

MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE EDUCATORS

PODCAST TRANSCRIPTION OF

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with host

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Ba Luvmour: Welcome to *Meetings With Remarkable Educators*. This podcast is brought to you in part by you, our friends and supporters at patreon.com/remarkableeducators. Each podcast is a dialogue between me, Ba Luvmour, and an educator who sees the greatness in their students and touches the whole of their being. These educators defy generalizations. So here's a little bit about what they've done and how I know them.

Ba Luvmour: "Is a society based on partnership and not domination possible? What would such a society look like? Are there examples of this in history? In the present day? Can humans regain the partnership way and be liberated from the violence and oppression of the dominator way? Who can ask these questions with the integrity of meticulous research and the dignity that comes from overcoming heinous domination herself?" Riane Eisler.

Her book, *The Chalice and the Blade*, has sold over 500,000 copies, is translated into 26 languages, and lays an unimpeachable foundation for understanding the partnership/dominator continuum. And that was just the beginning of her prodigious contributions in jurisprudence, literature, teaching, and speaking to bring cultural change to partnership, to respect, caring, and happiness as central to our world. So when Paul Freedman wrote that she had agreed to be a guest on *Meetings with Remarkable Educators*, I was thrilled. Riane has influenced so many educators. I knew that partnership in education is a cornerstone in her work, and welcomed the opportunity to deepen my understanding. I felt that she was an ally in that *Natural Learning Relationships*, the holistic appreciation of child development that Josette and I articulate, specifies one way to actualize partnership in education and in families.

There was one hitch. This was the first podcast in which I didn't have a previous personal connection with the guest. I wondered if such a person of such renown and who had been interviewed by many people from many nations would be open to dialogue and inquiry, or simply offer previously-prepared statements. Friends, listen and find out, but I think you can probably guess the answer.

Riane Eisler, JD is president of the Center for Partnership Studies, and internationally known as a systems scientist, attorney working for the human rights of women and children, and author of groundbreaking books such as *The Chalice and the Blade*, *Tomorrow's Children*, and *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a*

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Caring Economics. Dr. Eisler has received many honors, including honorary PhDs, and peace and human rights awards. She lectures worldwide with venues including the United States General Assembly and universities.

Ba Luvmour: Well, I'm just so thankful that you're taking the time out of your busy life. I know how busy you are. I'm just so appreciative of us being able to do this together. So thank you so very much for being with us.

Riane Eisler: Well, I'm just delighted to be with you, and I'm rearing to go.

Ba Luvmour: All right. Well, I just wonder, is there a moment in your life where, all of a sudden, sort of a light went on and the partnership way appeared to you as a way to go ahead and speak directly to the wellbeing in the world? Was it gradual? Was there just a moment of, "Oh, I see it, and now I have to go and fill it out."?

Riane Eisler: You know, that's a really good question. I started to do the research on this way back before the book that introduced the partnership and domination models came out. I worked on it for about 10 years. So that was the first phase of the research. So I can't really say that it was just one moment. I think it was both. It was a gradual, obviously over 10 years, process. But there were a lot of 'ah-ha' moments for me. Beginning to see the configuration and the patterns that had really been obscured if you look at human societies and human cultural evolution through the lenses of conventional categories. That was very exciting.

Ba Luvmour: Of course, I've just finished reading *Tomorrow's Children*, and in a previous conversation you told me that was one of your books that didn't have as much popularity perhaps, certainly as *The Chalice and the Blade*. So taking all of that understanding and bringing it to children, and education, and the specific curricula you describe in there, and so on. How did that transition happen?

Riane Eisler: I think that there are certain key institutions in society, and of course education, all the way from the informal education in families, as well as media, religion, et cetera, is one of these institutions. And schools, or more formal education, play a very important part, both in cultural systems maintenance and in systems change. So that awareness led me to write that book, to write *Tomorrow's Children*. And I'm still astonished that it hasn't really been taken up more by progressive educators, because what it

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provides is such an integrated approach of process, structure, and content.

But I think one of the main reasons is that progressive education has focused primarily on process, how we teach and learn, and paid far less attention, paid some attention, to the structure of the educational institution, but far less attention to content. And yet, the content, the narratives, that is so key to what kind of worldview our people grow-up with.

