

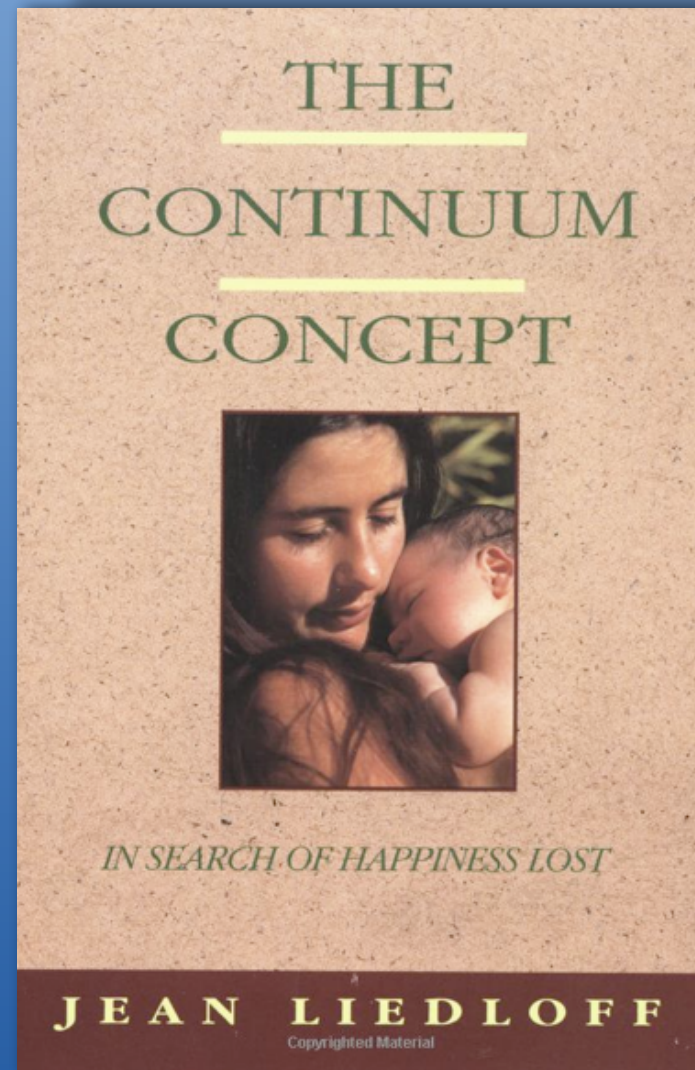
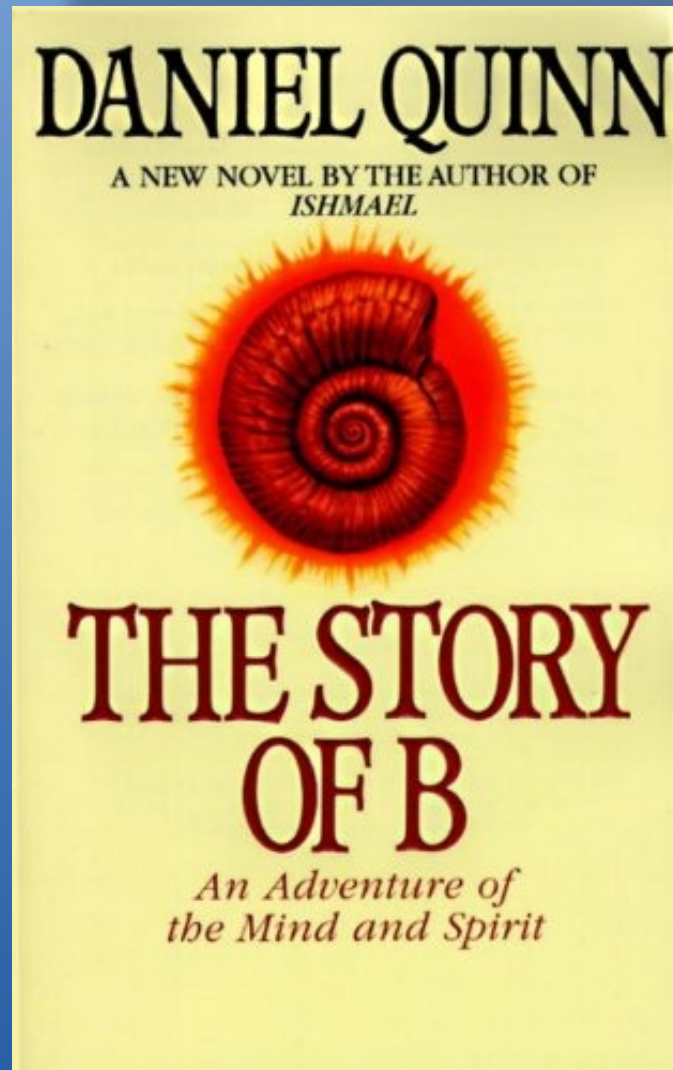
# The Human Predicament



Christian de Quincey, PhD

The Holmes Institute

# The Human Predicament



#2



THE  
CONTINUUM  
CONCEPT



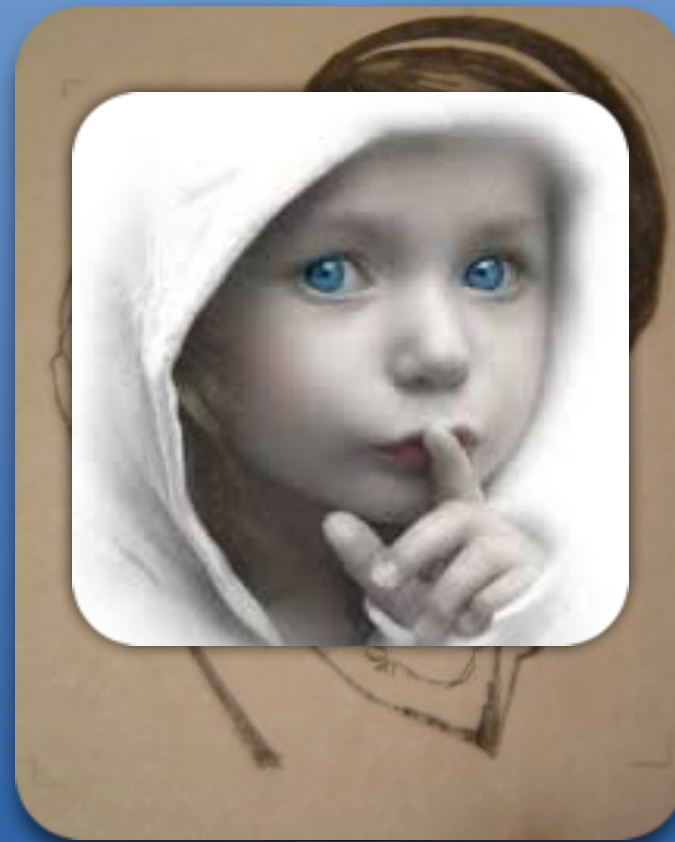
*IN SEARCH OF HAPPINESS LOST*

**JEAN LIEDLOFF**

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# Up in Arms About being Put Down

A Shocking Secret:



Modern parents are educated to mistrust instinct  
— their own and their children's —  
breaking an eons-old evolutionary contract  
between mother and child.



