



# Timeless Truths & Timely Wisdom

Ervin Laszlo

A Conversation with David Lorimer

for the Institute of Noetic Sciences and the Scientific and Medical Network



# Foreword by Claire Lachance

## CEO, Institute of Noetic Sciences

On September 13, 2018 I experienced one of the most inspiring days of my career. On that unusually warm day, I made a lengthy train trip from Florence, Italy to a small village in Tuscany for a very special appointment: to meet with the legendary Dr. Ervin Laszlo at his home. I had no idea that the “appointment” would become an entire day spent in provocative conversation with Ervin – mostly in his study but also amongst his beautiful gardens and over a delicious Tuscan meal prepared by his wonderful wife, Carita.

What will be forever etched in my memory of that day was Ervin’s absolute focus and unrelenting passion for awakening people to a full understanding of our inherent interconnectedness – such that humanity “wakes up” to its collective potential to address the threats facing our society and planet. There was a palpable urgency in Ervin’s words and tone as we met, with no time for small talk! Within minutes of sitting down together, Ervin asked me a barrage of questions about what specifically IONS was doing to expand awareness of our consciousness research around the world. Where is the IONS team showing up, speaking out, and convening the crucial conversations? How can we collaborate now – not later? Before the day concluded, we agreed to formally collaborate and I also had an invitation to join Ervin two months later as part of the At One Conference in Suzhou, China.



Dr. Laszlo’s urgency and unrelenting passion is evident in this very special e-book, *Timeless Truths and Timely Wisdom*. The book captures Ervin’s recent interview with David Lorimer as part of IONS [ConnectIONS Live](#) weekly program. It is challenging to summarize Ervin with a single title or descriptive sentence. As you will see in this lively, captivating interview, Ervin’s remarkable life ranges from being a piano prodigy as a young adult to becoming the founder of systems philosophy and general evolution theory. Twice nominated for the Nobel Prize, Ervin’s groundbreaking work also introduced us to the Akashic Field – offering a new conception of cosmos, life, and consciousness emerging at the forefront of the contemporary sciences.

As I recall the sheer overwhelm of books, papers, manuscripts, and works-in-progress filling Ervin’s Tuscan study, I continue to be filled with awe and gratitude for Ervin’s life of passionate service in awakening our interconnection for a truly better, flourishing world.

## DAVID

I will start by asking you a little about your childhood and early background. How you became a concert pianist, and about your mother, who was a pianist herself. Can you tell us something about the early phase of your life? How did you decide to become a pianist?

## Ervin

Actually, nobody asked me — I wasn't consulted about what I wanted to be. I grew up from the time I was four or five years old with the idea that I'm a pianist. I never thought I would be anything else. Nobody around me thought I would be anything else.

It was not that an uncalled for arbitrary design would have pushed me into something that was not really good for me. It turned out that I have a feeling, a real and unusual talent for music.

I could not only hear music, I could see how a piece develops. I could hardly read musical scores since I very rarely consulted them. In my childhood my mother would play a piece for me, and then I would play it, and I would continue playing it. It was purely intuitive. Music was something that was a given. I could speak through music, just as people speak their own language. I could express myself through music. Music was a way of existence for me.

Music is a language and great musical works have a particular completeness to them. They come to a close and have a perfection to them. Music is a deeply emotional experience based on the feeling of perfection.

I used to practice first to memorize a particular piece and get my fingers to play it. Then Mother would say, now play it with feeling. That's how I would play it, not just playing the notes. Playing what the music tells me.

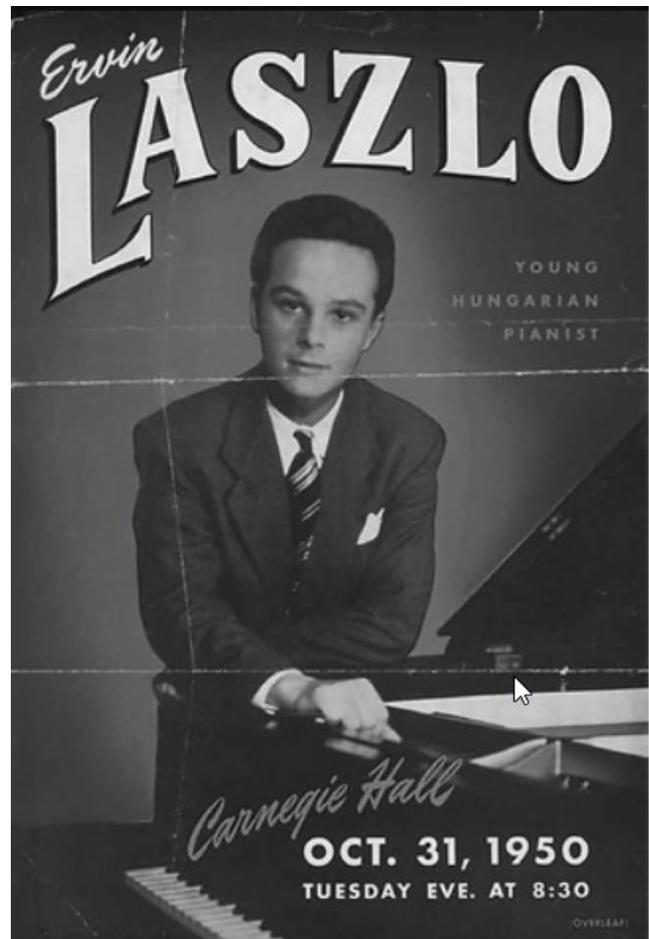
This was in my childhood, how I started. My mother was a musician and my uncle was a musician as well. He was a violinist. But at the same time, he was a philosopher. Ours was a very musical and intellectual household.

