



Conscious Life presents

TRAUMA SUPER CONFERENCE

Collective trauma needs collective healing

Guest: Thomas Hübl

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[00:00:10] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone to this interview where I'm super excited to be talking with Thomas Hübl.

In this interview we're going to be exploring a few different pieces related to trauma. We're going to start off by talking about trauma and the struggle to be present as part of the healing process.

We'll then explore why working in groups and having collective interactions can be so important in trauma healing. We'll then be talking about the delicate balance between doing our own trauma work whilst also showing up in the world and how we make sure that we are doing both, but we're doing so in a sustainable and healthy and ultimately impactful way.

To give you a little bit of Thomas's background. Thomas Hübl is a renowned teacher, author and international facilitator whose lifelong work integrates the core insights of the great wisdom, traditions and mysticism with the discoveries of science.

Since the early 2000s, he's been leading large scale events and courses that focus on the healing and integration of trauma. His nonprofit organization, which we'll talk a bit about towards the end of the interview, the Pocket Project works to support the healing of collective trauma throughout the world.

His book, *Healing Collective Trauma: A Process for Integrating Our Intergenerational and Cultural Wounds*, outlines the collective trauma integration process as a safe framework for guiding groups through collective trauma healing. So, Thomas, welcome back. I always really enjoy our conversations. Thank you for making the time.

Thomas Hübl

Me too, Alex, very much.

Alex Howard

So I think an interesting place to start, we were just talking before we hit record, around a lot of the energy and focus in psychotherapeutic work and in trauma healing work can be this idea of needing to be present, to be here in this moment. But for a lot of people with trauma, their instinct and their impulse is everything but that. And I'd love you to maybe talk a bit about why that's the case and then how to be with that and work with that.

[00:02:31] Thomas Hübl

Yeah. Because I saw thousands of people trying to be more present. But when we are trying to be more present, it's already very obvious that there is a force in us that doesn't want to be present.

Instead of seeing this as a dysfunction, maybe it's good to approach it as, oh, maybe let's see what's the function of that. And then the more we understand the function or we feel the function of it, so maybe we can make that our ally and that will make us present anyway.

Because I believe everything we encounter in the inner work is basically intelligent and our Sherlock Holmes mind, or this deep sensing, is to start to understand its intelligence. And I think that's what we are often missing if we are not precisely attuned to the process that's happening.

And when we say it, I think it's very obvious when we say trauma, in the traumatic moment, life says here, in space and time, it's not good for me when a child gets abused and somebody gets hurt and there's violence. When there's neglect here, it's simply not good for us. So moving out of here in space and time, so in time and space to fragment because trauma fragments the human narrative.

So it's a fragmentation. It's much better to be someone else, to go to a dream world, to leave the body, to be less embodied, to withdraw insight, to put on walls and to deal with some kind of compensation like addictions or whatever with the hyper stress that is in our systems.

All of that are ways to deal with an incredible overwhelm and I think having a loving relationship to that process that life developed over thousands and thousands of years.

The trauma response has been developed by life for a reason because we really needed it to survive. And now that we have it, I think we need to make that trauma response our ally in the inner work. And that means that because many people say yeah, embodiment is cool and is important, which of course is true but this embodiment and not being grounded has a good reason too.

So I think when we work, especially in therapeutic context but also everybody with him or herself or with themselves is oh wow, I actually am not working in myself with something that's stupid or that I'm incapable of feeling my body, I'm capable of shutting down parts of my body because they are too overwhelmed.

That's a different way to approach the whole internal process. But what happens is, if I go to look for oh, what actually was my intelligence as a three year old, then I'm not looking at what's wrong and whether I want to get rid of it. I'm looking at what was right then. And it was very good at that moment. But it fixed itself. It became frozen like that. And then it's been working ever since like that. But today I don't need that anymore.

