

Practical Animism Online Course: Live Call #4, June 19, 2019

Please excuse any typos and inaccuracies in this transcript.

Daniel: So we're recording now. It's June 19, 2019, and acknowledgement to the holiday, I guess holiday is the right word, in the United States of the commemoration of the real, more official end of slavery, 1865 in Texas. And, in that way, solidarity and respect for the human slavery that continues on Earth today and how, as we're talking about boundaries and etiquette and consent, to recognize that very acute body level harm is continuing to play out in this moment on Earth. So we hold that in our awareness in a kind way, in a way that holds solidarity for people still really suffering in these very acute ways.

Daniel: Let me say a couple things, just as highlights about the lesson, and then we'll chat it up. And then next week, we're going to talk about something slightly lighter than killing and sacrifice and consent violations and all that. It feels important that we lay a groundwork for the gravitas and the depths of the terrain that we're moving in, and we see that what we keep holding in this conversation between the maps that we make about human-to-human relationships, and how those maps often but don't always apply to how we negotiate relationships with other kinds of people who are not human, or who are not visible. Maybe they're human, but they're not visible. Yeah, so we'll keep exploring that back and forth, and what transfers and what doesn't.

Daniel: In the most recently released lesson on consent and boundaries, one of the things I wanted to make sure that people understand moving into relationship with the others, because it's sometimes... not always, but it's sometimes a bit more subtle because we're relating with beings, or with the people whose body isn't... You're relating with the spirit of the Crow, let's say. That includes the physical crows on earth, but also it includes the crow, as this spirit, collection of spirits, this big thing, deity thing, that you can just speak to directly as like, Crow, with a capital C.

Daniel: And so when you get into relating with people who don't always have physical, concrete bodies like we do, navigating boundaries can require even more awareness, and we want to be mindful of how we replicate what's healthy, or unconsciously replicate what isn't healthy in terms of what we have learned about navigating boundaries. Because if we can't receive a no from others, and we can't say no ourselves, then our yes is weak, at best. Being able to give a strong, robust affirmative yes in requests from the Others, or requests to the Others, it requires us making sure our "no" is up to speed.

Daniel: Say just that maybe. I see there are already questions coming through. I have a handful of really alive questions that have come in with the google docs, I want to

speak to those. I have a few just course-tending things real briefly. One is that the course is closed now for registration. People who signed up for only part one, if you decide to sign up for part two, that's welcome. Reminder that even less than the ancestral lineage healing work, if you participated in that. This work is not so sequential, it's not so linear. So don't worry if you haven't listened to the last lesson and you just want to come for the live conference, or you jump around a bit with the course. It's not a big problem. Just follow your own rhythm, trust what's nourishing you, and follow your lead with that. It's fine.

Daniel: The Facebook space is... Appreciation for people engaging there. It's a bit lively in moments, which is totally fine. Social media is a horrible and a fantastic way to learn about boundaries and about etiquette and all that. It's like, etiquettes are really strange and kind of problematic, but also good for learning kind of lens. So let's be good with each other, and if somebody does something that's weird, let's still be good to each other.

Daniel: Good. And the recordings from these are now available, just an audio file, if that's useful to you. If you want to listen to it later in the car or something like that, we have that available.

Daniel: The last thing I'll say before I get into questions is one of the invitations with this lesson is to really take a moment to examine if you tend to see yourself as a victim of life; or as someone who is inherently always structurally harmful toward others, say, a victimizer; and if you notice that you really dwell in one identity over the other, to see that there's a risk in that. I'm not minimizing, as an American, all the things white dude, the reality of systemic oppression when I say this. Some people are socially positioned in ways that suck more, or they bear the brunt of structural and interpersonal oppression, so that's super real. Not minimizing that. I'm saying that you want to notice that you don't create a self-perception that you're basically harmed by the universe, or that you're basically harmful toward others only, because it'll make it hard to see the stories to challenge that and it'll function as a kind of skew, or an interference, in the ability to enjoy intimacy with others, whether they're human people or other than human people.

Daniel: I don't think we fight our experience, I think we just create more space most of the time. In creating a lot more space for different kind of experience within ourselves, there can be a little bit of neutrality that eventually arises. The ability to just witness what's happening. So respect to that.

Daniel: There's a great question from Kira that came in, and then I'll go to some of the folks on the call, kind of go back and forth. Kira's saying that I'm highly sensitive and

empathic, can pick up on other people's energy, and set intent to not be so sensitive but it happens, and you kind of...boundary diffuse. I do meditation, but how do I not be an energetic sponge in a way that sucks? That's my paraphrasing.

Daniel: That's a great question. Folks can be boundary diffuse because you had a shitty childhood and you anticipate danger by making your energy body the size of your surroundings so that you could survive, and some people might be boundary diffuse because that's just their temperament. They have a lot of, you could say, constitution of water, or just like, frog medicine. Amphibians are very receptive to what's around them.

