



- Dr. Drew Sinatra: Change is an undeniable force in each and every one of our lives, but how do you handle those changes? How do you handle the emotions and all the experiences that make up the fabric of your life? How do you navigate global shifts, and the rites-of-passage that we are all going through right now?
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: Today, I'll be joined by Dr. Scott Eberle. Scott has worked in hospice care, and is experienced at providing end-of-life care to patients and their families. I personally met him through The School of Lost Borders, where I did a wilderness fast. We'll be talking about the way life forces you to constantly adapt, how to manage the crisis that we are facing globally right now, and how you can gracefully transition from one stage of life to the next.
- Narrator: Welcome to **Be HEALTHistic**, the podcast that's more than just health and wellness information — it's here to help you explore your options across traditional and natural medicine, so that you can make informed decisions for you and your family. This podcast illuminates the whole story about holistic health by providing access to the expertise of Drs. Steve and Drew Sinatra, who together have decades of integrative health experience. **Be HEALTHistic** is powered by our friends at Healthy Directions. Now, let's join our hosts.
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: Hi folks, if you like what you hear today and you want to listen to future conversations on all things integrative and holistic health, subscribe to our podcast at **BeHealthisticPodcast.com**. Also, check out and subscribe to the Healthy Directions YouTube channel, which features video versions of our episodes, plus extra videos you won't want to miss. And finally, we have more with me, Dr. Drew Sinatra, my dad, Dr. Steve Sinatra, and other health experts at HealthyDirections.com.
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: Welcome, everyone, to another episode of **Be HEALTHistic**. Today, we have Dr. Scott Eberle on the show. This gentleman wears many hats — he is a hospice physician who began his medical career in the late 1980s, working as an AIDS specialist during that last, great pandemic. He also became a wilderness guide at The School of Lost Borders in 2003, extending his focus of sitting with people physically dying, to guiding those who are dying symbolically. He also does similar rites-of-passage work individually, offering counseling to those who are going through a major life transition.
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: And I know Scott personally, he was my wilderness guide on a vision quest, vision fast I did last year. And we live very close together here, only a couple miles away, actually, in Northern California. So, I had the great pleasure of doing day walks with him, as we'll get into, as well. Scott, what a pleasure to have you on the show.



Dr. Scott Eberle: Oh Drew, it's my pleasure, as well. So, where to begin? So the bio, which I hadn't heard in a while. The way I hold it all together is to speak about myself while I'm doing rites-of-passage work. Which is to say, be it individually or a circle of people in the desert, like I was with you a year ago. Or actually, just the way I hold the storyline of what we're seeing in this very difficult time. I see it through the lens of being a rite-of-passage guide.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So, just to say a little bit about that, as an intro to where we're going — “rite-of-passage,” the term, was coined by Arnold van Gennep, a Belgian anthropologist back over a century ago. In his original description, he named three different phases of a rite-of-passage. Different language for that, his version is severance, threshold, and incorporation, or something like that. What I prefer to speak to is the dying, the in-between, then the rebirth. So, thinking in each individual person's life, when you end a marriage, or you end a job, or you are no longer a youth and now you're stepping into adulthood. All kinds of different rites-of-passage. What's common to any of them is the old story, the old identity, the old names, die away. You step in to the in-between of there being no name, no clear story. And then follows the rebirth, the incorporation and the other way of naming it, into a new life, a new name, a new story.

Dr. Scott Eberle: And what makes that map so vital and alive for me right now, is never before in the history of the...I'll say, modern history of the human race, have we ever had a time where we had such a global rite-of-passage on a massive scale. I'm going back, in particular, to March, April, when almost the whole world went into lockdown. Massive pause button. Many jobs, most jobs, either ending or going into huge, modified way of being lived out. And along the way, just so many stories about what we take for granted in this world, about how we live our lives, just ended...ended. So, we found ourselves in a global in-between.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Now, months later, I see us as being just, just beginning to imagine what a rebirth might look like — with great amount of struggle, a lot of conflict, a lot of uncertainty. And I want to name that the time we're doing this recording, is all of 10 days, 12 days after the murder of George Floyd, and all the demonstrations and all of the upheaval that's happened since. So, to that global in-between, now comes a whole new way of imaging how the old stories no longer serve us, are no longer seem to be true by more and more people. How issues of racial injustice and the call for truly reforming some fundamental, deep institutional racism, it's absolutely in the forefront of our minds, our hearts, our experience.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Actually, the other thing I want to say, which I would've rather begun with is, in that great lockdown, there was this massive crisis that began as a medical crisis. People dying, or fear of being ill and fear of dying. And that then morphed into



an economic crisis. People out of work, unemployment rising, the stock market crashing. And then that morphed into all of the different variations on the personal crisis of how you survive during lockdown. With that comes fear, depression, risk of suicide, increased risk of addiction, lots of different troubles. And then, how I would name the last two weeks is we now see something that's the collective personal. Which is to say, on a massive scale, people raising their voices and saying, "What has been happening is not in any way okay and acceptable anymore." Not that it ever was. So anyway, rite-of-passage, oh my god — are we in the middle of that!

