



MIND & LIFE
I N S T I T U T E

Summer Research Institute 2021 Plenary Lecture: Roshi Joan Halifax

Integrity and Moral Suffering in relation to the Climate Catastrophe and Health.

Tuesday, June 8 (12:00 - 12:50 pm)

Krista Weih (00:14):

Good morning, everyone. Good afternoon. Good evening. I'd like to welcome everyone to day three of, The Mind and the Human-Earth Connection and the Climate Crisis. We're so glad to see you again today. My name is Krista Weih. I know I keep introducing myself, but in case there's anyone that's new, I serve as director for grants and events for Mind and Life. Again, we're so happy to have you all joining us again today.

Krista Weih (00:41):

We want to remind you that the Climate Emergency: Feedback Loops films that we showed you a snippet of, for those of you that joined us last evening, are on our movie's link on your platform, whether you're joining us for the SRI or for the speaker series. And that those movies will be up there for the next six months that you have access to the platform, and we invite you to watch them when you're able.

Krista Weih (01:07):

I also want to let you know about an exciting offering that will be happening at 11:30 PM, Eastern daylight time, this evening. Mind and Life Europe, our sister organization is sponsoring a webinar, a live webinar with His Holiness The Dalai Lama, tonight, about how can friendship enact a different world. It will be in remembering Francisco Varela, who was one of the founders of Mind and Life. And it will be a dialogue on the friendship and its effects on the world. We will put all the information for the link, which is a free on how to join that event this evening or tomorrow, whatever time of day that is for you. Again, it's at 11:30 PM Eastern daylight time. And we'll put that link on the resources page under our forums link.

Krista Weih (01:59):

And lastly, for those of you that are SRI participants, we know many of you are talking about wanting to gather in other ways than we have set up for you, maybe affinity groups or interest groups. And just a reminder that you can self-organize using the forums tab, and starting a discussion under the general discussion area. There, you might even consider posting your own Zoom links and invite others to join you at a time that's named by you.

Krista Weih (02:25):

So, welcome once again. And now, I'd like to turn it over to Elissa Epel, who has been serving as the most amazing chair of our program planning committee. Elissa.

Elissa Epel (02:35):

Thank you, Krista. Hello, everyone. Wherever you are, good morning, good afternoon, good evening. We are so happy to be together today with you all. I feel compelled to do a land dedication. I am here with you fully with you in mind. And my body is here in San Francisco on the unceded territory, the sacred land of the Muwekma Ohlone tribes.

Elissa Epel (03:01):

Today, we get to hear, Roshi Joan Halifax. And that will be followed by a panel from three very unique social and behavioral scientists, who are examining unique aspects of climate change and the mind. We will then have breakout sessions for the SRI attendees with Fred Bansen, Felipe Jane, Karen O'Brien and Evan Thompson. And yes, it will be very difficult to choose. I want to be at all of them. For the SRI attendees, there'll be a poster session toward the end of the day.

Elissa Epel (03:35):

So, it has been a very wonderful and stirrings several days. Living in the Anthropocene means we are living in a time of despair, suffering, but also our beauty and inspiration. And we live in both worlds at the same time. As has been discussed so beautifully so far by Kyle [Juul 00:04:02] and Lama Willa in our retreats and in our talks, we need wisdom and wisdom practices. And it's through this ability to have some equanimity during the chaos and wise climate actions, we can find relief community and purpose.

Elissa Epel (04:20):

And so, this leads me into no better speaker for the morality and the living with courage and integrity during this period as having Roshi Joan Halifax. I'm so happy you joined us, Roshi Joan. She came out of retreat in the woods. And so, we'd love to welcome you into this wonderful global community.

Elissa Epel (04:50):

Roshi Joan is joining us from Santa Fe. She's the Abbot of Upaya in New Mexico, which offers phenomenal trainings, and has been extremely active during COVID. Roshi Joan is one of the most inspirational teachers and leaders. She is a role model to women everywhere, regardless of whether you're a spiritual teacher, an academic, an activist. Roshi Joan has chosen a path of vast humanitarian relief to others. She's an exemplar of engaged Buddhism. She leads medical missions in the Himalayas. She's been a spokesperson for the Rohingya refugees. She leads contemplative practices to relieve suffering of others. And sometimes can be found at climate protests, such as in front of The White House with Jane Fonda. You can read about her remarkable life experiences in her book, *Standing on the Edge*. Today, she's talking about integrity and moral suffering in relation to the climate catastrophe and health. Thank you, Roshi Joan.