## David

Do you have a favorite piece that you love playing more than any other? I know you still have a piano and you probably still play every day.

## Ervin

My favorite piece is what I'm feeling myself into at the time. It's not an abstract choice, not something I would like to



hear on a CD or by going to a concert. It's what I play when it comes to me. I just sit down and play. That's what my favorite is — just what is emerging for me at the time.

**David**

So that's how it is. Now tell us the story of your playing the Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata in a concert and meeting the person who later published your writings.

**Ervin**

That person was a publisher who published the notes and thoughts I wrote just for myself. That was what brought me to the realization that I could be something else in life other than a concert pianist.

**David**

I just wanted to highlight the musical part of your life, because a lot of people are not familiar with it. Now we come to the more academic part of your life. How did that start? I think it was the Waldstein Sonata you were playing on the concert stage when you realized that you weren't sure where you were in playing the second movement, whether you were at the end of the movement or in the middle.

**Ervin**

Yes, for a moment, I felt completely lost. Frightened. Frozen, because it's such a crucial choice. I was performing in the [Beethoven House](#), in the hall dedicated to Beethoven in Bonn, his native city. I was playing a cycle of Beethoven's piano works, performing his music in a concert hall dedicated to him was a tremendous responsibility. There I was in the middle of the Sonata's beautiful slow movement, and I didn't know whether I'm playing the theme for the first time or the second. Because this particular theme recurs at the end. I just played on, and hoped that I was neither repeating the theme unnecessarily, or miss playing it altogether. If the public's response to it proves to be continued listening, I am all right. Because missing the entire movement is even worse than repeating it.

This was a moment of great dilemma. I took a chance and played the whole movement as if for the first time, and nobody got up, nobody laughed or made any signs. So I happened to get it right. But then, I said, this cannot go on. What alternative do I have in my life to giving concerts?

It so happened that I had just received a message from Professor Schrader, the head of the Philosophy Department at Yale University. He was reading the book I published by that time, titled *Essential Society*. He was impressed by it and wrote, "would you like to come be a Fellow of the Philosophy Department?" You would meet interesting people, he said, who could be important for developing your thinking.

This was a great opportunity, but a difficult choice, because it was difficult for me to leave my musical career. I had many concerts booked, entire concert tours planned for many months ahead. How could I just get up and leave all that?

I had to decide, and on the spur of the moment I decided that this invitation coming just now was perhaps not purely by chance. Perhaps it was something I was meant to accept and follow up.

I sent off my answer by telegram. It said, "I am accepting and coming." (At the time we could only send telegrams to each other for urgent communication, there were no e-mails and Skype or Zoom messages.) "I will be in New Haven at the

beginning of the next semester,” meaning next September (the incident in Bonn took place in the Spring).

I had to cancel my concert booking and start packing. I lived in Switzerland at the time with my wife and young son, and they agreed to stay there during my exploratory adventure. I was to come back and rejoin them and continue my music career at the end of the semester.

That was the plan. But my coming back was just another interlude. I received several remarkable invitations for academic positions while at Yale, and I accepted the most suitable among them — first a semester teaching aesthetics of music in Bloomington, at Indiana University, and then teaching philosophy at the University of Akron in Ohio. We went back to America together, and an academic phase of life started for me. That's the story in a nutshell of my shift from the concert stage to the lecture rostrum.

#### DAVID

Thank you for sharing this. Now I want to ask you about the philosopher [Alfred North Whitehead](#), because you, like many other people, have been profoundly influenced by his thinking.

#### ERVIN

I was indeed. Whitehead was far ahead of his time, and in some ways people are only just catching up with him. Reading his major book ([Process and Reality](#)) made a deep impression on me. I picked up other books that referred to him, then went back to Whitehead himself and tried to really get into it. Of his big opus, I read every sentence at least five times. It is very revealing once one understands it. For me, it was saying yes, of course, that's how the world is. It's not just a set of sturdy material, impersonal things, but an organic entity that evolves, develops and embraces all things. The world for Whitehead is a process of development, of evolution. This has made a tremendous impression on me, I still think in these terms.



Another influence on my thinking was the Belgian Nobel physicist [Ilya Prigogine](#). I met him about 25 years ago. He told me that [Henri Bergson](#) was a great influence on him in turn. These scientists looked at process and evolution as something fundamental, and also universal.

We now understand that evolution is not limited to genes in living species. Evolution happens throughout the universe. There is nothing in the universe that was the way we find it, everything evolved into what it is now.

#### DAVID

You speak a great deal about a sense of purpose that would underlie evolution in the world.

#### ERVIN

Yes — I have moments when it's very, very clear to me that not all ways to act and evolve are equally good, and not all are

equally right to take. When a course of action is the right one, I have a sense that this is so — this is what I should be doing. Things somehow fit into place. But if things don't fit, sometimes I even quite physically refuse to move forward, I feel that it is best to abandon them. Sometimes when I want to jot down a thought, the whole system freezes up. I try it again and again, and if it still doesn't work, something is wrong, it is not the right thing. I rethink that thought, and sometimes the different idea flows on to the keyboard. It feels right, and it works. This is a kind of spontaneous guidance from the universe. I believe in it and I trust it. If I am on the right track, if I do the right thing, this guidance facilitates doing what I intended to do. I just throw the first pebble and see what waves appear. Sometimes these waves grow and develop and become a lot more than I expected.

