do they believe?" Well, that's the wrong question. That's a Protestant way of thinking of opening a conversation. And I'm not saying it's bad, necessarily. I'm not a Christian, respect to Christians and to the diversity of from within Christianity.

Daniel: But most cultures in most part of the world ... And I'm drawing here on Graham Harvey's book, *Food, Sex and Strangers*. And he's saying if you look at how cultures relate with food, how they relate with sex, and how they relate with outsiders or strangers, you'll find that those are more common themes that all cultures have important information about than actually what you believe in terms of a doctrine or something.

Daniel: And so, you'll see this in ... A lot of traditionalists will be like, "I see that you're having good values. You're honoring the earth. You're honoring your ancestors. You're doing our tradition." And the person will be like, "Well, am I" I don't know. I don't know what you believe." And they're like, "Well, it doesn't matter what you believe. Your actions are reflecting your respect for the sacred powers. We care about what you do and how you life and how you move in the world." Rather than saying, "You can do whatever you want as long as you believe this thing."

Daniel: And so, the focus on belief, it's a projection of a certain set of norms onto others in a way that actually is ... it leads us to ask the wrong questions. So, if we said instead, "Who are the powers you're accountable to? Who are the elders that feature most strongly in your stories about life? How do you negotiate the fact that we need to kill to eat on a heart level?" If we ask those questions of people, then ...

Daniel: And imagine, an indigenous person rolling up to Rome and being like, "I see you're a Catholic priest. What do you do with your food? How do you bless it? Or

who are your elders? Who are the holiest for you? Who are the beings that hold up the universe?" And so, they could still answer, but it'd be like, "Well, we believe in this" "What do you mean believe? You mean you focus on it a lot?" They're like, "Yeah, I guess that's what we mean." And so, the idea of belief as an important concept, it doesn't extend beyond this little ... It's not universal.

Daniel: Yeah. So, thank you. I'm glad you asked that question. It's important because it is something that if we don't examine it will unconsciously ... Like asking even what do Buddhists believe. It's the wrong question. And then there's a whole body of literature in the west that distorts the dharma. And its really earthy relational setting in Asia by asking the question of what do you believe rather than how do you feed the ghosts, or what are the rituals you do to honor the trees when you have to cut them? Those are just folk things. Those aren't actually part of the dharma. Well, it's because you asked the wrong question, then it led you into beliefland. Yeah. Yeah. Thanks, Gail. That's good.

Daniel: Let me go to another question in my stack, and then there's a question from Michael Gregory. "How does one know when another person is alive or not?" There seems to be this focus on everything being alive or something like that. Yeah, it seems like a little bit of a heady question, but let me unpackage it because it's another opportunity to say a thing. And I apologize if I've spoken to this previously. I don't think I have. But it's another example of a wrong question, like is it alive or not alive.

Daniel: What we mean by alive, pragmatically speaking, is relating or capable of relating. When we say someone is ... "You're dead to me," I've just made you dead, to me at least, by choosing to not relate with you. I've killed you. And when we say to someone ... Think of all the times in the movies or in your actual life. You're walking past something. You didn't think it was alive and it moved suddenly, whether it's a human you thought was dead or something. It's like, "There is life, because there's movement, because there's relationship."

Daniel: And so, there's an interaction that Graham Harvey writes about or I think it's Anishinaabe or Ojibwe, like Northern Great Lakes. Indigenous person being asked by an anthropologist, "Are all the stones alive?" And it gets quiet. And that like, "Well, you're asking the wrong question, but let me try to answer your way." And responds with, "No. No/wrong question. But any of the stones are potentially alive at any time."

Daniel: Potentially, meaning that at any point a Stone Person could speak and turn its attention toward a living person in a way that ... the human person, rather, and gets the attention of the human person. And as soon as there's an interaction happening, of course the other is alive, because that one's relating.