Ba Luvmour: Well, you know, as you may recall, I am in the field of holistic and progressive education for many, many years. I've often found that there's kind of a resistance to diving more deeply into, I don't want to say "philosophy", but the underlying epistemology, the underlying way of knowing that's involved in learning. The *Partnership Way*, from the first moment I read it, deeply called forth understandings of interconnectedness and wholeness that aren't just words to throw around, but reflect a very profound inner and personal, as well as social commitment in order for the outcome of something like the Partnership Way to take hold. Does that ring any bells with you?

Riane Eisler: Oh, absolutely. And one of the reasons that *Tomorrow's Children* focuses, and yes, it talks about process, and yes, it talks about structure, but it does focus a great deal on content. It is precisely for that reason, because we humans live by stories, by narratives. And if progressive education fails to pay attention to how the narratives continue to reinforce, despite all of the talk about equality, and care, and what have you, really continue to reinforce an old, what I call *domination worldview*, I don't think we're going to move forward. It's really doing a disservice to young people not to offer them at least the choice of new narratives.

Ba Luvmour: Well, even in the self-directed education community, and the homeschooling community, as well as progressive and holistic schools, right, I completely agree with you Riane, absolutely, that process becomes the most important part of the event. What do you feel inhibits them from embracing the content?

Riane Eisler: I think habit is part of it. I think that also people are very used to thinking in what I call *old paradigm ways*. They think in terms of right versus left, religious versus secular, eastern versus western, northern versus southern, and fail to understand something that really jumps at you, which is not only are there regressive and

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violent societies in all of these categories so that none of them offer us the social blueprint. Right?

Ba Luvmour: Right, exactly.

Riane Eisler: That we need. But that, interestingly, they pay scant if any attention to the cultural construction of our primary relations, which are childhood relations, parent/child, and with other caregivers, as well as gender relations. And there is this real tendency among progressives, I'm afraid, to still see these issues as "just women's issues" and "just children's issues".

Ba Luvmour: Yeah, special interest groups. It's just more and more divisiveness isn't it?

Riane Eisler: And isn't that weird? Because we're talking about the vast majority of humanity. I mean, when you consider that women are half of the species, I mean female, and that if you add children to it, I mean, this is the vast majority of humanity. And yet we've been so ... I mean, I've really studied this intensely. This is brought out, to some extent, in *Tomorrow's Children*. But *Tomorrow's Children* focuses less on critique than on offering other alternatives, which I think is so important.

We can critique from here to eternity, but unless there is a sense of just, "What is it? What are the foundations that we're trying to lay here for that more equitable, more sustainable, more caring future, or even a future at all, given the problem of really high technology guided by an ethos of domination?" It's fascinating isn't it?

Ba Luvmour: It really is. The way I've come to look at it is this wellbeing, this greatness, this wholeness, this partnership, it's in us, it's natural, and it's wanting to come forward, and it keeps bumping up against, obviously, these dominant habits and the whole dominator paradigm.

Riane Eisler: Absolutely.

Ba Luvmour: And you just mentioned the paradigm shift, and that's become a very popular term right now. And as with many popular terms, it's not really well-used, as it should be. So I wonder, first of all, can you talk about ... I know the Partnership Way is where we're moving towards, or where we kind of have to move towards for our own survival and happiness. But how does that shift happen? How do we

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do that? Is it just going to be reorganizing the narrative? Is there something that we have to do to help break these habits, these sleepwalking modes that so many people walk around in, that they neglect the obvious, as you were just speaking of?

Riane Eisler: Well, look, I think first of all we have to recognize that progressives, like regressives, have internalized a lot of the basic assumptions of domination systems, which is this, first of all, the equation of difference with either superiority or inferiority, with either dominating or being dominated, with either being served or serving, starting really with the fundamental difference in form among humans between female and male. Then, that gets generalized, doesn't it? To a different race. It isn't just racism in the United States. It's Shia versus Sunni, and Sunni versus Shia. I mean, all rigid domination cultures and subcultures have this in-group versus out-group thinking. And I cannot emphasize enough how important it is, today's reexamination of the cultural construction, of both masculinity and femininity, and how the two should relate is, because it is fundamental. So that is one of the cornerstones.