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So much to comment on there. I mean, there's multiple layers happening right now with this rite-of-passage, what you just talked about. I mean, we have this global rite-of-passage with the coronavirus, everything being upended. People are losing their jobs, they're starting to wonder, am I going to be able to put food on my family's table? Will I lose my job? Can I pay my mortgage? And yeah, as a result, you have all these emotions come up. We have fear, we have anxiety, we have worry, all the added stress.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And then we have the death of George Floyd, which just adds a whole other layer to this. It just seems like there's multiple layers that are building right now. It's like a pressure cooker, we almost feel like we're in, where things are just building tremendously.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Yeah, pressure cooker is a great metaphor. Actually, when I was walking my two dogs yesterday, I had them on a lead, both of them, and encountered some people who didn't have their dog on the leash, and I snapped at them. Self-righteously snapped at them saying, "Get your dog on a leash!" And afterwards I'm going "Woah, where does that come from?" Not the statement, but the tone and the energy behind it. And I think there's a lot of that frustration of, just, how do I cope with being in this world right now? A lot of that.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: There is...I mean I'm seeing a lot of road rage, I'm seeing a lot of people yelling at one another on the streets. Even at a crosswalk, I'm hearing people honking their horn at other people. It's just an odd time where yes, there's a lot of pressure building up inside.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Although, then I want to balance that by also saying, and I'm very conscious of this and trying to live this out, as well. I am much more likely to say a warm and friendly hello to a stranger that I cross when I'm walking my dog. That's really, truly, much more common.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Exactly.



Dr. Scott Eberle: So, there's also this sentiment of we're all in this together, and how do we go ahead and show up as gracious, kind human beings? So it's not all just the pressure cooker and how it makes us snap, but it's, how do we really show up in these times with an open heart?

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, Scott, the three phases of a rite-of-passage — the dying, the in-between, and the rebirth. We sort of jumped right into this, during the coronavirus, into the in-between stage. Would you agree with that — or did we actually have a dying stage before that?

Dr. Scott Eberle: Unlike any time and any experience I've ever had, this was as quick a death, social, collective death, as I have ever seen. Go back to March...I don't remember exactly, it was probably the second week of March, where every single day the information that would come across, I'll speak for myself, changed my view of what I could and should and needed to do day to day. And that was the dying. It was like, in the space of a week, we went from, "Oh really? This pandemic is not a pandemic yet" — at least I'll speak for myself. To, a week later, not going out of the house and, how do you go to the grocery store? Is wearing gloves and a mask enough? Just all of that. So, I want to name the dying as all of a week or two, which is just unprecedented.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And typically speaking, let's relay this back to a traditional vision fast, vision quest, where you're out on the mountain fasting for four days. During that time, there is an in-between. Then also, obviously when you come back, there's an in-between phase, as well.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: What we're going through right now seems like a very extended in-between phase. I mean, obviously, you don't have a crystal ball in front of you, but how long do you see this continuing on for? Are people going to realize what's happening when all of a sudden our lives are turned back to normal, or will people start to really question things as they go along?

Dr. Scott Eberle: That's almost an impossible question to answer. Let me tease it out and say, in some ways we're always in-between? Every single day of our lives, what was true yesterday isn't true in the same way today, and if we don't stay current with who we are inside ourselves, how we tap into our deepest self, our spirit, our soul, whatever words you want to use. If we don't do that on a fairly consistent basis, then we're going to get stuck, and then we're going to have to go through a massive falling apart and breaking up of what no longer served — I'm talking individually.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So for me, the practice of being in-between is a daily practice. For someone who's gone ahead and lived this way of being in-between as consciously as



possible, navigating difficult times, perhaps will be, I wouldn't call it easier — but there's going to be a practice, a way, a style of living that is supportive of the uncertainty of these times. For someone else who doesn't think in those terms, who's locked into one view, or one job, or one relationship, and all of a sudden that disintegrates, then this challenge of being in-between can be overwhelming.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So for me, the call, I'll use the words for your podcast...the call to **Be HEALTHistic**, is a call to show up and be our open, vulnerable selves from day to day as best we can. And know that we're going to be muddle through and do it well some days and badly other days. But I want to say one more time, we're always in-between, and how we're going to cope with that, individually, is in some ways the measure of how flexible and fluid and alive our life is.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Do you want to speak to...how would you work with someone right now in helping navigate this in-between phase? What would you work with someone with, talk to them about?

