

David's Desk 183 Audio Companion Transcript

James: David, welcome to the audio companion to David's desk!

David: Thank you James, it's a pleasure to try turning my "Desk" into sound.

James: I'm looking forward to this opportunity as well,

David: Thank you. Three years ago, this month, I put out a David's Desk, where...We have in our neighborhood these drains in the road and they have little signs on them that say "Puget Sound starts here." It's to remind people that anything they dump down the drain ends up in the Sound. I thought that was such a perfect metaphor for saying that the larger wholeness that we're all part of starts here. And so the David's desk was just a series of photographs of the drains and of the Sound to illustrate that point. I thought, well, you know, it's been three years since I sent that out, it's July and people probably don't want to deal with weighty things. Here in this country, everybody's heading out for holidays. It's one of my favorite Desks, so I thought I'll just reprise that and add a little bit to it and send it out again. But then the Roe vs. Wade decision was handed down and everything turned a lot more serious, especially with the decisions that have followed since then.

James: Yeah, I could see that. And it still starts here.

David: Yes, it does.

James: And it still starts here. I'm still taken with the idea of sea legs, the little reminders that we have, that allow us to maintain our stability when the boat is moving so erratically like it is right now, our world is moving so chaotically and in response, what do we have? We have little things like "Puget Sound starts here," or we have other things that remind us to just take a step back.

David: Yes, I agree, James. We need to find ways of rolling with the boat, rolling with the waves. Otherwise, you get tossed around and you become less effective. It's hard to do something when you're lying sprawled on the deck!

James: Or your emotional state is such that you're regurgitating all of your lunch over the edge of the deck as well—you're reacting to it in a way that's visceral.

David : Yeah, exactly. It's actually a fairly prominent theme—or a consistent theme, I should say, with my own subtle colleagues to pay attention to the energy field that you're actually immersed in and to the energy and the life that's around you and your attunement to that. Pay attention to your Sovereignty, pay attention to being centered in the earth, right where you are. All of that provides the foundation to stand on for any other work you may do that deals with the events of the world. That's where our sea legs come from—it's a matter of finding that center of gravity, that point of balance that allows us to roll with the boat.

James: It does take a little bit of time for that to happen. You actually have to experience the movement. You can't just grab onto something and say, I'm not moving. If you want to get to the other side of the ship, or if you want to have an easier journey on this, there is a practice, there is there is an intention that yes, I'm going to learn how to walk on a moving ship. I'm going to learn how to move forward in my life given that this is what my life is looking like right now.

David: Well, that's exactly right, and the first step is to acknowledge that I'm not on land anymore, that I'm on a boat and the boat is on the ocean, which is a fluid medium, fluid environment. I have to adapt to that. The problems arise when I persist in thinking I'm still on the land, and I demand that everything around me act as if it were stationary on the land. I think the idea that life is stable has been a less than accurate portrayal of reality. All along, we've always been part of a fluid medium that is subject to change. That's the

ancient wisdom that the Buddha presented and it's no less true today than it was 4000 years ago, 3000 years ago.

James: But we have come through a period of somewhat stability in terms of what was happening in the world. The pressure for changing hadn't reached the point where it was really bubbling over like it is now. 20 years ago, 15 years ago, even 10 years ago, it didn't seem—at least in my memory right now—it didn't seem to be as churning and and boiling and roiling and just multiple, multiple things hitting us at the same time.

David: Yes. I'm thinking back and I'm casting my mind—what's left of it [chuckles]—back over my life, and it seems to me that it's always been a dynamic environment, and yes, perhaps not as much as it is at the moment—things do seem to be accelerating. The interesting thing is that (if I keep using this planetary metaphor of ocean and land) the ocean itself rests on the land and the seabed is a solid surface that allows the ocean to slosh back and forth. Then you go deeper and you get the plate tectonics and you get the land resting on Molten magma, which is fluid. It's this constant dance between the fixed and the fluid. It's what a friend of ours, Dr. Lee Irwin...when I mentioned that to him once, he said, well put those two together and you get the flexible. He's absolutely right—that's the third element that resolves that tension. So really we're asking ourselves to live in flexibility. And that's always been the case—we have stable elements and we have not so stable.