I've identified in my research really four cornerstones for either domination systems or partnership systems. And by the way, it's always a continuum. No society is a pure partnership or domination system. Okay? But one cornerstone we've already touched on is childhood. I mean, what we today know from neural science, and we've known for a long time from psychology, is how fundamentally our early childhood observations and experiences shape us. They shape nothing less than how our brain develops. Right? Before our critical faculties are in place.

And, you know, I looked at your book on education, and it's a lovely book, and I congratulate you on it.

Ba Luvmour: Well, thank you.

Riane Eisler: And it really deals very much with what, in today we would call *authoritative, mutually respectful childhood relations*, because we haven't really, as you note, I mean, what passes for respect in those relations in a domination system is fear.

Ba Luvmour: Yes. Josette and I have spent so much time looking at that essential teacher, or educator, or parent/child relationship, because we feel very much right there. If that's not built on trust and mutual

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respect, then the subsequent learning is not going to happen, or is going to happen in a corrupted way.

Riane Eisler: But you see, for domination systems, you see it in rigid domination systems, you have to socialize children to conflate a caring with coercion.

Ba Luvmour: Just hearing you say it, I mean, it's so accurate. But it's just so sad. It's really ... I walk around with an open heart and a kind of bleeding heart around that all the time, because that right there, the power of turning that to trust just would change so much.

Riane Eisler: Well, and the good news is that, of course, books like yours, books like mine, other books by both pediatricians, by neuroscientists, by psychologists, are pointing out this enormous importance of a real cultural transformation in those primary relations. And that's where process is really also important. But again, I want to return to the issue of narratives. I mean, think for a moment of what kind of models for human relations children internalize from our traditional fairytales, for example. I mean, pretty bizarre. You know? Royalty over common people.

Ba Luvmour: Yes, pretty bizarre.

Riane Eisler: Women are helpless, men have to rescue them, men have to fight, to mate. I mean, the whole thing is bizarre. But it isn't really bizarre at all when you consider that it came out of more rigid domination times, and its part of the socialization. But let me continue with the four cornerstones, if I may?

Ba Luvmour: Please do. Thank you. Please do.

Riane Eisler: Because we've talked about three of them already. We've talked about childhood, we've talked about gender, we've talked about narratives, and then there's economics. If you really build a completely ... We have an opportunity now, because the old economy ... I mean, both capitalism and socialism came out of very early industrial times. You know? I mean, it's really interesting, 18th, 19th Century, we're in the 21st Century post-industrial age. Right? So they're antiquated. But that's not the main problem. They carry enormous luggage from more rigid domination times. Part of that is the devaluation of care work, of caring for nature, caring for people starting at early childhood; is simply not part of either socialism nor capitalism. I mean, for both Smith and Marx, caring

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for people in early childhood, that's just women's work. That's just reproductive and not the productive work they were interested in.

Riane Eisler: So I wrote a book, as you probably know, on that very critical institution, economics. And it's called *The Real Wealth of Nations*, and the subtitle is somewhat ... people do a double take, because it's *Creating a Caring Economics*. And I'm always amused that people find that so difficult. Because isn't that a comment on how we've been socialized to accept that economics systems should be driven by uncaring values? Right?

Ba Luvmour: Yes, absolutely. Wow.

Riane Eisler: So as you can see, my work really goes to fundamentals.

Ba Luvmour: It's Teaching Story Time.
Briefly, teaching stories invite us to see the world with a new perspective, often featuring a wise person, a wise fool, or a trickster animal. They can be humorous, and often have many shades of meaning shining throughout the story. I have told teaching stories for the past 40 years, and I love them. I have to tell you, each time I tell one I learn much more of myself.

Ba Luvmour: This teaching story is called How Little Can we Live On?

Ba Luvmour: The wise fool decided to do an experiment. He wanted to see how little amount of food his donkey could live on. So, accordingly, each day he decreased the amount of food given to the donkey by a bit. Of course, over time, the donkey became thinner and thinner, but it still lived and it still did its functions. Then, one day the wise fool went in and the donkey was lying on its side, quite dead. "Drats!", said the wise fool, "I almost had it able to live on nothing at all!"