Dr. Scott Eberle: Well, first what I'd do is I don't do hopefully too much talking. I do a lot of listening, because so much of what I think is central to the human existence and the way we survive as individuals and as a species, is through story. The individual person's story about, who am I today? What is dying right now or has recently died? What is the present experience of being in-between and uncertain, and all the fear and challenge that comes with being in-between? Also equally important, what are the ways in which I want to be open to the rebirth, the new way of being in the world that I'm trying to bring in?

Dr. Scott Eberle: So, for me as a rite-of-passage guy, it's a lot of invitation to do deep storytelling by the person I'm sitting with. And then as you got to see in the desert last year, then when the time's right, mirroring back that person's story by, as best I can, stepping into their shoes — and literally, telling their story back to them. So two things that happened with that. One is, hopefully if I do it well, I empower them to be able to experience what their gifts are, and how they move through challenge. Then they also get to actually have the sense of really, deeply being listened to. And if you do that then in a circle of 10 or 12 people, then you augment that experience of being really heard in a profound way, which most of us seldom get to have in our lives.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, that's really where the magic happens, and that's where I was blown away with what happened at the vision quest that you guided us through. Could you give our audience a little context as to what a typical vision fast, or vision quest, looks like? Then we'll get into more details.



Dr. Scott Eberle: Sure, and actually as an opening to that, let me say, we at the school avoid using the term vision quest, for concerns about cultural misappropriation. Wilderness fast is the best way to describe what we offer. Then I want to quickly say, all of our ancestors, whoever we are, were in some way practicing wilderness fasting and a wilderness solo kinds of experiences, in some form, as a way of dropping down deeply and getting in touch with soul, spirit, self. So, it's important to honor the practice with a wilderness fast, that's what we do.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So in the school's program, there are three elements that we offer up. They're often referred to as the three taboos, I prefer calling them the three sacrifices, which is to say that for four days and four nights, a person sacrifices human company — in other words, they're alone. That alone, right there, is radical. Secondly, they sacrifice the comfort of four-walled shelter — we teach people how to make a tarp, so that they can have protection against the rain or the sun or the wind. And yet, they are exposed to the natural world, which to my way of thinking, really heightens the experience of being a mortal human being, a mortal animal in the natural world. So, that's the second sacrifice.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Then the third sacrifice is no food, fasting. That is both a physiologically altering experience, which creates a mild euphoria and/or altered state of consciousness by about the fourth day of the fast; it varies tremendously from person to person, from fast to fast. So there's the physiological altering of the fasting. And then there's also the metaphor — if you don't break up your day with meal, after meal, after meal, and instead are left to ask the question, how do I feed myself, feed myself spiritually? That, in and of itself, is a doorway into some deeper kinds of storytelling, reconciling with who I truly am in the world, that's my deeper story.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Scott, can you speak to the importance of letting go of the cell phone, letting go of computers, letting go of all that technical stuff, all the things that we are really, in a way, addicted to in our modern lives? Perhaps we can talk about your story at some point, too —but I'd love to hear your perspective on the importance of letting go of these things that we're so attached to, media-wise and technology-wise.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Well, what we do when we go out into the wilderness and leave behind internet connectivity. I like to call it the illusion of connectivity, because real connection for me, at least human to human, happens with...I just recently came up with this phrase, the residence of real presence.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: I like that.