We find a different approach, a different intelligence even also in the therapeutic, in the relational context and that quickens the healing process a lot because like that we re-own that function and we update it because what is presence? Presence is like the updating mechanism of our life because all the trauma is stuck in the past and it splits our life in past and future.

But presence is where the past integrates itself and the future shows up as innovation, creativity, insight. And I think that when we think about trauma as a non-updatable area until it's re-owned

and then it gets an update and then it integrates itself into now and we call it post-traumatic learning, but that's a much more in elegant way because we are not looking, and the societal framework also I think needs to change. That we look at people's dysfunctions and I think even if we frame it that way because we experience it often that way, it slows down the healing process a lot.

[00:07:13] Alex Howard

So I'm really curious, Thomas, to that place of, because it's not just letting the disembodiment happen and run one's life because that's, of course, perpetuating the suffering. So one wants to do something with it. But the point you're making is that just trying to force oneself to be present is going against that impulse and that instinct.

What's that place of being with what's there, so there is an element of presence that's coming in, but without trying to force it to a place that doesn't feel okay in that moment. So I'm really curious as to the felt sense of that way being?

Thomas Hübl

I think that on the one hand, if you do any trauma work, we need to first of all get to know what we call our resources. Where do I feel grounded? Because I don't feel completely ungrounded in most of the cases, but there are some parts of myself that I feel connected to, grounded in that I have a felt sense of.

Exactly as you said, I'm not saying we should leave it that way. I said the attunement to the intelligence is very important. For example, as a three year old, if I needed to go out of my body in order to avoid a big pain impact, so then at my three year level of development, the process of disembodiment is happening. It's disembodiment.

Every moment after its disembodiment, it's a noun. It looks like effect. Oh, I don't feel myself. And then as a grown up, I come to any kind of process work and then I find out, oh, wait a moment, I can't feel this. It's hard for me to do that, but it's like when somebody screams in a cave in the moment, the person screams, that's the scream.

Every moment later, it's the echo of the scream. So a symptom, disembodiment, the noun, is a symptom of the very process that happened only in the traumatic moments, moment to moment. And so our job is to find, okay, how can I use my nervous system in an intelligent way and in a more precise way to feel my fears, my stress, my anger, my shame, everything that's wrapped into the traumatic moment?

Where does that live? In me, much more precisely. And often we need an outer reflection, like a therapist or a person with us that is skilled to help us attune, to be the witness of the pain that has never been really witnessed and felt and to bring that internal process back into a relationship.

And in that relationship, like, for example, the therapist's nervous system helps my nervous system to turn on the light in the room where the trauma lives because now it's unconscious. I only see the effects of it in my life. But when we are really precisely attune, then it's much faster to help us to click and your nervous system helps my nervous system to find the right location where the real process lives.

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That's why I often say trauma work is turning nouns, absence, into absencing, or disembodiment into disembodying, or whatever, dispersion into dispersing. Because it's always a process, not an effect but the process is usually unconscious so it's hard for us to feel the process.

We only feel tension in the body but we are tightening our muscles. That's a process. That's not a thing. And so I think that's liquefying slowly, the nouns turned into verbs are liquefying our life and then our internal data system starts to flow more because where there's trauma, the data can't flow, that flows through our nervous system.

It's kind of congested, it's stuck, and then it loosens up. And that process is much easier if we are looking internally together for the intelligence of that process and not, oh, I want to get rid of my fear because then we are just repeating what happened in the trauma moment.

Also we got rid of the fear because it was too much. And now we want to get rid of the fear that we already got rid of in the past so that's the repetition we cannot get rid of. Anything. We can only integrate the information and grow our current perspective.

We are also much more able to meet the world today. Because often what happens is we touch the trauma a little bit, we become more aware that we are traumatized. But then the real integration, that's the only transformation, just to be more aware that we are traumatized is great.