Ba Luvmour: Let's have some fun interpreting this teaching story. Become a Patreon supporter at [Patreon.com/RemarkableEducators](https://www.patreon.com/RemarkableEducators), and you have access to our detailed comments on how this story applies to education and parenting. Of course, that's just our perspective. The fun comes with community dialogue as the many shades of the teaching story come alive. See you there.

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Riane Eisler: I was just going to make the point that while my books are, you know, *Tomorrow's Children* looks at education, *The Real Wealth of Nations* focuses on economics, *Sacred Pleasure* focuses on sexuality and spirituality. But the point of it is that it's really always looking through the lens of the partnership domination continuum. And that is so ... I mean, you asked me about "ah-ha" moments. Using that lens is transformative. Not only was it to me, but I get so much mail from people saying it really transformed their lives. So we've got to get these models out there.

Ba Luvmour: So that actually speaks to what's on my mind at this moment, which is back to the, I guess for lack of a better term, the inner quality of the person. So the understanding of the dominator and partnership lens is a transformative aspect from your experience. Because that's been a real question for me, is, "What's going on inside people?" We touched upon that briefly when we talked about habit a little bit earlier in this conversation, but how do we really break those habits? So one of the ways that you're saying right now is, by appealing to, or when people understand or use this lens, that then they are more able to let go of former habits?

Riane Eisler: I definitely would say yes to that. It's very interesting. Linguistic psychologists point out that language, and especially the social categories that a culture makes available, channel our thinking. If you don't have ... I mean, for example, for gender relations we have patriarchy and we have matriarchy. But if you really look at whether it's ruled by fathers or ruled by mothers, conceptually, semantically, it's just two sides of the domination coin. Isn't it? Nothing, no real alternative. And that's because in the rigid domination mindset, there really are only two alternatives: You either dominate, or you're dominated. There is no partnership alternative.

So we need to change our language, not only our narratives, in order for us to be able to make these fundamental changes, because otherwise we keep getting pulled back into the old, don't we?

Ba Luvmour: Yes. Let's go then more deeply into what is meant exactly by "partnership". You've talked about the confusions that arise in the dominator model and you've given us the four important cornerstones that we have to work in. In your book, you talk about partnership, and you talk about it as a tapestry. I'm wondering if you could give us just a richer and deeper understanding of partnership?

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Riane Eisler: Well, when I began to see these configurations, these patterns, in societies across history and cross-culturally, there were no names for them, because we're so used to these old categories that I just mentioned: right/left, religious/secular, east/west, north/south, you name it. So at that time, the term *partnership* seemed like an apt way of calling it, because it has not yet begun to be used the way it's being used now for sort of joint ventures. Right? We can work together.

Ba Luvmour: That's what immediately comes to mind, yes.

Riane Eisler: People can work together to do terrible things.

Ba Luvmour: That's for sure.

Riane Eisler: I mean, terrorists work together, monopolies work together, invading armies work together. You know? And I chose it at that time, I used the model of a business partnership, where at least in theory the relations are supposed to be mutual respect, mutual accountability, mutual benefit. Right?

Ba Luvmour: Yes.

Riane Eisler: Domination is very easy. I mean, everybody can understand. But there is confusion around partnership. I sometimes wish I had chosen another term. But it's already out there, and it does have a good connotation, even though it can be used to just working together, which is hardly how I use it. I use it as a way of describing social configurations.

The four cornerstones I just mentioned to you are really key to those configurations. I mean, if you start with the kind of childhood and family relations and how those are directly interconnected in a mutually reinforcing way with the kinds of relations that are normative in a society, in a domination system, they're top-down, authoritarian relations. Right? And again, we need new words, because in the partnership model, there are hierarchies, but they're not what ... I've had to coin words again. In domination systems, you have hierarchies of domination. We're all familiar with those. You know, accountability, respect, and benefit. They just flow from the bottom up. Right?

Ba Luvmour: Yes.