# Instinct vs. Intellect

Split between feeling and reason.

We overvalue abstract reason  
at the expense of instinct and feeling.



Instinct tells us to hold our babies.  
Intellect tells us 'don't spoil the child.'



# Split Consciousness

instinct v. intellect

Chronic dysfunction.

We feel alienated  
from ourselves, from others, and from nature.

# The Aftershock Effect

Long after early trauma, powerful emotions reverberate through our mind-body.



Childhood experiences remain with us throughout our lives.

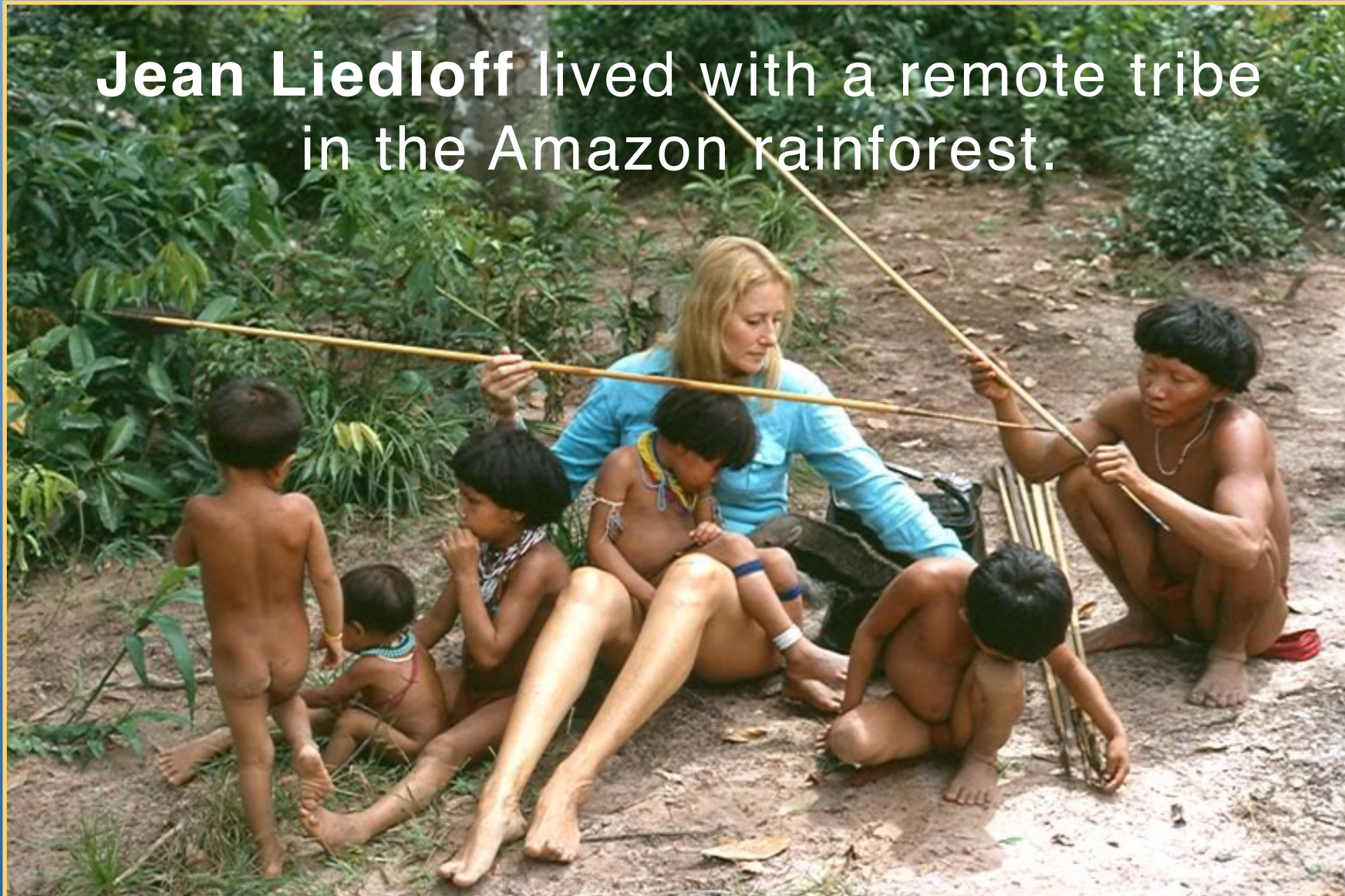
Adults carry life-long scars.

Erupting at times of stress, replaying old wounds.



# Observing The Yequana

Jean Liedloff lived with a remote tribe in the Amazon rainforest.



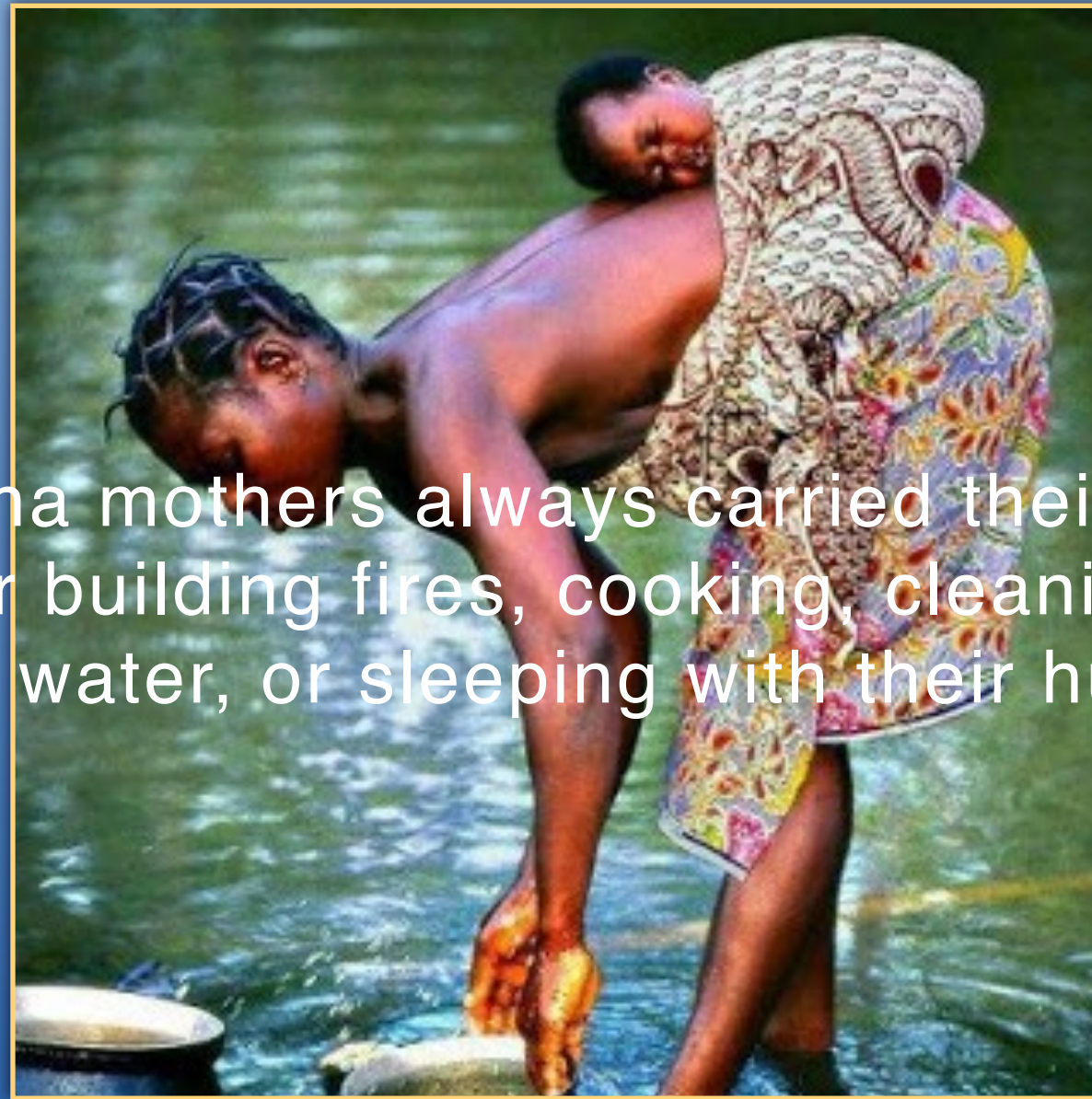
The Yequana still lived a stone-age lifestyle.