Daniel: I'm not super like that, so I sometimes... not forget, but I can unintentionally go on my own settings, which are different from that. One way to work with it is to not fight your temperament too much, and just accept that, at least for the foreseeable future, be a bit boundary diffuse. Some practical things that can help on a subtle energy hygiene kind of level are learning what works for you to cleanse your space energetically, and do that regularly. You need fresh running water, so to speak. You can literally use water, you can do smoke or sound, or whatever the practices are. Changing your clothes if you need to, you need a shift from a certain space to another. Wearing lighter clothes is a practice sometimes people work with. Maintaining your energetic hygiene is another thing.

Daniel: An advantage of being a bit boundary diffuse is that you pick up on what's around you, so it's especially important for people with those settings to have good people around you, because you're going to take in what's around you. It could be annoying to be an energetic sponge, but you could just hang out with super cool enlightened people. It's going to rub off on you, really quickly. So surround yourself with good people, seriously, and good energies if you can.

Daniel: Another basic kind of protection, boundary-type thing, is be really clear about where you need to be and where you don't need to be. Because most of the time you get in trouble, or a person gets in trouble with funky energy. Not always, but often. It's because you're out of your lane of destiny, so to speak, you're in somebody else's business, and you get kind of blown up over there. So making sure that you are really on track with your life, even on, like, "Where do I need to be today?" That'll reduce, generally, the amount of unnecessary suffering in your world.

Daniel: And then, be willing to listen to the fears, and interview them and understand them. Because sometimes we have a "fear is unhelpful" idea, and I don't think that's an honoring way to work with the sacredness of fear. Sometimes fear is bringing a lot of useful information about where there's an actual danger, or where an actual change needs to be made. So make sure to create a lot of space to listen to what

the more sensitive aspects of yourself are picking up on, and discern whether or not a change needs made around it.

Daniel: You can do things to layer up your energy body. It's a big topic, we could do a whole course on it, but those are a few things that come to mind.

Daniel: The other is, don't feel from a really, "I'm alone in the universe" stance, that you personally have to hold all of your energetic protection in your own body. You can have forces and powers and systems around you that confer protection. This happens when people have like Secret Service, personal security, things like that, that they're contracting out the protection work. It happens on a spirit level, too, and it's not a bad idea. It can increase actual safety, and so the best way to feel safer is to become safer, actually. So tend to that. Don't dismiss or delegitimize you're own concerns if you have them. I know it's a little bit different than the boundary diffuse piece, but it's a bigger conversation.

Daniel: But those are a few things, Kira, so let me say just that. Thank you. It's a good question.

Daniel: Let me go to Gary, who I know. I think I know your question, but I want to hear you share it if you would.

Gary: Sure.

Daniel: I took you off mute, so share where you're calling me from, too, if you would.

Gary: I'm from Northern California, I'm from Chico, which is about 10 minutes away from those fires that just happened. I asked you this question already, but I'm very grateful to get to ask you firsthand.

Gary: I live in an area that was occupied by Mechoopda tribe? And my grandparents actually bought a lot of land in around the 50s, and they turned it into a walnut orchard, and that's kind of our family land. It's a working walnut orchard to this day, and I've known this all my life, but never put the pieces of the puzzle together until recently that it was on many Mechoopda living sites. There has been several times in which somebody has found an artifact of some kind, or even a bone and brought it into the house, and had sometimes violent action attributed to it.

Gary: Ultimately, what I'm getting at, is that I do think... and I hesitate to use the word "curse," because it sounds like a pretty strong word.

Daniel: Just say “consequence,” for now.

Gary: Sure. It does seem as if that site of the family has been affected by that particular living arrangement in some negative way, and I've worked with plenty of shamanic practitioners that have more or less suggested the same. What I wanted to ask you, what I would love to ask you for a long time, is actually how do I start to potentially address this situation? Because it seems as if doing ancestor work, you're kind of bypassing one of the necessary parties, which is the potential spirits of the land, then how-

Daniel: Yeah, okay. Let me speak to it. That's good, Gary. I appreciate it. It's a rich question.

Gary: Yeah, [inaudible 00:14:13].

Daniel: Here's my basic sense of it. A number of things can happen kind of at the same time, but then other things are a little bit sequential.

Daniel: For one, if you are in a position to identify if you or your family has any human remains or any artifacts that you have any reason to believe are from Native peoples there, you can gather them and contact the tribal organization and say, “Hey, sorry to be kind of losers here, but we have this, and we would love your input on next steps. These are rightfully yours, sorry,” so that's a doable thing.

Daniel: Another ritual thing to set in motion is actually to get to know your own blood lineage ancestors of the side of your family that's occupied this land, and start to address the healing that's needed there, because it's not that probable that your people were in radically awesome, whole, and intact shape, and then they just walked up and were harmful and then everything went sideways at that moment. So it is relevant to understand what is the trouble you've brought to it, and then what is the trouble that worsened because of the harmful behavior of the occupation.