Roshi Joan Halifax (05:57):

Elissa, thank you so much. I'm very grateful to be here. And I just want to begin by giving thanks for this earth and for her creatures, for her waters, for our atmosphere, and this precious land that supports all of life.

Roshi Joan Halifax (06:22):

As Elissa shared, I'm a Buddhist. And I'm the Abbot of Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico. But right at this time, I'm not in Santa Fe, I'm living in a small hermitage at 9,400 feet in the unseated territories of the Tewa, and in the greater watershed of the Rio Grande, or in Tewa what is called [inaudible 00:06:51]. And I'm talking to you from this small valley that is surrounded by three million acres of national forest.

Roshi Joan Halifax (07:03):

And like you, I stand in solidarity with indigenous peoples and with people of color. And I also need to acknowledge those who are fleeing war and fleeing the effects of the climate catastrophe, all of whom who bear disproportionately the burden of climate devastation.

Roshi Joan Halifax (07:30):

And I want to offer deep gratitude for social and environmental activists and for the scientists and for the governments, who are working on understanding how to dial down this climate catastrophe. And also, I stand with earth cherishing peoples and the young, who are taking stand in relation to protecting and restoring health to our mother earth. And I think all of you here who gathered to learn, to bond, to foster community, I stand in solidarity with you as every one of us, no matter how great our privilege will be effected by this unfolding climate catastrophe in the Anthropocene that we're in the midst of at this time.

Roshi Joan Halifax (08:26):

We all know that the calamitous changes in our climate are related to the terrible suffering associated with injustice, with inequity and our exploitive economic structures, and have a profound impact on the rights and health of all humans, and probably most species on this earth. Now, these devastating effects in our climate are as well, a source of moral suffering for many of us. Thus, I look at the climate catastrophe as a fundamental world challenge and a breeder of moral suffering.

Roshi Joan Halifax (09:13):

This moral suffering has direct effects on our character and on our integrity. And I hope that this presentation will give you some sense of why, and why I feel that principled action is essential at this time.

Roshi Joan Halifax (09:32):

No matter the differences in moral platforms, I believe that we need to look deeply at the effects on us of moral suffering and relationship to the exploitation and destruction of our environment. Now, to understand what moral suffering is, this refers to the very harm we experience in relation to actions that transgress our tenants of basic goodness.

Roshi Joan Halifax (10:05):

Our moral suffering is experienced in at least four main forms. And I want to just briefly address those forms. One is moral distress, and that's the anguish that arises in the mind, in the body, or in our relationships when we are aware for moral problem, that we feel we have a responsibility to address, and we might have a determined remedy, but we're unable to act on it because of internal or external constraints. And we end up directly or indirectly participating in moral wrongdoing.

Roshi Joan Halifax (10:49):

The second form of moral suffering that I have written about is that of moral injury, mostly associated with the military, but now more commonly associated in medicine. And I believe it touches many of us in ways that we are perhaps not even aware of.

Roshi Joan Halifax (11:14):

Now, moral injury is a psychological wound resulting from witnessing or participating in a morally transgressive act or actions. And it's a toxic festering mix of dread, of guilt and of shame. And by contrast, moral outrage is an externalized expression of indignation toward others who violate social norms. And it's a response that involves both anger and disgust.

Roshi Joan Halifax (11:51):

And the fourth is moral apathy. And that's when we simply do not care to know, or when we are in denial about situations that cause harm. Moral apathy can be indifference that's based on privilege, can be indifference that's based on denial or addiction. And it gives rise to moral disengagement.

Roshi Joan Halifax (12:16):

So, I want again, just name those four different valences of moral suffering, moral distress, moral injury, moral outrage, moral apathy. And just in relation to the term moral apathy, it's a term that I harvested from James Baldwin. I went to see, I Am Not Your Negro. And when James Baldwin used that term, I realized, yes, moral apathy.

Roshi Joan Halifax (12:48):

Now, Buddhism can give us a valuable way to understand the experience of moral suffering. So, for example, when we as individuals or we as a nation cause suffering to other beings or to ourselves, our integrity is compromised, and the outcome is moral suffering, whether we know it or not. In other words, moral suffering can be at the preconscious level.