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Riane Eisler: In hierarchy of actualization ... And we need hierarchies. We need parents, we need teachers, we need managers, we need leaders. Right? But *hierarchy of actualization*, benefit, accountability, and respect flow both ways. What's so wonderful is that even though the language isn't being used, the language of having hierarchies or managements that are empowering rather than disempowering really captures some of that. Doesn't it?

So we're trying to move in that direction, but we haven't had this frame. I think without the frame, without that new paradigm, that new systemic approach, we're all over the map. Okay? Versus the people pushing us back who understand about childhood, it as to be authoritarian, who understand that gender, which is the second real cornerstone of these two systems, that that's a model as I said, you know, for difference, it's either you're on top, or you're on bottom. And also, it brings with it something very, very pathological, which is these rigid gender stereotypes where masculinity is defined as not being like a woman, and yet women are the only ones who are supposed to embody and use the "*soft caring*", caregiving, nonviolence. Men aren't. So no wonder we've got a mess. Right?

Ba Luvmour: Then, partnership here, I'm going to use some words, and please let me know if I do this well. Partnership here means mutually beneficial in such a way as to bring forth wellbeing in each participant in the event?

Riane Eisler: Yes. And at the same time, it means reconstructing these four cornerstones in a way that will support those kinds of relations. Because, you see, we can talk about having these kinds of relations. But unless we have an understanding, which is what my research, and now the research of others, and what neuroscience now shows, unless we have an understanding of the importance of how the childhood relations are constructed, of how gender roles and relations are constructed, of how economics is constructed, and about the narratives, we don't have the structure that will support these kinds of relations.

Ba Luvmour: I see. So I know in our work we have tried to bring forward an understanding, for example, of how children see the world, how they organize the world, how they know their world. Then, to suggest opportunities that are available to parents where, at least what they're bringing forward can engage the child within the context in which they're living, in other words, in the way they know the world, so that the communication is not tucked down, but is

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understood well from both parties. Is that an example of a partnership approach?

Riane Eisler: That is a very important part of the partnership approach, because what you're focusing on are how relations, starting with childhood relations, are structured. I would like to add to that that also important is changing the whole notion of gender construction, because not only in terms of the opportunities that each child has as a girl or boy, but also because of the tremendous impact this has on the governing values of a society.

Ba Luvmour: I'm totally involved with that, Riane. I have all daughters and granddaughters, so we are all over that one.

Riane Eisler: And it has to be structural. It is wonderful that there are families that are moving in that direction, and that's an important part. But as long as ... I mean, let's talk politics for a moment. It was a very interesting study that people who voted for Donald Trump as president, they had two things in common. One, a mistrust of these sort of "strong, uppity women". Right?

Ba Luvmour: My God.

Riane Eisler: And secondly, it wasn't economics, it was status and domination.

Ba Luvmour: Yes. I see that directly. That's not a surprise, what you're saying.

Riane Eisler: So what I'm saying is that if you use the lens of the partnership domination social scale, you begin to see that a lot of stuff that seems random and disconnected, like these two findings I just mentioned, they fit, because this model pays particular attention to gender, pays particular attention to what kind of relations a system encourages. But what I'm trying to communicate is that, from my perspective, and this takes us right back to *Tomorrow's Children*, my process is very, very important. We have to pay much more attention to structure and to content. Content, of course, is narratives, and structure is the institution, I mean the hierarchies of domination or hierarchies of actualization. Okay? So it's all interconnected and mutually supporting.

Ba Luvmour: The amount of research and curriculum, suggestions, and ways to revisit everything from cultural evolution to physical evolution is just extraordinary in your book. I really wish all of our listeners would just spend some time with any of the chapters, because

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they're all ... I just can't believe how many suggestions you have. It just must pour out of you.

Riane Eisler: Well, I feel that it's very important to be specific. What we're talking about is sort of the larger picture. But, for example, if we're talking about multicultural content and gender-balanced content and narrative, well, one of the examples of that was to use, in art classes, not only talk about so-called "high art", but to talk about crafts. Crafts have been relegated largely to women, haven't they? Pottery and tapestry. Isn't that interesting how it's been devalued? And yet, those are the arts that are part of our life. They're not just hanging in a museum. Right?

Ba Luvmour: Right. Much more common in our lives, for sure.

