

THE DAVID SUZUKI PODCAST



COVID-19 & THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF LIFE





THEME MUSIC

INTRO

David: For thousands of years, Indigenous cultures have understood that we and Earth are one: what happens to the planet also happens to us, and there are natural limits to our exploitation of the world we live in.

COVID-19 has confronted us with those limits.

Sixty per cent of all diseases that afflict humankind have leapt from other animals. As we drive wildlife into ever more constricted spaces, the opportunity to create new viral forms increases, as we've seen with hanta, Ebola, HIV, dengue, SARS and now COVID-19.

Population growth and development have spread a yummy layer of human protoplasm all over the globe, while hyper-globalization renders our ability to contain a new disease very difficult.

The pandemic reminds us there are limits to the luxury and delusion of thinking we are separate from the natural world.

It also gives us a chance to rethink and reimagine our relationship with Earth, and how we can protect it for generations to come.

On today's show, an international journalist and an acclaimed activist help us understand how we might halt the destruction of our only home, leaving us with new hope that even the unlikeliest of cousins — environmentalists and financial leaders — may finally be on the same page when it comes to the climate crisis.

TRANSITION MUSIC

MONOLOGUE

David: We are land animals, so it's no surprise that we called our planet Earth, even though water covers more than 70 per cent of the world's surface.

The biosphere is the thin band of air, water and land that is occupied by all life. Our specific part of this living layer is the terrestrial portion that we call land.

In the science fiction movie *The Martian*, actor Matt Damon is stranded on Mars with a year's supply of potatoes, but he has to wait four years to be rescued.

Although there is lots of dust and sand blowing around, there is nothing to grow his potatoes in because soil is a complex mix of inorganic material plus water, air and organic material from dead plants, animals and micro-organisms.

So, with a great deal of clever provision of air and water, Damon had to supply the necessary organic material — his own poop.



Soil is a gift of life that was billions of years in the making.

Planet Earth formed 4.6 billion years ago with a surface of rock and lava that broke down over hundreds of millions of years through a process called weathering.

Water dissolved materials, freezing and thawing broke rock, chemical reactions ruptured molecules, and storms and floods gradually broke up hard material into smaller and smaller pieces, gravel, sand, dust and clay.

But the formation of soil had to wait for the arrival of plants, which grew and died and contributed the organic material of their carcasses that are critical for soil.

Our very existence is made possible by the uppermost layer of topsoil, rich in organic material, water and oxygen.

If we reduced Earth to the size of a basketball, the soil would be thinner than a layer of saran wrap, and 98.8 per cent of all human food comes from this thin layer.

It takes over 500 years for 2 centimetres of topsoil to form from the accumulation of organic and non-organic material, yet in a few decades, the high productivity of industrial agriculture is depleting what took thousands of years to form.

It's for good reason that soil, the land or earth is considered sacred by most ancient cultures.

Australian Indigenous people call the land they have inhabited for thousands of years sacred, a gift from The Mother.

The first man created by God in the Torah was Adam, whose name comes from the Hebrew word adamah, meaning earth.

Indigenous people may consider a river, a mountain, a forest to be sacred, not as something to be sacrosanct, kept pristine and worshipped, but meaning spiritually alive, culturally important or just worthy of respect.

Ever since the agricultural revolution that began 10,000 years ago, farmers have known how important soil is. Indeed, many revere the land.

But today, most of us live in cities, where we often call soil "dirt", so touching it "dirties" us and "soils" our clothes.

We think nothing of dumping our toxic compounds like pesticides, waste engine oil, or paints onto the soil. We dig it up, push it around, drown it under dams or pave it over with roads and buildings.

Soil is alive and makes it possible for us to feed ourselves. We must find a different relationship with soil and care for it so it can continue to nourish us.



TRANSITION MUSIC

VOICEOVER: WINONA INTRODUCTION

David: My first guest today is Winona LaDuke.

As an Anishinaabekwe member of the White Earth Nation, Winona has spent decades advocating for environmental protections.

In 1977, when she was an 18-year-old Harvard student, she went to Geneva, Switzerland, to testify to the UN on the exploitation of natural resources.