Roshi Joan Halifax (13:19):

And when we alleviate the suffering of others, our integrity is affirmed and our character is strengthened. So, to have integrity, what this means is to have a conscious commitment, to honor strong, moral and ethical principles of non-harming, and also commitment to benefiting others. Moreover, our values are reflected in our character, and they are what affirm or destroy our integrity.

Roshi Joan Halifax (13:54):

So, I believe that our nation is caught in the grip of moral suffering, though many do not realize it. My views regarding moral suffering are related to the interrelationship between human ignorance and exploitative social and corporate structures resulting in pervasive, structural and direct violence.

Roshi Joan Halifax (14:25):

And I need you to understand, I'm not a moral philosopher. I'm just a Buddhist teacher, yet investigating the nature of morality has long been an important part of my practice and my life. And this has become so clear in this era of climate change, when I feel it's essential to consider the human causes and costs of what is happening in terms of our environment and the extraordinary degradation that is happening in our time.

Roshi Joan Halifax (15:03):

So, we all know that the secondary cause for climate change for the most part is fossil fuel dependent economic growth. And this is primed by the root cause of greed and of ignorance, and an utter lack of integrity. We also know that fossil fuels are a finite, dangerous, dirty, and destructive source of energy, and that continuing to develop fossil fuel dependent economic growth models, it makes no sense, no matter how you look at it.

Roshi Joan Halifax (15:47):

And those of us who are gathered here today are, I believe most of us are aware that we live in an interdependent world, and we cannot deny how profoundly damaging fossil fuels are to individual and collective health. We also know that it's absolutely necessary that our global community commit to reforming our intertwined energy and economic systems. I mean, it's the only logical next step, and the morally correct thing to do. And we must do this from a space of courage, of wisdom, and compassion.

Roshi Joan Halifax (16:38):

And we who are here in this space of the Summer Research Institute, we know that these wholesome, life-giving qualities of mind and heart are cultivated through views that are reflected in various indigenous traditions. They're reflected in Buddhist philosophy and practice, and in various other traditions, including hopefully, in the tradition of science. We also recognize it is not simply about changing institutional or in systemic structures. We also have to address this suffering in terms of the human heart and the human mind.

Roshi Joan Halifax (17:26):

In spite of the concerned and wise urgings of environmentalist, scientists and indigenous and young people, fossil fuel companies that are focused on making a profit, have bought politicians, derailed the media, lost their moral compass and subverted our democratic processes, so that they can continue to profit. Those who invest in fossil fuels get richer, in spite of knowing that fossil fuels make up two thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions, and even when we all know that there is an end to the ancient sunlight that we can extract from our earth.

Roshi Joan Halifax (18:19):

I think we also have to look at the environmental impacts of so-called factory farming, which is a serious environmental footprint, as well as horrendous cruelty to other living beings. We've learned that factory farming contributes to land and water degradation, biodiversity loss, acid rain, coral reef degeneration, and deforestation. And nowhere is the impact more apparent than climate change.

Roshi Joan Halifax (18:56):

It's important to note that factory farming contributes 18% of human produced greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. And I think our good friend, Matthieu Ricard will be addressing this in greater detail later this week.

Roshi Joan Halifax (19:14):

Now, there is a reason why many corporations have heavily promoted a focus on individual behavior like recycling or energy saver light bulbs. And it's not to say that there's anything wrong with energy saver light bulbs or recycling, but it's also why these companies support autocratic regime change around the world. They don't want us to see that we need fundamental systems change, serious institutional and economic performs, and for our governments to enforce checks and balances on those companies who profit from polluting our earth. And they also know that thriving democracies with awake, principled, compassionate and active citizens are a threat to them.

Roshi Joan Halifax (20:11):

So, fundamentally, the responsibility lies within the human heart and mind. Now, indigenous peoples, for example, have for millennia, they've had a sacred and practical relationship with the earth. And we need to give attention to this. The predatory process of colonization has tragically disrupted the lifeways of many indigenous peoples and traditional ecological knowledges, and I say this in plural, acquired over thousands of years are lost, but fortunately not entirely. And thank you, Kyle White and others.

Roshi Joan Halifax (21:01):

I believe that learning from indigenous peoples about ecosystem management and restoration is something we must turn to now, in addition to what we've learned from Western science, in order to dial down the impacts of the exploitive and extractive relationship with mother earth. I also feel that the sacredness of indigenous people's relationship to earth reflects values that are central to be strengthened at this time.