But that's only the first step. Because what we want is that the trauma healing strengthens us enough, makes us open our relational retractions enough that we can meet the world of today and that we become more effective because otherwise we see the bypassing that I think you are also very interested in. That we want to kind of go out of life more and more because the real world is more and more overwhelming, because it touches our inner overwhelm.

Alex Howard

Yes, I want to come back to that piece in a little bit because I think it's a really important part of the discussion. I just want to back up to that place of being seen and held in one's response. And you made the point around working with a skilled practitioner, and there's a co-regulation or that there's a safety that's built in that.

And I was reflecting when you were speaking that in a sense, there's the healing work that we do on our own, there's the healing work that we do with another in a therapeutic context, and there's the healing work that we do in a group.

I know that that's been a big part of your work over the years, and I'm curious as to what you see as the opportunity and the limitations, perhaps, with those different ways of working, because I think there are a lot of people that can watch events like this and I think hopefully get a lot from them.

But it also strikes me that if I reflect on some of my own work and some of my work as a clinician that there are things that seem to happen in different spaces that perhaps can only happen in those spaces. I'm really curious as to your thoughts around that.

[00:14:06] Thomas Hübl

Yeah, that's amazing. The architecture that you are talking about is of course important because what is healing work? It's creating the right environment for healing to happen. Even a therapist is an environment for a client to do the work.

So a one on one setting is creating an environment. And for some people we need that one on one setting because that's the only thing that is safe enough that will help us to do some steps so that has validity and it's very important.

And I think we developed more and more skills over the last 150 years to do that work well and more and more precisely. Now, I believe that there is another part. I mean, my personal practice, obviously I with myself is very important to develop certain skills and certain things I think I can really do with myself.

But especially the parts that got hurt in relational settings, attachment processes, through violence, through whatever, need a relational context to repair it, to help us repair that. And I think relational work is very important.

I also think sometimes we talk about co regulation, but I also talk about co regulation, but I talk about something else too, which is like a precise attunement that when somebody comes to me and is 40 years old, and the trauma sits in certain developmental levels, my nervous system needs to be able to model for my client the exact environment that that age needs.

If I miss that, I leave a little bit of a relational gap and I think that relational gap has an effect. So there's co regulation of stress but then there is a precise attunement to the layers where the trauma information is stored.

That's why I often speak about collective trauma. Not because individual trauma is not important, it's very important. But there's a tendency to see individual trauma as a standalone thing, that is now my personal thing that I have to deal with, when in fact a lot of the traumatizations are part of what I call the IAC system of trauma.

It's the individual ancestral collective system, because the fact that I have attachment trauma means my parents were traumatized, my grandparents were traumatized in the Second World War. That's a whole system. The culture, Austria, where I grew up was hurt in the Second World War or was perpetrating in the Second World War.

That's a whole system. And my trauma is part of a consequence of that system. And I believe that sometimes when we open the map more, not to bypass the individual process, but to have more information available, that's a very helpful thing.

So that's one thing. And the other thing is the collective spaces. I feel that doing, and that's what we do in our training programs also with very large groups, we have lots of therapists that do one on one work. We do a lot of work in groups, in small groups, in the big group.

I do a lot of processes in front of many, many people with a few individuals and their process ripples out into the collective witnessing space. If hundreds of people witness one process, then it's like a resonance body and one trauma process resonates for 50 other people in the room.

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That creates an acceleration system that when it's well held and the people that really need it have their one on one meetings within that five day or seven day process. And so everybody who needs deeper holding has deeper holding. But everybody who is more resourced already can hold many things in their internal process or with other participants in small groups.

I experienced that kind of collective system that we also use for collective trauma processes as well. Like when we work on massive wounds like the holocaust, racism and genocide.

Because when many people in the room feel and are with and witness one person's process, you have hundreds of nervous systems dialing in. And we often work on how to set up the container so that it becomes stronger and stronger. So that develops weak competencies.

That's not just me sitting in a group, it's me being part of a we space, personal competencies, plus also we competencies that we develop together as groups because there's a collective weakness that's arising in the groups. And I believe that's an acceleration of the healing process.