Daniel: Doing the work to address your own ancestral lineage wellness, you'll in that process learn what's left, and what does require direct engagement in some way with the ancestors of place. It's not a bypassing. It's also not a bypassing because it puts you in a place of ancestral more wellness, or relative resilience and self-esteem, to be able to enter a dialogue with the ancestors who are of that land. As your own ancestral wellness gets a bit more in line, which doesn't have to take that long, you, with your people, can then in ritual space, in a facilitated space unless you're really comfortable with it. Seek to just understand what's happening with the ancestors of the land, and what kind of offerings can be made, how you can turn the volume down on it enough to understand what larger repairs or reparations or actions of healing are possible here.

Daniel: All along, if you want ritually to work around the edges of the thing, which is a great practice around a complicated situation, you can improve things around the edges. Ask, what are ways for you, in the circumstances of your life, to give back to the Mechoopda people, and tribal causes, things that are of acute importance to them in the present. And it's possible, not a given; you don't want to come with the expectation. But it's possible there's someone from that community who would be willing to be in dialogue with you around the healing intent that you're bringing. But you don't want to put that burden on them, nor do you want to exclude them from a process that involves their own ancestors. So it's a bit of a balancing there, and so it would be my habit to say, do a little bit of groundwork first. Come into conversation with your own people, and then from that place you'd be able to approach a dialogue with other living representatives of that community there.

Daniel: And if you can, go to the land and cry your face off. Be like, "Wow. We did damage in a real way to your families and your people, and that sucks, and we're sorry."

Gary: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Daniel: "Sorry on behalf of my people." That matters, so bring that, and that's a opening.

Gary: Great. And can I ask you a real quick question?

Daniel: Go quick on it, yeah.

Gary: In terms of if you're doing ancestry work, if you are somebody who is open to that kind of work, I've had practitioners tell me that if you're the person in the lineage that is open to the idea of it, then it kind of rests on your shoulders in a way.

Daniel: I kind of see it that way. Look, I don't care very much about spiritual calling. I think people get really special feeling about it. I don't know that I have a spiritual calling, I just have put in a lot of work and training around it, and I'm kind of ambitious and obligated. So actually, I don't think it matters. You don't need a calling. But if you see a problem and nobody else sees it, and you just walk past it? Should it haunt you? Yeah, probably.

Gary: Sure.

Daniel: So yeah. I agree with that.

Gary: Okay. Thanks a lot.

Daniel: Thanks, Gary. Let us know how it plays out.

Gary: Yep.

Daniel: Good.

Daniel: Let me go to a question from... I don't know if it's Rena or Rayna, in Israel. It's a great question. Could I address how we honor the boundary of others when the starting point is already not okay? Rena gives some examples of people playing the radio too loud, or people wearing fragrances or spraying pesticides, and taking all those on isn't going to be feasible. So what helps to work for the situation, where you can't immediately change it and there's already a boundary transgression in place?

Daniel: I mean, it's a great question. Makes me think of the sort of entitled view in the United States, when we elect Donald Trump and everyone's like, "I'm moving out of the country." For people who wish to do that and there's a way to do it, okay. For most people, we can't afford it. There's just not an option, culturally, and so you live in a situation where laws are passed that poison our daughter with pesticides. And it makes me feel rage, when I tune into it. I don't hang out there that often, but it's very accessible, and I'm not sure what to do with it, to be honest.

Daniel: I think one thing you do with it is you don't lie to yourself about it. You make space to feel reaction. If you have a way to speak up about it, okay. But I don't speak up about every bit of news that I read, because I wouldn't have a day. I think when you can, when you have the luxury or the privilege to do it, you can regulate how much trauma you digest a day. Not everybody has that privilege. I think that... I kind of describe it as self-gaslighting, maybe a funny way to say it. But it's a way of dismissing your own experience, of saying, "Oh, this isn't that big of a deal, isn't really happening." So don't do that.

Daniel: Mostly, the biggest first challenge that everything else hinges upon, is staying intact within yourself in terms of your own truth, your own experience. That doesn't mean it's always mature, but you want to know what your experience is, and not cut off from it. Because once you start to not even be willing to feel a thing, then our hearts get a bit more narrow, our lives get a bit more narrow, and we stop telling the truth about our experience.

Daniel: That sucks, that it's like that, Rena. And it's like that differently for all of us, of course, in the sense that we live in a system that perpetuates a lot of non-consensual taking. And it's painful, and it's sad, and it's good to feel it sometimes, even if there's nothing to be done about it. Or another way of saying it is feeling the difficulty of

it is part of what can be done about it, because it's a way of keeping emotionally and psychically intact through the challenges.

Daniel: When I say I don't know what else to do, it's because when there's a systemic harm you can do all the spiritual practice and tap dancing around it, but until the injustice is addressed, that's the problem. The system itself that does that is the problem, or the people that maintain it or however. There's no bypassing that. There's no inner work move to get rid of the structural thing that keeps causing the damage. It actually needs structural change. You can find more centeredness and resilience within it, within yourself, and that's helpful. But if it causes you to not care about the structural problem then your resilience is bypassing, it's avoidance.