When my subtle and colleagues say tune into the immediate environment around you, into the life of that environment, part of what they're pointing to is a level of stability. The life that's inhabiting the trees outside my window and the life of the all the other plants and the the various creatures that inhabit this neighborhood—that's a fairly stable ecosystem. It's not that it's not subject to change, but there are processes going on that are millions of years old; the way in which a tree is a tree doesn't change from day to day or year to year. So they're saying touch into what is stable and draw from that, but don't cling to it. Just as you said—if you're trying to get your sea legs, you don't hang on to a piece of furniture

bolted to the deck and pretend that you're back on land and everything is stable.

James: It's interesting that as you were as you were describing that, I was looking outside of my window and I see the trees and my front garden, and my neighborhood and it is pretty stable. There are people that are retiring and moving away to a smaller place. So there is change, but it's change on a personal level. On the level that the sun rises and sun sets—I can manage that level of change. But when I begin to pay attention to the world that humans have created in terms of their behaviors, for example, whether it's the economic system or the political system or the social system, and how that is very erratic in its change; it's subject to the whims of the person who is saying something or has some kind of power or control to make something happen that immediately changes—for example in *Roe vs Wade*—fifty years of solid precedent that just disappears overnight, almost, where my front yard may not change as significantly, as quickly as that.

David: Yes, or Putin deciding to invade Ukraine. You have immense change that didn't have to happen. And yet, there it is. So, yes, that's right—human activity and human decisions definitely introduce a level of erratic and unpredictable behavior into the system. It's like I say, you've got the fixed and you've got the fluid. I think the thing about the human participation is that it's an unstable fluid. It's not like it's obeying the physical laws of fluids [chuckles]. Something like Putin saying, I think I'll invade Ukraine today—it doesn't exactly come out of nowhere. They were building up towards it. And yet, at the same time, it did come out of nowhere. It originated with one person's perception of reality and taking action on that. And the same with all the impact that Trump has had in the United States.

James: So there's an individual that has that kind of impact on the world or on society or on my neighborhood. And it actually feels like also an opportunity. If I'm experiencing this and I'm suffering, while I'm experiencing this, how is it that I can not suffer while experiencing this? If we flip it around, if we flip what's happening

right now, there are amazing opportunities that are that are being offered to us to actually experience what we're experiencing while learning from that experience and finding a different way, bringing into balance those three aspects that we were talking about earlier—the freedom aspect of that and the other aspects. Yes, those are part of being incarnate, and as you're fond of saying, there is no guarantee that is going to be easy. There really isn't.

David: That's, that's certainly true.

James: We have freedom, we have choice, we're here to experience, we're here to make a difference, we're here to be of service. If things were ideal, it would be kind of not being able to do that. You have to have change to be able to grow, right? The wind blows and my plants get stronger as I put them out of the greenhouse and begin to expose them to the elements until finally I can transplant them in the garden and they take off. But they had to strengthen from that protected environment of my greenhouse.

David: There's a paradox here. Again, let me go back to repeating what my subtle colleagues often say, which is this focus our individual circumstance, our immediate physical and subtle environment, but also on our own sovereignty and our own self. That focus is not intended to be selfish in nature or to stop there—the self isn't a destination, it's a means of engaging with a larger whole.

If I'm distressed over the things that are happening...let's say that I'm very distressed over the Supreme Court decisions. I have every right to be—if that is my perspective on life, that I'm a pro choice individual where the abortion question is concerned, then I have every right to be upset over that decision, just as if I was a pro-life person and the court had decided differently I would be equally upset.

So I have that upset and I don't want to deny the fact that I'm emotionally engaged and I feel badly about what's happened and I feel that the world's not going in the best possible direction. But

then I go out, and I'm out in my society, and I'm engaging individuals, whether I meet them in the store, or on the street, or in my office, my work. I'm engaging individuals in the specificity of that moment, and the way in which their specific life engages with mine. One of the things that John always used to say was that God emerges at the point where two people meet. Where these boundaries come together, there's a chance for revelation, there's a chance for love, there's a chance for kindness and caring, a chance for Sacred qualities to come into play.

If my attention now is consumed with what has happened with the Supreme Court and I go into my grocery store, and I'm going to the checkout line, and that's where my thinking is, I may miss an opportunity to engage with the person behind the checkout counter, the one tallying up my food, to engage with them in loving and supportive and empowering ways. I miss an opportunity for God to emerge.

It's those opportunities that fill our day. We're not living in relationship to the Supreme Court all the time. If I were in Washington, D.c. and I was clerking for one of the judges that would be different, but I'm not. While I can be rightfully concerned with what's happening at a national or international level and take whatever opportunities come my way to engage in a positive way with those larger events, in the actual nitty gritty of my day, I'm working at a much more granular level and dealing with the energies that are there with other people and with other environments, and with places and so on. That's where that's where I have the opportunity to shift things and to enable change and to bring in kindness, to bring in compassion, to bring in joy, to bring in something as simple as smiling and acknowledging somebody.