Riane Eisler: And they're much more important. So I gave the example of African women craft artists, that can be used. You see? So that children don't grow up with this notion of, "Well, the only important art is a Picasso, or whatever." No.

Ba Luvmour: We just came back from Santa Fe and visited with some indigenous people there. This beautiful, beautiful yarn weaving called *The Rainbow Maiden*, we just fell in love with it. And it has pride of place in our home right now. It's so beautiful.

Riane Eisler: Isn't that wonderful?

Ba Luvmour: Oh my gosh. We look at that and we just can't believe ... And the colors just keep kind of folding into each other. It's kinetic, even though it's stationary on the wall.

Riane Eisler: And yet, it has not been considered "high art", until recently. It's beginning to shift a little bit. And, of course, in *Tomorrow's Children*, I would like children to be exposed to thinking of creativity, also in terms of everyday creativity, which is really the most important creativity.

Ba Luvmour: You've developed and presented us all with such a rich, detailed, comprehensive, and stimulating view. I wonder if you could tell us just a little bit about your background and how you grew into that, how you came to it?

Riane Eisler: Oh, I'd be happy to. Well, look, as you can tell, I have a great deal of passion for all of this. That passion is rooted in my own early

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childhood as a refugee child from the Holocaust with my parents. That led me really to questions about whether all of this injustice and violence has to be. I mean, when we humans are capable of so much kindness, so much caring, so much consciousness, so much creativity, why has there been so much cruelty, and insensitivity, and destructiveness? And those were the questions that eventually led to my research.

There were many other formative experiences, certainly it was really very interesting when in the late 1960s I woke up along with thousands of other women to realize that I had been part ... I mean, being born Jewish had almost cost me my life. So, yes, you know, that other. Right? That was demonized by narratives. I mean, think of the importance of narratives. But I also became aware that I was part of the other, that is, instead of being part of "mankind", I was a woman.

Ba Luvmour: Really? That's amazing!

Riane Eisler: Yeah. And I had not been aware of that. And then I thought of all of my education, you know, higher education, how little there had been, about really, by and for people like me, like women. If you really think of the university curriculum, and even today the new women's studies, men's studies, gender studies, they're still in the ghetto, aren't they?

Ba Luvmour: Yes, they are. And it's very disappointing. It's almost as if they're just lagging behind. It's terrible.

Riane Eisler: In my work, they don't. You see? Which, again, is so fascinating. I mean, the understanding that this is ... It's like fish swimming in water. We had all been used to devalue the female half of humanity and anything associated with it. I mean, I still remember when people used to say, when a child was born, if it was a girl, "Hope next time it's a boy." That was in the west. Right? In the so-called "enlightened west". Well, I mean, even today I don't know how much you know, but at least the stories are coming out now of millions of little girls who are simply fed less, given less healthcare in this so-called "developing world". I mean...(sigh)

Ba Luvmour: There was a study done that I'm familiar with, and actually was colleagues with some of the people, in which they went into this pretty large school district and they asked all the administrators, teachers, and students, "Who is the least gender-biased in the whole

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district?" And they came up with six teachers, and everyone agreed these six teachers don't have gender bias. So they asked, "Well, can we put a video camera in your room, sort of up in the corner for a few months, let it just run, and then you can look at the tape and you can decide, meaning the teachers, can decide whether or not there's gender bias?"

And the teachers, goodhearted people, were appalled, because all of the favoritism towards the boys, helping them work out their problems, calling on the girls to be neat, and just on and on, all the stereotypical behaviors were reinforced. And these were the people who everyone had agreed would be the least gender biased.

Riane Eisler: Well, I'm not surprised. I've done a lot of work on human rights. In fact, I wrote the first article ever published in the *Human Rights Quarterly*, on what later became known as *Women's Rights as Human Rights*. And I've also written a great deal about *children's human rights*. They're simply not ... I mean, it's taken a long time for even international human rights organizations to start to include these rights.

But you know, I have to say, and this is, again, I mean, this is not politically correct, and I don't care. When there is this sort of sense that everything is the fault of the west. Well, no.

Ba Luvmour: No.