Daniel: So yeah. I don't know, that's maybe a depressing answer. That's what I got. Others, chime in on the Facebook or whatever, but try not to let it destroy your happiness, that's kind of another thing, if you can. There's a kind of resistance and power, in a good way, to not letting all the bullshit in the world really wreck your joy. There's something very subversive and worth choosing about continuing to nurture life-affirming energies and joy and kindness and patience and happiness. That's also true, that's also important.

Daniel: Good. Let me go to Sarah. You're off mute now, yeah.

Sarah: Hi, I'm calling from eastern PA.

Daniel: Great.

Sarah: And I just had, I guess, a quick question regarding... In the video lesson, you took us through the process of creating a boundary and setting that up, and feeling that, and feeling what that feels like. And then there was a moment where you asked us to then relax the boundary. The sense in myself, that was very difficult for me, and I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit to that. I know I've worked a lot of boundaries the last five years in my life about violations from when I was younger and things like that, so that was a very difficult point when you said relax it, so I kind of wanted to understand what you meant when you said, "Well relax the boundary a little bit." Because I was very clear on, "This is my space," and then those who were outside of it [inaudible 00:25:17].

Daniel: Yeah, good. I recorded that like two years ago, so let me see if I can remember what I meant. I think I understand the spirit of what you're saying.

Daniel: Look, balance isn't like this. It's like [gesturing]. It's crashing around. We don't really discover, and I say this with sensitivity to the fact that even you just named

that there are others who have crossed your boundaries. It's like we don't discover where our limits are until we cross them, or we don't discover where others' limits are until we unintentionally are like, "Whoa, sorry," and hopefully it doesn't get too far until people are like, "Boundary," then you can course-correct. What I want to encourage also around the ritual explorations and learning is the learning environment here. Even if you've been doing ritual for 80 years and you're born into a family that trains you how to do it, still, when you're 80 years old, it's a learning environment here, this Earth.

Daniel: I want to encourage a space where we can kind of mess up, and in your case I think you're saying, "I relax that, and then that was like, wow, that..." Maybe it brought up a feeling of non-safety, or you noticed that it was more helpful to not relax the boundary, yeah? Something like that? And so that's the great information. Then you're like, "Oh, this is the boundary setting that actually works well for me." The practice, another way of saying it is get so boundaried up that you can't even see what's going on around you, and just notice how that feels; and then get so boundary diffused that you can feel what your neighbors are feeling, notice how that is; and then kind of feel the middle setting. Basically, explore the extremes so you can figure out where you want to be.

Daniel: There's a practice in Zen, people will sit down and they'll kind of rock back and forth a little bit until they find center point for meditation. It's a little bit like that with the boundary settings, that's the main sense, is just to explore it a bit. Does that land okay?

Sarah: Yes, thank you.

Daniel: Good. And the bigger thing is give yourself permission to be in the learning mode. There's a lot of generosity from the spirits if we come with that humility, so thanks, Sarah.

Daniel: There's a great question from individual who is living in Hawaii, born and raised in Maui. Not Kānaka Maoli or native Hawaiian, but Kamaaina, and... Sorry, I don't know all the Hawaiian language terms. But an earlier, non-Hawaiian arrival to Hawaii, and has noticed a lot of influx of people with poor manners and feeling that the land has a lot of anger, a lot of... yeah, anger at that. Kind of like, what do I do with this? How do I work with this?

Daniel: This is a moment where I think it could be good to notice a parallel with human-to-human relationships, so I hear the questioner saying, "What do I do when someone I love is being harmed, and I don't have it in my power to stop that?" That's a very difficult situation, and we're absolutely, 100% of us, in that situation if we apprehend what's going on on earth right now. And yet, it's more acute when someone

kidnaps your child, or when someone is suddenly occupying a place that you and your people have known generationally and really tended to, and now you're experiencing a fraction, which isn't to diminish it, of what a lot of First Nations people throughout the Americas, let's say for example, experienced with European and other occupations.

Daniel: What do you do with that? The first layer is you don't minimize the very real, systemic injustice of it, so there's no easy quick fix with it. There's no spiritual practice that's going to fix it, besides a radical uptick in awareness among North Americans about the history of settler colonialism, and a willingness to make systemic changes and repairs. Ritually, financially, systemically, all of it. So may that happen, and in the meantime we get up, we have to eat and sleep and all that.

Daniel: So what helps to navigate it? I think if you're not already doing it, making space for the grief and not seeing the land in a sort of pitying, victim-y way. I'm not saying you do, but sometimes when we see another who's being harmed, we can start to define our perception of them by the harm. I know if I've been harmed, I don't want to be known only by that, I want to be seen in the fullness of who I am. So continue to celebrate the beauty and love of the land there. Let that be infectious, so try not to let what's happening crash your intimacy with the land even while you make space for the sorrow, or the grief around the changes that are happening.

Daniel: The only way it gets shifted on a big level, I think, is for the values at least I associate with indigeneity, or we could say animism, earth-honoring cultures, whether they're legally indigenous or not. Those values need to become mainstream. That's what the intent of this course is. That's what my wish for the political system is, is that these ethic of respecting other kinds of people is widely accepted, even by culturally annoying white people or whatever, the people who are most removed from that value set.