And I believe we are moving into a time where we of course will still do one on one sessions, but the collective spaces will accelerate the healing process in a responsible way because we don't want to accelerate it and not be responsible and safe in the work. And I have seen many group spaces that are tremendously transformative.

Alex Howard

Something that strikes me as you're talking to us is who's doing the work and where the work is coming from? And what I mean by that is that as practitioners, therapists, clinicians, particularly, we can get very much into thinking I've got to know it all, I've got to have all the information, all the right skills, I've got to watch every interview and every conference.

And of course that skill level is part of it. But what I'm also really hearing is the power of tuning into a wisdom which is beyond the facilitator, the client, that it's almost making space for a wisdom to unfold that's already there. And there's something that's quite beautiful in that because often the issue can be I don't have what it takes, or this is too big. I'd love to hear you speak a little bit to that wisdom that we open to and why it's so important.

Thomas Hübl

Beautifully said. That's exactly one part of the trauma, how collectively traumatized the world is that we feel too separate as humans. As humans we say we are on the planet, I was like, no, we are part of the planet. Like, my embodiment is a deep anchoring as the planet. I'm not on the planet. I'm not separate like a glass on a table. I'm a continuation of planetary evolution. I'm sitting here also as the planet. I'm not the entire planet as Thomas. That's what I'm saying.

But I'm an integral part of a biosphere that is a data network. And the more we feel separate, we often mix individuality with separation. They are kind of often together and they say, yeah, we are all individuals, but we are still, like when you walk through the forest, where is nature?

Nature is not around you. Nature is through you. You are also nature. Like we call the rabbit. Oh, the rabbit is part of nature, but we are looking at it. No, we are not looking at nature. We are also

nature in nature. Because my body, I'm also like the rabbit in the forest. Yeah, but sometimes there is an idea like oh, we are looking at nature, it's beautiful.

[00:22:00]

Or where is society? I'm not looking at society. Society is all over. This is a system that I'm also society. I think what you said is so beautiful that because in loosening up this hyper individualism that is a mixture between individualization and separation, then the natural data flow of the biosphere, of the super computer of living is much more available to us.

Then the effort that exists within that hyper individualized, individual. One part of the effort is part of the separation, as you said. And we call it collective wisdom. But that's our natural state that we are not even relating sometimes induces the idea that I need to relate to you. Like one separate part needs to find out something about the other separate part.

The super computer doesn't need to go anywhere for the data because the data is accessible to every one of us. I think now it's about 8 billion people this time and we all have democratic access to all the data in the world. But sometimes our nervous systems are so hurt or shut down that we don't tap into that data and we feel very separate.

And that's why what you said is so important. I see this in the groups all the time. The incredible intelligence that arises, that nobody does that's why the *Tao Te Ching*, the great book, wisdom book, Lao Tzu wrote, when the highest form of leadership is that we all bow down to the higher organizing principle, there is no separate leader.

We're all listening to the higher organizing principle. And the more we feel separate, it downgrades to different forms of leadership until we end up in chaos. But that's exactly right.

That when we loosen up the separation, then there is an intelligence that is much bigger than you and I. We are part of that intelligence. And of course, we can be more dialed into it, so it can guide us in the healing work. But it's beautiful what you said, that sometimes the over effort in an individual or a professional is actually a sign of feeling more separate than actually is our true nature.

Alex Howard

This idea of separation, I think, is also important in the context of showing up to the collective challenges that we also face. That one of the things that, as I was saying to you before we started recording that's a lot on my mind at the moment, is where trauma healing meets our capacity to show up in the places of helpful activism, for example.

Because I think part of what happens is that the danger can be that our awareness of our impacts of trauma can make us less resilient, not more resilient. And I see you as someone who is walking this delicate dance, if you walk dance, dance this delicate dance in an admirable and skillful way in terms of guiding inner work whilst also having a strong sense of responsibility in terms of showing up in the world. I'd love to hear some of your thoughts around this.