Daniel: So, is any particular stone capable of relating in any given moment? For sure. Not just stones, but lamps and pens and old car tires and all of it is potentially capable of relating at any moment. Are they relating in every moment? Well, if they are, I'm not picking it up because it would flood my consciousness, and it would lead to a kind of ... it would be too much. So, we have to have selective attention to not be overwhelmed. Yeah.

Daniel: So, it depends. You're not always alive, in other words, to everything, because you're not always relating to everything consciously. So alive, not alive, I don't know. The question doesn't compute. It's a good one to deconstruct. It's not a traditionally worded question of alive, not alive.

Daniel: Great. I see a question from Diana. And so, I'm going to unmute. Just share where you're calling in from, if you would.

Diana: From San Francisco, California. Hi Daniel.

Daniel: Hey.

Diana: It's Diana. It's Artemis.

Daniel: I know. I see you now. I didn't see you. Hi.

Diana: Hi. Thanks. So, I wanted you to speak more about something you'd said in your talk. And I also wanted to relate it to what Pollan was saying in the TED Talk around that plants are manipulating us in this Darwinian way in the Botany of Desire and his little TED Talk that you shared with us the link to. And are we supporting the perpetuation of the biota? And you had said that there was the complicated history of things like cotton and sugar and coffee. There's complicated histories around a lot of plants and, currently I feel like, corn.

Daniel: Yeah, yeah.

Diana: And so, I just wanted to hear a little bit more about you saying ... You said something about them drawing us to them. And do you feel like they're drawing us to them is some relationship to the complicated history? I don't know. I thought it was a interesting thing that you'd said about them having a complicated history, them drawing us to them, and how is that related. Because I feel like the things that he was talking about in his book, Botany of Desire, specifically potatoes, tulips, marijuana, they kind of did have complicated histories as well.

Daniel: They do. Let me talk about making children for a minute. We did that, and we have a lovely daughter, and that's demanding and complicated. I'm just reaching on my desk. I have a shot glass. It was a gift from somebody from Ibiza. And it's kind of cool and it's kind of like whatever. And I think of these objects as like orphaned, if you will, objects sometimes as the children between the humans and the elementals. And when we call physical things, if you will, into being, they're children. And we have a kind of accountability to the things we make.

Daniel: And I see that when ... There's layers of good questions in what you're bringing up, so I'm glad you're speaking to it. One of them is when we make karma, if you will, with a being. When we're like, okay, a bunch of European aristocratic folks with poor values realized they like the taste of sugar, and that it is something they can sell to people as well, and so it becomes one of the big drivers for the transatlantic slave trade. Is that effect the storyline of this still sacred and now very bound up in human suffering plant that is sugar? Yeah, totally. Is the story that we could tell about that one of humans harming the plant, or of the plant somehow wanting to spread, or a bit of both? Yeah.

Daniel: I think the most compelling narrative of what's happening. What I like about Michael Pollan, and it's not unique to him, is he's flipping the story to say, "What if apple and cannabis and corn actually have agency, and they're the ones driving us?" So, that's a fresh shakeup of our story that we're in control of everything.

Daniel: And I don't know that that story is ... That move alone isn't that satisfying, because it's kind of just a flip of the power dynamic or of the agency story. It doesn't get to this really messy, beauty-oriented co-creation. HE might get to that. That's not a commentary on him. But the thing that's interesting to me is what's the redemptive story, meaning the one that makes space for the voice? Like what does sugar really have to say about it?

Daniel: If we sit down and collective interview the elder that is the animating consciousness of the plant that is sugar, who's also having an experience of so many people even in this course right now who have ingested that being today, and ask what's going on for you? What's your story? What's your experience of this. Then from that listening, we can move from an unconscious, or even non consensual, relationship into a more consensual, more conscious relationship. It doesn't mean all all that painful history isn't still there, but it means that a new type of co-created story can begin to be told.