Daniel: So... yeah. But mostly you make space to feel it, I think. Kindness to you, there's a lot of tenderness in the question.

Daniel: The other thing is find other people who share the care that you're speaking to in the question, and find ways to share in ritual with them, and sharing conversation with them to make sure that you're not holding it alone. Because when there's a collective pain, it's best to hold it in a collective group vessel, and as Jessie was alluding to at the start of the call. So if you can find others, incarnate others, that's great. If not, then find the other than humans. The spirits, the ones you can access no matter what, and ask them to help you hold it. We're going to talk about that next lesson, about it. It's an important principle in being able to grieve well than it is to not grieve alone.

Daniel: So thank you for the question. You keep honoring your truth about it, and keep feeling the feels, and keep leaning in when it's right for your destiny around the

justice that's needed. And keep speaking up if I didn't get to your question in what I just said. Thanks for bringing that.

Daniel: Others are welcome to raise your hand here. There's one question I definitely want to speak to from Jenelle, I don't know her last name, so I'm going to say Jenelle. The question is on consent and how the examples given about a river may not consent to be dammed, but the people who dam it and profit from the power of the dam generates, or who live in the flood plain, might not consent to reversing the dam being there and might not be into hearing the perspective of the river and the fish, and so many other situations like that. So how do we think about, or navigate, consent when we've arrived at a situation where things have been done non-consensually?

Daniel: Well, it's a great question. I think we start by acknowledging things. We did a ritual, it was maybe a decade ago, I lived in California at the base of the Golden Gate Bridge, to apologize to the spirits of land for the building of the bridge. Nobody asked, ritually, I don't think. It was built in the 30s. But it was good. It felt like surprising communication from the humans to the spirits of place. It's also the most popular place on earth to kill yourself, so the next day we had a ceremony to honor the human dead and the land. But it felt like skipping steps to go just to the human story without acknowledging the desecration at a sacred site, where the fresh and salt waters meet.

Daniel: Rituals of acknowledging what's happened can be important, even if those things happened without consent to begin with, so, "Yes, this happened," can help. But what you're really alluding to is if everybody's a person, if corporations are people, which I think they are a kind of person. If ducks and mountain goats and mountains and the wind are all people, how do we sort out which people are more important than others? Because we need to, and that's maybe a provocative thing to say, but if you say all people are equal... Like, when I swat a mosquito and I will kill a mosquito that's biting me. We mow our lawn here, and beings die when that happens. So I don't experience that the same as killing another living human. There is a implicit hierarchy that's created when I frame it that way, and it's true.

Daniel: So if there's removal of the dam that's being proposed, we have to think about are there fish people, and the river people, and maybe the indigenous folks who want that dam removed, and let's make an assumption there. Do they have a stronger voice than the corporations themselves? I would hope so. But being animist isn't enough. Recognizing the personhood of others alone isn't enough. You also need to have guiding values on which people are going to have more weight in how you organize society.

Daniel: So you can be an animist who's really deeply animist, and just be a totally hazardous person with no ethics. I hold this assumption, and it's an implicit assumption, of course. You probably noticed it or maybe you hold it consciously or half-consciously, that if we only saw "the others" as people, extended personhood, if you will, to them, then we would behave better. We would be more ethical and moral. If we saw the river as a person, then we would be ethically accountable to that river as a person, and I think there's a good case to be made for that.

Daniel: I kind of see it that way, and I'm going to drop a link in the chat here, and we'll put it on the Facebook page in a provocative way.

[https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/11/27/the-root-of-all-cruelty?fbclid=IwAR2gWwsvJLcmAQfNaGU_2gJ2gLmWU0D82bWnZikyUIYFbpAkPsvH5213hJs] But it takes the opposite position and says if we look at... it's one of those trigger warning kinds of articles, but it takes the opposite position and says that we're actually the most terrible to people we know are people. To people we love, and when humans are being awful to others, the evidence actually suggests that it is with the full knowledge that those others are people. You can be masochistic and cruel, and be quite animist about it. So it's possible that people are like, "I know the salmon are people. I know there's a river spirit, and I'm better than the river spirit. I conquer it." That's still quite animist, it's just being a terrible person. So it's important to tease those factors out. You can be unkind and unaccountable to others, and still recognize their personhood.

Daniel: Yeah. What a mess. We're in a mess. We're going to go into small group space soon, let me take a breath. I think I got some of the main content related questions for this topic spoken to. I don't see any others with a hand raised in this moment. Just taking a breath here.

Daniel: Consent is really not black and white, it's really messy. It's super important to grapple with it, and some of the ways it gets talked about are really very black and white, and on certain levels, of course. If people say no, respect their no and their lengths about that basic level. If people don't want tea, do not give them tea kind of thing, and if you haven't seen the cartoon it's a good one. Our beloved daughter takes tea bags and just pushes them on the cats, I'm like, "They do not want tea," you know? Tea. It's so funny.