#### DAVID

One of the people you met at Yale was [Ludwig von Bertalanffy](#), the Viennese biologist. Can you give me an idea of your impression of him, and of the influence of his thinking on you?

#### ERVIN

Bertalanffy was the founder of what became known as general systems theory. This term is a source of misunderstanding, because people are talking about general systems as such, as if this were a different kind of system. Actually, the meaning of general systems theory is that it's the general theory of systems. The term 'general' applies to the theory, and not to the system. There is no such thing as a general system, only a general theory of systems. The concept 'system' applies not only in biology, but wherever evolution takes place. And if most of the entities in the natural world are systems, that means that that these entities are not separate and separable, little particles or elements. Evolving things are part of a larger wholes, and all these systems, wholes and evolving systems that are parts of wholes, we can regard as systems. The term itself is not important, only what we mean by it. I remember von Bertalanffy saying once, I don't care what they are called, you can call them crepes suzettes. What matters is that such a system is an integral whole. Its parts stay together, and develop and interact with other wholes. Creating more complex and extended "suprasystems."

This was a very avant-garde notion at the time. It is better known today, but it is not really made use of. Leading people in politics and business base their decisions on linear analysis. And if such analysis doesn't penetrate the problems, they call those 'wicked problems.' They don't realize that complexity in the world calls for systems analysis, otherwise everything turns out to be wicked. In the world of systems, everything is seen to be in evolution, and evolution is toward increasing complexity and coherence. That is not a simple coherence, it's a coherence of interacting parts that are diverse among themselves. When these systems evolve, the problem of understanding them compounds very fast and becomes unmanageable in terms of classical analysis.

But analysis in terms of evolving systems simplifies the situation,



because at the level of the highest level system, we don't need to deal with all of the complexity that lies below. We need only to deal with the results of that complexity. A CEO or a Prime Minister doesn't need to deal with the problem of cleaning the streets and administering exams in the schools. They can deal with the problems of social, economic, and ecological policy selectively. They extract the data that's relevant for their sphere of competence, data that refer to the results of complexity. They only need to deal with that.

Complexity in a system is relative to the position of the perceiver. The more you look at the parts, the more things get complex. If you look at the wholes produced by the interaction of the parts, things become simpler and more manageable.

The overall system is the product of a trend or development that holds sway in the system's environment. If you know the nature of that trend, you can do a more goal-oriented, more relevant analysis.

I'm not worried about dealing with complexity in a system. I try to deal with systems at the level of wholes, recognizing that these wholes are parts of larger wholes. I don't go into the smallest detail — I try to get an overview. Maybe that's a shortcoming. But I don't think so, because at a time of change and transformation, a good overview is essential.

#### **DAVID**

Yours is a hugely important role. What you said reminds me that the world's governments act as a rudder, particularly given the way they are related in the G-9. The art of governing is the art of steering, which I think a lot of governments have forgotten.

I want to move on to your time at the United Nations. What sort of reflections do you have regarding the work you did at the UN? What are your thoughts looking back, and especially in the light of where the UN is now and where you think it may be going?



## ERVIN

Well, the term 'United Nations' is practically a contradiction in terms. Because 'nation' is defined in the international context as being sovereign, and a sovereign entity is responsible only to itself — its own people and its own territory. How can such a sovereign entity be united? Obviously, if an entity is united with another entity, or group of entities, it cannot be sovereign. Others enter into its decisions and influence its behavior.

Working at the UN, I always opted for promoting the members states being 'united' rather than being 'sovereign.' I tried to point out that every member state has to interact, to join together and not maintain an aloof separateness — the kind of separateness implied by the idea of sovereignty.

This contradiction is a factor in the whole work of the Organization. There are the national delegates who are there to safeguard the interests of their own government and state. Then there is the Secretariat that tries to create an organization where the states have a sense of unity and work together for the common good. These two these things don't mesh — they are at odds with each other. I tried to counteract the nationalism inherent in the representations of the member states. This was natural for me, because I have very little national identity myself. I was born in Hungary and left when I was 15. I love having a Hungarian identity, because if I don't have a Hungarian identity I cannot have an American, an Italian, or any other identity. These identities need not be mutually exclusive. I have several national identities at the same time, and can also have a global, all-human identity. The latter is the dominant identity in my life.

At the U.N., I dedicated my work to bringing about cooperation between the nation-state members through forming a larger unity, a unity between nation-states on the regional level. Inter-regional cooperation was the program I created and headed for four years at the UN.

I was not a civil servant in the usual sense. I was a Special Fellow at the Institute for Training and Research, and that meant I had the freedom to pursue my goals and objectives once they were approved by the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Executive Director of UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research). I had an office at the New York headquarters and a budget that allowed me to organize cooperation among research institutes on the regional level.

Then, as I continued work on my projects, I was co-opted into an organizational niche as director at the Institute. But I never stayed entirely within my formal role. I was never very good at following rules and I objected to spending eighty percent of my time on political and organizational red tape. I tried to deal with the substance of my projects and I kept out of collateral commitments.

Getting out of bureaucratic obligations was not easy. I didn't play the game of currying favor with the powers that be. I just did what I considered was needed to represent and disseminate the goals and ideals I believed in.

Helping to achieve cooperation among the member states was my goal all along. But it was very difficult to go against the nationalist spirit and be truly global. I would have liked to call the organization 'United Peoples' not 'United Nations'. That was also the vision of [Dag Hammarskjöld](#) — he wanted the organization to stand for people, not for states.

## DAVID

Let us move on now to the next phase of your life. How did you come to found the [Club of Budapest](#)? I understand that this was in cooperation with Aurelio Peccei of [The Club of Rome](#). What were you trying to achieve with this new entity?

