



Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:00:00] Hello and welcome to Unstress. My name is Doctor Ron Ehrlich. I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which I'm recording this podcast, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and pay my respects to their elders past, going back over 60,000 years. Present and emerging, we have so much to learn about connection and respect from our indigenous forefathers. Well, today we are welcoming back [Helena Norberg-Hodge](#). Now, Helena is a globally respected analyst of the global economies impact on communities, local economies and personal identity around the world. Helena founded [Local Futures](#) in 1978 and Local Futures is a pioneer of the world localisation movement, raising awareness about the power of going local as a key strategy for restoring ecological, social and spiritual well-being. Helena is also the author of [Ancient Futures](#); learning from Ladakh and [Local is Our Future](#). She's also a producer of the documentary [The Economics of Happiness](#). She's the recipient of many awards, including the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the Alternative Alternative Nobel Prize, the Goi Peace Prize for her pioneering work towards a new economy, and the Arthur Morgan Award, which honours those who are passionate about and committed to community democracy, entrepreneurship and individual character. Well, Helena is definitely committed and passionate and articulate and in my opinion, convincing. And I'm sure you will agree too. It's such a pleasure to [welcome back to my podcast](#). I hope you enjoy this conversation I had with Helena Norberg Hodge. Welcome back Helena.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:02:04] Thank you. Very glad to be here.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:02:06] Helena, it's always good to have you on. And I always think people cannot hear this message often enough. We're going to talk about localisation, of course. But I wondered if we might just take a step back from that because the vast majority of perhaps our listeners, although I

know you and I both remember a different time, but the vast majority of our listeners have grown up in a globalised world, which kind of is easy to think. This is normal, this is the world. Can we just reflect on what a globalised world is?

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:02:41] Yes. And, I want to also explain that I've lived in so many different countries, so I've experienced an unglobalized world in my native country, in Sweden, in America, in Germany, in France, and in these remote cultures of Ladakh and Bhutan, the Tibetan culture. Basically in the modern world, in Sweden and in America. People had much more time. People did not have to work as hard to pay the rent or the mortgage or put food on the table. In fact, in the earlier period before globalisation took off, which was in the sort of late 80s, people, you know, the average family, only the father worked. And then what happened is as prices went up, women had just joined the workplace. And even then, both the mother and father were working even harder and running faster. An interesting part of this was also that communication moved more slowly. Everyone use the post office, and the post office was the same price for everyone. Whether you were poor or whether you were a CEO of a big company. It operated at the same speed, so you didn't have some advantage as you do now. Being an Amazon that can fly things all around the world at an artificially low price. And if you and I want to post a book to another country, cost more than the price of the book, another thing that was part of the reality is that if you were a sports star or if you are a musician, you are actually playing to an audience that was deeply appreciative, sometimes many thousands of people, but you weren't on a stage of 8 billion people competing with about a billion people. So if you were a football player, you were known in England. You know, you if you were a part of Manchester United, you came from Manchester. If you were playing in a in an orchestra or a singer, you were well-known in your country, but you weren't necessarily known globally. The what it meant was that there were many, many more stars. There were many, many more, sports players who were getting a good livelihood and enjoying their work. Whereas now what we're seeing is this intense competition on everybody to compete, to get into that echelon where you get paid \$1 million for singing on, you know, one show. Now that sounds great. And not many people have the ambition to do that. But the fact is that in the pre global world, many more people had a chance to do many more things because they didn't have to devote so much time to just putting food on the table and a roof over their head. They were also able to have more time for sports, for music, for art, for each other, for themselves, for exercise. So I guess I would say the biggest take home message is that globalisation has made us more and I mean financially poorer, but also time poor. And the time poverty is the clearest indicator of how impoverished we are and the running faster and faster just to put that roof over our head and the food on the table is it's killing us. And now, on top of that, what we're seeing is a very clear trend that with globalisation, not only are you running faster and faster, but you are more and more lonely. This is something that I became aware of already in the 70s in Sweden, people were isolated as part of modernity, moving into the city, the cities becoming bigger and bigger, people living alone. And this has been exacerbated massively in the last 30, 40 years. So we have epidemics of depression in virtually every country. But because we don't get to hear the global picture, we often blame our own culture, our left or right government. You know, people can blame everything in England or Maggie Thatcher or now the more recent conservatives, but they really need to look at the big picture to see that Tony Blair and that the both left and right have actually been supporting global corporations globalisation at the expense of their own country. And it's not a right or left issue, but I guess, yeah, the most important take home message ultimately, is that we were happier and healthier pre globalisation and doesn't mean it was perfect. We need to go back