Daniel: Anyways. But in practice, sometimes people... we have a lot of different voices even within us, and sometimes we want a thing and we don't want a thing. If you ask, "Is it good for me to pick up this feather I just found," well, who are you going to ask? You're going to ask the bird, you're going to ask the Earth, you're going to ask your own ancestors, you're going to ask the Divine. Who you ask permission from is going to warrant a different answer, so we're not a singular thing. We're a collection of different energies and voices, all of which may have different angles on a thing, and then our life is not only our own. We're accountable to others, so profoundly. So are we really so individualistic that we're in a position to sign off on a bunch of stuff?

Daniel: There's a lot of layers that come in with balancing consent with interdependence and accountability to one another, and it's important, I guess, is what I'd say, is allow for a little bit of messiness and a bit of confusion and staying with it in that topic. And some elder powers and deities will want certain things for your life, and it's good to say no to them. If you don't have self-esteem, you're not going to be able to say no to the weird old gods who want your attention, and they have their own agenda. Bless them and their weird, old god agendas. But we need to be able to say no to anybody, even to god, so to speak, directly. There's a lot of wisdom stories about that. God's like, "Do this," and people are like, "No." Like, "Good answer. You pass the test." Be like, "What is that? Don't do that." So you know. It's complicated.

Daniel: All right. Let's do some small group stuff. Thanks everybody for your engagement with the course. I'll hang out a little bit after if you have quick questions, but I want to really appreciate our supporter crew and their time and energy as we head into small group space. So Lindsay?

Daniel: If anybody needs to peel off, that's fine. We're done. And if anybody wants to hang out for a minute and ask another thing, or share a thing, then that's okay too. But yeah, thank you all, in case you are heading out, and we'll meet again soon, and just keep leaning into the work. It's good. Appreciate you all.

Lindsay: [inaudible 00:43:06].

Daniel: I see a question from Beleszove?

Beleszove F.: Bella-SUE-vay.

Daniel: Beleszove. Okay. Great.

Beleszove F.: I apologize if this was already answered, I joined 10 minutes late. But I'm wondering if you can speak to... I've been experiencing consent fatigue? Where did Daniel go?

Daniel: I'm following you. You're good.

Beleszove F.: Just with awareness of like, in each step in everything I do, considering it a living being, and it's like eating the food when I did the exercise. It was beautiful and lovely, but now I've noticed every time I go to eat an animal, I don't feel like my muscle for being that present with all that [crosstalk 00:44:07].

Daniel: No, don't do that. I ate a Twix bar today. Is that helpful to know? I remember, it makes me think years ago. I don't know, years ago. And I was ending a

partnership. Well really, it was a multi-year relationship that was really important to me, somebody I still care about a lot. The way the spirit showed it to me was really kind of grim. It was like I just saw myself surrounded by eggshells sort of metaphorically in all directions. It was like, "If you stay, damage; if you leave, damage." Like, whatever you do or don't do will cause harm. Welcome to Earth, young man. I was like, "Fuck, this is not very pleasant." And so, in that particular situation I ended the partnership, and it was painful for everybody, just like it was before ending it.

Daniel: It's just our condition here, and I think it's okay. My brother, I love him a lot, he's a good person, lives in Oregon, and he did essentially a vision quest, wilderness fast one time. I don't think he'd mind sharing, but I would go check on him once a day, make sure he was doing okay, like, "How you doing," because you're fasting from food too, and water sometimes. He's like, "I just spent the whole day appreciating all these meals I've had, all throughout my life. All these different meals." He seemed really happy about it. He's like, "I've had some good meals." Another thing that can happen is, I don't want to say like a blanket acknowledgement, so it's not really an apology for eating. It's like, "Hey, thanks," others, or you know. We're all up in it with each other.

Daniel: So it'd be great practice to once a year or whenever, whenever you can, to have just a ritual that's like, "I'm going to slow down for an hour," or two hours, or half the day, "and just give thanks for all the food all the people have eaten this year," and let that really land. I think it's kind of better to do something from time to time, even if it's just pausing and be like, "Wow, a lot of people, human and otherwise, are throwing down so I can just live. Let me honor that." Just pausing to feel it from time to time is better than getting to be formulaic, where you don't actually connect, I think. Be easy with yourself about it. I don't think it- Yeah. Be easy with yourself on it.

Beleszove F.: Can I ask a part B to that? It seems justifiable to ask when it's something like, "Okay this is going to give me life and nourish me." But the other day I was in my favorite park, and there was this beautiful field of the little tiny daisies that grow in the grass? I'm like, "Oh I just want to go lay in them." And in realizing that laying in them was going to smush them and kill them and injure them maybe, and I was like, "I can't ask permission. 'Do you mind if I kill you'," and, you know-

Daniel: Yeah, sure. I understand. Yeah.

Beleszove F.: You've had the experience?