Dr. Scott Eberle: When we truly are physically present with people, there's a resonance that happens, which doesn't happen by email, and it doesn't happen with a text, and it doesn't happen even with a phone call — or a Zoom session. Oh my god, don't get me started about Zoom sessions. Hugely wonderful and really valuable, and it doesn't provide the resonance of real presence.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So, when you go ahead and go out into the wilderness, the biggest thing we've done for people when they come and join us is, number one, we got them to mark off 12 days in the program you did. We get them to mark off 12 days in their calendar, in which they're completely free of all of the usual responsibilities that feed a pretty locked-in identity. Don't get me wrong, my identity in my day-to-day is as locked-in as yours. Well, maybe not quite as much, because you work more hours than I do. But still, all of us in our day-to-day lives, we get pretty solidly organized around who I am in this day, and the work I'll do today, and what I have to do later in the week, and who do I need to call, and the emails I get, all of it. So you walk away from all of that for 12 days, and you have just created degrees of freedom, a capacity for deeper and more heart-opening, soul-opening kinds of storytelling, and experiencing an identity clarification that cannot happen in your day-to-day life.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So, a central part of that, absolutely, is all the devices. Again, looking at the program that you did with me, you'll recall that we had four days in the sort-of wilderness, where people could still drive into town and go ahead and connect to their internet, email, phones calls. And then not until we went into the true back country — and there was five days out there, of which four days were for the solo — did we really get people to truly disconnect. And that's the central, the heart of the whole ceremony is that five days of completely leaving all of that behind.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Yeah, and that was just such a beautiful part of the ceremony, was letting go, all of that behind. I should say too, Scott, for those listening, you hear 12 days being away and being with a group for a fair amount of time, and then five days really soloing in the wilderness. I thought that, and it's interesting...I was almost rushing into it say, "Well, I just can't wait to do the solo fast by myself. That's where everything is going to come down." But really what happened for me was when I went, Scott was one of our guides, and we had another guide, as well, named Betsy. The two of you together, along with the assistants that were present, really opened the doors to everything happening within me and everyone else in the group.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So for me, it really came down to a group. It was really a group thing that just helped bring out all this stuff within me. Yes, it was amplified during the solo fast up there on the mountain, and then coming back again for three, four days



and talking about the experiences, and what you mentioned earlier, the mirroring. That's such an important aspect to what happened out there, because you dig deep into what happened with all of our experiences, and I thought that that was just such a profound experience. It was everything, from the community aspect, to the solo group again, and coming back to the community aspect again. That was really what brought everything up.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Well, so I'll say a little bit more about what those first four days look like, and the last four days, because to expand on what you've just said. Our task as guides, Betsy Perluss and I for your group, our tasks as guides in the four days before people go out are a couple. The first, and the most important, is that we want to make absolutely sure that people will be physically safe. We at the school often say, you might call us instead of The School of Lost Borders, we're The School of Lost Rules. Which is to say, you got to make up your own ceremony when it comes right down to it. If you want to bring a tent, you bring tent. If you want to eat food, you eat food. If you want to come into base camp and talk to us during your solo, you do that. It's your ceremony. But the two inviolable rules are, you have to be physically safe — because if you're not, then you change the ceremony for everyone because then we go into, someone's lost. Then we got to call a helicopter ceremony, which is a ceremony I really hate. We've done that just recently, a couple years ago. Really bad ceremony. So we have to keep people physically safe. Then the second inviolable rule is that people respect each other, obviously. Really fundamental to what we do.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So anyway, a lot of what we were doing in those opening days was making sure people had enough equipment, and that they knew what to do if they got lost or they got injured, all of that. And then the second part of that preparation was focused on really helping people hone their intention. What we often say at the school is, when it really comes time to do the fast itself, all you're going to do is mark, with ceremony, all the work you did before you got out on the mountain alone. That work began from the moment you signed up, Drew, whatever it was, many months beforehand. All of the preparation internally — the conversations you had with your family, the conversations you had with yourself, and then we invited you to write a letter of intent months before you even came, why you're doing this. What's dying, what's in-between, what's being reborn in your life that you really want to go ahead and mark with a ceremony.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So then, during that last few days before people go out, you'll recall I'm sure quite well, each person in the group is going to be fasting. You've got oh, 40 minutes, probably at least, for them to speak about...we call it the interview. Betsy and I interviewing people about, so, why are you going out? A typical interview starts with someone talking for 10, 15, 20 minutes about all what's up



their lives, and what they wrote in their letter of intent, and this is what I think is going on. Then Betsy and I start asking...we have very different styles. She's a Jungian psychologist, I'm a hospice physician. So you can imagine the places we like to open things up and find cracks...not cracks in the story, but really, just find depth to the story, is the better metaphor. And I love working with Betsy, because we so complement each other, the way we do that.