She observed them closely.

And noticed important differences.



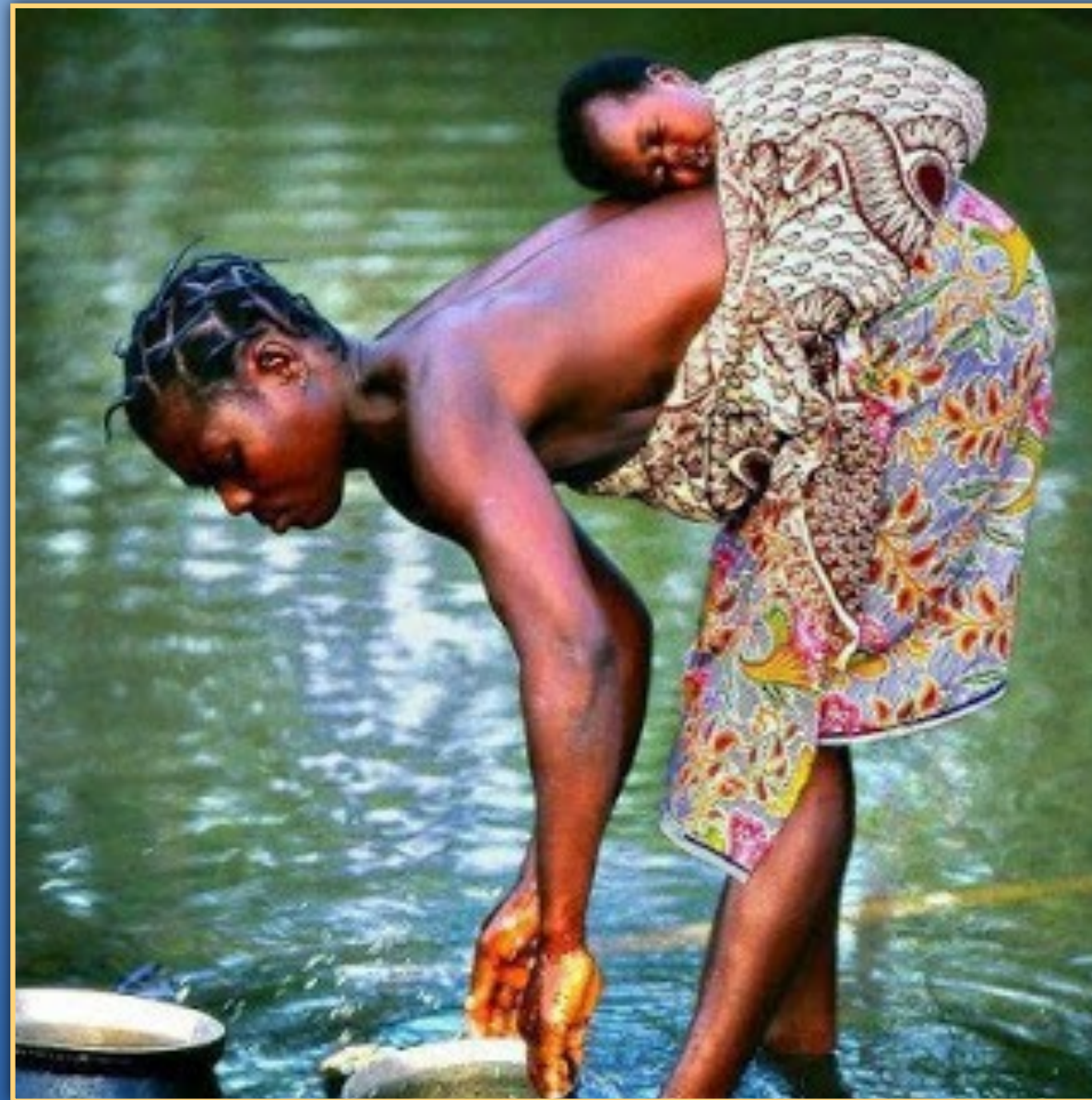
# Indigenous Life



Yequana mothers always carried their babies whether building fires, cooking, cleaning huts, fetching water, or sleeping with their husbands.

Children showed no signs of distress common among civilized kids:

# Indigenous Life



No fighting, temper tantrums, competing, rebelliousness, being accident-prone.