Since then, she's travelled across the world speaking about Indigenous rights and the importance of protecting our environment.

She's currently the executive director of the environmental organization Honor the Earth and is the author of five books on environmentalist and human rights.

To Winona, a sustainable future involves a different kind of economy altogether, and in her view, the path toward a better tomorrow requires drawing on lessons and teachings of the past.

WINONA INTERVIEW [Duration: 19:02]

David: You know, we sit up here above the border with the United States, kind of feeling very smug as we watch what the heck is going on in your country. But I heard about the speech you gave, I guess a year ago now, to the Audubon Society about this slogan, Make America Great Again. I wonder if you could give us your take on the idea of a great America.

Winona: Yeah, I mean, from my perspective, America was great when there were 50 million buffalo and there were 8,000 varieties of corn and, you know, a thousand varieties of potatoes and tremendous biodiversity and 250 species of grass. And you could have passenger pigeons. The sky was blackened with passenger pigeons, you know, you had forests in abundance and you could drink the water from a creek or a river or a lake. That's when America was great.

David: Is it something? Is this an opportunity now to think about maybe using that as a target to try to change direction and work towards that too?

Winona: Well, you know, I really like what Arundhati Roy says when she refers to pandemic as portal. And she talks about that historically in time, pandemics have caused and forced societies to change and this one is no different. And the question is how we want to walk through that portal. Do we want to bring, as she says, our dirty skies, our avarice, our hatred, you know, through the portal, what we want to walk through clean.

Now, this time, I refer to this as the time of the bat, you know, because the coronavirus is a living being. And what you have is, you know, humans who think they're the smartest things in the world, particularly white men, it seems. And in the end, it turns out that they aren't in charge, that



Mother Nature has given us all a really big smackdown. And this is a living being. And I guess. And COVID started with the bat. And so, you know, that's the origins as a bat. And so you've got to leave the wild things where they are. That's a good lesson. You know, quit messing with where the wild things are and you won't get strange diseases that belong with the wild things, who can deal with them.

And then you look at this moment and they say that, you know, hole in the ozone is clearing up. You know, that the amount of fossil fuels being used on a worldwide scale has dropped significantly. You know, and that all sorts of other dumb stuff in terms of pollution has diminished because things were closed down. So I see this as an opportunity to hit the reset button, and I'm going to take it.

David: You know, what worried me was as soon as we got into the lockdown, people were saying, "Well, this is the new normal," as if pre-COVID days were normal. And that's what we've got to try to get back to. That was not normal. That was a very, very aberrant direction that we were in. And I agree we have this portal, but it's where do we want to go from here? Certainly not pre-COVID.

Winona: Well, you know, I agree with you not getting back to normal. Normal is dysfunctional and normal didn't work out. I'm all ready for the next economy because the last economy didn't work out too well for us. And I feel like now is the time to make something that makes sense. But a lot of it is local, you know, because that's the nature of what we really need to do.

We need to diminish globalization and restart, regrow local self-reliance because, you know, our shrimp that travels from Scotland where it's raised to China, where it's deveined, to a Costco near you, it's not a shrimp that we want to eat. And that's the reality — we need to relocalize. And that's this opportunity. And the fact is that lockdown makes us relocalize. I have relocalized, you and I have discussed it. I live, you know, I've travelled maybe 40 miles in either direction for months, you know. And that's where all our farms are. And now we're harvesting our wild rice.

I feel the thing is that, you know, to me, first let's say that what they have said is what has been normalized is not normal, you know, because they talk about alternative energy or they talk about alternative agriculture. I mean, industrial agriculture is an aberration of 10,000 years of agriculture. You know, the fossil fuel economy is an aberration of energy use, as is nuclear. So we need to return to ways that make sense, and we need to restore our memory.

And then also, like, there are a lot of smart things out there that we need to figure out how to integrate, make good decisions on technology and choice. And then we're going to make something that is better. You know, a lot of these people in the cities, they haven't really experienced climate change so much because they don't live in the real world. They go from air-conditioned house to air-conditioned car to air-conditioned office. You know, that was then. Not anymore — catastrophes of biblical proportions around us, you know, not just COVID, catastrophes of biblical proportions. The West Coast is on fire again, and they have cooling centres in L.A.

