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## **Catalyzing a Democracy Gestalt - From Critical Mess to Critical Mass: Oliver Escobar**

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[Oliver Escobar](#) was raised in a country governed by a dictatorship. Now he is making a life work in democratic research, teaching, and advocacy. He says many or most of our democracies are very underdeveloped. They focus on just a few practices, elections and party politics, which are important but very limited aspects of democratic life. That underdevelopment may have played a role in bringing about what is now a time of great upheaval. That upheaval might in turn serve up an opportunity for renewal.

Oliver says democracy is very personal. It's about the conditions of possibility for meaningful lives. And it's not so new as we typically think. In this episode we talk about the indigenous nature of democracy, a practice that reaches all the way to the beginning of culture, long before the dawn of western civilization. Democracy is not a story that belongs to a few countries, it is a story that belongs to humanity.

There are people all around the world who are living in or into deeper democracy. And yet, their stories are not ones we hear. We ask and explore why. Why when there is a more whole way of life alive and well in communities all around the world, do we not hear their stories?

What would it take to go from what Oliver calls a critical mess, to a critical mass?

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