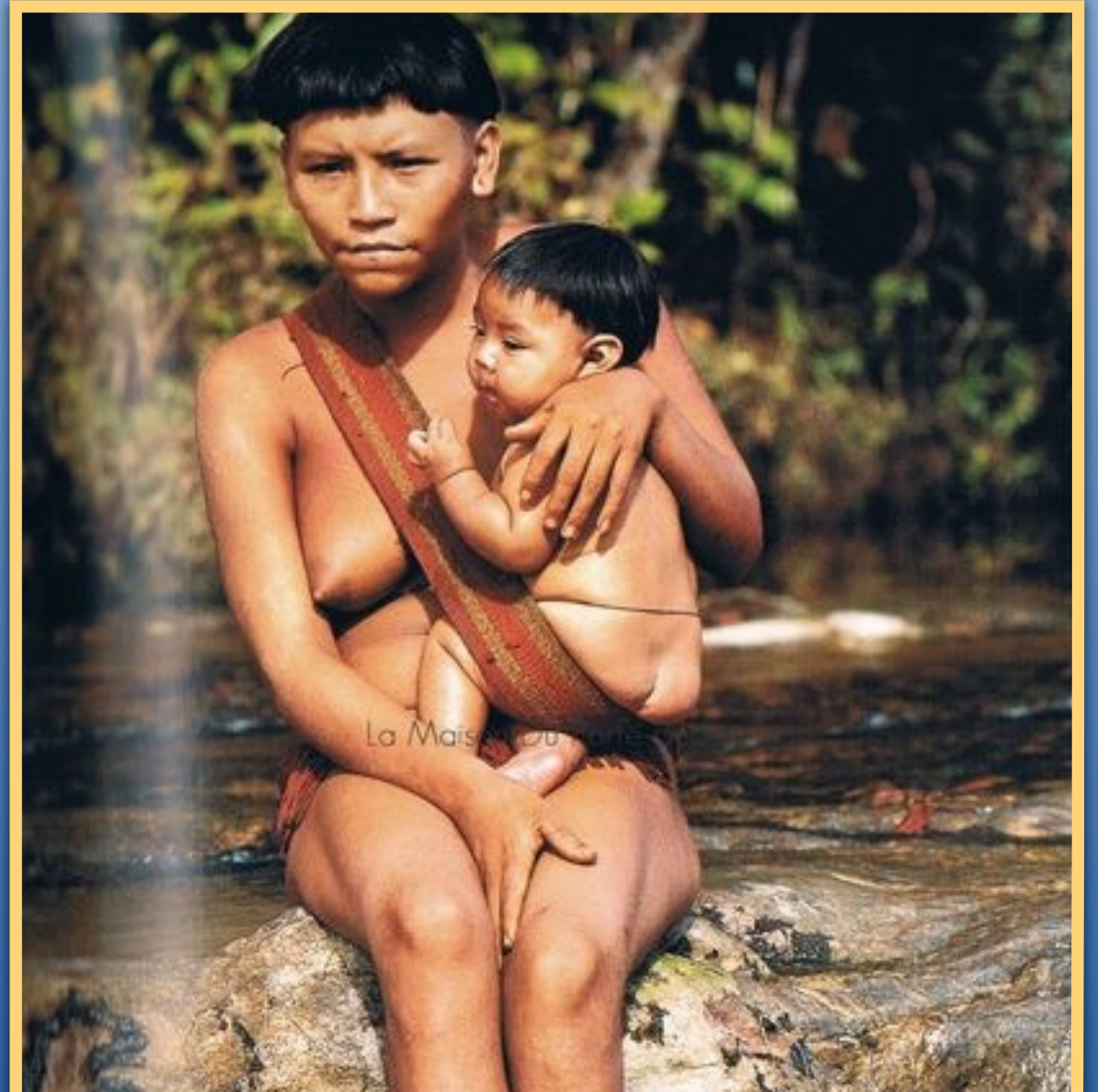


# Indigenous Life

Yequana mothers know instinctively what is correct for their infants.

As children grow, caregivers trust them to know what is natural and safe.

*Children fulfill the expectations of adults.*



*Infants expect to be trusted to act on their own, knowing what is correct.*

# Indigenous Life

Liedloff saw young children pick up razor-sharp knives, *by the blades*, and not cut themselves.

They played with fire without burning themselves or their huts.



Instincts honed over countless generations guide indigenous children and adults.



# The Continuum Concept

For millions of years our ancestors carried their infants everywhere.

In-arms experience evolved as an 'innate expectation' a deep-rooted instinct.

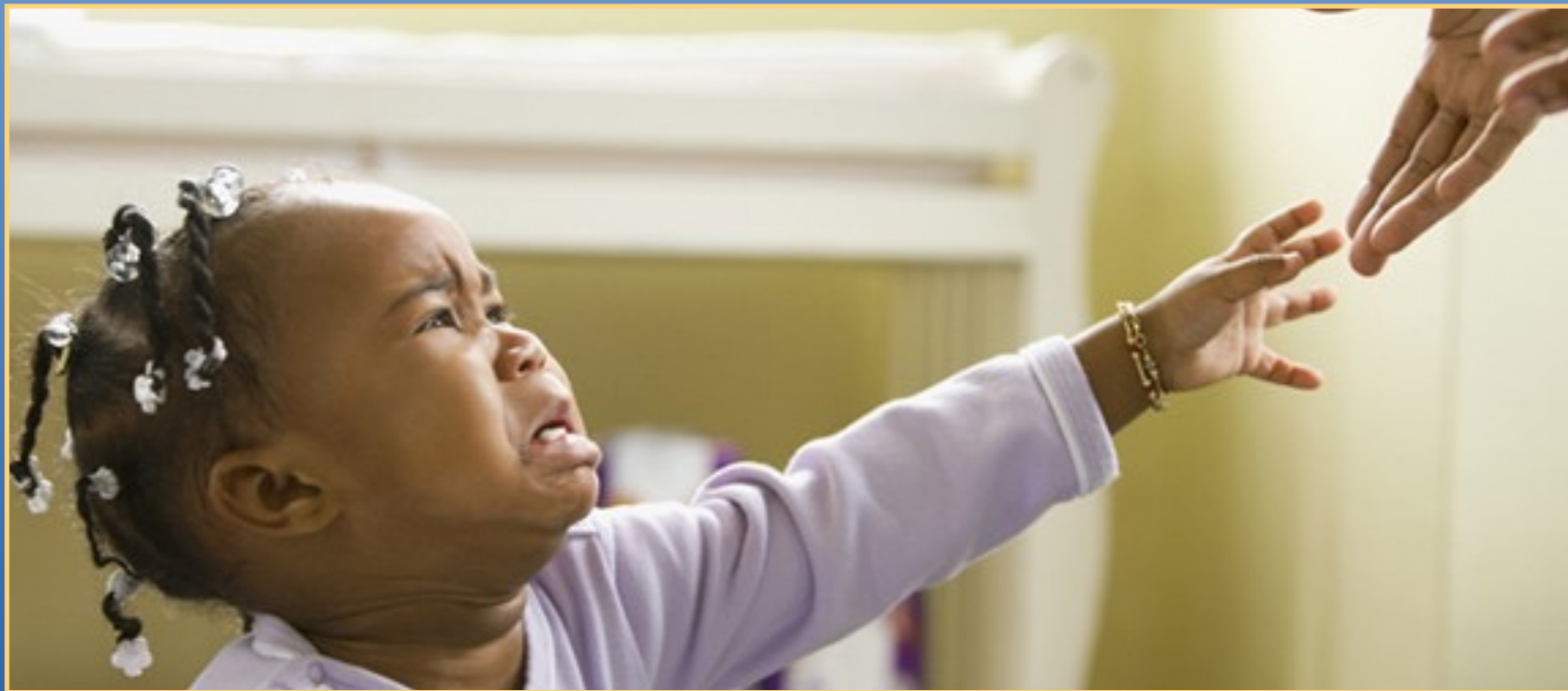
Today we ignore instinct, relying on reason to tell us how to relate to our children.