[00:26:00] Thomas Hübl

I think one thing is for some people's healing, we need a phase to have a protected space to open something up that was so painful that we can't think at the same time about social engagement. And that's amazing, and that should be like that.

And I think some of us really need that healing space that is protected first in order to deal with the tremendous impact that we had in our lives. And then the energy that gets integrated is post-traumatic learning. Integration is something that was split off, is coming back into the central data channel and increases my perspective.

But from a certain level of integration, our trauma work is supposed to not take us out of life more, same as our spiritual practice, I believe, shouldn't take us out of life, but bring us more into life and make us more resilient. What's resilience? Resilience, I believe, is the capacity to stay related to challenges.

And we can see this also in soldiers. Sometimes there are two soldiers that went through the same traumatic event. One comes out pretty okay, has PTSD, but it's integrated. One comes out and is pretty fragmented and may be unable to live his or her life because it hit a place they couldn't stay, a young attachment place, they couldn't stay related to the situation and got fragmented because there was a fracture already to start with.

We also see that people that go through different challenges, not everybody gets traumatized in the same way when we bring in activism, I think some form of activism is trying to deal with my trauma, but outside. So that's important to know, because that will lead to exhaustion, depletion, burnout, frustration and also create friction in the world.

Then days where I feel my calling and I think it's super important that we feel, okay, where do we want to contribute? Because the exchange between what I take from the world and what I give to the world needs to be in a balance. And I think trauma creates scarcity.

There's often not enough and then we create a society of not enoughness and trauma healing starts to create more flow and abundance that I also feel I have more to give. Or people that have a strong spiritual practice often say if you are so fortunate and privileged to have that in your life, that needs to lead to more responsibility, to the ability to respond to your life circumstances.

And I think that trauma informed activism, so that I know my own triggers, I am working on my inner stuff, but at the same time I am responding to climate change, to racism, to all kinds of big things that need to be looked at. And it needs us. It needs to be like we are part of an immune system also. And that immune system, if it's too paralyzed, doesn't heal the organism.

I think we are seeing that in the world. And then there is also the challenge where activism is amazing to create much more and quicken the public education and it's amazing to wake us up to see habits that we are sleeping as society and to say listen, this can't continue like this. With climate change, certain things cannot continue the way they are, and they need to change.

And if there is enough change energy then the habits that are wired in us will open up and can be reconstructed on a higher plane like on a higher level of development and are more functional for this evolutionary time. So that's great but then sometimes the habits are like fossils that are frozen in the ice of our collective trauma and when you push against that you just get a lot of counter pressure and nothing's moving.

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And I think that's also what we see in the climate change conversation that we are not skillful enough to see here we need change energy, here we need a difference, we need a holding to melt first the ice and then change it. And if we don't do that right then we walk around with bruises and then we blame the world for not doing it right because we become bitter, we become burned out, we become frustrated as activists and then we say you, it's because of you.

And then the whole blame game starts because there's an unconscious component to the intervention that is not being owned. And I think if we have all these puzzle pieces in the room, then trauma informed activism is absolutely needed. I think we also need to have the courage to step up and do something for the world.

When trauma often dissociates us from inside, because many people say yeah, but I don't know what to do and I don't know what's my purpose. And sometimes that's a result of trauma and sometimes that's also a result that we want to do it too perfectly and we want to actually find a real right thing.

Sometimes I say to people, if you have a highway ramp and you go up on the highway and the worst thing you can do is stop on the ramp, don't stop there. Even if it's the wrong highway. Go up, drive, take the next ramp and go change your highway. But don't stop, because once you stop there, the cars are so fast that you can't get in anymore.

That's why it's an acceleration lane. And I think that's for us too. If I don't know what to do, then I do the first thing that feels kind of resonant enough for me to participate. And then let life guide you to a more perfect place, if that's at all in your purpose, it will come anyway just by you moving.