Riane Eisler: I mean, if you look at some of the traditions of horrible domination, and yes, domination of male over female and male preference, I mean, babies, as I said, in places like Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and India, little girls are very often fed less and given less healthcare. And you know, it's not only what happens to these children, because the survivors, because they're malnourished, will give birth to both boys and girls that have been cheated, really, out of their full capacity. Because we know that malnourished women do not have the capacity to give birth to children that have their full potential.

I mean, systemically, this is what I'm interested in. You see? Yes, when I woke up to the female other, so to speak, and to feminism, that was big. But then I started to see the connections between gender bias and so many of our world's problems, like the male socialization not to be like a woman. Right? Well, that really, I mean, is so terrible for so many boys and men. And again, the good

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news is that there's beginning to be awareness of that, which is a partnership trend.

Ba Luvmour: Yes, absolutely. So then we're in the late 60s and this is waking up in you, and with it, obviously, a tremendous sense of social justice and just ... At the root of it, is there an awareness? Because this is true for me, and I'm just asking if it's true for you. Just an awareness that there's a fundamental interconnectedness within all life? For me, that just lives in me, so what can I deny? I can't deny anything. What can I put down? I can't put anything down or disrespect anything, because it's like disrespecting myself."

Riane Eisler: Well, it's very interesting, because, as you know, in *The Chalice and the Blade*, I trace our cultural evolution going way back, and it tells a very different story of our cultural origins. You know, not these terrible savage people who are driven by their genes, presumably, to murder and to oppress, but actually, of cultures that did recognize the interconnection of all life. I mean, one of the foraging societies, for example, studied by an anthropologist friend of mine, a former University of California anthropologist, [*name inaudible*]. These people really see the world as animated by spirits. But interestingly, the spirits are neither female nor male. They just are. And they don't have in their language words for "female" and "male". It's fascinating.

So when you're talking about interconnection, these earlier cultures, which, by the way, are characterized in the Neolithic by a profusion of female figurines, which have been interpreted as being goddess figurines, they really did understand the unity of all life. And if you look at the cover art of *The Chalice and the Blade*, it's a fascinating figure, because she has breasts, but she's phallic in shape, and she's also bird-beaked. So there you have a complete symbol from that earlier time of the interconnection of all life.

Ba Luvmour: It's just beautiful. I love listening to you. This is great. I did a podcast with a friend and a colleague named Four Arrows, born Don Jacobs, and he told the story of, you know, the Iroquois confederacy had a very democratic model for how their various tribes and nations interacted. And when the founding fathers were trying to figure out how to do the United States constitution, they actually sat down with many of the Iroquois elders. They sat in this meeting, and the first thing the Iroquois people said to them is, "Where are your women. There are no women here from your side."

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Riane Eisler: Yeah. They noticed.

Ba Luvmour: They noticed, yes. So they lived with at least some of that understanding of "we're all in this together". And their care of place and relationship to nature I think reflects that as well.

Riane Eisler: Well, you know, in those respects they had more of a partnership orientation. They weren't warlike, which is a domination orientation. But, you know, I mean, first of all, as a Holocaust survivor, I do not believe in unilateral disarmament, obviously, because I think that's a chimera, that's a fantasy. As long as there are even more rigid domination societies in our globe ... And you don't have far to look do you? I mean, North Korea, Iran, you name it, you have to have defensive armaments.

The extent to which the United States has those, and I know I'm going off subject here a little, but not really, because one of the characteristics of domination systems is the violence is built into the system, starting in early childhood. Whether it's child beating, or wife beating, or pogroms, or lynchings, or aggressive warfare or terrorism, they're all part of domination systems. Because why? Because how else, ultimately, are these top-down rankings maintained? Be it man over man, man over woman, race over race, religion over religion. Right? So this is really a completely different approach to looking at the world, and one that I think we desperately need at this time.

When, obviously, the old language, the old institutional structures, the old economic theories, they're not taking us where we need to go, are they?

Ba Luvmour: No, they're not. How old were you when you had to leave from the Holocaust world?

Riane Eisler: I was seven.

Ba Luvmour: You were seven? Where did you go?