## ERVIN

I was involved with the Club of Rome for many years. I was pleased that its founder and president Aurelio Peccei came to me and suggested that I take an active role in researching and writing a 'report' to the Club. I undertook this, but wanted to reform The Club of Rome at the same time. The Club was highly oriented toward bringing together high-level influential personalities in business and politics. The meetings of The Club were organized to involve Prime Ministers and Presidents and top executives in the corporate world. I thought that this was not the best approach. The Club should be talking to the people and not just leaders. Because wonderful things were said at the meetings about pulling together and cooperation, but come Monday morning, the leaders went back to their country or their offices and did much the same thing they did before. I said that we need to bring together not just business and political leaders, but people whose voices resonate with the people. That means involving artists and writers, sports figures, dancers, musicians, as well as spiritual leaders.

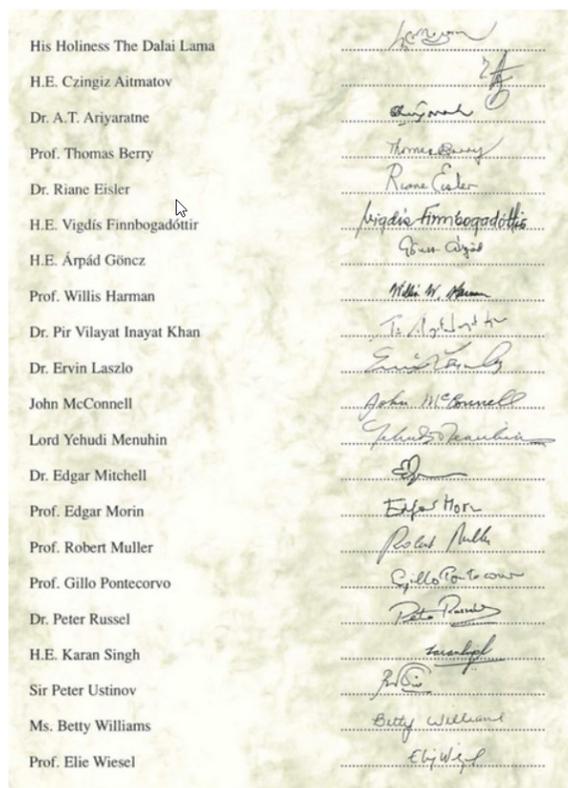
I tried to bring together such people, but with a membership limited to one hundred people, this was not possible within the structure of The Club of Rome. I had to create another entity, a twin Club. This was what I first thought of as an artists' and writers' Club. The goal was to address people's mindset, their consciousness. Artists and writers could do that better than the established leadership.

I called the new mindset 'planetary consciousness.' This was at the time a very new and daring idea. Most people didn't understand what it means. Does it suggest that the planet has consciousness? This needed clarification. I drafted what I called "[The Manifesto on Planetary Consciousness.](#)" When I completed the first draft I happened to be in India, serving first as the head of the Auroville Commission in Auroville near Pondicherry, in the southern part of India. The Commission was charged to be the official contact point for [Auroville](#), an independent social and political entity within the territory of India.

The Dalai Lama visited Madras (today Chennai), which was just a few hours' drive away. I asked my friends in Auroville who were being received by the Dalai Lama to introduce me. I went to Madras to be received by His Holiness. I was told that His Holiness has five to seven minutes to offer at the most because he has meetings scheduled all day. I said, let's use that time anyway.

When I sat across from the Dalai Lama he asked me what I had in mind. I said, here is the draft of a Manifesto on planetary consciousness. I would like to promote this kind of consciousness in today's world. He said he would like to hear it. I started reading my draft. His secretary was there and took notes. His Holiness kept interrupting, coming up with ideas of his own. We ended up working on it the rest of the day. At the end, we basically had a new draft of the Manifesto. That's the draft I took back to Budapest to get the endorsement of the Members of the Club of Budapest.

The first Members at that time were the President of Hungary, himself a literary figure of deep spirituality, much like Vaclav Havel, the Czech President at the time. The other initial Members were the famous actor playwright Sir Peter Ustinov, the great violinist Lord Yehudi Menuhin, the renowned actress Liv Ullman, and President



Havel himself. We intended to make this a club of independent thinkers and activists who can think as well as feel the way to the better way to think and act. They did not adopt the everyday rationality, they had a deeper, wiser mindset.

A few months after my visit to India, we organized the first meeting of the Club of Budapest with its first Members. The Dalai Lama himself attended as an Honorary Member. (We called our Members 'Honorary Members' to honor their commitment to the Club's objectives.) We reviewed the draft of what we called 'Manifesto on the Spirit of Planetary Consciousness' and it was adopted by the Club of Budapest.

**DAVID**

This brings us to the question of wisdom. Do you agree that the greater our material power, the greater the need for wisdom? Today, this need would be greater than it has ever been.

**ERVIN**

The need for wisdom in today's world is because we need to stop behaving insanely. There is a tremendous amount of insane behavior in the world. Everybody is rushing. People rushing for power and profit and adopting a very self-centered attitude.

This narrowly chauvinistic attitude was typified by the much repeated motto of Donald Trump — 'America first.' He didn't say who comes second, and even if there is a second. Nobody comes after us, it's us all the way. You can't have a complex and highly interacting international system operating on this principle. This would only sub-optimize the system and create conflict and inequality.