Roshi Joan Halifax (21:39):

Now, in addition to species extinction, cultural extinction, the extinctions that we're witnessing in our era, we're in this sixth great extinction event on our planet, and one that's human caused. We also have to realize that this climate crisis is making us sicker and sicker every day. And those at most risk, are children, pregnant women and the unborn, the elderly and the material impoverished, but even the most privileged of us cannot escape the health impacts, which are staggering to contemplate.

Roshi Joan Halifax (22:27):

For example, we are witnessing and experiencing our atmosphere becoming a toxic harbor for increasing allergens, mold, fungi, smoke, mercury, petrochemical, cancer-causing poisons, choking

dust, disease-bearing insects and extreme heat. Extreme heat is also linked with aggression and violence, which is connected with violent conflicts and forced migrations, source of extraordinary trauma.

Roshi Joan Halifax (23:08):

Our waters are also becoming a toxic harbor for endocrine disruptors, poisonous chemicals, microbial pollutants, including sewerage and lethal algae bacterium, as well plastics are contaminating our oceans and fisheries. Seawater is contaminating drinking water. And drought, fire and flooding are destroying forest, farmlands, towns and cities.

Roshi Joan Halifax (23:38):

And we're also witnessing the physical destruction of our earth and the subsequent illnesses brought by humans engaging in extractive and profoundly destructive processes of the earth so-called resources, a term, which is I believe a travesty. Exploiting the earth's forests, minerals, fresh waters, ocean life, wild animals, and more.

Roshi Joan Halifax (24:09):

Yet maybe, the least talked about area of sickness is the profound grief, trauma and moral suffering being experienced by millions whose lives are shattered by flood, by drought, by fire and heat. And the pernicious moral injury and outrage experienced by those who witnessed the terrible loss of life and are dehumanized by those who profit from this devastation, often leading to anxiety, depression, futility, rage, bottomless loss, and even suicide.

Roshi Joan Halifax (24:55):

And then there's the pernicious psychological and moral injury experienced by those who witnessed the terrible degradation of life associated with the climate catastrophe. I think of Greta Thurnberg, and I think also of earth cherishing peoples, and the moral anguish experienced in response to the aggressive assaults on the dignity of those who raise their voices in protest, and who are dehumanized and even assassinated by those who profit from this devastation.

Roshi Joan Halifax (25:34):

So, I want to just share some words from the Lauder Mariel Nanasi, who's the executive director and president The New Energy Economy. And she writes, "We are at a crossroads. We either face the very real possibility of a planet on hospice, driven by an energy system that is the epitome of capitalism on steroids with extreme exploitation and racism at its core, or a profound opportunity to shift at the very basis of our economic system that we haven't seen since the abolition of slavery. And it's really up to us, which way we go."

Roshi Joan Halifax (26:28):

So, we can look at it this way, in relation to the United States, the first 200 years of capitalism were based on slavery. The second 200 on fossil fuels. And this next 200 years, I believe must be based on renewables, if we're to survive. If we could abolish slavery on which our country was built, which took the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of lives, we can also do this. Just as the abolition of slavery was

the morally right thing to do in 1861, ending our addiction to fossil fuel use as well as so-called factory farming, this is the moral crisis and imperative of our time.

Roshi Joan Halifax (27:31):

Now, it may seem that our climate catastrophe touches only people who are materially impoverished, who live in coastal areas or are refugees fleeing climate driven wars, but truly this climate devastation affects every species on earth and will profoundly affect the coming generations. In the final analysis, ending climate devastation is as much about self interest as it is about compassion. And clearly we must act now. If there's to be a viable, morally grounded and healthy future, social engagement is essential, as this psycho-spiritual transformation by cultivating the qualities of heart and mind, that make it possible to see the destruction we have brought on this earth, and to take action to transform those habits of mind, that bind us to consumerism and blind us to the harm we have caused.

Roshi Joan Halifax (28:51):

We also have to take the science seriously, as well as examine our views of reality, and hold accountable as well the petrochemical corporate, military and political forces robbing the future from our children and grandchildren. And we must end the direct, indirect structural and institutional violence associated with this climate catastrophe. And to do this, we have to engage in practices that cultivate what Roshi Norman Fischer has called the bodhisattva attitude, which includes the capacity to be morally sensitive with the ability to detect moral conflicts and dilemmas. There is no compassion without this.

