



## HUMANITY'S CHOICE

**D**ur first task as a human community is to recognize the remarkable choice directly before us.

On the one hand, if we regard the universe as dead at its foundations, then feelings of existential alienation, anxiety, dread, and fear are understandable. Why seek communion with the cold indifference of lifeless matter and empty space? If we relax into a dead Universe, we will simply sink into existential despair, so better to live on the surface of life.

On the other hand, if we live in a living Universe, then feelings of subtle connection, curiosity, and gratitude are natural. When we see ourselves as participants in a cosmic garden of life that has been developing patiently over billions of years, our regard for the universe shifts from indifference, fear, and cynicism to curiosity, love, and awe.

Humanity's future pivots on which understanding prevails and the choices that naturally follow.

The wellbeing of humanity and the Earth depends upon this generation waking up, growing up, and moving from our adolescence into our early adulthood as a species, and thereby establishing a new relationship with nature, other humans, and the living Universe.

If we do not welcome the miracle of life around us and within us, the alternative seems likely to be our effective extinction as a species. Climate chaos, sea level rise, mass migrations, species extinction and more are accelerating and moving past critical tipping points, producing irreversible changes to the Earth, and making humanity's turn toward a sustainable future immensely more difficult.

Would we choose ruin over life? As unthinkable as it may be, it seems painfully realistic to conclude that unless the great diversity of humanity can find an awe-inspiring bridge to a compelling future that is grounded in a commonly felt experience of tremendous, untapped evolutionary potential, we will not have the soulful motivation needed to turn from separation and survival to community and co-evolution.

As the push of outer necessity meets the pull of untapped inner capacity, humanity is beginning to awaken. And yet, adversity trends such as radical climate change are accelerating so rapidly there is a real danger that humanity's responses could prove to be too little and too late—and we may veer off into a new dark age.

If we are distracted and in denial, and overlook the urgency and importance of the great transition now underway, we will miss a unique, never-to-be-repeated, evolutionary opportunity. Each generation is asked to make sacrifices for the next, to be a caretaker for the future. This generation is being pushed by an injured Earth and pulled by a welcoming Universe to make a monumental gift to humanity's future: working together with equanimity and maturity to consciously realize our bio-cosmic potential and purpose of learning to live in a living Universe.

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