Dr. Scott Eberle: And along the way, as you'll recall, we get Drew Sinatra to drop really deeply into what his life story is. In a profoundly beautiful way...you got cracked open even before you went out on the mountain, my friend.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: I did, thanks to you, really. Yeah, you helped bring it out.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Yeah, speak to that. What was that like for you?

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, I should preface this by saying that I actually wanted to do a vision quest, and you know this story, but I'll share with the audience. I wanted to do a vision quest, or sorry, vision fast, when I was 24. At the time, I was attending a wilderness awareness school, spending a lot of time outdoors with nature, connecting to source. And I went out on my own and decided hey, I'm going to do a vision fast for three, four days. And I just went out and brought my tent and went out into the wilderness. I ended up coming back early because it snowed, very early time in October to snow.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So I came back, I felt like I'd failed in some way. But then I spoke to an elder, his name was Walt, in the community. And Walt said to me, "Drew, a vision fast is not something that you can take lightly. This is a serious endeavor in your life." And so, I waited 15 years and I found the time was coming right again to immerse myself in a vision fast, and that's when I signed up to The School of Lost Borders. And I'm so happy that I did that, because my intention going into this, I was feeling that...I was surrendering. I was surrendering to the process, where before when I was 24, I was trying to control the process of, this is what I'm going to do and this is what I'm going to get out of it. I went into this one with you as, "Hey, whatever happens, happens."

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And my intention going in, really, my major intention going into this was to connect to source. I wanted to connect to source again, and feel that presence, that connection to earth energy, to the sky, to the wind, to the birds, to the sun, and all that. And I certainly got that up on the mountain top.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So for those listening, really yeah, your intention going into it is really important. And also when you're working with a guide like Scott or Betsy, they're there to help refine your intention. Because you may go with some idea in your head — I



certainly went with many ideas in my head about what I was doing here, but it actually came out to be a connection with source. And then also, for me, I found out that I was really there to become a better father for my two boys. And I had no idea that that was going to come out beforehand, but it certainly came out in the middle of it when everyone was mirroring back to me what I was saying, and also my experience up on the mountain top. So, lots can happen out there, depending on your intention.

Dr. Scott Eberle: I was waiting, Drew, for you to speak about your boy.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Oh yeah, yeah.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Because that was, for me, what struck me in the deepest way before you went out, as to why you went out. So then I want to connect that with your statement about your initial intention was to reconnect with source. And so then when you started telling your personal story, what was revealed to you, and then to the whole group, was perhaps one of the biggest ways, if not the biggest ways, in which you express in your daily life being connected to source is in your role as a father.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So yes, connection to source means being on the land and in the natural world and having spirit with a capital S, or however you language that kind of thing. Moving through you, and reconnecting you deeply to your deepest self in your daily life, how you father your children was revealed to be the biggest daily expression of that very call. So having those two come together, both together as your intention before you went out on the fast, was hugely powerful.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And then, of course, being out on there...I won't really share too many experiences, because it was very personal out there. But there was a lot of reaffirming of my intention with experiences, and insights, or things that I saw or felt or heard, that showed me that I was going into this with the right mind.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Yeah, yeah. Well, so I'll speak a little bit more about the preparation phase, the days before and say, this is not quite as important as the being safe or the help clarifying intent, but it's really important. And that is to help people begin to imagine what kind of ceremony they're going to go ahead and enact, day-to-day, during the solo. What rituals, what symbols, what movements or practices? We talk specifically about self-generated ceremony. We're used to knowing in the world that if you go to a church, or a mosque, or a temple, there will be religious ceremonies, rituals that are given to us or presented for us. What we do at the school is we offer what we call a bare bones ceremony. We give the very basics, and invite each person to have their own world view, their own



religion, their own spiritual practices, rituals, whatever, become what they want to make of that during the solo.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So we've had, over the many years, we've had a lot of people who have a deeply religious calling or way of being in the world who simply bring their religious rituals in to the bare bones ceremony of a four-day fast. Or, going to the other side of it, people who have no religious beliefs and/or practices, yet who are being called to create ceremony to mark a major change or shift or deepening of who they are in the world. And all of that fits into that bare bones approach.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Scott, could be talk about the importance of...let's say for people listening, if they can't do this, if they don't have time in their life, or they have children they need to take care of, and they can't leave for 12 days at a time, or five days at a time, whatever. What can people do listening to connect to source, and to connect to the wilderness? What can they do?

