

I went to space...

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0:00

1 When we see our planet from the perspective of space,

0:04

2 certain things become undeniably clear.

0:09

3 We keep trying to deal with issues such as global warming,

0:13

4 deforestation, biodiversity loss, as standalone issues,

0:16

5 when in reality,

0:18

6 they're just symptoms of the underlying root problem.

0:22

7 And the problem is that we don't see ourselves as planetary.

0:26

8 When I looked out the window

0:27

9 of the International Space Station,

0:28

10 I saw the paparazzi-like flashes of lightning storms,

0:32

11 I saw dancing curtains of auroras that seemed so close

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12 it was as if we could reach out and touch them.

0:38

13 And I saw the unbelievable thinness

0:41

14 of our planet's atmosphere.

0:42

15 In that moment, I was hit with the sobering realization

0:46

16 that that paper-thin layer

0:47

17 keeps every living thing on our planet alive.

0:50

18 I saw an iridescent biosphere teeming with life.

0:54

19 I didn't see the economy.

0:56

20 But since our human-made systems treat everything,

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21 including the very life-support systems of our planet,

1:01

22 as the wholly owned subsidiary of the global economy,

1:05

23 it's obvious from the vantage point of space

1:07

24 that we're living a lie.

1:08

25 We need to move from thinking economy, society, planet

1:11

26 to planet, society, economy.

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27 That's when we're going to continue

1:15

28 our evolutionary process.

1:16

29 I'm Ron Garan, I'm a former NASA astronaut

1:19

30 and former combat fighter pilot

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31 and the author of "Floating in Darkness,

1:22

32 A Journey of Evolution."

1:31

33 We are all, as a species, to some extent,

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34 floating in darkness,

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35 and I use Plato's "Allegory of the Cave"

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36 to illustrate how a lot of times

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37 we think we know the whole picture

1:42

39 when in reality we see a very, very small representation.

1:46

40 We don't see the actual picture that will allow us

1:48

41 to solve a lot of the problems that we face.

1:51

42 And we're paying a really high price right now

1:55

43 as a civilization.

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44 This is a really, really dark time,

1:58

45 and part of the reason why we're not solving the problems

2:01

46 is because we don't have the right perspective,

2:04

47 we're not addressing things in the reality of the situation

2:07

48 that they exist,

2:08

49 and I think that's one of the reasons

2:11

50 why we need to leave the cave,

2:12

51 we need to get out of the darkness.

2:17

52 A lot of astronauts who go to space come back

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53 and they they feel that there has been

2:22

54 some sort of transformation.

2:23

55 And a term was coined back in the '80s

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56 called the overview effect.

2:28

57 And the overview effect describes the shift

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58 that astronauts have when they see the planet hanging

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59 in the blackness of space.

2:37

60 There's this light bulb that pops up

2:39

61 where they realize how interconnected

2:40

62 and interdependent we all are.

2:44

63 A little over 50 years ago, humanity as a whole

2:47

64 had a collective out-of-body experience.

2:51

65 On Christmas Eve, 1968, the crew of Apollo 8

2:54

66 came out from behind the far side of the moon

2:56

67 on their fourth orbit.

2:58

68 They took a famous color photograph,

3:01

69 and that photo is called "Earthrise."

3:06

70 "Earthrise" is the first color photograph

3:08

71 to see the whole planet hanging in the blackness of space,

3:10

72 and the first to capture that for the rest of us,

3:13

73 and this image revolutionized how we see the world,

3:16

74 how we see ourselves.

3:18

75 There is no such thing as them.

3:20

76 There's only us.

3:21

77 And precisely one year before the Apollo 8 astronauts

3:25

78 were hurdling through space on their journey to the moon,



3:28

79 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a Christmas sermon on peace,

3:32

80 and I believe that that sermon really gives words

3:36

81 to what Earthrise evoked.

3:37

82 Dr. King says.

3:38

83 – [Dr. King Jr.] As nations and individuals,

3:41

84 we are interdependent.

3:44

85 – We're not gonna have peace on Earth

3:46

86 until we recognize the basic fact

3:48

87 of the interrelated structure of all reality.