Roshi Joan Halifax (29:53):

We must as well nurture our capacity for moral discernment, which is our ability to assess what actions are morally justifiable. And to do this, this takes attentional stability. It takes insight. It takes a motivation that is based on compassion.

Roshi Joan Halifax (30:20):

And finally, we've got to develop moral nerve. It's a term that was used by Joan Didion, the author, to describe someone who has non-negotiable virtue in standing above the abyss of harm, so that we can be guided by our deepest values, so that we can be conscientious and connect to who we really are. And I believe that we have to do this, not only to restore broken ecosystems, but also to restore health and integrity to the human heart.

Roshi Joan Halifax (31:03):

So, I'd like to complete this presentation, just saying the four vows of the bodhisattva's. What really is that reflection that cultivates the bodhisattva attitude. Those vows are, creations are numberless. I vow to free them. Delusions are inexhaustible. I vow to transform them. Reality is boundless. I vow to perceive it. The awakened way is unsurpassable. I vow to embody it.

Roshi Joan Halifax (31:59):

And then at the end of the day of practice at Upaya, you will hear these words. Let me respectfully remind you, life and death are of supreme importance. Time passes, swiftly, and opportunity is lost. Let

us awaken, awaken. Do not squander your life. And I would add, do not squander any life. Thank you very much.

Elissa Epel (32:40):

Needing some time to let this... These messages in this last message really let us all feel permeated in it. I am happy that we have some time for questions after that phenomenal, powerful talk that I know that I will listen to again.

Elissa Epel (33:18):

I think I'll just start with a very quick question for you of what is on my mind. I know you've written and talked a lot about these edge states, in standing on the edge and the shadow, and the growth. And we couldn't be more on an edge state, a societal edge state right now with all of this potential that we want to grasp, and this the urgency of changing hearts, changing habits of mind, changing hearts. And I am wondering if you can offer some advice to us on how to live with the urgency that we feel.

Elissa Epel (34:04):

I think we've heard a lot of messages that have been helpful. Kyle Juul, for example, talked about practices and building resilience, now today for the harder future. And Kyle talked about the long view that the work we do will not be seen. The results may not be seen in our lifetime, but it's for our ancestors and all the future beings, and that relational perspective through time. I think it's how do you live with both? How do you live with this kind of our life is short and we need to act in the most extreme ways immediately, as well as this longer view that can let us sleep and feel ease?

Roshi Joan Halifax (34:52):

So, this is such a beautiful question, Elissa. There's a term that we use in Zen that I really love. And it is robai-shin. And robai-shin is translated as grandmother's heart. And as we know, grandmothers are not pushovers. They have had the incredible challenge of being born into a woman's body. They've given birth. They've experienced a loss. They've experienced brokenheartedness. And they have realized wisdom and tenderness. I look at what we're going through today as literally a global rite of passage, and as such with tremendous potential for positive transformation, if we do not squander our life and lives. And it means that we are asking ourselves to develop a view that is non-empathetic, that is inclusive, that is characterized by equanimity. That is our capacity for resilience to uphold ourselves in the midst of conditions. And this takes a lot of training.

Roshi Joan Halifax (36:23):

And as the Buddha said, "My Dharma is swimming upstream." It's an upstream project for a consumer addicted global economy. And it takes a lot of dedication. But usually what primes us to take action is an experience of suffering. And I believe this is why it's so important to point out moral suffering and to surface it at this time, so that we come into the sensibility of, "I feel that my integrity is compromised by how I'm living in this world as a consumer, or how I'm promoting views that are harmful for myself and for others."

Roshi Joan Halifax (37:17):

And per se, the grandmother's heart, robai-shin has this relationship between the relative and the absolute. It's the every day in the witness. Every time you put a coffee pod into your Nespresso, you're adding harm, but also it's the long view, being able to see deeply through time in relation to the truth of impermanence, or the, we won't survive, but this earth will. So, it's a kind of maturation of wisdom and also of compassion.

Elissa Epel (38:01):

Thank you so much. A related question from many participants, Sandy de Vitaly, Adrian Ben [Newhasan 00:38:08]. Can you talk about reconciling the moral outrage and anger with the Buddhist philosophy of equanimity and avoidance? Well, avoidance of negative emotions, I wouldn't say avoidance, but the ability to feel equanimity. I understand from Tibetan Buddhist roots, that anger can become fuel when transformed into motivation for positive change. So again, it's anger and equanimity.