Dr. Scott Eberle: So my own personal answer, how do I connect with source on a daily basis? The only way I can answer that, Drew, is to acknowledge that I have a very severe version of electromagnet hypersensitivity — which means radio waves, any kind of exposure, I will go ahead and get a serious headache for 24 to 36 hours. You know this well. And I now live a really, quite wonderful life in which I have the safety and sanctuary of my own home, I get to do this wilderness work, I am just as fully alive and engaged as I've ever been. And yet, I've been sheltering at home, in place, for seven years. Which is to say, most of the work I do is either in my own home or way out in the back country.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So, to answer the question, how do I connect with source? I have to get outdoors every, single day. Every day. A bad week for me is when I miss going outdoors one day in the week, that's a bad week. And actually, here's the biggest change that I can mark in my own personal life that's a result of the last three months, is three or four months ago, up until then, it was enough if I at least got out for a half an hour with my dogs, on a given day. Some days, much longer, but a half-hour minimum. Well, I'll tell you, right now in the craziness of the world that I'm living in, that we're all living in, my minimum now is an hour and a half. I need to get out there and walk and walk and walk enough to not only stretch my legs, but to stretch and loosen and open up my mind. And for me, that's connecting with source.

Dr. Scott Eberle: But the other answer I'd give you is, the vision fast, the wilderness fast, that is a four-day ceremony of being alone in nature. The short form is the day walk, you made a mention of it earlier. In a day walk, instead of coming together and doing three or four days of prep, and then four days solo, and then stories afterwards, you come together as a group for an hour or two, usually just an



hour, to do a short version of an intention council, where every speaks about what it is that's up in their life and what they want to mark that day. Then people go out for four or five hours, and then they come back, they have a break-fast together, assuming they fasted during that four or five, six hours. And then we do stories for a couple of hours. So in the course of an eight to 10 hour day, as you did with me a month or two after your four-day fast, I will call a circle and get a group together to go out just for that amount of time.

Dr. Scott Eberle: My experience is almost anyone can do that, both in terms of the schedule of their lives, but also in their capacity to be alone and be in the natural world and be a mortal animal for hours at a time, and all of that.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: What if people don't have someone like yourself to be a guide during that day fast, what do you recommend that they do to get that similar experience?

Dr. Scott Eberle: The best answer I can give you comes from a story from years ago, about five to 10 years into my doing day walks and four-day fasts and all that. I taught at a medical school in Japan, and went back every year for about six years in a row. The very last time I went, I arrived and about a day or two into being there, I found myself going, "Why am I here again? What am I doing?" So, the first open day I had on my calendar, which was the Sunday days later, I got up at the crack of dawn and said, "I am walking with the intention of asking, why am I here and what am I supposed to be doing on this three week visit?" I went out, did a walk, fasting alone, it was in the town of Matsumoto, the same place I had lived for a year during the very first visit to that medical school. And by the end of the day, it was really clear to me — I knew exactly why I was there.

Dr. Scott Eberle: And for the rest of the time of that three weeks, I had no uncertainty, no unsettled-ness, and I showed up as fully as I could and served the people. I'll just say, in particular, there was one professor and my commitment to him, and one student and my commitment to her, that were the major reasons why I came out of that day walk knowing why I was there. And I didn't know it so clearly before that day.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, that's so neat, Scott, because when you go out on a day walk, when you're walking out into nature, even if it's for an hour or two, it really helps bring clarity to questions you may be having. I think...I'll share a personal experience with mine, is I've done a day walk with you, I also held one with some of our classmates from the vision fast. And you go into it with a question, an intention. And it's not like you all of a sudden get a download from whoever up there saying, "Oh, this is the right thing to do," or, "You need to do this." You have experiences out there — you see a spider web that's being formed, and a spider on there with the sun glistening on it, or the dew on there. And you go down to



the beach, and you see something in the water that's moving around. Or you have some kind of an experience, even with the sun hitting your face or the wind hitting your body, where all of sudden it almost brings some clarity to the question or questions you may have.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And for me, that was a such profound thing, because I think even going into the vision fast, the wilderness fast, was really, what kind of a download am I going to get? What am I going to be taught here? And really, it was all about the experiences that I had that really helped shape my whole experience.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Yeah, well, one of the things we'll often say in preparing a group for four-day fast is, if all you do is go out there for the four days and just meet each moment with as much wonder and openness as you can, that's ceremony. Ceremony doesn't have to be, "Okay, I say these words, and I do this action, and I burn this smudge, or whatever." Ceremony for me, first and foremost, is a state of mind. So bringing that back to the day walk, or a four-day fast, either short form or long form, what you're speaking to, the spider web with the glistening dew and all of the other symbols you mentioned. You're inviting the natural world to be your mirror. So you got a question, in your case, how can I be a better father? That story from Japan, why am I here and what's the work I'm supposed to do? Whatever the question is, and you go with openness and a sense of wonder, and allow the natural world to speak to you.