much further to more indigenous cultures, more balanced cultures where women and the feminine had a stronger voice, where spirituality was linked to deep ecological connections, to find something that can really be a signpost for where we want to go in the future. And that's what localisation is from. It's not from indigenous culture, where the community fabric was strong, where we also had a deep relationship with the natural world around us. And yeah, we were a lot happier than now. Yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:08:39] Well, it's interesting to hear you say about indigenous because I start every podcast over the last year or two with an acknowledgement to country, and it's not lip service. It's because I truly believe we have a lot to learn from our indigenous people. About connection. Connection with people and planet. And I agree with that. It's so interesting too, because I remember a time when we all used to own we owned the banks in Australia, we owned the telecommunications, the public service, the transport, the utilities, and then everything was privatised for efficiency. And anybody that's been on a phone call with these so-called efficient organisations. No, that's not true anymore. But then the interesting part was we were given credit to go and buy back shares in something we already owned. And if that's not an example of economic irrationalism, I mean, that is part of the problem, isn't it? The economic rationalism, the neo liberal model cutting the legs out from underneath the labour force in Western countries?

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:09:51] Yes, I see also the neoliberal is so clearly mad, but from my point of view, learning from indigenous culture, we even have to define no talk about the liberal, if you like, before the neoliberal meaning that the foundation of the modern economy was the idea that it is not in your interest to be a more self-reliant regional country. It's in your interest to specialise all of your production for export. So this system really started through creating debt and loss of self-reliance, and we were at a loss of self esteem around the world. I mean, the precursor to the modern economy was the enclosures, slavery, genocide with that misogyny and massive misogyny Christianity had built up before that, to this quite frightening hatred of the feminine of nature, you know, burning women at the stake. Now that's the foundation of the modern economy. So when the thinking comes in and based on comparative advantage, saying that, oh, no, it's not in your interest in Australia or Scotland or anywhere to produce a range of things for your needs as a priority. Now you should shift away and produce for export. So of course, that started with tea and cotton and mining and, you know, so-called third world country. But even in England the enclosures meant that people were driven away from their land into impoverished London. And that was a mess, filthy, polluted illness, crime. And if you stole a bit of all bread, you could be shipped off to Australia just like a slave. And now you are forced to, you know, rob that country of its resources. Poor Britain in huge, monocultural plantations, you know, sheep stations, all of this for export so deeply in the economy has been this commitment to produce for export. Well, what does that mean? It means produce to make global traders richer. So in the modern era, it took on a new force after the Second World War with the Bretton Woods, IMF, world Bank and the GATT, the generally, the Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. And this was now countries committed to ensuring that every country would be subjected to so-called free trade, which meant that they had to open their doors to the Coca-Cola, the Monsanto's, to Monsanto wasn't around them, but to these giant banks and corporations. And if they didn't open their doors, then they'd be punished in various ways. And all of this led to a type of colonialism through debt. And we often think about that in terms of the Third world. But we don't realise that the U.S. has the biggest