Time to, you know, no time like the present to transform. And I'm sure that the leadership for that



transformation is not going to come from the nation-states, because they are too entrenched with their dysfunctional system. The need that, you know, the leadership is going to come from communities. The leadership is going to come from Indigenous Peoples, who not only have been resisting getting a piece of the pie and saying, “We want a different pie, we don’t want this one.”

David: You know, you’ve been very heavily involved in the political process. We look to the people we elect to lead us. And yet, you know, even with the most enlightened leadership, for example, we had nine-and-a-half years of a prime minister who said we can’t do anything about climate change, it’ll destroy the economy. That crazy economics to deal with climate change. We booted him out and we got this young, charismatic guy coming in, went to Paris in 2018 and Canada’s back, we’re really going to try to keep temperature from rising above 1.5[°C]. We all celebrated and then he bought a pipeline. He bought a pipeline because politics meant he had to try to serve the people in Alberta, the energy capital of Canada. So politics, the need to get re-elected hampers, it seems to me, our so-called leaders.

Winona: I definitely don’t think there’s clear political thinking in the United States or in Canada at the highest levels. I refer to this as Wendigo Economics. The economics of a cannibal. You know, and the first time I ever heard that was, a Nuu-chah-nulth leader named Johnny. I don’t remember what his last name was, one of those chiefs out there. And he said to me, he said, “Sitting down and talking to the Canadian government’s like sitting down and talking to a cannibal. You can make as much small talk as you want, but in the end, you know exactly what he wants.” And I, you know, I thought about that for years, fighting at Clayoquot Sound and everything, but that’s exactly it. And so what you have is this economy and this addicted economy. And then you have this, you know, the Stockholm syndrome combined, you know, that causes this. People who might have been principled lose their way. And so those of us who have been, who are still coherent, that’s the term I think of. It’s still coherent. John Trudell used to always say that — stay coherent.

You know, we’ve got it. We’ve got to provide the leadership because, you know, whether it’s Trudeau or whether it’s Trump, it’s really not that different. And what I know is, what you know is, the Teck [Resources] mine is not getting built and that they aren’t going to build all those pipelines because the tar sands is crashing. And, you know, that’s not happening because of Trudeau. That’s certainly not happening because of Trump. That’s happening because of, you know, Mother Nature, COVID. The state of the world and a bunch of banks and investors are like, we’re done, you know, so in spite of all of their best efforts to bolster up their insane society, these politicians, it’s changing. And now would be the time to, you know, be in the lead of what the change looks like, because change is inevitable. It’s a question of who controls a change. I really call on, you know, our communities to step up and take the reins.

David: But we need a plan. What is exactly the Sitting Bull Plan?

Winona: Oh, I’m so glad you asked. I’m just finishing my writing. I have a short piece and then I’m working on a book. So this is the plan. First of all, you know, get real. That’s the first part of the plan — get real. You know, remember the laws of Mother Earth because she’s in charge and we’re not in charge, you know?



So it's like this. We, you know, we need to do this structural adjustment to the north. The north has been busy structurally adjusting everybody else. Time to do a structural adjustment up here, right. You know, when you go through sector by sector. So let's start with infrastructure. I'm not opposed to infrastructure. Infrastructure makes you a First World country. The United States has a D in infrastructure. It's not that we don't need pipes. We just don't need, you know, tar sands pipelines from Canada. What we need is that, is that 300 miles of Enbridge's pipe that they will never put in, in Minnesota. That needs to go to New York City because they need it for their water and sewer system, right. I mean, you know, exactly what I'm saying is, like, we need infrastructure that makes sense.

You need a rail system that runs something called Solutionary Rail. I love those guys. It runs on a direct current and it's an electric rail. One per cent of our rails are electric, 60 per cent of them in Italy. Most of Europe, you know, electric rail, it's like 50 per cent, 60 per cent more efficient. And that's how you're going to move stuff. If you've got to move stuff, move it efficiently, but on rail — get the toxic stuff off the rail and put some people on the rail, you know, do that transition.