Riane Eisler: Cuba. It was one of the very few places in the world that you could buy your way into as a Jewish refugee. And, of course, the Nazis confiscated, which is their official word for "armed robbery", right, everything my parents had. So I grew up in the industrial slums of Havana. It was interesting, because we still went first class on the ship to Cuba, and then ended up in cockroach-infested tenements.

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Ba Luvmour: How long were you there?

Riane Eisler: Seven years. I grew up in Cuba. It was very difficult. Very difficult. But I learned something very interesting, which was very useful in my work. The culture of Vienna, the culture of Cuba, and then later the culture of the United States, I very early experienced this knowledge that what people consider "just the way things are" is not the same everywhere. And that was very important in terms of my understanding, really on a very deep level, that *we can change culture*. And, of course, my work is designed to really accelerate, make visible and accelerate the shift from a domination-oriented culture, which we've inherited from more rigid domination times, to a more partnership-oriented culture, which is, at our level of technological development, really, it's essential for survival.

Ba Luvmour: I know we've been on a while. I do have one other kind of big question I've been wanting to ask you. There is now a lot of people who are turning to meditation and to spirituality in the sense of not a religious spirituality and not contained or constrained by those customs, and rules, and regulations, but an inner relationship to spirituality, to the wholeness and to the mystery and to the unfolding. How do you see that as part of the movement towards partnership?

Riane Eisler: Well, I really address that quite a bit in my book *Sacred Pleasure*, which, as I said, reexamines sexuality and spirituality from the lens of the partnership domination continuum. I think that meditation, the understanding of our interconnection, which we know from physics, too, I mean, you don't have to go to spirituality for it particularly, you can see it in science; these are very important partnership trends. At the same time, I'm afraid that there are aspects, for example, in the so-called "new age" movement that are very regressive. You know, the Iron John story, I mean, again, in masculinity, where Iron John has to kill in order to find a mate. I mean, that's the old domination story, isn't it?

Ba Luvmour: Yes, it is.

Riane Eisler: And also, I'm afraid that it's also very often like children playing in sort of the new age playground, with crystals and what have you, when there's so much work that has to be done in terms ... I mean, if you've got the leisure to do that, for goodness sakes, work for a cultural transformation from domination to partnership, be it ... See, we haven't had the frame. If people go to the website of the

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Center for Partnership Studies, which is *CenterforPartnership.org*, you can find, for example, the contrast of the integrated regressive political agenda, and the proposal for an integrated progressive political agenda. There are a lot of resources for people. And, of course, my books. I mean really, I would so like young people in particular to read them. And, you know, my books are very accessible. I mean, they've been used and they are used in high schools.

Ba Luvmour: Yes. Great. And I want you to know that ... I want everyone listening to know that all of Riane's connections, links, books, and biography, as well as show notes will appear along with the podcast, so there'll be plenty of time and plenty of, rather, opportunity, to explore partnership. I can only say, I grew up, of course, in all of those dominator modes, and I've found a partner, and we have worked through so much together. I mean, you want to see if you're equal, lead seminars together for 20 years and see who's talking when. I mean, that's just one simple example. But we've really, really worked deeply at trying to overcome, and we feel we have. There's just an incredible joy that's in my life every single day, just in the connection that's unfolded from really this profound respect and partnership that we share.

Riane Eisler: Well, and I have seen both of your books. Of course, I mean, I've been very fortunate in my second marriage to really find a real partner. It's possible. I mean, that's the thing that a lot of people don't understand, how much more pleasurable, as you just said.

Ba Luvmour: It's unbelievable. It really is.

Riane Eisler: Yeah, I mean, we have to work to ... People talk about learning about relationships. I think a lot, as you point out, is unlearning, unlearning what we've been programmed so that we can fit into domination systems. Well, if we're going to change the system, which we must, we can unlearn and relearn. I just want to thank you, Ba. It's a pleasure to talk with you. I have enjoyed it very much, and I hope that our listeners ... We really veered to very much the large picture, but education has to give people the large picture from a different perspective, or we are simply reinforcing the old ways of thinking, and we can't afford to do that.

Ba Luvmour: Thank you. Thank you so very, very much. I know how busy you are, I know how in demand you are. Just so thankful for this.

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Riane Eisler: It's been a pleasure, Ba.

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