# The Continuum Concept

Civilized society  
separates babies from parents.



Little physical contact with primary caregivers.

Innate expectation of in-arms contact  
is frustrated or ignored.

# The Continuum Concept

Expectations of in-arms experience continue within the baby's body.

Infants are left with a sense of 'something deeply wrong.'



# The Continuum Concept



Generations have grown up  
with a sense of  
'something missing.'



# Progress at a Price

Despite great advances  
modern civilization pays a high price.



psychological, social, spiritual,  
and environmental malaise.

# Progress at a Price



Over-dependence on reason  
creates lop-sided civilization  
crushing the human spirit.

*Instinct is as ancient as life itself.  
Intellect is a newcomer.*



# The Evolutionary Continuum

A prehistoric landscape at sunset. In the foreground, a Triceratops stands in a body of water. In the background, a Tyrannosaurus Rex is visible. The sky is filled with a warm, golden light, and there are silhouettes of mountains and flying reptiles.

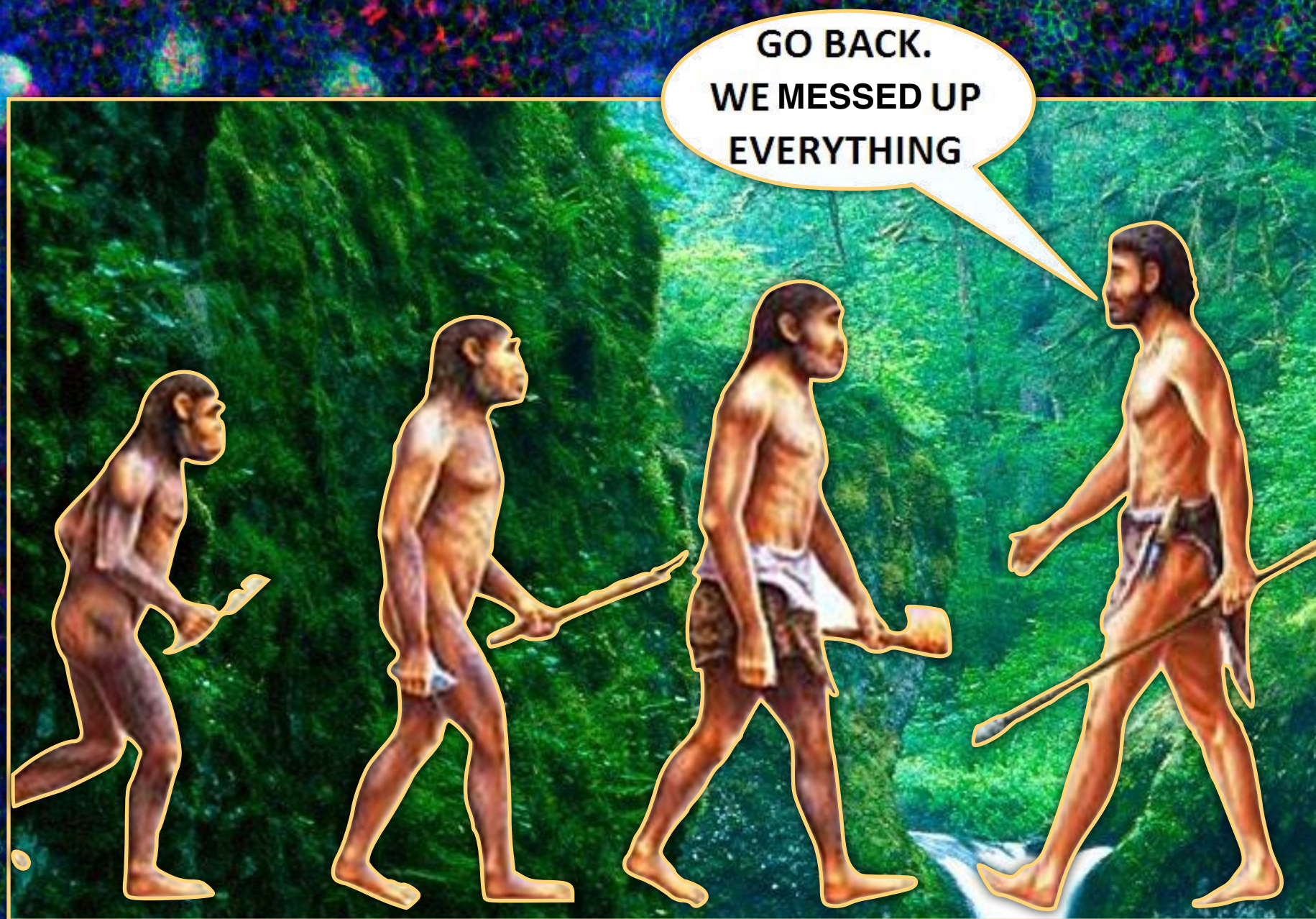
For billions of years, simple living forms experienced environmental changes and adapted. They grew more complex and diversified.

Survivors reproduced and passed on the benefits of their experience.

Their descendants became increasingly more effective and efficient dealing with environmental conditions.