Daniel: I think I shared this some, but the question came up in I think the Facebook forum, so I'll speak to it again for a minute. When I was interacting Joseph Rael, I just met him once. Beautiful Painted Arrow. He was in the clips in this lesson

because he speaks to it pretty acutely. And I asked him, "Are you suggesting that because when we eat the plants, they have an experience of us, are you suggesting that human is somehow a better, a more advanced or more desirable form than plant?"

Daniel: And he just responded. He's like, "What's your name?" I'm like, "Oh shit." And he's like, "What's your full name?" Like, "Daniel James Foor." And he's like, "That's the experience they want." I'm just like digesting. Okay. I'm like, "What's that download of interesting perspective." What I take him to be saying is it's much more specific somehow. And I don't know what to do with that beyond that necessary to say that it's not in the abstract that these relationships are playing out. It's in a very specific way.

Daniel: And so, the specific beings that you're specifically eating today are getting to have a very specific experience of you. It's not just human only in the abstract. And who's driving that? My answer to that is what's the most loving and inclusive and interesting story we could possibly tell about it? That's more interesting than what's true about it, is what's the story that brings the most kindness and the most authenticity and vulnerability and relationality into the world. It's a story that involves the voices of the others and our voice, too, as a starting point.

Daniel: Good. Yeah, thanks. It's a portal to a big, rich conversation. Let me go to another one. We wanted to talk about human sacrifice. Yeah, that'll be good. No, it's in the field. Because as soon as we ... What I'm saying is we should question a bit anything that sets up a hierarchy that says animals are morally superior to plants in all situations. And it's not to recognize that there aren't differences. There are between them. And it feels different to me to harvest kale than to butcher a pig. I can be all animus teacher guy, but those two things do feel different to me.

Daniel: And so, then the question rises. Well, if humans are not above others, that we're all just related, is it inherently problematic to kill other humans or to eat their bodies? Now this is not the first time this question has been asked. It's ritually practiced in not many places, though, but a handful of places on earth. And more handful in recent past and quite a few historically. And people in a pinch if they're really in starvation conditions will eat others, of course.

Daniel: I think it's a good taboo to maintain, to not eat other humans personally, for all kinds of reasons. But what to say about it? What happens is there's not an inherent moral superiority that humans carry in when you really start to deconstruct the idea that we're superior and at the center of things. And so, then it's just ... it kind of runs off like instinctual good form to not do it. I'm not sure that I have ... I wish I had a better, more scripted answer than that besides to say we shouldn't do it.

Daniel: What is true is that it's important to recognize that modern western cultures in general participate in a tremendous amount of human sacrifice. It just happens in a less structured way. We make a public legal display of executing people. There are tens of millions of people who have died in the last century through war. And so, we set out to kill other people who we think have things we want or are worthy of being killed by us.

Daniel: And so, war, the violence that happens through bad policing, the violence that happens through domestic violence, or other kinds of violence where homicide occurs, it's perhaps not fully consciously ritualized. But I would suggest that that is very much human sacrifice, in a sense, or it's a way in which the unconscious archetypes or deities or gods and goddesses or powers that are moving through us are seeking to be fed. So, it's messy and fatal and super problematic. And so, it's already happening.

Daniel: And there's a comment I say about Graham Harvey mentions cannibalism as an act of compassion in some tribes. Yeah, it's important to understand why other humans are being eaten if they are. It's such an intense taboo in this culture. I am not suggesting we do that. And there are all kinds of health reasons not to do it besides legal and social reasons not to. But we're not better than others. Really. And holding the view that you are is painful for your own heart.

Daniel: You can hold that stance of humility and still not eat your neighbors. Both those things are compatible. You notice I struggle. I'm struggling to have some moral doctrinal reason why you shouldn't eat other people, and I'm like I can't really find one. You just shouldn't. So, it's okay to go on instinct in that way. Traditionally, there would be stories discouraging it, just like don't do it.

Daniel: But if you think ... What I would say is if you notice yourself judging cultures that have a recent history of human sacrifice, look in the mirror about how we hold that, because that happens a great deal still. In some ways, if we made that into a ritual process, it might even shine a mirror on what's already happening. Again, not really suggesting that.

