Commonplace •

5 Things with Diana Ayton-Shenker, CEO of Leonardo/ISAST

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I’ ve been considering 5 Things to Think About in the context of last week’ s autumnal equinox, the full harvest moon, and the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. Sukkot calls attention to gratitude and celebration of harvest, collecting and sharing the fruits of our labor and seasonal cycles, and the power of invitation to extend hospitality to the stranger, the outsider, the other amongst us. Sukkot also commemorates the experience of wandering and dwelling in temporary shelters during the transition from slavery to freedom, from a familiar but unsustainable way of living into an unknown future. This is what I’ m thinking about today.

1. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*

This book by Robin Wall Kimmerer has been on my “to-read” list for years. We need this book’ s intertwining stories and interdisciplinary insights to heal and reveal the interconnections between people, plants, and planet.

2. Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis

I' m thinking about the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 6th Assessment Report: [*Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*](#), in anticipation of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (1-12th of November, hosted in Glasgow). I want to be able to look our future grandchildren in the eyes and say: we knew and we acted. I need to be able to look myself in the mirror and say: we know, we commit to action, we are all in this together.

3. Wisdom VR Project

[Wisdom VR](#) creates immersive experiences of shared wisdom with Emmy-nominated VR films by Gary Yost and Adam Loftin. As I consider how to harvest wisdom from those who inspire transformation, those who lead and lean into new ways of living and being, I turn to this series and imagine future subjects like Liz Lerman, Maya Lin, Lily Tomlin, Stephanie Dinkins, Lindy Elkins-Tanton, Chimananda Ngozi Adichie, Yo-Yo Ma.

4. Torah (Re)Reading

For his 83rd birthday, my Dad will celebrate the 70th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah together with multi-generational, multi-cultural family and friends. In his honor, I'll join my brothers, children, and nephews in reading from the same Torah portion, Parsha Vayera, which he first read when he was 13 years old. [Here's a fascinating commentary](#) by Rabbi Sacks on Leonard Cohen's final song, [You Want it Darker](#), in relation to Vayera.

Visit the web version of this article to view interactive content.

Leonard Cohen and parsha Vayera

Visit the web version of this article to view interactive content.

Leonard Cohen - You Want It Darker (Audio)

5. *Leonardo* Volume 55

Gathering thoughts for [Leonardo](#) Volume 55 in 2022, I am reflecting on the narrative arc from *Leonardo* Editorials in 2021. Written one at a time, I am now curious what kind of through line emerges to be harvested between “[The Heart of Leonardo](#)” (Vol. 54:1, February 2021); “[From Ecosystem to Echo System](#)” (Vol. 54:2, April 2021); “[Healing Arts](#)” (Vol. 54.3, June 2021); “[A New Creativity Agenda](#)” (Vol. 54:4, August 2021); “[A New Creativity Agenda, Part II](#)” (Vol. 54:5, October 2021); and “Cultivating Digital Trust” (Forthcoming, Vol. 54:6, December 2021).