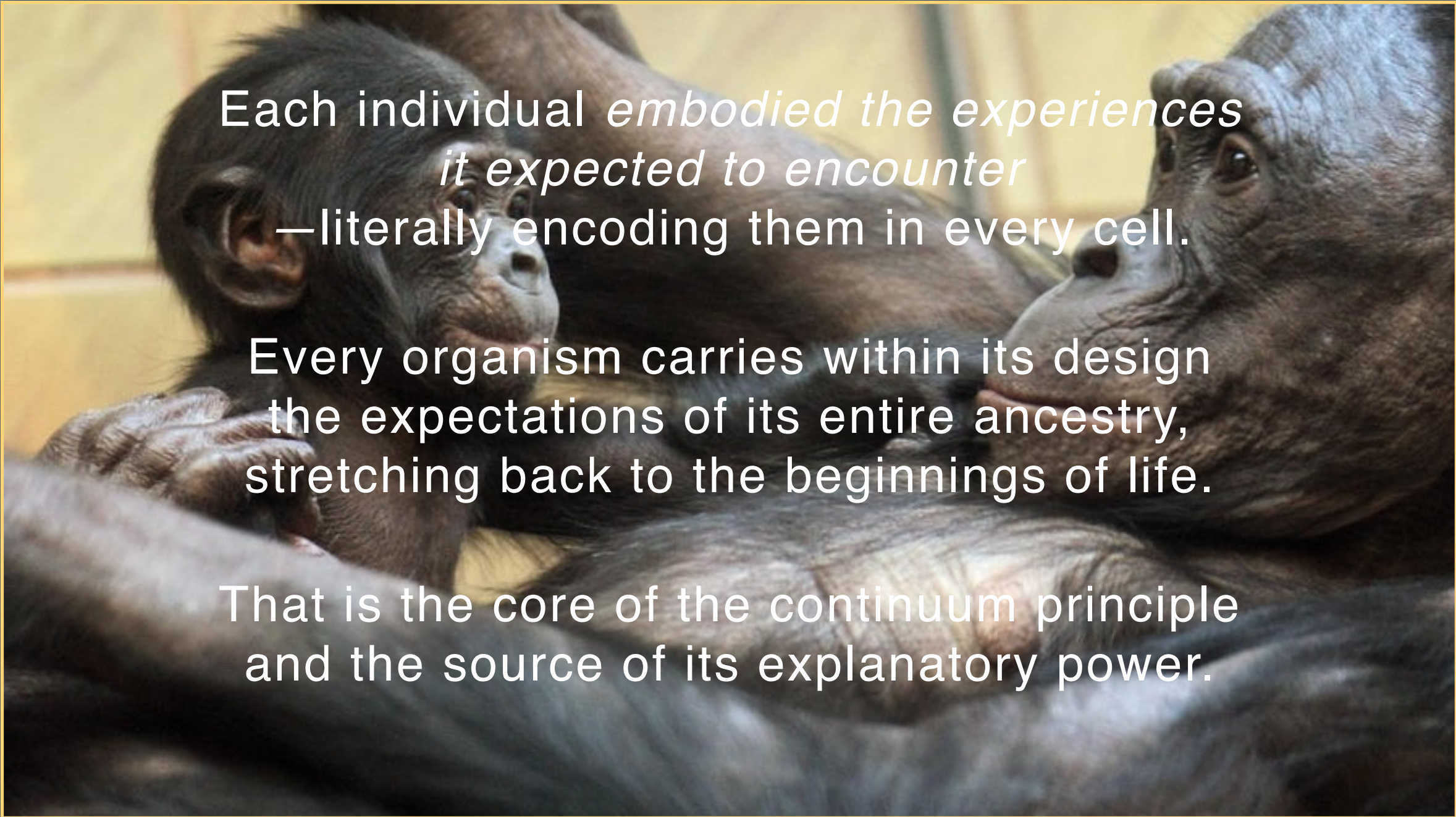
# The Evolutionary Continuum



An Evolutionary Error?



# The Heart of the Continuum




Each individual *embodied the experiences it expected to encounter*  
—literally encoding them in every cell.

Every organism carries within its design  
the expectations of its entire ancestry,  
stretching back to the beginnings of life.

That is the core of the continuum principle  
and the source of its explanatory power.



# The Heart of the Continuum

A newborn baby is wrapped in a red blanket and held in someone's arms. The person holding the baby is wearing an orange shirt. The baby's face is visible, and they appear to be sleeping peacefully. The background is a light-colored, textured surface.

We come into the world with a ready-made set of expectations—our “continuum”—programmed by our long evolutionary heritage.

For millions of years, our ancestors were carried about by their mothers, feeling secure.

As newborns, we expect certain things like nourishment and protection . . .

to hear and feel our mother’s heartbeat, to feel her body jiggling as she walks or runs or stoops or jumps, all the while secure in her arms.

# The Heart of the Continuum

Our continuum has conditioned us to expect to be in close physical contact with our mother from the moment of birth.

Having ready access to her breast, to be held in her arms, to feel the warmth and security of her skin against ours . . .

*for as long as we feel we need it, usually for the first year or two of life.*





# The Heart of the Continuum

When the continuum is fulfilled the child grows up with a natural sense of 'rightness' and behaves accordingly.

'Continuum babies' grow into healthy, fully adapted and adjusted 'continuum children' and 'continuum adults.'





# Evolved Expectations

Evolved expectations live in us as a *certainty*  
—until they are betrayed.

Unfulfilled, we experience a break in our continuum  
and lose touch with our sense of essential rightness.

Our behavior deviates from our evolved,  
innate ability to react correctly,  
wasting the benefit of millions of years of evolution.



# Learned Expectations



We attempt to fill the void with *learned* expectations and behaviors, e.g., wailing if our caregiver is not available.

Learned expectations deviate from our continuum, and are tainted with disillusionment, doubt, suspicion, and fear.