Dr. Scott Eberle: I remember on my second fast ever, four-day fast, I sat down and I was in connection with a chipmunk for, I am not exaggerating, an hour. Let me say, I was moving so slow, the chipmunk was like, "Wow, who's this?" In a way that chipmunks don't do humans that move too quickly. So in that hour, I won't try to remember what I learned or what was said to me, but I had a dialog with a chipmunk of a kind I have never had before or since. Just as that spider web becomes a symbol and in a dream-like, archetypal kind of way, activates some kind of connection inside you that opens up...oh, that's what I'm supposed to be about with this intention, this question. And to do that for hours — often times, my invitation on a day walk is to say, "Look for just one symbol that really tells you what it is you're supposed to be learning today." Of course, if someone finds two or three or four, then that's two or three or four times better. But there's usually one powerful symbol that opens up and says, "This is what this day was about."

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Yeah, and I found those day walks to be an amazing reset button for the whole system. Your nervous system, your immune system, everything happening in your life, it's a great reset button. Because you come back and then you just have an amazing week after, you feel like you're really grounded in your body and everything. So, I highly encourage those listening to go out there, with a



group, if possible, and to have some ceremony that you're a part of. Use the wilderness, use nature as that platform.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So yes, you can do a day walk all by yourself. I do them every day, in a sense, when I take my dogs. But as you just mentioned, it's so wonderful to do it with at least one other friend, so that at the end you can tell your story. And have your friend, if they feel so moved, to mirror it back, tell your story back to you.

Dr. Scott Eberle: So the Japan story, in some ways, was the exception. Almost every day walk — and I've probably done about 100 day walks in the last 20 years with at least one other friend, because I find that's the way that I connect to source, using your language. And discover, in particular, inside of me what it is I'm supposed to be discovering right now in my life. So having that one other person, or even stronger if there's more, that's just good as gold.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, Scott, as we wrap up here, I wanted you to share with the audience your role as the counselor, in what you're working with people, in terms of the major life transitions that they might be going through. Do you want to speak to that?

Dr. Scott Eberle: Sure, well...the work I do as a rites-of-passage guide happens on multiple levels. There's The School of Lost Borders, which is based in the eastern part of the state of California, and mostly we're taking people out into the deserts, and mostly it's seven to 12 day programs. I'm also part of Earth Ways, which is a collective of wilderness guides here in Sonoma County. Through that, I offer day walks, day-long programs that are local. And then the third way in which I do the work of a rites-of-passage guide is one-on-one. Right now, I have clients in Australia, Spain, Denmark, eastern United States, the greater Bay Area, San Francisco, Sonoma County. So a fair amount of spread across the globe, probably about seven or eight people.

Dr. Scott Eberle: And some people it's once a week, some people its every other week, and usually it's Zoom, some people prefer phone. As I already said earlier, what I'm doing is I'm first and foremost, deeply listening and creating a space for them to tell their story. Trying to help them drop into more clearly, what is the intention, what is the lessons I'm supposed to be learning right now, what is the deeper telling of my life story? How do I cope with transition and dying and in-between and rebirth? So I have to say that I don't pretend to do traditional counseling. There's many things about what I do that are counseling-like. I'm a physician, and end-of-life physician, so I'm very comfortable sitting and doing deep listening and counseling for people, and I've been doing that for decades. But in this version, whether it's a major life illness...one of the people I'm working with has probably weeks to months to live. Several people are in crisis, because of all of the way in which the world has thrown their jobs or their other situation



upside down in the last few months. Whatever the rite-of-passage that people bring, that's where I meet them and walk with them.

Dr. Scott Eberle: The other thing I'll put into the mix is almost everyone, I send out in the land. Not every week, not every session, but as often as it seems appropriate...maybe once every month or two, and it all depends on that person's openness to it. I'll help them figure out, what's their intention, send them out, it doesn't matter — they can live wherever they are in the world, Spain, Australia, Denmark, all three of those people have done day walks. Invite them to first beforehand, I help them hone their intention, then they walk with that for two to four to six to eight hours. Then the next time we're together, I hear their story, and then I mirror their story back.