debt of all, that the leaders of our modern industrial countries have also blindly supported the global trade as a religion. And I'm monologuing so much now. But I just want us to talk also about what's happening right now in the UK because of what happened to the Post office. And so I don't know if you've heard of this.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:13:40] No, no. Tell me.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:13:41] Yeah. Well, it's so interesting and I really feel it's preparing the ground for this very important message about the need to move away from globalisation towards localisation, meaning, you know, supporting local, regional and national economies everywhere as a priority. And of course, having trade with makes sense where it makes sense for the majority, not just for the billionaires who are making more billions as we speak. We've just seen right now with Davos happening, we've seen statistics from Oxfam about how billionaires around the world have increased their wealth just in the last year. And the only statistics that we need to really understand is that the middle class and of course, the poor everywhere are getting poorer and poorer very rapidly. So in England, what's happened starting in the late 90s is that the Post office brought in a new computer system from Japan. It was made by Fujitsu, a Japanese company, and that computer system had huge errors. And it led to the post office accusing people of embezzling funds. People were accused of embezzling between, a thousand and £100,000. Thousands of people, these were postmasters who were in small villages or bigger towns. You know, the post office had become a sort of a little window in a shop, very often pillars of society, very respected. And now suddenly they were accused of stealing and they were told people from the post office came out and told them, you're the only one this is happening to. Nobody else has this problem and no one else can go into your computerised account system. No one else is just you. No one is complaining. And the people were sent out from the post office to tell people this. Got a bonus when they managed to prosecute people and they were going around the country and telling thousands of people this. And then in the meanwhile, it turns out that Tony Blair was warning the post office about putting a bad image to this computer system because it would affect trade with Japan. So the post office is being encouraged to cover up and to pretend that this computer system was fine, they imprisoned people. People lost their houses, they lost their reputation. There were suicides at least four. And wonderfully, this is now all over the media in England, and it's all over the media for weeks because they made a docu drama. And in this docudrama there are good actors who look, you know, spell out what happened. And by the way, the wonderful, you know, situation that brought tears to my eyes. Eastland. Finally some of these people connect with each other and know that they're not alone. And they start collaborating to build up the momentum to take this on. So this is one of the key messages today. We need to try to connect with like minded people. And that's so many issues. It's over our daughters anorexia or over the other problems we might be facing. It's over you know coming together to see how can we do something about changing the world for our own benefit and for the benefit of the planet? And that's what localisation offers, is a systemic direction that we can all support.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:17:59] Well that's an incredible example of that. And I know this is something that you've been working with and on for over 40 years. And, it's actually been interesting because over

that time I've also been very aware of the role of the chemical, food and pharmaceutical industry in health care, to which I would now add the media companies. And that's something that I have been aware of. I know you have been aware of, but we've just come out of a 2 or 3 year pandemic, and even having been aware of that, I was totally shocked by the level of influence. It even surprised me. How did you feel?