We need a new wisdom, which is also a very old wisdom. To adopt it we need to go back, but not back to where we were, but back to what we were meant to be, part of the evolving system of life on the planet. We need to aim for a more natural, wiser way of thinking and being. A new normal, aligned with the norms of healthy life on the planet. This must be a democratic, distributed power norm, a sanely self-governing normal. This is very much missing in the contemporary world. Governance is still hierarchical and self-centered. There is a major wisdom gap in the human world.

**DAVID**

The way that you put this in your book is a coherence lag — a lag in coherence within and among people. We are taking too much time to become sufficiently coherent. Maybe you could say a little more about coherence and how you see our approach to it.

**ERVIN**

Very well, let me go back to our mutual friend and mentor, the Nobel physicist Ilya Prigogine. He showed that a complex system can function and survive only if all its elements are working together. This means that the all its elements are responsive to one another and together work to maintain the system in the delicate condition in which all living systems subsist, namely, far from thermodynamic equilibrium. .

Coherence means that all elements of the system are responsive to each other. Together the parts make a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. Coherence is absolutely a key feature of evolving systems. The drive toward coherence appears to be inherent in the universe.

This systemic cooperation is the gist of coherence. Einstein said that the most remarkable thing about the universe is that

it's so coherent that we can understand it. The coherence of the living world is the most striking feature of this region of the universe.

The drive or impetus toward coherence is there already at the most basic level of the physical world, the level of atoms. The so-called [Pauli Exclusion Principle](#) shows that atoms are not created simply by adding electrons to nucleons, but by integrating electrons and nucleons in a coherent structure. This is how stable 'neutral' atoms emerge in the particle soup of the early universe, and how they further interact to create multi-atomic molecular structures.

We can also describe the process by saying that coherence emerges as laws of nature limit the degrees of freedom by which particles relate to each other and the rest of the universe. Coherence is a limitation, but it is the limitation of chaos and not of order. It is the emergence of order. Creating coherent systems is the outcome of long-term cosmological processes, and it may be the goal of evolution in the universe.

#### DAVID

This vision was very much shared by [Willis Harman](#), the founding President of the [Institute of Noetic Sciences](#). He was thinking absolutely along these lines. He was one of the few people who had the vision to bring together a group of leading process thinkers. That group was a very great influence in my life.

Now, Ervin, there is an important component which I know is of interest to everybody, which is how you distinguish between a bio-physical and a psycho-physical universe in reference to the presence of consciousness.

#### ERVIN

Yes, David, this is a tremendously important question. It is fundamental for understanding who we are, entities emerging and evolving in the universe. I believe we can best describe the true nature of the universe as 'psycho-physical.' The universe is both physical, and psychological — spiritual. It has aspects that appear to us as spiritual, mind-like, and aspects that appear to us as physical, matter-like. But these are aspects, appearances, not basic realities. Referring to the universe as physical does not mean that the universe would be material. [Max Planck](#) in one of his last talks in Florence, Italy, said that after 40 years of studying the most basic elements of the universe, namely atoms, he can say that there is no such thing as matter. There are no hard, separate things that would move according to mechanistic laws. The universe is wider and deeper than that.

With the advent of quantum physics, we can now say what the universe truly is, with more confidence than ever before. We can now conceive of the universe as a field of vibration, of which the elements are individual vibrations that resonate together and create more complex clusters of vibration. No vibration and cluster of vibration is entirely separate from any other. There is nothing here that would be material, although relatively stable clusters of vibration may appear matter-like. Astronomer [Sir James Jeans](#) said it well: the universe is basically more like a big thought, than like a big rock.



**DAVID**

Indeed. Planck added that mind is the matrix of all matter. We have some changes in our concepts awaiting us, and they are not easy. It may take a lifetime to comprehend and complete these changes.

**ERVIN**

We now realize that there is something like a cosmic consciousness pervading the universe, a consciousness that is the template for all the things that manifests in space and time. What we perceive are elements, projections, manifestations of this cosmic consciousness. They are projections or manifestations of what [David Bohm](#) called the explicate order. This order is not the ultimate reality; it is created by the dimension that is ultimately real — the implicate order. The implicate order is more like a cosmic consciousness than any material sphere of being.

**DAVID**

Exactly. There is a resurgent interest in David Bohm's work. We hosted a film, [Infinite Potential](#), which deals with it and it had half a million viewers.

**ERVIN**

The emerging insight is that we are part of each, and part of a larger whole. Then there is nobody who could be said to be 'other.' Nobody is a 'stranger' or 'foreigner.' We are all living systems, part of the web of life on Earth.

If this is so, it is ridiculous to carry on like we have been, fighting each other and harming, often killing, each other. Contemporary politics is largely a fight for power. The way politicians fight, it's not so much *for* something, but *against* something — against competitors, against anybody who seeks to be richer or more powerful.

**DAVID**

These are very outdated concepts which need to disappear as we move into a better world.

To create a better world — this brings me to what you call timely wisdom. Reviewing, rethinking, challenging, expanding our sense of identity, and reconnecting to the source. Is there anything you'd like to highlight from the wide range of wisdom principles? Expanding our identity and reconnecting with the source could be the key.

**ERVIN**

That's exactly that what they are. The urgent need is for each of us to expand his or her identity. Like everyone else, I am not just Hungarian or American or Italian or whatever. I am also that, but first of all I am a human being and a human being is not categorically 'other' than any other human being, and even any other form of life. We are all living beings on this planet, part of an evolving system and we evolve together. We need to expand our identity to encompass all living beings on Earth.

**DAVID**

Yes, but how do we do that? What are your thoughts and recommendations?