So transform your infrastructure, transform your agricultural system. I mean, it's obvious that, you know, in the time of COVID, when they started smashing eggs, dumping milk and killing pigs, the globalized food system doesn't work. What you need is a relocalized food system that is organic. Rebuild it, you know, and it turns out that during COVID, the rise in seed sales was tremendous and seed companies were, like, backlogged trying to locate enough seeds because everybody gardened this year because they were home.

You know, rethink about our work situation. John Trudell used to say the only difference between a work slave and a slave in chains is that the second one knows exactly where he stands. Interesting construct. But the fact is that so many people are trying to just make their paycheque, you know, make their bills, figure out how to cut those bills, figure out how to transform a labour force so that you aren't all commuting to work.

And we're doing that in COVID. People are not travelling. And it turns out a lot of people don't want to go back to normal, right. They want to stay in this new economy. So redefine it. We localize it. You know, you utilize appropriate technology to make things work. You know, energy production. We've got to move to renewables, and we need to cut consumption by maybe 50 per cent of. How could we do that? Oh, yeah. Do a couple of things, one already. They say that we waste 50 per cent of our energy between point of origin and point of consumption. That's what Lawrence Livermore says. Canada's worse, you know, quit wasting energy, quit coming up with bigger projects like boiling steam in the tar sands with a nuclear reactor, and then you can deal with microgrids and renewable energy and re-localizing and, you know, being responsible.

And also, you know, people have relinquished power. We relinquish power and everything. "Well, I don't know how to do that, I don't know how to..." Turns out most people don't know how to do anything anymore. From what I can figure, they know how to shop, but they aren't handy. They don't grow. They don't cook. So they don't build. They don't heat. We need to change that. We need to become human again instead of, you know, what we are. So, you know, we're becoming wendigos, little wendigos, you know.



David: Yeah, the hard thing is the old mindset, I guess, you know, Amory Lovins told me that. And I looked at that. Of all the people who've died in China from COVID-19, 20 times that number have survived because the air is cleaner during the lockdown. In other words, interesting, 20 times as many people are dying and they want to just crank up their economy again, and they're turning on the coal plants. And, you know, I would have thought, oh my God, we're killing people by air pollution. It's a far greater crisis than COVID. And yet they want to crank it back up again without changing.

Winona: You know, we all think we're smart, but we don't know what we're doing. And what happened when COVID came to my community is I just went to the maple sugar bush. My kids out to the woods. I, like you, quarantined with a bunch of grandchildren, and kids from different reservations came to stay with me because of the horses, and so we just live. I have lived this really good life that is so much healthier than the life that most of those kids were living before. And so I took this crisis as an opportunity to regain relationship. And I think a lot of people actually have, you know, and I mean, a lot of people have. There are a lot of people, you know, that are not well. But a lot of us have found something in ourselves that reminds us of being better people.

David: To me, the corporations are the biggest challenge right now.

Winona: They had their fantasy, but their party's over and Mother Nature is closing them down. And economics are closing them down too. I mean, Exxon got killed, kicked off of the S&P, the Dow. You know what I'm saying? Biggest company in the world in 2013. You know, they got replaced by, like, some internet company, you know, on that. So kings fall.

David: And thank you for hanging in. You're hanging on to your culture and your community because you're going to be one of the models for us to show them the way we have to go.

Winona: Well, I just keep saying, give us the reins, man. I'm ready.

TRANSITION MUSIC

VOICEOVER: ATTRACTA INTRODUCTION

David: My next guest is the financial journalist Attracta Mooney.

Attracta has been the investment correspondent for the Financial Times since 2013.

Not everyone immediately connects the dots between investment banks and fighting climate change. But Attracta does a great job of breaking down how investment banks are dealing with society's transition away from a carbon-based economy and towards a greener future.

Most encouraging to me, Attracta has chronicled how some of the world's largest asset managers are now on the same page as environmentalists when it comes to the climate.

It's not all good news, of course.



Here in Canada, COVID-19 has had an inequitable impact on people and the economy: 70 per cent of all Canadian jobs lost during the pandemic were performed by women. And younger workers and racialized Canadians are feeling tremendous pressure.