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:18:41] Yes. No, I, I absolutely didn't expect such an amazing handover of wealth and power to the pharmaceutical industry by our governments. But on the other hand, I had been studying this process whereby they were signing on to treaties giving global corporations more and more powers. And of course, you know, one of the most important of all of those is also handing over the power to banks to create money out of thin air. So we've got this world now where this is like an empire of global corporations and banks that are operating as a globalised empire, dictating rules to our different government. And we need to understand that we need to spell it, and we need also to realise that very often the people working in those banks and corporations are not aware of the bigger picture. They're not evil people who are consciously trying to harm us. But as part of that system, what had happened is that in medicine as well as the media, less and less accountability, less and less responsibility in science, for instance, I had worked with many scientists who had seen how the regulations that were protecting both environmental health and human health were being removed at the time when the technologies were becoming more and more dramatic. You know, with genetic engineering, the ability to affect life on Earth for virtually infinitely, the period from so-called discovery and market application was shrinking. And so and then we discovered also that the agencies that were meant to be protecting our health and the environment and health were more and more funded and basically run by the same businesses they were meant to be regulating. So it was still totally shocking to see what happened in the whole Covid situation. And again, I do want to remind people to try to remain compassionate and try to really understand how it was possible for doctors, politicians, people in power, people in the media to keep to a line that they should have question to just as well take what is from above and to believe that, you know, the World Health Organisation must know what they are talking about. There should have been more questioning for sure, but I think from my experience in talking to ministers to economists and scientists, it's very clear that once you in a culture within the power institutions, when you get up to a higher level, you are surrounded by assumptions that essentially say, we've got to go in the same direction we've been going, and if we rock the boat, there will be more harm. That is particularly true. So the finance is leading it. And with the finance, the idea is that it's like a bicycle. And if we were to slow it down, if we were for instance, regulate the banks, governments would be so poor there would be millions of people suffering. Now, that is absolutely not true. The truth is that by continuing to hand over power and make fewer and fewer billionaires even richer, they are impoverishing the majority. So changing that would actually be relatively easy. It would have much smaller social repercussions. It would be economically healing for society. But so when we understand that within the economic context, it's also easier to understand how within the pharmaceutical industry, within the, you know, World Health Organisation, that things have shifted to be more about profit than about genuine health. That the time it takes to do proper research has shrunk. And here we were thrown into this mix. That was disastrous. And we can just pray that there is more and more of a wake up and that that will show that we need more caution, we need more testing. We need to really know that what's happening is in the interest of health, not in the interest of profit.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:23:23] No I, I really I mean I agree with so much what you say, but I agree with particularly that we shouldn't judge people harshly because I believe the vast majority of people in public places and in the, you know, in and doctors and politicians, they want the best. They have unwittingly I think there are two, there are 2 or 3 words that summarise it for me in terms of understanding. One is business model. That goes a long way to explaining a great deal of what goes on in our world. But the second one that facilitates the business model with well-meaning people is overwhelm. Overwhelm. Because I often hear doctors say, oh, there's no evidence to support this or that, whereas I know to stay up, keep up with the evidence requires about 600 hours of reading a week. And I don't think there are, you know, there are 600 hours a week. So this is overwhelm. And this must be true to politicians, to all sorts of people in all sorts of positions.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:24:28] Absolutely overwhelm. And again remember we've seen this speeding up for everyone. Seeing doctors teachers people before the pandemic having burnout. You know you had a lot of the younger people also just couldn't even finish with their medical studies. It's so intensely competitive. So again part of this globalising system has so increased competition and time pressures. It's killing people. It's idleness. And it all goes back to the economic trajectory of pushing everyone into this one globalised system, which cannot pay attention to the needs of people and nature, cannot respect the diversity, the uniqueness of every individual, the uniqueness of every plant, every bit of soil, so also what I've been seeing over these years is that people in power operating within a worldview of numbers of representations, they're not dealing with the actual people. They are dealing with very narrow assumptions that support continuing in the same direction that is deemed efficient, is deemed to be the only way to save lives, or the only way to plant trees, you know, planting vast monocultures that are deadly, that destroy the soil and destroy the ecosystem. So, yeah, I think, we need to go back to the fundamentals, which have to do with what's happened to knowledge linked to economic growth. And that in turn, has been linked to technology. And that's where you and I might differ because, recently we spoke on the phone. You were more favourable about AI than I can be. I can't be because I feel that the basic parameters are so dangerous. All right. Do you agree with that?

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:26:27] I do, I do, I do I think it has great potential, but I unfortunately unfortunately it will be out of control. And if it comes into the hands of those that may not have our best interests in mind. And what are the chances of that happening? Well, what do I think? I am concerned. I mean, I see great potential, but. But then I saw great potential in the pandemic too. I thought this was a great opportunity to focus on public health. You know, we were told if you were unhealthy, you were more susceptible to die in a week or 2 or 3 if you contracted the illness. So what a great motivation for public health. We didn't hear a thing about it.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:27:13] Nothing. And that too I. For those who are talking about the other pandemic of obesity, heart disease and diabetes, and people now in America dying earlier than their parents generation, we're talking about a deadly pandemic. And what do we see? We see that it's

