The Wound of Separation
Transcription of Charles Eisenstein's Interview
https://charleseisenstein.org/video/the-wound-of-separation/

If our true being is the totality of our relationships and includes everything in the cosmos, if we are truly a holographic mirror of all that is, then when we cut ourselves off from any aspect of nature, other people, we create a wound, we create a cut off. This is painful and we yearn to recover our wholeness. However due to ideology, due to the economic system that we're emerged in, due to cultural factors, due to many reasons the reunion that we long for is unavailable to us. That is good for business, because it drives consumerism, it drives acquisitiveness, it drives greed. It drives all kind of neurotic behaviors that seek to compensate for the missing relationships. It drives overeating that give people a momentary feeling of connection or a momentary feeling of being here.

One of the ways that the wound shows up is a crisis in being, an existential crisis, because if we are social beings, if we are interbeings, then in isolation we do not feel as if we really exist all the way. People in indigenous societies, in tribal societies, or in agrarian villages, they were enmeshed in a matrix of relationship that gave them a strong identity. Everybody who they saw on a daily basis knew them really well. There was no stranger. Everybody knew you better than almost any modern person knows their neighbors, because we are emerged in stories from the internet, and from television, and from the outside. We don't know the stories of our neighbors, but in a traditional setting everybody knew your story. Everybody knew your parents story, your grandparents story, and we also were in intimate connection with the land. We knew every plant, we knew every animal, every bird, we knew its song, and when it sang, and what bugs it eat, and where those bugs lived, and what the soil smells like where the bugs live, and what plants grow there, and what medicine the plants are used for.

We were in this web of interbeing. We were deeply known. Therefore we knew ourselves. We felt as if we were at home in the universe. That is missing in our current society. We are surrounded by a sea of strangers, people that we know only very superficially, if at all. The same is true of the trees around us. "Oh, that's a tree", we maybe don't even know the name of that tree and we certainly don't know all of the details and all of the stories that a land based, place based person, an indigenous person would know.

So we don't feel like we are really at home. That insecurity drives all kinds of destructive behavior. You find that when that need is met, when you are in community, when you are in some kind of weekend workshop or some kind of gathering, or if you are having a deep experience in nature, your neuroses and addictions don't even operate anymore. You don't want to go shopping at that moment. You don't want to have a drink at that moment, because you're fulfilled, you're met, you're held.

Often we don't recognize that in this society and we go to war against the symptom of the wound of separation. We go to war against the addiction, against the bad habits and neuroses, and the destructive behavior, but we don't go to war against the cause, because the cause isn't one thing. The cause is everything and that doesn't fit in well with war making mentality which seeks to find the enemy and then attack that enemy.

When we are in a situation where the formula of war making doesn't work, where we can't find an enemy, or we know that the enemy isn't the real enemy, then we don't know what to do. So we avoid that understanding. America is doing that right now. We see a problem like terrorism and we find the enemy: terrorists. We bomb them, drone them, try to lock them out, lock them up, but we don't ask what is causing terrorism. Is it just these bad people? Or could it have something to do with

previous wars, or austerity policies that have driven millions of Syrian farmers off the land? What are the deep reasons?

When we go to those, not only can we not identify a single enemy, but we'll also realize that we are part of the problem and then we don't know what to do. That is good. It's good to not know what to do. That's an improvement over thinking you know what to do, but actually not knowing what to do. From not knowing what to do, or not knowing how things are, not knowing why it's happening – that's called humility – then there's space for real understanding to come in.