But, as Attracta notes, something very promising is happening where COVID, climate change and investment meet.

Our current situation may be opening a door for us all, one that could lead us to a greener and more responsible financial future.

ATTRACTA INTERVIEW [Duration: 8:48]

David: You've recently written how climate change is no longer a back burner issue, but we've now been hit with a pandemic. So I'm wondering, you know, you'd think with a global pandemic now and seeing how governments are falling all over themselves trying to deal with it, that climate change would disappear as an issue, that certainly the investment community would kind of put it aside. But you say it hasn't been. What's going on? What's happened?

Attracta: Actually, what we've seen during this is that they seem to have been taking climate change even more seriously than they've ever done before. And I think one money manager said to me that this is because the pandemic has shown kind of just how catastrophic a single event can be on their investments or on the world. And their concern now is that climate change could do the same thing. But if there is no attempt to stop global warming, then their money and their investments are under really big stress. And so they can't ignore climate change. And so despite the pandemic and the kind of short-term impact or potentially long-term impact that has, climate change still remains an issue. And they actually are going to have to consider what that will do to their investments. So they're not doing this out of the goodness of their heart, and they're doing this for money, basically. They want to make sure that their investments — and their investments are actually yours and my investments, it's pensions usually — make sure that that money still exists in 30 years' time.

David: But what has been the trigger that has resulted in this shift? Because, you know, was it 2008? Sir Nicholas Stern published his big study on the impact, the economic impact of climate change. We all thought that was going to be the trigger, that things would change, but it didn't. What has caused this change now?

Attracta: I think the Paris Agreement focused people's minds, and then, you know, the various papers that have come out since then saying, you know, putting monetary terms on the impact of climate change made a lot of asset managers step up and think, oh, we're going to have to consider the impact of this on our return, on our investments.

I think a second thing that's happening is that there's kind of a growing concern among ordinary people, ordinary savers, like you and me, about their investments and how their investments are put to work. And although that means that they're thinking, do they want to be invested in fossil fuel companies? Do they want to be invested in companies that don't have a good social record



with dealing with employees? And that means that they're asking for better products, better and better in the sense that they think they will do good as well as generate investment returns. And that this, kind of this movement — which is called environmental, social and governance investing — is growing.

David: And as an environmental activist, I'm always wondering what is the best way that we can influence that community?

Attracta: So to influence the climate finance community. Yes. So I think there's several ways, right. And when I talk to my friends, they tell me how they're recycling or they're trying to use their car less. They're trying to cycle more. They do all of these things. And then I say, what about your pension? How is that invested? And they're like, oh, oh, I've never looked at that.

And the thing is, if they're in the UK and actually in most countries in the world, they will be invested quite heavily in fossil fuel companies usually, and so oil companies, miners, all of these things as a default. It's nearly always the default for pension funds — the default option. And that's the very basic level. So that's just at your pension level. That's not any of the other investments you make. And most of us have a pension, right? If you work in a shop or if you work in, if you're a teacher here, from whatever job you have in the UK, you have a pension in lots of Western economies. That is the case now as well.

And so all of us are actually backing all of these companies who are heavily investing in fossil fuels or are heavily reliant on fossil fuels. And so we can make a difference by talking to our pension funds, and talking and piling pressure on pension funds to talk, in turn, to their asset managers. And that starts to move conversations. And that is what has been happening — the pension funds have been putting pressure on asset managers to talk to companies more about how they are preparing for a transition to a lower carbon world.

And that is changing conversations. We have seen, you know, we've seen companies start to take actions here in Europe. BP and Shell have already taken some action. They've written down some projects because they've realized that they just will not be as valuable in a lower carbon world. And they have committed to the, kind of, net zero targets. And part of that decision was driven by conversations with shareholders. Their shareholders are the asset managers who are acting on our behalf, really, even though we feel, and I think most of us feel very disconnected from the finance world. Ultimately, it is our money that is financing everything that's going on out there.

David: That's shocking but also hopeful for me because, you know, I think of my investment portfolio, which is trivial when I think of Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates, and these are the big investors. So it gives me some hope.