But that's better than not to do anything and wait for the perfect thing that I can contribute. And I think the other thing is that many people see their intervention or their contribution too isolated, there's so much pain in the world, what can I do?

But if I become part of the we, whatever that we is, an aid organization, like a group that does something or whatever it is, if I don't have an impulse myself to generate my own startup or whatever it is, then let's support another one and let's do things together.

Because the more we create collective networks and collective intelligence spaces, we are able to create a cup that is big enough to host the complexity. Because I often say complexity is only complex in a too small cup.

If you increase the cup, thousands of liters of water in your swimming pool is nothing, but in your bus stop might be overwhelming for your bus stop. And that's the same for climate change if you are too fragmented and isolated and many people try to find a solution that will give them a Nobel Prize, yeah, great, but we need more collective collaboration and do it together in order to hold the complexity in the bigger cup that we all create together. And I think that's where we are going. Collective impact is the thing to come.

[00:34:02] Alex Howard

Also reflecting as you were speaking around the balance between listening to my own feelings, instincts, like what's alive in me, with also recognizing, is that a genuine aliveness towards something, or is that a trigger and a projection that's playing out?

An example, let's say that I feel really angry against the government and there's a kind of rage against the government and then maybe I inquire into that a bit more. And what I realize is actually it's my own anger and disappointment towards my own parents and not getting certain needs met. And actually because, in a sense, what I'm doing is I'm playing out my own trauma response.

Maybe I'm not being helpful to the overall situation. I'm kind of creating more conflict rather than actually showing up in a useful way. My question is I'm curious to find what helps separate an instinct and an impulse from a trigger and how do we really try to meet these things from the most skillful, I guess, place that we can?

Thomas Hübl

That's an important question because I completely agree. If we already feel what we are against, then most probably there is a high chance that we are already triggered and that our past is speaking right now and wants to change the world.

But it changes with the skills that didn't work in the past and they won't work today either. In the trigger, I often say when we are really triggered, we don't have a future because all we have is our past impulsive tools to deal with situations.

And it is like sometimes you see what we all experience in intimate relationship arguments. That a five year old talks to a seven year old. That's not going to solve our relationship issues, nor won't they solve our societal issues. So there is a certain maturity, what means maturity? That I'm resting in a certain level of presence.

That I don't need to be afraid that my deeper resonance with the world will disappear after this moment. If it's an intelligence that is essential to me, I will feel it now, I will feel it tomorrow and I will feel it in a week.

Which means sometimes we have these reactions towards things that are momentarily and there is a deeper place in us that is not so dependent on the outside situation. It's more something that I feel when I feel my body, I feel my core, I listen to what really motivates me.

That's a more contemplative process that is not so much related to if that situation right now is good or not or if I agree with somebody or if I don't agree with somebody. That's important in the moment but that's not where the true motivation comes from.

That comes from a deeper place inside. So making some space for that inquiry, what really matters in my life? What were essential moments in my life? What's essential for me? What do I call essential? And why do I call it that way? How does that feel in my body when I tune in with an essential moment I have and I get a reference sensation and then I'm looking for more of those reference sensations? How did I feel when I felt really seen by somebody?

How do I feel when we have a conversation where we really meet and we give birth to something new together. There are many things that are reference experiences that most of the people have

where that's a memory, maybe, it's a memory, but it also gives me kind of a tracer to find my way into my core. And the other side is when I'm already impulsive, when I'm already triggered, when I'm angry, or when I often say I'm not dead.

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That's always a bit, why do you tell me who you are by telling me what you are not? Why are you telling me what you are? Some people say I'm never going to be like my father. And I often say, that's like if I need to hold this wall, and then you ask me out for lunch, but I will never go with you for lunch. If I need to hold this wall, I push against this wall.

