

👐 Transparency; deep forgiveness; narcissism & humility; empathic listening #12

How do we respond to change?

Hi, I'm Alex Staniforth; Artist, Coach, Trader. In these bi-monthly letters I'm exploring how our species makes meaning and takes action in the context of an ever evolving dynamic world. I write this as a place to share and collect thoughts as we explore these topics. I hope this blend of information serves to raise some interesting dialogues.

We have a couple of events coming up in June:



Free Online Meditation Circle on Monday/Wednesday/Friday/Sunday. You can see the timings [here](#).



If you haven't yet visited our website, you can visit [here](#).

A wider perspective



In a recent report, [The Brookings Institution](#) summed up the range of political and social dangers that deepfakes pose: “distorting democratic discourse; manipulating elections; eroding trust in institutions; weakening journalism; exacerbating social divisions; undermining public safety; and inflicting hard-to-repair damage on the reputation of prominent individuals, including elected officials and candidates for office.” Deepfakes are now a reality - seeing is no longer believing. [Siwei Lyu](#) offers a few protections and [Transparency International](#) released a report containing recommendations.



Echo chambers present a real issue in our modern age. [Ideas are increasingly left unchallenged](#) until collided with by an opposing force of equal magnitude - often leaving both parties stunned and more attached to their presuppositions. What ensues is often little better than a nationalistic grapple for moral superiority. Use of divisive and simplistic media does not help. What does help, both with internal echo chambers and external ones, is [empathic listening](#). When parties feel listened to, the anxiety surrounding their 'not being heard' fades and is replaced by a more relaxed, generative awareness. Understanding is likely to follow, and resolution more likely.

🔥 The latest CO2 concentration (ppm) measurement (as of June 17th, 2020): 416.08 ppm; June, 2019: 414.5 ppm, 25 years ago: 360 ppm.

Closer to home

👑 Narcissistic leadership. Narcissists make inspiring and fear inducing leaders. Narcissism as an isolated trait results in lack of effective feedback, high internal stress and eventual paranoia leading to collapse. They are not collaborative people and are usually highly difficult to work with/for. Think Hitler. Yet Steve Jobs was also highly narcissistic. What seems to set long run effectiveness of the narcissistic leader is their ability to simultaneously tap into humility - a seemingly paradoxical ability to transcend the duality of 'good and evil', allowing them to tap into each as a source for powerful contact with the world. These kind of leaders would do well to look into their shadow and select those around them carefully.

👧 A conflict is a dialogue of the deaf. Conflict occurs when parties come at each other from wholly different perspectives with little empathy for the other. While they may want the same thing, their inability to communicate with the other, and to hear the other leads them to clash rather than flow. Learning to listen has as much to do with your relationship with self as it does with other. If you are uncertain of yourself, you will either be overwhelmed by the external world, or defend against it 24/7. The degree to which you act out these paths is a complex blend of your personality, past, culture and values. The more deeply you are able to know yourself, the less energy you expend navigating external uncertainty. The less energy you drain in things you can't control, the more energy you can commit to experiencing through the life of the other. The rewards of this path are endless.

Notes on compassion

💎 What is forgiveness? It is the fragrance flowers give when they are crushed. Forgiveness is most commonly associated with external acts of unburdening another's transgressions - not often connected with ones relationship to self. To me, forgiveness starts with self. Deep self forgiveness looks like accepting, learning from and developing into a past state of incomplete information or delusion. Our capacity to learn and to grow is contingent on our ability to acknowledge where we've come from and not harbour or spit out pain. Here're some practices.

Artistic expression



Sea swirl - Tiffany Blaise (2017)

Poetry Corner

 Cry of the Cicadas by Matsuo Bashō

Nothing in the cry
of cicadas suggests they
are about to die

Things & Stuff

 Deepfakes are here. What can we do about them?

 Loving Oh De Laval's eye on things

 Lacan's graph of desire

Invitation: If you've found your neck is tense and painful, you might like to give a little 10 minutes of Qigong a go. I reached out to Kseny a while back and her routines have really eased me during long days of solo desk work. Here's a link to her channel.

If you've found anything here stimulating and want to chat, then get in touch via my email: aostaniforth@gmail.com.

Stay well,

Alex