changing that and having some voice, societal democratic voice to limit advertising, targeting babies with high fructose corn syrup and trans fats and things that we know to be absolutely toxic. That would be relatively easy to regulate that, to deal with it. But we will only have the political will once people wake up to it. And I'm and I'm, my big hope is that the social and environmental activists, you know, those who are concerned with climate change, with toxic pollution and those concerned with poverty and epidemics of depression, etc., that they will come together in a clear, unified voice to focus on the need for an economic shift, which is a major political demand, that governments sit down around the same tables where they're now signing trade treaties, giving corporations and banks more power. Now they're coming back with civic society at the table to demand that we start regulating those banks and corporations. It doesn't mean that these companies have to shut down overnight. It simply means they're going to have their less profit next year, but they're going to be moving in the direction of, you know, just like musical chairs. They can no longer play their game. They're going to have to be American if they're supposed to be American. They cannot have the freedom to be anywhere and everywhere. And the government will be regulating and having an umbrella of protection so that instead of the WTO, a world trade organisation, we have a world environment and health organisation that is genuinely, keeping an eye in our interests. But the watchdogs will also be empowered to go all the way down to the local level to empower people and have a say in, the choices, you know, the big. Can I just say one more thing?

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:29:52] Absolutely.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:29:53] One more thing that's been so clear to me, going way back to earlier societies is that with the era of so-called cheap oil, the entire economic system was distorted to pretend that using more and more oil to replace people on the land, to start with, with big machines and all the chemicals that pesticides become the size of homes, that they're all replacing human labour. When you start from the baseline of colonialism and slavery, that technology looks like a big improvement. But when you start from a baseline of smaller, diversified farms that are feeding the region and their community, you you have a completely different picture. And we are now seeing with the new localisation movement, we now have a worldwide local food movement, including in Australia, where I helped to start a lot of things back already in in 99, 2000, because we didn't really have new farmers markets that were there for farmers to feed their region and to feed their city and their region. But now we're demonstrating with farmers markets, communities for agriculture, a whole range of structures. What happens when you shorten the distance between the farm and the table? And that's one of the central parts of localisation. We can produce far more per unit of land, per unit of water, well, more. So we can decrease the human ecological footprint by supporting a shift towards a localised, diversified food system. If subsidies were shifted overnight, we would see enormous benefit. People don't know that every day countries are routinely importing. Exporting the same food product. You have oranges from California selling in Australia at a time when there are Australian oranges available, and in the supermarket the Californian ones are cheaper. It's a completely artificial price based on pretending that oil was cheap, which it never was. It's false accounting. If we shifted that to support job rich, ecological, slower, happier ways of doing things. And that's particularly true in the caring industries. You know, whether it's looking after children or the elderly or ourselves. We need people, not robots. Can I also just add one more thing.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:32:39] Helena? You can add whatever you like. This is your time to go.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:32:43] Yes. I'm not giving you much of a time, but have you heard what's happening in Germany recently?

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:32:48] No. Go on, tell me. Tell us about it.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:32:50] Because right now in Germany, the whole country is being brought to a standstill. I mean, cities all over the country by farmers, starting with farmers. And the immediate in was the sort of impulse was that the government is removing the subsidies for diesel to farmers. But wonderfully, it's much more than that. So people are now also by the hundreds and thousands, millions demonstrating about the increase in poverty. And they're articulating that we need to shift our agricultural subsidies away from the diesel, but to support farmers, to produce healthy, diversified ecological food, to just withdraw and have, you know, millions of farmers lose a livelihood is not our only chance. You know, we can literally right now shift subsidies wherever we are in Australia and Germany. But it's going to take a strong movement and a voice. We need to get the troops out there. But I feel things are shifting and yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:34:02] You talk about subsidies. I know that a few years back I read an IMF report which outlined the fossil fuel industry globally receives \$5 trillion a year in subsidies, which equates to \$10 million a minute. And we've been talking, I don't know, for 20 or 30 minutes. There's \$300 million. And I'm sure there are quite a few farmers globally that could do with that last 30 minutes of subsidies, let alone a whole year.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:34:32] And and now, thank goodness. The important thing to us for people to realise that the costs have been dominated by big business. And it's really only recently that there's now public knowledge that is big oil that's running the show.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:34:50] And so when you're talking about costs, you're talking about the climate, something.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:34:58] That they. You know, they have been framed by corporate interests from the outset, and people haven't yet quite registered that the focus on carbon has come in from corporate thinktanks to reduce this issue to a tradable commodity, again, globally, traded in