The things that define us by what we are not, are usually things that we suppress in ourselves. And so that doesn't give us a free choice. That only shows me what maybe was painful or hurtful for me in the past. I think that there are multiple kinds of assessments, how we see, now I'm more in my triggered zone.

Which is okay to be triggered if I can make more space and not make that the source of my location, but as part of okay, that's something that needs my attention to integrate more and then to find spaces. And we all need to, if you want to communicate with our essence, we need to make space for it. If somebody wants to marry, you need to make a space for your marriage. If you never have space in your schedule for your marriage, you won't get married.

Alex Howard

Or you will get divorced quite quickly afterwards.

Thomas Hübl

Or you get divorced quite quickly after. Then better not to get married. But if you want something in your life, you also need to make space. So if you want to get to know our essence, we need to make space for it, to have a contemplative space, to have a cup of tea, sit down, feel, make space for it, inquire and go into a different inner state.

And in that inner state, we will feel more, okay, what do I feel attracts me? What do I feel pulled towards what interests me, what motivates me? And then I follow it even if I don't know exactly how that should look like. I start following my next impulse. There are people for them, it's very clear what they want to do.

That's our individual life journey. And if I don't know how exactly, I follow the next step and then I follow the next step. And once I look back, I see a path. But while I was walking that path, it was just step by step. And I think that's for some people that's how the path creates itself.

Alex Howard

What strikes me in that is that you made a comment earlier about the similarities between a spiritual path and a trauma healing journey. And of course, those two things can cross over in lots of ways. But the thing that I was thinking is that, often when we've experienced trauma, what we're looking for is certainty.

And we're looking for a place of finding safety and stability in ourselves by kind of thinking our way there. Knowing what's going to happen, when it's going to happen, how it's going to happen. And it

goes back to the point you made earlier around this collective wisdom, a large part of this is almost befriending not knowing. It's finding a sense of okay with not necessarily knowing what's going to come next. That's not always easy.

[00:41:58] Thomas Hübl

No, that's not easy. But that's one of the main skill sets for our time. There's more volatility, there's more uncertainty. Structures are falling apart. Sometimes the new is not visible yet. Can I be grounded enough and at home in myself that I can stay in the moment when you're jumping from one rope to the next and you let go of the one but you don't have the other one yet in your head, that moment is scary.

That moment is scary because uncertainty in the past was scary because as long as we are attuned to the situation we feel that we will catch that other rope. But if we are in a kind of a not feeling state, then often we are overthinking. And trauma often leads to an overactive mind because there's too much stress, chronic stress, in the body.

So then even meditation doesn't really feel like a relief because I'm constantly thinking, but it's the stress that activates my thinking, that's the thing. And also the past fears. That's why I think context is important that we are living in a world where our ancestors went through many hardships and our ancestors went through wars, they went through hunger, they went through immigration that was difficult or migration, were refugees or were perpetrators.

We are not coming into this life, with nothing before us. There's a lot of history encoded in our bodies and that we are getting scared, that's very natural. And my relationship to my fear and paying attention and working with my inner process makes me more comfortable.

Also as business leaders, for example, if I am not comfortable to not know, I will constantly over control my organization. If I'm willing to be in the moments where we don't know where things are going, we will actually be much more generous. And that's a success factor in volatile times. So changeability, uncertainty, relationality innovation capacities, even if things are uncertain. I think this is exactly the skill set for this time. Yeah.

Alex Howard

And I just want to amplify just one thing you're saying before we come towards the closing pieces, taking your rope analogy. The belief is that when I let go of that first rope, that nothing's holding me before I catch the next rope. And what I think is really important in what you're saying is that the collective wisdom that we're not the one doing it anyway.

Thomas Hübl

Exactly. That we are part of a bigger river and we often lose the sense that we are part of the bigger river. And then it seems like I need to do everything which is a hyper control and children that haven't been held properly by their parents started very early on to hold themselves.