3:51

88 Now, the interrelated structure of all reality,

3:53

89 that's not a cliché, that's not a philosophy,

3:55

90 that's the reality of the world that we live in,

3:57

91 that's fact.

3:58

92 That what happens to one directly

4:00

93 affects all of us indirectly.

4:02

94 That we are all inextricably linked together

4:05

95 in this fabric of life that we call Earth.

4:08

96 So if the overview effect is that light bulb

4:10

97 that pops on is the awareness

4:13

98 of our interconnected interdependent nature,

4:16

99 the orbital perspective,

4:17

100 which is the title of my first book,

4:18

101 is what you do with that awareness.

4:21

102 The orbital perspective is the call to action.

4:23

103 It's a sense of injustice that we see

4:26

104 when we see the sobering contradiction

4:28

105 between the indescribable beauty of our planet

4:30

106 and the unfortunate realities of life on our planet

4:32

107 for a significant number of the inhabitants.

4:36

108 One of the the things that I realized

4:38

109 during my time in space is that we're not from Earth,

4:40

110 we're of Earth.

4:41

111 And to take that one step further

4:44

112 is that we're not in the universe, we are the universe.

4:46

113 We are the universe becoming conscious of itself.

4:51

114 A lot of what we're talking about

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115 doesn't require going to space to realize,

4:55

116 you don't have to be in orbit

4:56

117 to have the orbital perspective.

4:58

118 And one of the tools that we can use

5:01

119 is a term that I borrowed from cinematography

5:03

120 called a dolly zoom.

5:05

121 And what a dolly zoom is,

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122 is where the camera is rolled back, or dollied back,

5:09

123 at the same rate as the lens is zoomed in,

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124 and it was used in "Jaws" and "Vertigo"

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125 and many other films.

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126 And what the filmmakers use that technique for

5:18

127 is to give altitude to a scene,

5:20

128 and as the foreground stays the same

5:22

129 and the background stretches.

5:24

130 But we could also apply that term

5:26

131 to the challenges that we face.

5:29

132 If we dolly zoom a situation,

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133 that means that we zoom out

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134 to the widest geographical area we possibly can,

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135 ideally the entire planet,

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136 but as we zoom out to that big picture,

5:39

137 we don't lose focus on the worms-eye details on the ground.

5:42

138 We don't zoom out to the point where people become numbers

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139 on a spreadsheet or a workforce or a voting block

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140 or a consumer block.

5:48

141 They maintain their value as valued members

5:51

142 of our human society.

5:53

143 There's also a temporal aspect to this.

5:55

144 We need to zoom out to the longest timeframe possible,

5:58

145 ideally multi-generational,

6:00

146 but in the process, we can't lose sight of the short term.

6:05

147 The last part of a dolly zoom is to see things

6:07

148 from different perspectives,

6:09

149 and so we understand the depth of our problem,

6:10

150 and that makes our solutions that much more lasting

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151 and that much more effective.

6:18

152 You have an incredibly powerful position

6:21

153 to affect real change in the world.

6:23

154 What I try and do is to live a constant dolly-zoomed life.

6:27

155 (laughs) I wake up every morning in my bed,

6:30

156 but I also wake up on a planet.

6:33

157 In the long term, I'm very optimistic,



6:36

158 because I do see quite clearly

6:38

159 a blossoming unity spreading across our planet,

6:41

160 a blossoming awareness of our interdependent nature.

6:46

161 That awareness will eventually reach critical mass

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162 and when it reaches critical mass,

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163 then we'll be able to solve the problems facing our planet.

6:55

164 And it should give us courage during these dark times

6:59

165 to keep doing what we know to be right

7:02

166 and to not give up hope,

7:03

167 because we are gonna see the dawn.

7:06

168 And when we can evolve beyond a two-dimensional

7:09

169 us versus them mindset,

7:11

170 and embrace the true multi-dimensional reality

7:14

171 of the universe that we live in,

7:15

172 that's when we're gonna no longer be floating in darkness,

7:18

173 we're gonna leave the cave,

7:19

174 and it's a future that we would all want to be a part of.

7:22

175 That's our true calling.