the most corrupt, hideous way. And yeah, and so even the focus on carbon itself is a problem. The focus should be on fossil fuels. It should be on the subsidies for fossil fuels and shifting those subsidies. And then we also need to realise that a lot of the renewable energy that's being, imposed in the form of vast windmill farms and vast solar plantations is also not a good thing. It's being pushed as a way of replacing all the energy that's going into the global economy. We so desperately need a proper accounting. What would it take to actually feed, clothe, house people in their societies in a truly ecological and humane way? We would then see that we do not need more and more and more energy every year. The energy is going into this madness and importing and exporting the same product, and not just that, is going into the well, as you know, a model of built in obsolescence. More and more the technologies are made to not to last. All of that should be absolutely forbidden. Imagine what we could do if we actually recycled and then restored even the refrigerators, the cars, you know, if the materials were reused properly. But that's not happening. Yes. And and I think it will. I do think, inevitably things will change for the better. But the question is how much more crisis we're going to have to witness. Because ultimately, the way that governments are subsidising the global empire has now turned into subsidies for a system that is primarily a marriage between high tech and the financial casino market that is criminally destructive, linked to the war machine War is hugely profitable. And you see also that the war in the social media that's destroying the identities of young people is also profitable. So I hope people have seen the film [The Social Dilemma](#). Yes. Where everybody's from Silicon Valley, warning us about allowing this to go uncontrolled, unregulated and continue escalating.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:38:01] Well, I think it's not only the subsidies, but it's also the fact that the costs, the health and environmental costs and liabilities are never factored into the cost of a product. That's for the that's for the community to bear.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:38:15] Yeah, exactly. Yeah. I think the community and the local government to clean up the mess. Yes. Yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:38:22] But listen, let's strike a more positive note because I know in October you attend in October 2023, you attended a summit of Planet Local, a [Planet Local Summit](#). Tell us a little bit about that. It was a wonderful event. I tell us about it.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:38:37] Yeah. I didn't just attended the session, organised it. I started a year earlier, so we had been organising conferences around the world before that, and then in the pandemic, we couldn't. We had to cancel. We already had had five planned in Brazil, Japan. We've been doing them around the world since I've film. The [Economics of Happiness](#) was released in 2011, and this year we felt, well, we don't know, like the way things are going, we may not be able to do it again. Let's try to do a really big global event. And we were able to collaborate with the former mayor of Bristol, a medium sized 600,000 people city in in the UK. And he had already started doing some great things there. And all these are influenced to that is a very strong one, mainly through our influence actually. We started a local food movement in Bristol and well, it was what was wonderful