So then myself is the only thing I trust. And also more in the spiritual practice we see. Even when we just tune in with our body and I feel the flow in my body, like where my body feels streaming and flowing and tingling sensations, that's integrated history. It's not that we don't have anything, we have millions of years of wisdom encoded in our bodies.

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So, when I tune in with my body where it's flowing, I can feel that, where it's a bit more tired, stuck or stressed, I feel the unintegrated history, but integrated history sits in us. And as you said, that we get a sense again that our life is flowing. It's like swimming. If you don't swim in a river, you drown. But the river in itself has current, like it's flowing and so it's both, we are swimming and we are flowing.

There is anyway an intelligence that drives the boat and within that we are individually also swimming. And I think these are lovely analogies that show us sometimes trusting, sometimes we don't have the right answer, we don't have the right thing to say. And that's fine. And that relaxation into that moment is often the wisest contribution.

Alex Howard

Beautiful. Thomas, I'd love you to tell us about a couple of things. Firstly, tell us about some of the work that you're involved in with the The Pocket Project and some of the ways that you're using your work and looking to impact in different places. And then afterwards I'll ask you about how people can find out more about your workshops and courses and so on?

Thomas Hübl

Yes, in 2016, my wife and I recreated the NGO, The Pocket Project, because I was very passionate while I was a medical student in Vienna 30 years ago, I was working for the Red Cross as a volunteer, as a paramedic. And I always felt giving something to the society as a volunteer always attracted me.

I did this for nine years and then my whole life unfolded. And then Yehudit one day said, let's combine this, what I do now and what I did then into an NGO. And in the last seven years, an NGO grew out of that. And we are doing global collective trauma work right now.

For example, there's a project with Ukrainian refugees and Ukrainian therapists and funding different projects that address different collective trauma fields. We had a series of 23 international labs where we tell, where we look deeper into racism. We do colonialism in different places around the world, gender violence, the Holocaust, climate change, we are building that NGO. And a place where many people can contribute their skills or their time or their intelligence.

Our impact work collaborating with the UN. We are on the way to apply for this UN advisory status so we can impact, that's what I call the process mechanism of our work. And the more it grows, the more people in really difficult situations are being supported. And I think that's very important because I often say the deepest pain in our world is the one that is mute.

And that's why also, what was so important in our pre conversation to you? How are we more engaging? I think that's really important that every one of us that is privileged enough even to be part of this summit or conference.

We have many things in place in our lives. And I think it's our responsibility to listen to the mute pain of our world because that's where most of the energy is bound and that's what slows down our collective development, because there's so much energy that needs to be held. And so the mute pain is actually the collective responsibility, and because it's so frozen that it doesn't even have a voice to call for help.

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It's very important that there is enough attention and enough giving and enough engagement to support places that really need that support and to collaborate together. Because also of the massive wounding that happened, for example, through colonialism. So, something needs to be restored in our world.

That's why global restoration work is what we have to do. And that's not different. I always see trauma integration work as a bottom up innovation because that's the learning that we've never had. And then there is top down innovation that's creating a new science breakthrough, a startup or biotech.

That's great also. But we need both. We don't need just one. And so, we focus a lot on the bottom up integration process and use our top down integration to develop the top down innovation, to develop the projects that really support that and enable and empower support, locally or globally.

Alex Howard

It's beautiful. Tell us where people can find out more about that. And tell us about how people can find out more about your courses, workshops and online programs.

Thomas Hübl

The Pocket Project is pocketproject.org, is the website and there are many subpages for the different projects. And my work is Thomas Hübl, thomashuebl.com is my main website. Thomas Hübl, online programs. We have a series of training programs and I'm supervising therapists, coaches and consultants that work in the leadership field and be doing work on that level too. But everything can be found in our online orbit.

Alex Howard

Fantastic. Thomas, I really appreciate you and your time, as always. Thank you.

Thomas Hübl

Thank you, Alex. I always love our space together and anytime.