**ERVIN**

To expand our identity we have to let go of the ideas that frame our past, narrow identity. We have to let go of many of the things we have been taught in school and were told at home and in our family. They are no longer valid sources and

resources for living in this interacting and interdependent social and ecological system.

The ideas we have been living by have become outdated. And some of them are irrational. I have listed some of these irrational ideas and the behaviors they inspire in my book on [The Wisdom Principles](#). The timely wisdom is asking, does what we think and do really make sense?

I have started my mature life by questioning all the ideas that govern our thinking and behaving. It was not enough for me to be just playing the piano and doing my best to please audiences. I wanted to find out what is the sense of it all. What is the purpose of my life?

Questioning is important, because if you find what is wrong, you open the door to asking, what can I do about it? Asking this question and taking it seriously is the beginning of wisdom.

**DAVID**

Indeed, and do you still propose what might be called a philosophy of progress? You probably would prefer to use the term evolution, rather than progress?

**ERVIN**

I think real progress has to go with evolution. As young people would say, it is to 'go with the force.' The force of evolution; a subtle but real impetus. This impetus is in us. It is a tropism or attraction toward wholeness and coherence. I use the term originally suggested by [Stanislav Grof](#) — holotropism. This wholeness-oriented impetus is an inner drive towards coherence, manifesting as a feeling of love for all things — universal love.

The holotropism I am speaking of is encoded in our cells, in our heart and brain. We need to recognize it and bring it to the level where it can influence our thinking and our actions.

**DAVID**

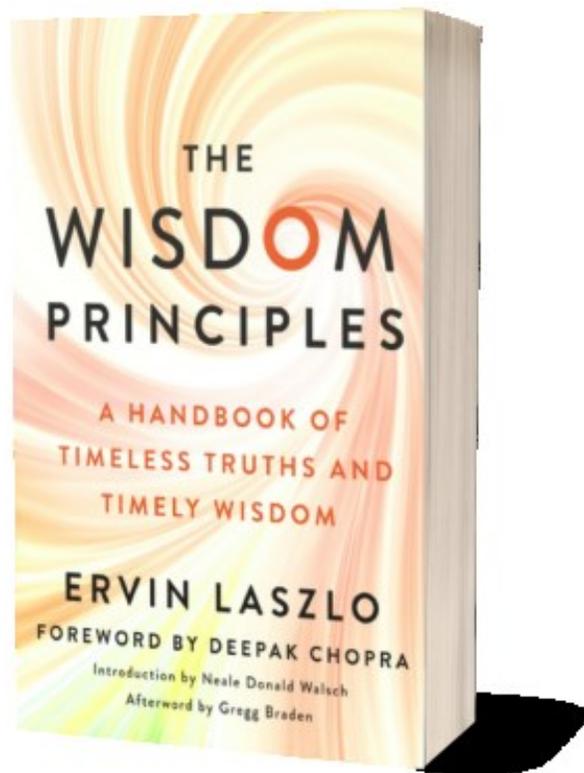
I want to ask whether you think we should come together and create a kind of wisdom council.

**ERVIN**

Absolutely, yes. There are already examples of such a councils, for example, the Elders convened by Nelson Mandela and Jane Goodall, among others. I was heading for many years the Wisdom Council of The Club of Budapest. We had many important meetings. Presently I am involved in the creation of the Wisdom Council of the new Internet platform 'PeopleTogether.' These initiatives are important because we are in desperate need of the kind of guidance that could be provided by the members of such councils.

**DAVID**

[E. F. Schumacher](#) said that humanity is now too clever to survive without wisdom. We hope that humanity can come up with the wisdom to survive.



Let me come back to something particularly important in what you said earlier. It is that it's not a question of coming up with a rational plan and imposing it from above, but rather of tuning into what is emerging and empowering that.

**ERVIN**

This is the gist of genuine leadership. Leadership means picking up what is moving people forward and empowering it, guided by the universal impetus for evolution, 'the force.'

We are part of the force. I know that sounds poetic and soft, but this impetus is working in us and for us. It is more effective when we know it and can follow it.

**DAVID**

Be healthy and enable others to be healthy as well is the task before us. That's the task. To me, it is the purpose of why we're here. I'm sure all deep-thinking people agree with that.

In the late 19th century, there was a 'New Thought' movement and one of the metaphors that it used in particular came from [Thomas Troward](#), a circuit judge in India. He said that we all have the experience of being a center. This is to say 'I am' — to be aware of oneself. What this says to me is that there's only one center, but we are all cells of the microcosms within the same center. Does this resonate with you?

**ERVIN**

Quantum scientists are telling us that we are really one. And many consciousness researchers say that the one of which we are a part is a cosmic consciousness. Here I introduce a daring idea that I am now convinced of: the cosmos is consciousness. This is the ultimate insight. We are elements, projections, manifestations of the cosmic consciousness. With this insight, the pernicious and mistaken fragmentation of the world into separate and often opposing people, organizations and states can be overcome.

**DAVID**

There are obstructions in the progress of the evolution of which we are a part. Our evolution is a very non-linear process. Is the introduction of dysfunction a necessary condition for achieving coherence?

**ERVIN**

There are always disruptions and disruption is part of the process. The course of evolution is not predetermined. Disruption, temporary obstruction brings about change, reinforces change, opens up the system to novelty.

**DAVID**

What is your advice to the younger people who are reading this? What advice would you give to parents and grandparents, to pass on to the next generation?

**ERVIN**

Open up. Take the natural, evolutionary road ahead. It is the road to a miraculous world. A world that merits being loved and being promoted to the next stage of its evolution. Open up to it. Receive it. Open your heart to receive it even before it is received and articulated by your brain. Become what you can and now need to become. Join with others to create a coherent world, a larger whole of which you can be a positive part. Strive for power, but not for power over others, but

the power to be... so others can also be. Strive to thrive together, and not just to barely survive.