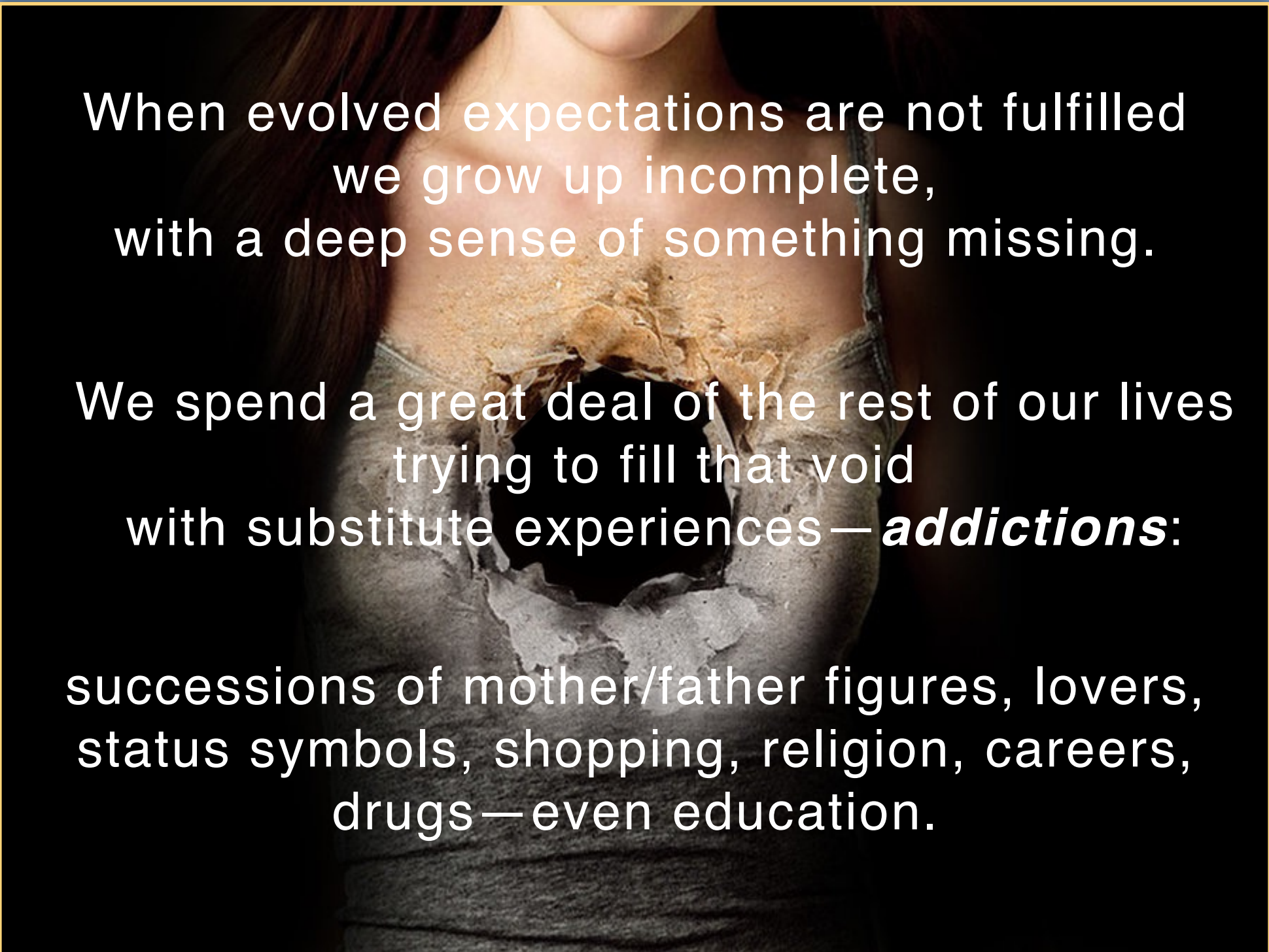
# Learned Expectations



When an infant is abandoned, its continuum ruptured,  
no substitute experience is acceptable.  
All that remains is a feeling of want,  
a burning desire for the unfulfilled  
expectation to be satisfied.



# Filling the Void

A photograph of a woman's torso, showing a large, jagged hole in her chest. The hole is dark and irregular, surrounded by torn, brownish material, suggesting a deep wound or a void. The woman's skin is pale, and her hair is dark. The background is dark, making the hole stand out prominently.

When evolved expectations are not fulfilled  
we grow up incomplete,  
with a deep sense of something missing.

We spend a great deal of the rest of our lives  
trying to fill that void  
with substitute experiences — ***addictions:***

successions of mother/father figures, lovers,  
status symbols, shopping, religion, careers,  
drugs — even education.



# Filling the Void





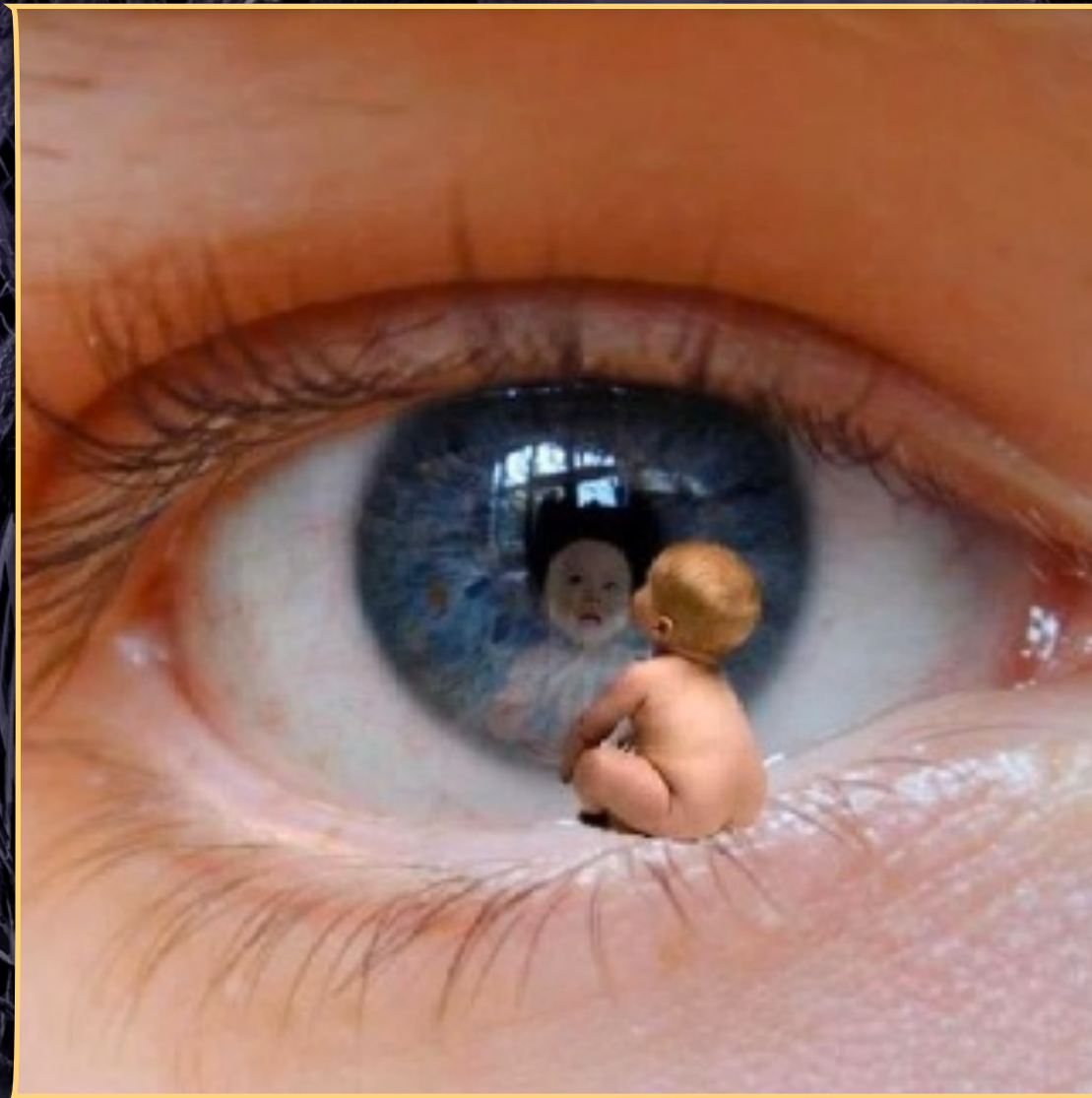
# Filling the Void

Ironically, attempts to restore the lost continuum push us farther from our roots.

Deprived of in-arms experience, we strive in vain to fulfill stunted expectations — a never-ending search that drives civilization.