was the minute we announced that we were doing this Planet Local summit, we lost touch, enthusiasm from people who wanted to speak, but also people who were buying tickets from Brazil, from America, from Japan, from Australia, just to come and listen. And so it was just a remarkable meeting of people who I would say, in the end, when I just looked at the photos often because I was so in a haze during the actual summit there, and the whole thing was essentially five days, which included three days of a public conference with an audience of, the audience was about 1200, but we had 130 speakers in just three days. And so it was quite an organisational day. Then we had networking days, and then we had other days where just the speakers to connect and collaborate. So it was a major thing. But looking at the photos afterwards is when I became aware of how incredibly beautiful and healthy and inspiring the audience was, as well as the speakers, and they loved each other. There was such a I kept saying, it feels like I organised weddings all at once, hundreds of weddings because people were just glued together, so thrilled to meet each other. From Romania, from Brazil, from Finland. So. It basically confirmed what I do, feeling every day that at the grassroots, not in the media, not in academia. And some of these people are in academia, but they don't get big grants and not heard. They don't hear about them in the media. And it's very hard to find them in social media. But there is this groundswell, and there always has been more localised ways of doing things. So there's still billions of people in the so-called Third World who are still. I still building a foundation of local economies that are much healthier. Among other things, they're intergenerational. There's much more contact between young and old. One of the key things, too, is they have much more time. Time for each other, time to sing and dance and cook and celebrate together. And they are also producing much more of what they need, whether it's the food building, the houses that actually engage in creative, productive work where they see the impact of what they do, where they see the benefit, and they know the people who make them. So there's already, you know, billions of people in Third World. But in some ways the most inspiring is that in the Western world, there are so many people who want to come back to it, and also millions of people who are succeeding and doing that. It's harder to do with all the economic pressures going the opposite direction, psychological pressures in the opposite direction, by the way, in the Third world and so on as well. The psychological pressures are also enormous negative weights because they through the media, I tell people that if you live with your grandparents or if you live closer to the land, if you ever have your hands in the soil, you're backward and primitive. You've got to do everything you can to give your children a good education so they can go to the city. So this is again in the movement that gathered in Bristol. We had this very sophisticated group of people who were doing both. They were engaged in the paths towards nature, towards community, towards more intergenerational contact, towards the more caring, compassionate, deeply ecological and joyous culture. They were aware of inner health through a spiritual reconnection. You know, the inner reconnection between our brain and our heart and on gut. The whole path of localisation is a path of reconnection. And it doesn't start necessarily with the spiritual, but it either starts with it or it arrives at it, because it's part of that cycle of being connected. That's how we evolved. We have to go back to that. We all connected to the soul, and we're hearing more and more about the bugs in the ground and the bugs in our gut. We're seeing more and more evidence through neuroscience of the joy, even, that comes from singing together. What happens? Hormones in our brains when we use our bodies when we walk. All of this is coming back to being more connected to our bodies, to the earth and to others. The reconnection to others in many ways is the most difficult, because we've been trained to believe that we don't need we shouldn't need anybody else. Needing others is weak. We hear a lot about co-dependency. A lot of that is rubbish. A lot, a lot of people who are co-dependent are healthily interdependent, and we have to be really aware that all the profound teachings from the ages have been teachings of the

interdependence of all of life, the oneness of all of life. And we've been pushed into a mechanistic path that taught us that, no, no, those connections are not real. We can control, we can live separate from each other, separate from nature. And we were, in most cases manipulated into that. So this is another thing that we're trying to share is don't don't internalise that as something that you created nor blame. You know, Bill gates ran and created this system. He's been pretty clever at creating very lucrative ways of benefiting from a system that has allowed this madness. But we all have to take responsibility. But we also should reduce self blame, and just try to understand what's been happening and wake up to the amazing benefits of a systemic paradigm shift towards seeing that the global versus local is a key element. Key element is disconnection versus reconnection. Key element is away from nature towards nature. Key element is speedy competition versus slowing down and collaboration. Key element is patriarchal, hyper masculine, and a balance between feminine and and masculine and valuing the feminine, which aka typically is the more nurturing and caring, more deeply connected to nature and to others. So we're really, thrilled about how this summit went, and we're very grateful. Well, I'm very grateful. Valley had my eyes open for this from Ladakh or Little Tibet and also from Bhutan.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:47:32] I know we talked about that at our last time and, and it's such an inspiring story that what you, what you're saying, it's interesting about compassion. We did a [whole program on compassion](#) and, and the power of it. But the importance of self-compassion as a starting point. And it's interesting also about connection because, the irony of our current situation is that we could be we could have thousands of friends supposedly on the internet, and yet we don't even connect with the person sitting right next to us. And, and I think, the research shows [that loneliness is equivalent to smoking](#) 15 packets a 15 cigarettes a day on our health, you know? So it's a it's a big one. Yeah. Yeah. Go on.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:48:19] Yeah. I was just going to say that I do, you know, because we're such strong advocates of face to face personal connection and really trying to urge people to understand the benefits of that. And it requires that we move away from the terrible pressure we've been under to appear perfect. So we've been isolated into our little nuclear families and behind these very thick walls, where it's the only place where we feel that people know that we're not perfect when we are supposed to be perfect, and breaking that down through coming together in circles of support with people who are mature enough to really share. Journey is bit modelled on the 12 step program, where people can see that they're not the only ones who have these problems of depression or aggression in inside the home, or fear of the future, whatever it might be. The beautiful thing of the 12 step program was that it's through sharing the journey of coming together in community, that the healing happens much more rapidly. And in our localisation movement, you know, we're saying that a cornerstone of this is a conscious reconnection with others, which can be a bit frightening. But taking steps in that direction, even just with one like minded friend, can be a very good stuff. And when you accompany that with a spiritual connection to nature, we're also seeing these remarkable, remarkable examples of prisoners, torture victims, you know, depressed people healing. So the reconnection in community and to the animals, to the plant, the animals, just even just the reconnection, as you probably know, in certain therapies to dogs or to horses, but broadly speaking, it's to, to live. And so I, I, I think I can't in any way overestimate the benefits of that face to face connection. But I'm often told,