Dr. Scott Eberle: I want to give one example. The person I'm working with who's got metastatic cancer, and as I said, probably has weeks to months. When I first started working with her three or four months ago, she was someone who'd never done a wilderness fast. She knew of it, a friend of hers did a wilderness fast with Betsy and I actually, years ago and that's how we got connected. And I said to her, this woman, "You know, this is the work I do is I encourage people to get outdoors." And she got quite excited, and the reality was that she was so physically weak, she couldn't go for a walk. So what we did together is we helped her figure out that she would buy a very comfortable chair, a friend would help drive her somewhere where that she could then walk for five minutes to get away from cars and people, sit in this comfortable chair for an hour, and then her friend would collect her and bring her back. And that was her day walk.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Oh, I love that.

Dr. Scott Eberle: She's no longer able to get out of the house now, and the work we're doing is profound. I'll honestly say that what I'm doing with her is much more hospice physician-like, but I am not a hospice doctor with her. I'm a rites-of-passage guy. And it's been fascinating to see how that different hat changes the way I do the work. I am helping her figure out questions to ask her doctor, for the doctor to manage her meds, but that is all about helping hone her intention. So the big breakthrough a week ago was her getting to the point where she said, "I don't want to do chemotherapy ever again." So I'm now helping her hold that intention and figure out what she'll need to say to the doctors who take care of her, so that she can have her intention become the path that she walks.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Oh, that's beautiful, Scott. Do you find that it's better for you to wear one hat at a time, or do you find that you can wear multiple hats at a time? Hospice physician, wilderness guide — I mean, is it a fine line there?



Dr. Scott Eberle: Now, the truth of the matter is, whatever I do — when I was out in the desert with you and that group, I don't remember the details, but that I am a hospice doctor informed questions I would ask. Not that anyone was physical ill or dying or anything like that, but that all of my life experience...one of the practices of doing wilderness guide work is to become a hollow bone. To let spirit move through you, to listen deeply, to allow the story to come in, fill your soul, fill your heart, fill your mind. And then speak back, without ego as best you can muster, and have that be what you gift to the person before you. And when I do that, 30, 40 years of doing all the different kinds of work I do, are part of what is my own personal container. That hollow bone that I am, it absolutely determines how things move through me in whatever direction, whether I'm receiving or speaking back.

Dr. Scott Eberle: But I will then say, when I'm working with this woman now...she's got a doctor, she's got someone managing the meds. So that frees me up, that means the script that I'm working with has nothing to do with what dose of this drug does she need to have, and whether we should change it or not. The dialog we're having is much more about soul and spirit and intention. The day walk she's doing each day of her life, in her bed. It's a day sit, not a day walk. And how can I help support her by mirroring back to her, her story of soul, her soul story.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, Scott, as we close here, we usually end with a **Wellness Wisdom**, which is really leaving our listeners with some takeaways. What do you want to leave our audience with, with the rites-of-passage we've been talking about? Perhaps a connection with coronavirus, and what's happening around the world with that.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Yeah, my biggest encouragement is that everyone, get yourself outdoors. Get yourself outdoors — if all you do is simply go outdoors for a half-hour walk instead of staring at the computer, that is altering your state of consciousness in the most beautiful way. And then I want to quickly say, but if you can, go for much longer than a half an hour.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, I'm wondering if you watch the podcast, or listened to the podcast the last 10 episodes. My father and I have been talking all about the importance of getting outside regularly during this pandemic, because I'm finding, too, that I have to get out every single day, Scott. Or else, I don't feel as well.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Yeah, we've been sheltering in place, words that we've all come to despise, perhaps. The day walk I'm offering next month is called "Sheltering in Nature."

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Oh...well, Scott, thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Yeah, with pleasure, really. Lovely to be with you again in this way.



Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, we'll carry on with another day walk.

Dr. Scott Eberle: Yeah, there we go. There we go.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: That's our show for today, folks. If you have a question or an idea for a show topic, please send us an email or share a post with us on Facebook. And remember, if you like what you heard today and you want to be an active member of the **Be HEALTHistic** community, subscribe to our podcast at **BeHealthisticPodcast.com**, or on Apple podcasts, or wherever you download your favorites. You can also find more great content and information from us and the Healthy Directions team at HealthyDirections.com.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: I'm Dr. Drew Sinatra, and this is **Be HEALTHistic**.

Narrator: Thanks for listening to **Be HEALTHistic** with Drs. Drew and Steve Sinatra, powered by our friends at Healthy Directions. See you next time.