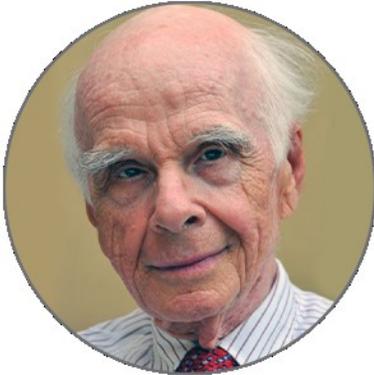
My advice is to become what you were meant to be. Become a person who loves other people, nature, and the universe, and loves them unconditionally. One who knows and feels that he or she is part of this evolving, miraculously coherent universe. One who strives to make humankind thrive by spreading human kindness. This is a meaningful goal for all of us.

**DAVID**

Great advice for all of us. Thank you so much, Ervin, for speaking to us about your life, your thinking, and your hopes for a better world.



# About the Speakers



**Ervin Laszlo**, Doctorat ès Lettres et Sciences Humaines, twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, Laureate of the Luxembourg Peace Prize, the Assisi Mandir of Peace Prize, as well as of the Japan Peace Prize, the Goi Award, has been identified by an international jury convened by *OOOM Magazine* as the 28th among the world's 100 most inspiring people. He is the editor of the prestigious periodical *World Futures: The Journal of New Paradigm Research*, founder-president of the international think tank [Club of Budapest](#), founder-president of [The Laszlo Institute of New Paradigm Research](#), and chairperson of The Wisdom Council of the new internet platform People Together. He is the author of over 100 books translated into 24 languages, including *The Wisdom Principles*, along with nearly 400 studies and articles. He lives in the Tuscan hills of the Mediterranean coast of Italy.



**David Lorimer** is a writer, lecturer, poet, and editor who is a Founder of Character Education Scotland, Programme Director of the [Scientific and Medical Network](#), and former President of Wrekin Trust and the Swedenborg Society. He has also been editor of *Paradigm Explorer* since 1986 and completed his 100th issue in 2019. He is the author and editor of over a dozen books, including *Survival? Death as Transition*, *Resonant Mind* (originally *Whole in One*), *The Spirit of Science*, *Thinking Beyond the Brain*, and *Radical Prince* about the ideas and work of the Prince of Wales. He is the originator of the [Inspiring Purpose Values Poster Programmes](#), which has reached over 350,000 young people. He is also Chair of the [Galileo Commission](#) which seeks to widen science beyond a materialistic worldview. Visit his [website](#) to learn more.

# Afterword by David Lorimer

## Programme Director, Scientific and Medical Network

Re-reading my conversation with Ervin reminded me that I had not listened to Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata for many years, so I dug out my LP featuring Wilhelm Kempff – what a pleasure to be reminded of this great work so familiar to my friend Ervin Laszlo! And of course, music can convey more than words.

There are many rich themes and commonalities in our conversation, as well as common influences in Bergson, Whitehead and Prigogine. Ervin also had the opportunity to meet von Bertalanffy, as he recounts, and the evolutionary process towards coherence and complexity forms an important element of his thought. As he himself says, it is important in an age of specialization to be capable of grasping an overview and understanding evolutionary trends.

Ervin's emphasis while at the UN on United Peoples rather than United Nations reflects, as he remarks, the view of Dag Hammarskjold in his reflections on the ethical duties of an international civil servant when faced with powerful national interests. Ervin speaks of planetary consciousness and the trend towards global identity beyond narrow nationalism. This is a fine line to tread when powerful global interests represented by the World Economic Forum are steering us towards a system of global technocracy, surveillance and control within a communitarian ethic demanding individual compliance. Enlightenment ideas of freedom of speech and expression are to become privileges granted by the state in return for compliance – the current vaccine pass embodies just such an idea and may be the thin end of the wedge towards a 'new normal'. For me, the essential principle we see in Nature is unity in diversity and diversity in unity, rather than the imposition of uniformity, which in itself is a mechanistic notion.

As I say during my conversation with Ervin, EF Schumacher remarked that humanity is now too clever to survive without wisdom. Towards the end of his life in 1975, the historian Arnold Toynbee wrote that "technology gives us material power – the greater our material power, the greater our need for the spiritual insight and virtue to use power for good and not for evil. The 'morality gap' means that, since we first became human, we have never been adequate spiritually for handling our material power. Today it is greater than ever." Nearly 50 years on, these remarks are truer than ever, and it is well worth revisiting Toynbee's dialogue with the Japanese Buddhist Daiseku Ikeda under the title *Choose Life*.

In his autobiographical work, *Experiences*, Toynbee reflects that self-centredness is the essence of life, so that overcoming this is the most difficult spiritual task. In this respect he became aware that "Love, as we know it by direct experience in living creatures on this planet, is also present as a spiritual presence behind the universe. Love is the only spiritual power that can overcome the self-centredness that is inherent in being alive. This love that is a form of self-denial is also the only true self-fulfilment." Wise words indeed, and he continues: "I do not believe that the goal of true and lasting peace can be reached without a world-wide spiritual revolution. By this I mean the overcoming of self-centredness, in both individuals and communities, by getting into communion with the spiritual presence behind the universe and by bringing our wills into harmony with it." Note the parallel between individuals and communities.