Daniel: Let me go to looks like Phlaurel. You're off mute. Say your name if you would.

Phlaurel: Phlaurel. Can you hear me?

Daniel: I can. Go for it. Yeah.

Phlaurel: Okay. I'm Phlaurel. Thank you so much.

Daniel: Great.

Phlaurel: I'm in Omaha, the land of the Omaha tribe and heart of the land, really. And the rivers are really high right now, so a lot of water everywhere. And my question was about if you have any suggestions for skillfully navigating transition, like the dilation of consciousness. Because I feel like ... I appreciated you saying we want to not get overwhelmed and sort of flooded. But I find myself ... I'm not sure I always know what too much is. And so, since there's so much of the just shutting off in the culture, I don't know, I guess I can be more specific.

Phlaurel: In working with this practice this week of things that I'm eating, I find that I want to stop, have these cherries, and I want to stop before every cherry and have an individual conversation. Right? And there's this feeling of, yeah, flooding is a good word, the sort of drowning of wanting to just fully immerse and not having really the skillsets to go slowly.

Phlaurel: And so, really compassion for how much of the shutoff culturally there is, because it's a grieving for the loss while starting to do the thing that was lost. And so, I find myself sometimes having something in my mouth, and midway through just starting to eat it being like, "Oh shit. Sorry." It just feels like I would love some skills on how to ...

Daniel: Yeah, yeah. Let me speak to it a bit. It's good. I imagine others are sitting with it, too. It's important to not be perfectionistic about stuff and to be kind with yourself around it and easygoing. I think if we contract into a sense of should or of guilt or of shame, then we're at risk of wanting to pull back from life.

Daniel: There's a great post about somebody feeling like they tuned in with chicken, and chicken's like, "You need to get up off your ass and live" and whatever they said. But it was like, "Do it for the chickens" was kind of the conclusion. It was like if you can motivate to get out of a stuck state, do it for the chickens. And it was beautiful, because what it conveys to me is the quality of indebtedness, to actually embrace that and to be like, "It's good. Others on the daily are giving their lives for us."

Daniel: So, what do we do about that? Do we feel overwhelmed because we should have a practice around it? Do we feel like kind of mad that we haven't slowed down? We're never going to be able to get out of debt. It's good, through. It's like if you're tangled up in a thing, it's the moment where you're like do you try even harder to get untangled from it, or do you just surrender to just being messy and karmically all bound up in things and connected to it, and walk into the mess and into the tangled relatedness of things?

Daniel: And so, in a moment like that of feeling maybe like you should be doing more, or you're just flooded by ... If you're flooded, it's okay to invite the intensity to decrease a bit and to kind of ground out and focus on other things. So, you want to stay within a range that is good for your nervous system. So, that's true.

Daniel: But if it's about a feeling of should, like you should be doing more and doing all that, the grandfathers, if you will, the old stable powers who are hundreds of millions of years old, they'll be like, "You're okay. You're okay. Think you're okay. Go slow. Just be with us." And so, when we can slow down, then that slowing down is its own kind of thanks. And so, they want our presence, I think, as much as anything. Good.

Daniel: Let's do it like this. I want to honor the time that we set, which is to have about 45 minutes of discussion. And I know there's some questions that folks have and some ones I didn't get to. And then to head into small group space. And I will participate in that, Lindsey, if it's not too late. If it is, whatever.

Daniel: And then after that half-an-hour in small group space, I will hang out for a little bit just because I enjoy the connection from my side as well. It's good to see you all. So, if you have other questions that didn't get spoken to in the small group, then I'll hang out for a little bit after as well. And I want to honor everybody's time for the small group. So, let's make that happen here. Lindsey, yeah? Sound good?