Daniel: I don't know that the bears ask permission when they eat our garbage, or they crash around. Yes and no. I mean, I ate a Twix bar. That's not needed, and so I think that is... two, actually. In those situations, you trust your instincts on it, and that's part of the lesson, this lesson four, is pausing and being not in the abstract. It's not

abstract. It's like, "What in this moment, for me and for these particular flower people, what is the voice from them, to the best of my ability to listen, that I'm hearing?" And then that is what you go with in the moment, because the answer might be different on a different day, and be willing to hear no, and be willing to hear no without an explanation. Just no. Be like, "Okay." And if you're not sure about it, don't do it.

Daniel: The more times we kind of get that right, and there's a sort of, "Yes, you've accurately listened, you know what's going on." I think it strengthens our intuition over time, and the only way we can get it right, so to speak, not in a big right/wrong way, but the more our choices accurately reflect what's going on with others? Yeah. I was going to say the more intuitive, we get better at sensing it, I guess. And we get access to other layers of trust and connection that come with that.

Daniel: So, good. Yeah. Great comments from some of the supporters about the importance of pleasure and about the importance of hot water and appreciating the different things that we're enjoying.

Beleszove F.: So as long as I enjoy it, it doesn't matter what havoc I wreak on the earth.

Daniel: No, I don't say that. I'm not saying that.

Beleszove F.: That's what my takeaway was, from what you said.

Beleszove F.: No, I'm just kidding.

Daniel: Okay, that's good. Yeah. Not that. Thank you for your question, though.

Daniel: Yeah, Elanne.

Elanne: [inaudible 00:50:25].

Daniel: You've got to unmute from your side. Yeah.

Daniel: There we go.

Elanne: Thanks.

Daniel: Hey.

Elanne: Hi. In the lesson, one of the things you named that can get in the way of consent is desire, and I've just been with that as I'm in my garden picking herbs for tea, and aware that my desire for those particular herbs at that time today is strong and

likely muddying the waters. Curious. How do you practice with that? What do you do when the desire is really strong, and it's entirely possible to imagine you're hearing consent.

Daniel: Well, there's a really pragmatic question in there, of what helps you to get it as right as you can, and that's slowing down and being spacious, and double-checking. Just being like, "I really want this." There's all kinds of situations everybody here, in life, has been like, "Hey, can we do this?" I'm like, "No." They're like, "Are you sure? You sure you don't want to?" You see kids do it, adults do it. We do it in all these little ways. We're like, "Oh, maybe later." Whatever.

Daniel: That's not necessarily bad, to really own and advocate for what you want. There's a piece that comes to mind, like, are we taking up all the space, or are we pulled back in our own energy body to the midway point, enough to actually accurately perceive the other? Because their answer could be like, "Well initially it was a no. But we, the mint spirit, see how much pleasure this would bring you. Let's do it. Go ahead, have some tea." Sorry, back to the tea thing.

Daniel: So there's that. And I don't want to suggest in that, that desire is somehow problematic. To the contrary. We're here through that. But the practical answer to your question as you presented it is just slow down and double check. It makes me think of... Maybe it's a little bit related. But there's a Oshun priest, a deity of love and beauty and rivers and all kinds of things, in Yoruba culture who... She's passed now, the Oshun Oshogbo. But she said something like 15 years ago in a talk that just stuck with me in a really useful way. She was like, "You know, I spent a lot of time in my life being lonely, and there's not a damn good thing that's come from it. Get all the love and intimacy and connection you can get." I'm like, "That's great." It was just like, don't indulge your suffering and dress it up as spiritual. Be courageous enough to desire what you desire, be friendly about it, be consent-oriented. But also be true to what you're longing is.

Daniel: So make space for it, and then make space for the Other as well.

Elanne: I just got an image of expressing more clearly my desire to the lemon balm. Not my lemon balm, but to the lemon balm.

Daniel: Yeah, no. It's great. Be like, "You can say no, but I just want to lay it out here how much joy it would bring me if you were to be part of what's happening over here." That's great. That's a great take on it. Thank you, Elanne.

Daniel: Maybe one other person if anyone wants to say a thing. Good to see you Philippa on the call, I'm glad to be... I'll be in Portugal in two weeks. That's exciting to me, first time there. Yay.

Steve: I have a question.

Daniel: Yeah, Steve. Good to see you, buddy. It's been a minute. Both of our hair is grayer. How are you?

Steve: I'm really good. Sorry I joined so late, but I just realized it's on and I joined.

Daniel: Oh, no. It's great. I'm glad you're here. What's your question?

Steve: Well, we have about 15 acres of redwoods, and I've been connecting with the spirits, and there seems to be a real differentiation between the spirits and the forest. The Native American spirits, too, seem to be... There's very different energy, a deeper energy among them, and they seem to require different offerings of food and they seem to have different demands or wants. And I was wondering if you could say anything about that, or what your experience with that would be.

Daniel: Not everywhere, but almost everywhere on earth, there are layers of human history. Some of the indigenous or First Nations people of a place, native people, they may have been there for a very long time, or some of them may have arrived only a thousand years before Europeans arrived in the Americas, let's say. And humans bring with them weird gods and different kinds of energies that may not, at the time of their arrival, be woven into the other-than-human spirits of place.