I was standing in line at a deli a couple of days ago in the grocery store, waiting for them to take my order. A woman was standing next to me and we just got to talking. She was a visitor from North Carolina. She here on on our hottest day so far this year. It was about 90-91 degrees here in Issaquah. And we just got to talking about how unfortunate it was that she was here for the day and it

happened to be the hot day. And she said, well, you know, I'm used to it—I'm from North Carolina. We had a nice exchange, and in that moment, there was a sense of reaching across time and space, reaching across our individual differences and making a connection. I can't speak for her, but I went away from that feeling more buoyant and more connected to humanity than I might have otherwise.

There's always those opportunities. I don't want to romanticize them or to reify them beyond what they are. But from the standpoint of my subtle colleagues, in most of our lives, that's where the action is and that's where transformation takes place and that's where positive and sacred energies can flow. If we're living in our imagination and our feelings, and minds only, always in this macro state—what's happening in the world—we miss that and we become ineffective. Again, that goes back to those images of the of the sewer drain with the sign that says “The Sound starts here.”

James: It does. As you were speaking, I was kind of moving back and forth and watching that part of myself that judges “Well, that's not as important as this occurrence that's happening in the world, because it's impacting so so many people, and I should be dwelling on that and doing something about that.” And then I feel my energy just moving out to that action and just adding to the turmoil of that.

And yet, when I'm back into my human scale, my personal scale, interacting with my neighbors, or, like you say, going to the grocery store and connecting at that level, it's very, very different. My energy expands at that point. I'm more open and porous to...it's sunny out today, and the wind is a nice breeze and the garden is growing, and my neighbors are out cutting their lawn, and there's an aliveness there that actually feeds me, it nourishes me in a way that putting my energy out or giving it or investing it in some world event doesn't feed me. In fact, it feels like it drains me,

David: Well, we're diminished by the sense of scale. And that is draining. If I want to engage with what's happening out in the world because I feel that I should make some contribution, then I really

need to shift into a perspective where it's not little me and big world, but it's me as a representative of the Sacred, it's me as a representative of life, it's me as a generative source engaging with an environment. In a sense, I have to think of myself as being as big as the world. I have to shift that sense of scale so that I'm not feeling diminished.

That's really what I want to get across. I do that by recognizing that I am part of this great sacred endeavor on this planet. I'm taking on the appearance at the moment of a single individual, but there's a part of me that's part of the larger planetary whole and can make a contribution at that level. Part of the challenge is how we think about power and how we think about exercising will. I want to be powerful to make things happen in the world. The world is a living system.

I have I have a friend who was recently diagnosed with cancer and and you think about it, it's localized, we hope—they're going in for scans to find out—but it's a collection of cells that by themselves are dwarfed by the totality of cells in the body. But yet, those few cells have the ability to bring the whole body to a standstill. It's interesting how impactful a single cell can be, especially in this community of trillions of cells.

It's the same for us; we can be impactful in ways that we don't always see, that are not immediately apparent, but joins with other people doing the same thing and you have a cascade of positive energy that enters into the world.

James: What struck me in what you were saying was the shift in perspective, from me being this isolated, separated individual in this huge, huge world that really doesn't feel like they can make a difference, right? And yet, I know that in me there is this sense of connectedness that can make a difference. How you were were laying that out is actually really important for some of the work that Timothy and I are looking at doing, which is individuals making a difference working with Gaia, working with the earth, working with life—not anti-life, but working with life in collaboration,

cooperation, co creation—all of those words. We're definitely not alone in this, in our efforts towards something, and we actually have choice to do this work. We have choice to look at how are we looking at this right now? What is our perspective on this? What would happen if I did change my perspective and took this view of it's the little things that I think are little that are actually the place where the Sacred enters, as you were saying—this smile, this work, this relationship that we have?

David: Yes, exactly. I was thinking of the little sign by the drain that say “Puget Sound starts here.p,” but I could look at the sound and say, the drain in my neighborhood starts here—it works both ways. There's this principle of resonance. (I have a thought that I'm trying to bring through...hang on to actually...) The principle of resonance, that's very important...yeah, okay...