and I myself am also nourished by my connections to people on the other side of the world. And that's partly what we had in the planet local summit that like minded people came together. And so we it's not just in our region, it's not just in our country. And meeting those like minded people is also very nourishing. And we can make use, as you and I are doing now, of these modern technologies, to do that as well. But we've got to be really careful that in the process we're not replacing or preventing that face to face lived connection from happening.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:51:17] Well, I know on a personal level, I was up in Byron recently and I just didn't have enough time to come and visit you. But I will next time, for sure. Listen, the planet planets, the summit, planet local summit is one thing. And and. Congratulations. What an amazing achievement. An event. I can imagine it being like, organising, you know, weddings. But but the World Localisation Day is, is an annual event now.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:51:44] Yeah. So [World Localisation Day](#), we set up, for June 21st because in the Northern hemisphere is a perfect time to be out celebrating in nature. And we started with an online program during Covid. And then we've had people all over the world celebrating the day, sometimes just organising a local food feast with friends, sometimes putting on a small conference, sometimes a webinar online. So that is definitely continuing with putting out the word to our network. And there will be people all over the world celebrating the day. And now it's not always easy for people to do it right on the day. So we actually have things going on for more than a month. But right now, the first thing is May 25th in Japan. And then probably we'll have things going on into July. So please come to our website, [World Localisation day.org](#) and even more importantly come to [Local futures.org](#) to see what we're up to. We're a very small organisation, but we do have a very wide reach with a lot of our material is translated into as more than 40 languages, up to about 50 now. So very small, but very global and with a broad holistic view that includes everything from, you know, well-being to planetary well-being. I hope you want to listen to the serious. We're just starting to put out, video interviews and podcasts from the speakers at our Planet Local summit. So please do come and and check us out.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:53:34] Well, Helena, you know, thank you so much for everything that you do and you have done. And, it's such a pleasure to reconnect with you. Thank you.

Helena Norberg-Hodge [00:53:45] Well, I want to thank you so much. Who is such an inspiration for me? It's just wonderful that you have linked the, you know, the physical well-being in this holistic way. You know, I'm so grateful for what you know about dentistry. But from that, to understand that it's about overall health of the individual, but overall health of the planet. So I really thank you for being such a soulmate and such an important voice in Australia.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:54:14] I think. Well, I'd encourage you, on a local level, to go and visit, your local farmers markets and connect with farmers. I said in my book that the 20th century was the year of the Revered economist, or the century of the Revered economist. And, look at that bonus. I hope the 21st century will turn out to be the century of the revered farmer. Because farmers, who provide us with food and nurture our land. And we need to be connecting with them on a local basis, local level, and connecting with the rest of our community in many different ways. Look, we will have links to the local Futures website and World Localisation day.org as well, two sites that I encourage you to visit and support. I also encourage you to join our Unstressed Health Community, a community where many of our episodes are curated and grouped and edited to pick out the highlights for you. There's a Coaching Lab podcast as well, where we explore some of the clinical hints that many of our guests have given over the many years of our podcast, live webinars, many, many resources, and many links to organisations that, that we, support in our in our podcasting. I hope this finds you. Well, until next time. This is doctor Ron Ehrlich. Be well.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:55:41] This podcast provides general information and discussion about medicine, health, and related subjects. Its content is not intended and should not be construed as medical advice, or as a substitute for care by a qualified medical practitioner. If you or any other person has a medical concern, he or she should consult with an appropriately qualified medical practitioner. Guests who speak in this podcast express their own opinions, experiences and conclusions.