Daniel: I'll be in Portugal, as I mentioned, is the Virgin Mary or Fatima or different deities that are connected to Catholicism, are they woven into the story of the land there now? That's my impression from afar, I assume it's part of the story. Were they imported, if you will, with the humans, like, the humans brought them? Yes. And so, humans, living or ancestral, can be connected to other kinds of powers that are not only land-based, is what I'm saying. So that's one of the ways. There's my relationship with the bears in our yard here, and if I try to ask the ancestors of Cherokee or other people here about the bear, I'm going to get a different conversation. I haven't tried to ask it, but that's a different... It's the same, but different, because there's cultural layers with it.

Daniel: So if anyone is seeking to come into mindful relationship with the ancestors of a place, and it feels a little staticky or you don't feel very welcome? Don't push at it. Build trust with the other than humans, because when you're friends with the rivers and the stones and the plants in a genuine way? Then you have friends in common with the grouchy ancestor spirits, and it softens things over time. You show up well with the other than humans, and really show up well with them. Then the other human ancestors that are part of that place will tend, over time, to soften their disposition towards you.

Steve: You find that they're often grouchy?

Daniel: It depends. The history here is horrible, so they have reason to be grouchy. But no, not necessarily. People can experience a lot of oppression in their life, and be totally free on some other level. But it doesn't minimize at all the systemic injustices. I'm not saying there's not genuine harm and suffering, and on a soul level, people can be deeply awake and in a place of their own power, and deeply connected to love and wisdom. So both things can be true at once, and if someone on a soul/spirit level is in a condition of great connection to bigger wisdoms, it's totally their prerogative if they want to show up to whoever, however.

Steve: I wanted to know if they're an earth-bound spirit, or if they've gone on to the upper world.

Daniel: I don't tend to frame it in quite that way, but I understand the distinction you mean, in a real general way. And we'll finish soon, and maybe chat because I enjoy talking with you all. It's more connective for me too. So if you need to scoot, it's fine, but I'll take one more question after you, Steve. I think Christopher has a question.

Daniel: I think you're asking, how do you discern if an ancestor that's connecting to you through the place where you're at is in a state of relative wellness and wholeness, or is in a kind of turbulent or troubled condition.

Steve: Yes, [inaudible 01:00:16].

Daniel: And I think that my usual protocol is to tune in with my own trusted ancestors and helpful powers, and ask them to help me discern because I'm not super psychic myself. If you are, then you probably just know. But trust your gut sense on it. Consult with your powers. Double, triple check it, and just say, unless you're doing a ritual to address the ones who are more troubled, just say, "I'm only open at this time to addressing ones who are in a condition of wholeness and actually want this interaction." So you can set your intent up front, and then ask your other powers to help you with it.

Daniel: Thanks Steve, and thanks for the honoring that you're doing with the history and the people there.

Steve: Thank you.

Daniel: Yeah, glad to see you. Yeah.

Daniel: Christopher, you want to ask a thing and then we'll wrap up?

Christopher: [inaudible 01:01:07].

Daniel: Speak up a bit if you would, it's a little quiet.

Christopher: Can you hear me now?

Daniel: I can, yeah.

Christopher: Okay. I was just wondering, when you take a moment to pause and check in, to ask for permission and see if there's consent, it just seems like that time itself is kind of like an offering. I wondered if you had any thoughts about the time it takes not just to check in, but to do all these sorts of conversations as kind of an offering of our life force, if you could speak to that at all.

Daniel: Yeah, there is something very sacred and precious and important in the effort. There's a scene in, it's probably my favorite film. It's Kundun by Martin Scorsese, and it's the story of the young Dalai Lama, the current... Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama in the Gelug lineage, the famous one. There's a scene toward the end, you go right to that scene and YouTube if you wanted to. It's him actually crossing the border into India, and the guard at the border asks him, like, "Are you the Buddha?" And he says something that really is just moving to me, he's a super inspiring human. And he says something like, "When you see me, and I try to be a good person, you see yourself reflected." What occurs to me this moment about it is he's saying it's the effort that is also sacred, and it's not even about getting it right, although it's nice to get it right. But it's the grappling with what that means.

Daniel: And for Elanne to go out and be like, "I don't want to just be greedy because I want this lemon balm, but I want it, I really do. And I'm in touch with that, I'm going to be beautiful in my presentation of that." But mostly, even if it's really compelling, I actually, if the answer is no, want to hear no. Is there something about that effort, and that integrity from the side of the plant spirits that are like, "Look at this human, showing up so well. We're still going to say no, but good. Totally."

Daniel: Yeah. There's something in the effort, so I like that. Thanks Christopher.

Daniel: Thanks everybody. Let's meet again soon, I forget if we meet again next week, or I think it might be the week after. And in any case, we'll be transmitting from Europe soon, and thank you all, thanks to the supporters. And we'll catch up more soon.

Lindsay: And I'm adding all the lines, so you can all say goodbye.