Attracta: They are the big individual investors. But actually, if you look at the size of some of the big pension funds — and Canada's full of big pension funds — Ontario teachers, for example, they have billions upon billions in assets under management, and that sort of level of cash, it can make a difference. You know, if big pension funds and even small pension funds are asking the same questions of their asset managers, saying, "Actually, we really care about climate change,



and we need to be able to pay a pension to our teachers in 50 years' time. So we can't have the world burn down around us, thanks very much."

But that starts to move the conversation. And so individual investors, the big investors of the world can make a difference. But actually, I think pension funds and their members can make a difference too. And fine, individually we might not control that much cash. But collectively, if people do want to make a difference, they can start moving their money into funds that invest more sustainably. Or talking to their pension funds about investing more sustainably. There are still loads of big asset managers and big investors who don't care, who really, you know, they just want the cash. Now, they're not thinking very long term, which is why pension funds have a big role, probably a very important role to play in this, because pension funds have to think decades because they will be paying cash out to investors, to their investors, for decades, compared to an asset manager, who usually only thinks in a couple of years and sometimes in days or weeks.

And so I think that's a big problem, that there are still huge parts of the investment community who aren't worried about climate change. And those investors are much more likely to back companies like fossil fuel companies. And that becomes a challenge. So in the U.S., for example, there's proposals at the moment that would restrict pension funds considering climate change in their investment decisions. So basically it could restrict them considering these issues. There's a lot of pushback from this because the investment community argues that climate change is a financial risk. But regardless if these proposals go through, all of a sudden you lose that lever of the financial industry, of the investment industry, putting pressure on companies to change. And if you already have a government, too, that is not necessarily a big believer in climate change or global warming or a transition to a lower carbon economy, then I think you face a really big obstacle.

David: Well, you've given me a lot of food for thought. Thank you very much. Am I trying to work out now what the most strategic use of environmental pressure can be? You've given me plenty of ideas for that.

Attracta: One other thing I just thought I will mention is that there is a thing happening in the investment industry called greenwashing, which is where asset managers pretend to be green, pretend to care about climate change, in a bid to win more business, in a bid to lure people like you and I, and to invest for them. And I think that's something that everyone has to watch out for. You can think you're investing well, but actually, it's not always the case.

TRANSITION MUSIC

MELISSA INTERVIEW

Today, I have the great privilege of speaking with Melissa Mollen Dupuis as our guest expert. Melissa is a member of the Innu community of Ekuanitshit [EEK-won-it-chit] on Quebec's Côte-Nord. A celebrated activist and filmmaker, she's already enjoyed an impactful career sharing her rich culture with Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. In 2012, she created with Widia Larivière the Quebec branch of the Idle No More movement. We are thrilled to have her on the



David Suzuki Foundation team as a lead boreal forest and caribou campaigner, based out of our Quebec office.

Melisa: I thank you for having me, David.

David: Oh, it's great to have you. So, you know, the basic element that we're exploring in this episode is Earth. And I'm wondering, from your cultural background, what does Earth represent to you?

Melisa: Well, basically, it's our mother. I mean, we always say Mother Earth — I know that it's a term that people use a lot, but it has so much more profound meaning. And it's always been something that's put forward in my culture. One of the best descriptions that I ever had was from an elder, which is called Checkable Wet Season, an Algonquian. He sadly passed away, but he described it the best way I could ever understand, how we manage it in our mind. And it's that we are on the back of a great turtle, and we use that — Turtle Island is the definition we use to describe the land we're on.

And every action we've done in the last millennia, has been one of collaboration like the bacteria we have on our own bodies that we need to live with. But in the last hundred, 200 years, we've been transforming the role of good bacteria into bad virus or even cancer overgrowing taking over the host that is taking us on our back. And right now we're seeing that we're killing the living being. But people see it only as resources. But this is the living beings.

David: The boreal forest, your home, is often called the lungs of the north. It's a vast and beautiful forest. Very different from the Amazon forest, of course, but home to biodiversity. I think most Canadians don't really appreciate the extent of what is up there. But from your standpoint, you know, why is it important to protect the boreal forest?