So when Neil Armstrong walked on the moon—the first man on the moon—this was a huge, really significant event, an iconic event. When we think about it, we have these images in our mind of him stepping off the moon lander and first boot on the moon and so on. But none of that would have been possible were it not for just somebody here at Boeing tightening a screw on the on the booster rocket or on the lander itself. We see the tip of the spear, we see the tip of the activity. What's invisible to us is everything that's gone into make it possible and to bring a certain event into manifestation.

If I'm sitting here in my home, and as you say, I'm a private individual, I don't have any government contracts, I'm not not connected to any diplomatic people. I'm just sitting here and I'm tuning into my environment and loving my environment, I'm doing what I call Grail space. From that place of feeling that attunement to a larger whole, I bring my my attention, my love to the world situation. But I could be seen as as this factory worker who's just tightening a bolt. I have no idea what the end effect of that will be. I just know that there will be an effect if I do my work carefully. I have to do my work carefully. When people mess up in the construction of these rockets, they explode. We underestimate

ourselves. We either overestimate ourselves by thinking we have more of a certain kind of power than we really do, and we underestimate ourselves by not realizing the kind of power that we do have.

James: When you look at what am I resonating with, if I have this image of myself as creating my world, like the magical thinking in a very strong kind of way that if I have these thoughts and do these things then this will be the ultimate outcome, versus I'm part of a flow of life moving forward to some thing that I actually don't understand. It may be something in my lifetime or my grandchildren's lifetime, but I'm part of that flow. And in this moment, when I'm attuning to my home and connecting with my environment and creating grail space here, and then in that moment attuning to what is this flow moving forward and how can I add my love or my commitment or my "power" to this flow that's flowing through me, but to do it in a conscious way, towards an intention that is not incredibly specific at the moment, but I'm in alignment with that flow, I'm in resonance in harmony with that flow. That's one of my tasks.

David: I think so too James. The question before each of us is where can I make a difference? Where do I have impact? It's not a question of can I make a difference, but where. Each of us in our lives has some place where we are making a difference. We could say we're making a difference all the time just in the way we interact with life. There's always something around us where our presence and the presence of the energy that we can bring into the moment will alter something, will alter that flow. It will make a difference. I may not know what that difference is or how to measure it, but it doesn't mean it's not there.

James: That reminds me of...you had one said that our soul's gift... you talked about our soul's gift to the world, what we can offer, and our presence is a another way of looking at our soul's gift. Our conscious presence our tuning in to the wholeness of our being in this moment and being with that which called us to sit there and to connect and to create grail space and to be in a prayer—not in a

ritual prayer, but to be in presence with what's happening so that it flows through us as a reverse drain sort of, you know, where Puget Sound starts here.

David: Yes. I agree.

James: I'm working with the material that we've been working with for a long time, David, it's becoming more and more my being

David: Yes. I think what's important for all of us to realize is that the opportunity in front of us each day, is not one of saying do I engage with my physical world or do I engage with my subtle world, understanding that there are genuine differences between them, but rather I deal with with my world which incorporates both. We've been talking here about things we can do to gain our sea legs, so to speak, by centering, by attuning, by basically using subtle methods. For me, they're more than just psychological methods; they're deep energetic methods.

But that doesn't say that I can't do other things out in the world. Nothing prevents me from looking at how can I make a difference in my community or what can I do to help elect this person to be my representative in Congress or what can I do to alleviate this problem in my society. There's not a conflict here. The idea is how to marry both? I think...I know, actually, that the challenge is that the all the subtle resources we have, we're just not using them, speaking generally generally. That's like having to meet the challenges of the world with one hand tied behind our back.

James : I also see that to get my sea legs, I actually have to walk around, I have to move, I have to take action, I have to do something with, with all of these...We have an amazing toolbox within Incarnational Spirituality and we're also called to use that toolbox. As you were talking about taking action, it occurred to me that I could become a poll worker. What an interesting thought to take action that way. I bring my presence to that situation and I welcome every voter with a smile.

David: Yes.

James: It's just a different way of being in that moment, to hold that integrity, that alignment in that function, which is an essential function for the running of society.

David: Exactly. Yeah.

James: It does start here, doesn't it?

David: Yes, it does. It really does

James: Yeah. What a wonderful...Thank you, David, thank you for coming on, and thank you for sharing this morning.

David: It's been delightful, and this is a wonderful experiment to see how this augments David's Desk. Yeah, for saying that the larger wholeness that we're all part of starts here, how this augments David's Desk.