

6.2

COMMON MAN

0:12–1:24 The one thing that Big History communicates to us is that we do share a common history. The other thing that Big History does is it connects us to this idea of a common and collective learning. So we now are sharing collective learning globally in all kinds of ways. The information that I have access to on my computer or through my television is stunning.

OUR COMMON
HISTORY

If I have an idea, I can convey it to someone, and I can convey it so efficiently and so precisely that ideas begin to accumulate in the collective memory. Once information starts accumulating from generation to generation, it slowly builds. And we're the first species in the history of this planet where information's accumulating. And once you get a species like that, you can guarantee something,

which is that, "Hang around for a few thousand years, and this species will dominate the planet." And that's where we are now. So we're the first species in four billion years to be capable of sharing information so efficiently that we have a history, we have technological change, we're collectively creative.

Human beings are incredible cooperators. It's actually one of the pleasant things for me about studying Big History and zooming out. We so often study history in terms of war

1:24–2:23

COOPERATION

Who were the most destructive? Who were the most aggressive? Who slaughtered the other ones? They were the winners, of course. But, actually, if you go back and look at it, it's, "Who were the better cooperators?" We are better cooperators than most organisms. We cooperate incredibly well with each other, but not just with each other; we cooperate incredibly well with animals. Look at all the domestic animals. That is a cooperative relationship. They benefit, we benefit. Look at all the plants. It's another cooperative relationship. The plant benefits just as much as we do when we farm. So here we have this incredibly complex web of cooperation, human beings in the center tying it all together.

2:23–3:36

CURIOSITY

There's something truly universal about us all as human beings. Throughout history, we've had this incredible curiosity that seemed to go beyond just the needs of bringing home something to eat or maybe planning for the next season or what have you. There's just this curiosity about, you know, why we're here, "What's over that next hill?" and "Let's go and look." And that's transformed itself into us building incredibly powerful probes to look out there or to visit out there or to go out there ourselves, and by "out there" I mean out of the Earth and into space. Through Voyager, we've left the solar system. we've built a craft that can actually leave the solar system. That's quite remarkable, and this will probably continue, and it says something about our nature that we have this curiosity just to know for its own sake, and that feeds in, again, to this understanding of how all that knowledge can be synthesized into a historical perspective about us — the whole Big History story.