Melisa: Well, the boreal forest for me is one of the most beautiful forests in the world. There's so many medicinal plants, small fruits, the animals. But that relation that we built fed us for, like, a thousand years. And if we were not managing to empty out the boreal forest, we could probably manage to have that equilibrium still there. You need to have a delicate ballet between the kin that are animal and the kin that are human and the kin that are vegetable. So it's very important to keep that balance. And right now, I could see the imbalance in our communities.

David: Also the boreal, I don't know if you realize, is the largest intact forest left on the planet. It's bigger than the Amazon forest. What are the risks? They're assaulting that great forest.

Melissa: And people are more and more connecting. But it's going at such a slow pace and the destruction is so much more rapid than that, that knowledge that's coming in. And we have stories for that. Also, we have the wendigo story are the nine nation. We say the action, which is the cannibal story. We say that human beings, we didn't have hell or paradise, you know, in the beginning. But you could bring yourself into a state that was next to hell, you know. And it would be by eating human flesh. You became a chicken. It's when you don't accept your cycle in life, and you want to survive so much that you eat your own children. Your parents are another human



being. That's where you punish yourself. You put yourself in a state of action. And the wendigo is that it's a very horrible monster.

The thing is right now, when I listen to the capitalist economy, it's basically the Atkins story. They're eating the future of their children. And when you stop to think of, what do I need to live?, the first thing I can think of is just COVID showing us what we need to live. The first two weeks of confinement, everybody filled up their credit cards and went shopping online. But after a while, it doesn't fill you up. And the next thing everybody did was gardening, trying to go outside and not being able to go outside.

And now I've been, like, actively doing forest bathing activities with a lot of communities. And when I can explain to them how they can connect, reconnect with the forest, they see it and they say it was real. Some people told me it's really hard because when we did the bathing activity in the forest, after that we have to go back. And it breaks that natural cycle.

[missing paragraphs from Melissa]

TRANSITION MUSIC

OUTRO

Thanks to Melissa Mollen Dupuis for that expert interview — is she ever a wise and inspiring voice... We're very lucky to have her leading our foundation's work to protect the boreal forest and key species like the boreal woodland caribou.

David: And thank you for listening to Season 1 of The David Suzuki Podcast:

COVID-19 & the Basic Elements of Life — produced by the David Suzuki Foundation in partnership with Jason Arkley Productions.

I recorded these interviews from the traditional, unceded territory of the We Wai Kai First Nation. I am so grateful for how Indigenous Peoples have been responsible stewards of these beautiful lands for thousands of years, and how they continue to teach us so much about how to live sustainably on this planet.

For more information on how you can help advance a green and just recovery from COVID-19, visit davidssuzuki.org/greenandjustrecovery.

To support our work and help us make more podcasts like this one, visit davidssuzuki.org/donate.

This wouldn't have been possible without our incredible production team: Jason Arkley, David Leibl and Brendan Glauser.

And Katie Jensen, Renita Bangert and Michal Stein of Vocal Fry Studios.

Theme music by Scott Nolan. Artwork generously provided by Roy Henry Vickers.



Until next time, take care of yourself, each other and this beautiful living planet. It is, after all, our only home.

Music is an incredibly powerful source of expression and communication. It can bring people together and inspire action. It's played a vital role in social movements as long as I've been around. At the end of each episode of this podcast, we'll play a song to end on a healing, meditative note. Four of the five artists we profile are independent, from the heart of Turtle Island. We hope you enjoy and do what you can to support up-and-coming musicians, especially during this particularly challenging time.

To close this episode, a song by Carly Dow. Aside from her music, Carly Dow also has an extensive background in environmental science and has worked for various conservation organizations for over a decade. She says this lends her songwriting a unique perspective and allows her to connect the worlds of science and art. The song "Constellations", which we're about to hear, was released on her sophomore album, Comet, which rose to the National Top 10 Roots/Blues charts for several weeks. At a time when so many are in need of healing, Carly says clawhammer banjo is medicine for the soul.

This is Carly Dow with "Constellations".

MUSIC PERFORMANCE [2-4 MINUTES]