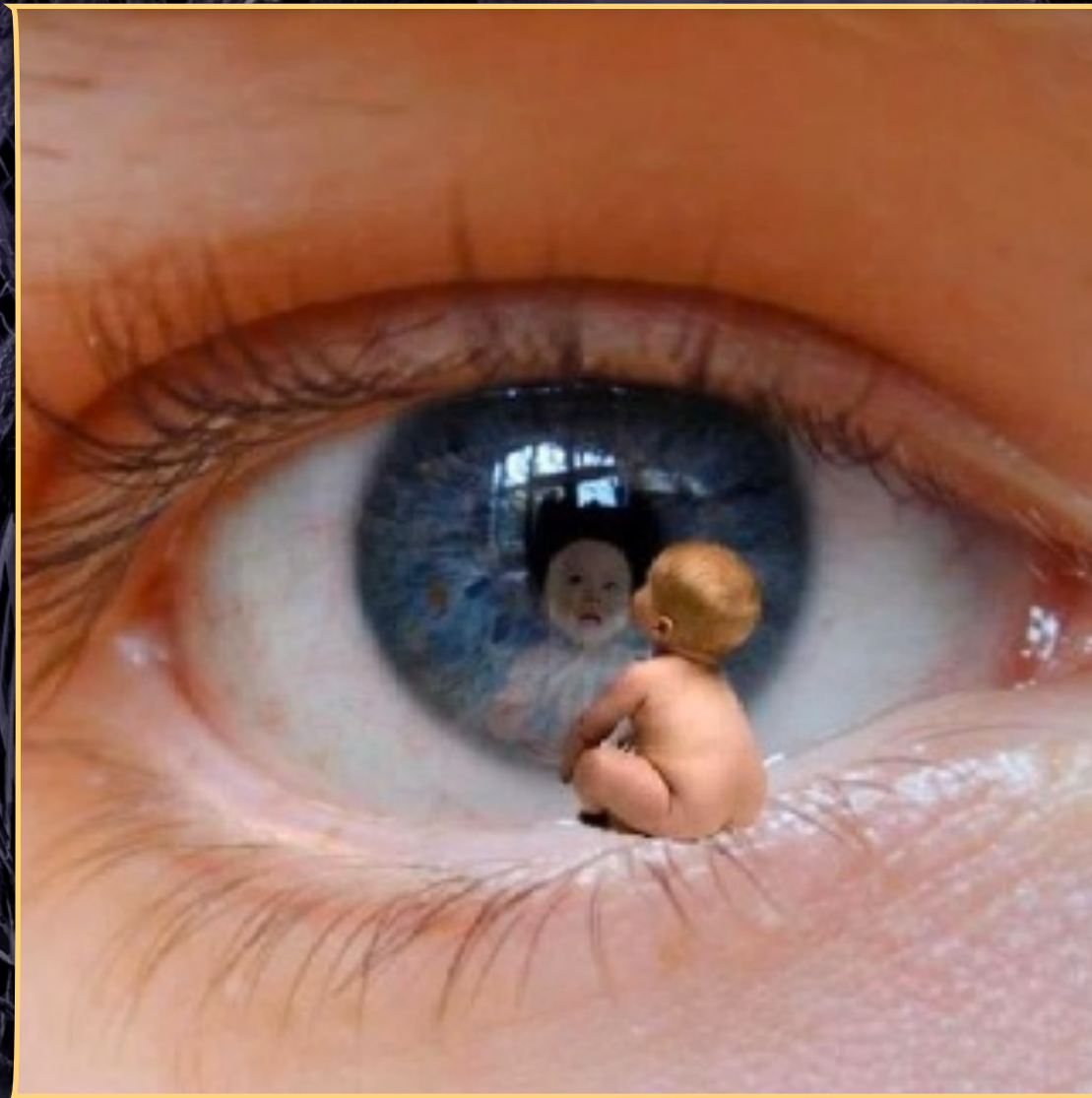
# Filling the Void



As adults, parts of us remain infantile  
unable to contribute positively to our communities.



# Filling the Void



*‘Happiness ceases to be a normal condition of being alive,  
and becomes a goal.’*

—Jean Liedloff



# The Challenge Ahead

Returning to the simplicity of Yequana lifestyle is not a realistic option—there's no going back.

We have to re-educate society to trust instinct, to honor the ancient continuum of babes-in-arms.

We need to narrow the gap between evolved and learned expectations.

*Re-integrate instinct and intellect.  
Balance the legacy of evolution  
with intentional creative advance.*



# Continuum Culture

Replace paranoia of competition  
with the spirit of cooperation.



# Continuum Culture

Replace obsession with progress-at-any-cost with a realistic respect for conservation.





# Continuum Culture

Replace aggression with tolerance;  
dogma with dialogue.





# Continuum Culture

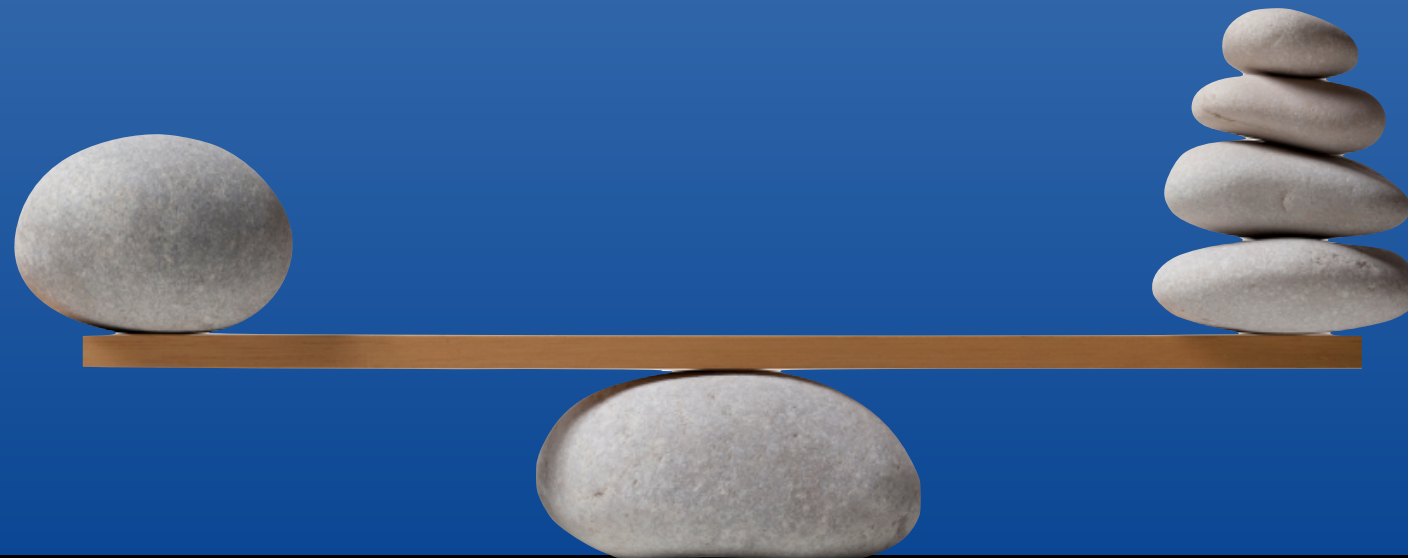
Replace power and greed  
with service and contribution.





# Balance

We need to develop science, technology,  
and commerce  
in balance with sacred nature.





# Restoring the Continuum



We begin by acknowledging an awesome fact:

Our babies arrive in the world already primed with the unconscious wisdom of millions of years of evolution.

*Infants instinctively know what they need to survive.*

# Bottom Line



It all begins by picking up our babies  
and holding them in arms  
*until they decide it is time to move on.*



THE  
CONTINUUM  
CONCEPT



*IN SEARCH OF HAPPINESS LOST*

**JEAN LIEDLOFF**

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