This thought was also expressed by Vaclav Havel – a founding member of Ervin's Club of Budapest – in a famous speech to the U.S. Congress in 1993: "Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change

for the better in our being as humans, and the catastrophe toward which our world is headed...will be unavoidable...We are still incapable of understanding that the only genuine backbone of our actions – if they are to be moral – is responsibility: responsibility to something higher than my family, my country, my firm, my success, responsibility to the order of being where all our actions are indelibly recorded and where, and only where, they will be judged.”

This is the same responsibility articulated by Dag Hammarskjöld which I believe is inseparable from freedom and embodied in an ethic of service. The Bulgarian sage Beinsa Douno (Peter Deunov) wrote that love is life for the Whole. He explains that all beings form a whole as branches and leaves of the great cosmic tree of the cosmic organism and that this is the basis of equity, of unity in diversity. He asserted that “Life is one, Mind is one, Love is one,” elaborating that: the abundance in the world comes from love, which brings all good. Wisdom distributes the good that love brings. Truth gives the Power to act.”(These are his three core principles). Hence, “the supreme goal of human life is that people should be free and to serve Love, Wisdom, and Truth.”

Corresponding to this, he writes that there are three kinds of life:

- Life for oneself (the law of the part – of oneself)
- Life for society (the law of the majority – of the neighbor)
- and Life for the Sublime Principle (the law of the Whole – of the Divine).

Hence the three degrees of serving oneself, society, or God. The Law of the Whole is the most comprehensive, transcending and including the other levels, recalling Toynbee’s observation above that “this love that is a form of self-denial is also the only true self-fulfilment.” It also highlights that the WEF communitarian vision exemplifies the law of the majority while denying inner freedom and the transcendent depth dimension of the human being by insisting that we are machines in need of an upgrade to our operating system – a view that seeks to merge humans with machines in digital transhumanism.

In 1919, Beinsa Douno sent a remarkable letter to the negotiators in Versailles: “Those who love their enemies are people of the new future culture. And if those who are attending the conference in Versailles love their enemies, a real peace can be established between the peoples. If they do not love their enemies and peace is re-established, it will be temporary. Real peace is one that brings in the future culture of work, life and Love. If the peace which contemporary people expect rests on the Law of Moses – an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth – the future will prove what kind of peace this is and what culture it will bring.” Only too prophetic and a lesson we still have to learn!

The Russian émigré and first professor of sociology at Harvard, Pitirim Sorokin, wrote in his final masterwork *The Ways and Power of Love* on the basis of his own experience of being imprisoned and condemned to death during the Russian Revolution: “Hate begets hate, violence engenders violence, hypocrisy is answered by hypocrisy, war generates war, and love creates love. Unselfish love has enormous creative and therapeutic potentialities, far greater than most people think. Love is a life-giving force, necessary for physical, mental and moral health.”

Elsewhere, he explains that “emanating from the supraconscious, validated by logical reasons and confirmed *a posteriori* by sensory experience, the universal sublime love is the supreme value around which all moral values can be integrated into one ethical system valid for the whole of humanity.” This is exactly the view of Beinsa Douno, and we have yet to appreciate and articulate a profound philosophy and ethic of love for our time, even though this is the essential message of The Sermon on the Mount as understood by Tolstoy (*The Kingdom of God is Within You*), who influenced Gandhi to say

that “Love is basically not an emotional but an ontological power, the essence of life, the dynamic union of the separated.”

This philosophy brings together Love with Life – also as healing and health – Wisdom with Truth as founding principles of a new humane Culture of Love. Our existing systems are based on division, conquest and war – agricultural war against insects (pesticides) and medical war against bacteria where antibiotic literally means anti-life. The basic metaphor is control rather than harmony, and Schumacher remarked that in a war against nature, humanity will find itself on the losing side.

In the postscript to her recent book, *Oneness vs 1%*, Vandana Shiva writes that “in fact, the pandemic is not a war. The pandemic is a consequence of war. A war against life. The mechanical mind connected to the money machine of extraction has created the illusion of humans separate from nature, and nature as dead, inert raw material to be exploited. But, in fact, we are part of the biome. And we are part of the virome. The biome and virome are us. When we wage war on the biodiversity of our forests, all forms, and in our guts, we wage war on ourselves.” Instead, we have to choose life, health, harmony at every level and undertake a complete regeneration and transformation of the dominant agricultural, food and medical systems that are inherently unsustainable. The real challenge — as identified by Vandana and others — is that these global companies are all interconnected in terms of ownership by the leading powerful investment trusts, Vanguard and Black Rock, who also control mainstream media and tech.

Our interconnected communities of IONS, the SMN, and the Laszlo Institute are all part of a global spiritual revolution and awakening based on the entwined principles of Life, Love, Wisdom, Truth, Justice, Goodness, and Peace. I hope that my conversation with Ervin and these words will empower you to stand up and be counted in these perilous times, remembering the words of Beinsa Douno that “Love is necessary for the transformation of the world. It is the only force which can bring peace between the nations, each of which has a mission to accomplish on earth. Love is beginning to appear; goodness, justice and light will triumph; it is simply a question of time.”

# ConnectIONS Live

We hope you enjoyed this transcript of the conversation between Ervin Laszlo and David Lorimer from the [ConnectIONS Live webinar “The Wisdom Principles – Timeless Truths and Timely Wisdom,”](#) co-sponsored by the [Institute of Noetic Sciences](#) and the [Scientific and Medical Network](#).

Led by IONS scientists, educators, and partners, the free, weekly ConnectIONS Live webinars feature presentations on cutting-edge noetic research and experiential transformative practices. To see the schedule of upcoming webinars, please visit:

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