Lindsey: Okay, I have people set up in groups. If you need to leave, we hope you don't. But if you do need to leave, this is the time to do so. You'll want to click on leave meeting, which is in red letters. If you're on a computer, look in the lower right hand side. Look for leave meeting in red and click on it. If you're on an iPad or mobile app, you'll want to look for leave meeting in your upper left hand corner in red letters. So, look for leave meeting and click on it.

Daniel: Great.

Lindsey: We'll just give a minute or so to see who leaves and who goes, and we'll adjust the groups accordingly.

Daniel: Yeah. And just as a reminder for the small group leader, start by making sure that folks can speak up and you can manage folks by the manage participants bar at the bottom with the sound. And then just try to make sure everybody has a chance to say something from the heart. And let's go easy on too much advice giving and stuff like that, but just to make a space for folks to be heard and maybe give a little feedback if you want it about what's alive for you with the learning. And then I'll hang out after that as well.

Daniel: We could spend a whole ... Just interrupt, Lindsey, when we're there. But we could spend a whole course easily just on the kin, the relatives that we're eating. Obviously, really charged and intimate and layered and ecologically important, psychologically important topic. So, we'll circle back throughout a bit, but I want to introduce it up front because it has a lot of implications. So, thanks. Yeah. We're still taking a minute.

Daniel: There was one other ... I'll speak to one other question real quick before we hit the small groups. There's a question about whether animism evolved though changes over time, or if it's civilization, so to speak, squeezing out animism or whatever. But the question implies that animism is an actual thing. I don't think it's a thing. I'm not asking anyone to believe in animism. It's not like a belief system in that way. So, let's not hold a Protestant way of thinking about animism.

Daniel: And you can be an animist and a Protestant Christian. You can be animist and anything else. Most people who are animist don't care about animism as a label or have never heard of it. It just suggests that you really are prioritizing relationship in how you approach life, and that you recognize that it's not just humans who are people. There are many other kinds of people, the salmon and stones and spirits and all kinds of other people. So, if [crosstalk 00:41:26].

Lindsey: Okay, we're all set.

Daniel: Yeah, great. Let's do it. Yeah. Thanks.

Lindsey: Okay, so I'm going to open the rooms. If you see a join button, you'll need to click on that join button to get into your room. And opening the rooms now. You'll be in there for 30 minutes. Here we go.

Daniel: Great. If there's anything that this ... I don't know how long I have, because we have some people coming to the house. But I'm going to glance at questions that came in to me and notice anybody have their hand up. Yeah. Appreciate you all. Think that's obvious. But I like the hanging out space. Let me go to Belleszo ... Yeah. You know who you are. I just took you off mute. You had your hand up.

Beleszove: Beleszove.

Daniel: Great.

Beleszove: Thank you so much for your generosity with your time and your answers. Something that's been coming up for me this week is wondering if there's a difference between animism and anthropomorphization.

Daniel: Yeah.

Beleszove: I'd learned that to anthropomorphize is like to reduce the personhood of the other. But it also seems like it could be a bridge in helping to see it as something other than like them as something other.

Daniel: Yeah. No, I understand. I don't know if it was Louise or [inaudible 00:43:26]. I just saw you asked on Facebook at some point about ... Maybe I guess Seyta connected you. You're asking about the Stone People and about if the stone split, does it become more than one person. I think it was somebody else actually asked it.

Daniel: Let me engage with your question. My reference point in general is that we want to apply the same ... As a starting point, we look to what works in interpersonal relationships between living humans in terms of kindness, respect, boundaries, etiquette, reciprocity, values that we know tend to support healthy relationships. And we bring those same sensibilities into the relationship with the other than humans as a starting point, knowing that that isn't always going to go easily or well. Because there are a lot of different kinds of relationship that happen on different power differentials and different needs and all that. But it's a starting point to notice what works well for relationships tends to work well for all kinds of different people.

Daniel: Now there's a risk that in doing that, I'm saying you should project human norms onto the other than humans. Now in the one sense that can be rude, because it suggests that they're going to be like us when they're not. In another sense it's polite, because it extends to them the same level status or personhood or valuing that we do with other living humans, hopefully. All right?

Daniel: And so, is there a risk that we are just saying the whole universe is like humans? There is. But usually anthropomorphizing or making things in the shape of anthro or human, usually that's a way for judgey, colonialist minded people to describe what they are judging as a superstitious or unevolved way of people thinking that other than humans are like people. And so, usually it's like an intellectual dig. And not always, but usually it's held that way.

Daniel: So, you have to see how's that being used. If it's being used in that way, well then be like, "Well, you're being judgey. You're being a judgey, colonialist minded person." But if it's more like someone saying, "Hey, relative. I notice that you're trying to relate with that yarrow plant like you do with your partner, but this yarrow plant needs a different style of approaching if you want to get a response." Well then, that's a different thing. That's a question of bringing more nuance to how we're relating with the others. Does that speak some to what you're ...

Beleszove: Yeah, it does. I was thinking specifically when we're going on these journeys to meet them, and they're coming back and saying these things. Is that just to comfort us? Is that really what they're saying, or is that just applying our schema?

Daniel: Well, that gets into the question of are we having really clear soul to soul contact with another. All those same questions come up with every relationship with another living human as well. If you've ever tried marriage, for example, or just partnership. Be like, "Am I just applying my own schemas, or am I hearing what I want? Am I actually meeting the other?" So, all that. "Is the intimacy working? What do I need to do? Is there too much or not enough of me?" All that negotiation that needs to happen for real contact and intimacy to occur, it's that rich and fraught and complicated with the others as well, and full of potential.

Daniel: And so, yeah, we can totally project our stuff onto them. And we can also only be open to hearing a really limited bandwidth of things. And we can imagine we're hearing something that's not really what's happening. And all that can occur. But that's the richness of just relationship, because it's a total disaster and beautiful mess and all kinds of things. So, good.

Daniel: We'll finish soon. See if there's anything else that I want to say. One theme I'll speak to is sometimes the topic around food can snag people's perfectionism and sense of deserving. I know we spoke to it a little bit earlier. But look, be really good with yourself. If there's anything that's going to get us out of the big cultural mess that we're in, whatever it is, there's going to be a lot of love and a lot of messiness involved in that and a lot of kindness.

Daniel: And so, if you don't feel worthy of things, then bed the earth to put you in touch with love enough to know your own goodness and to have a healing around your heart and all that, and to ask to be shown your own worth and your own specific goodness.

Daniel: Last thing I'll say maybe is a goal, if you will, for this work or this course or something is becoming even more regular sized. And it takes a lot of crashing around and practice and vulnerability to be not too big, not too small. And it means we have to really hold our center and be authentic and be accountable to what we're here to do, but to make a lot of space for others and to appreciate them and love them and lift them up along the way, and go out and be part of a bigger network. And it sounds easy in theory, but then you get to doing it, and it's like, "Whoa." So, yeah. Let me say just that.

Speaker 7: Daniel?

Daniel: Yep, I'm coming.

Speaker 7: Would you like it down there or are you going to come up?

Daniel: No, I'll be right up.

Speaker 7: Okay.

Daniel: Yeah. So, that's my cue. Thanks, everybody, for your presence. Thanks, Lindsey, for the support and all the supports. Truly keep speaking up throughout the course and ask for what you need. Be a little bit all in like that. If I haven't responded ... If you don't get a response within like let's say four days, follow up. Very occasionally we somehow lose track of something or whatever it is. But don't go into like, "This course is dumb" or "Nobody loves me" or whatever. Just speak up again, and we'll respond. It's like an accident if we didn't get back to you, because we're really responsive about that. So, thank you everybody for your engagement and your sincerity. Appreciate it.

Lindsey: Thank you, Daniel.

Daniel: Yep.

Lindsey: Bye.

Daniel: Bye.

Beleszove: Thank you. Bye. Thanks. Bye-bye.