Roshi Joan Halifax (38:41):

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I'm not a Tibetan Buddhist, but I've gotten a lot of wonderful teachings from Tibet Buddhists. And there's a form of compassion that is wrathful. So, and Thich Nhat Hanh in the ninth precept of the Order of Interbeing, it makes it really clear that speaking out about injustices even at the risk of your own life is essential. So, I think that dousing anger is maybe something we should explore a little more critically.

Roshi Joan Halifax (39:19):

I remember once I heard His Holiness The Dalai Lama in relation to moral outrage. And I don't know if you were at that meeting Elissa, but Sona Demirjian was there. And His Holiness made the point that anger or moral outrage can actually initiate principal to action. So, and we know from the work of Daniel Batson and Nancy Eisenberg, that some kind of arousal level is necessary.

Roshi Joan Halifax (39:49):

So, I think we have a fundamental misunderstanding about equanimity. We look at equanimity as some kind of state of mind, where we've been neutralized, so to speak. But in fact, equanimity is that state of mind that actually is able to include everything and sustain resilience, to have the ability to look deeply and to see when others are engaging in harm, that that also is suffering, and so forth. So, I think the deeper look at equanimity is really important. It is not a flattening out, but it's actually an opening up.

Elissa Epel (40:30):

Such an important point. There is another question arising that is rapidly gaining a community behind this question, Lauren Tube, Rappaport, Marissa Knox, Connor O'neil. what is the best way to fight greed and ignorance given that these are encouraged to co-exist, greed and ignorance?

Roshi Joan Halifax (40:57):

That's a great question. And of course, if you're a Buddhist, you could say, practice, study. If you're an earth cherishing person, it is coming into right relationship with the natural world. Not that I have

attained any degree of equanimity or wisdom, please, but I've been at this for 55 years since 1965. I've been doing basically the same practice. And the result is that I'm not the person who began this practice 55 or so years ago. And it is mind training.

Roshi Joan Halifax (41:43):

Everything in our culture is about colonizing at this point, our attention in the way of consumerism. And it isn't about the colonization, and others, various levels of decolonization. One is to decolonize our minds from the corporate messages that are driving consumers and better eating up our planet. And it takes discipline. And it's why that last chant, the night chant at Upaya, don't squander your life, wake up now, practice like your hair was on fire. There's the sense of, not apathy, lassitude and moral disengagement, but of deep engagement, but not of overwhelm, but of arousal and veer of hope and goodness.

Elissa Epel (42:33):

Oh, wow, that's so rich. And that last quote, it's the energy, it's the fuel behind equanimity, not the calm equanimity. It's such an important concept. And decolonizing our attention, it starts with where we're putting our attention and who we're listening to, and what we're watching in the springs. So, I'd like to call on Laura [Candido 00:42:56], we'll unmute you, and we'd love to hear your question live.

Laura Candiolo (43:01):

Well, thank you very much. I'm really moved by your heartfelt communication. Thank you really. So, I would like to ask you, what are the best skillful means or tools for developing integrity, the quality of integrity and cutting moral apathy? Thank you.

Roshi Joan Halifax (43:22):

Thank you so much for that question. Well, I think it really depends on the individual. As a Buddhist, I would recommend deep practice, familiarization with your own mental continuum, understanding the habits of mind and the contents of your mind, and the effects of the environment on your mind through direct practice realization, you awaken to this. And it really takes a degree of self honesty, and also a determination of very, of wholeheartedness. You really have to care. And sometimes that caring is deeply primed through meeting catastrophe.

Roshi Joan Halifax (44:11):

We're in a catastrophe right now, but it is not as visible to many of us as I think it should be, because of moral apathy and attentional distractions. But truly a contemplative practice that is not bypassing, but bringing bare attention to things as they are, developing a motivation that is fundamentally altruistic to break out of this pattern of self-centeredness. Learning how to have quality of attentional balance, where we're able to perceive things as clearly as possible. And then to have also in our experience of deep perception, if you will, the resilience to uphold ourselves in the midst of any condition, and to put ourselves not in places of privilege, but in the charnel grounds where suffering is very visible.

Elissa Epel (45:25):

Thank you so much, Roshi Joan. It's hard to end this session, but we are about out of time. So, I'm so sorry for those who couldn't ask their questions, you might want to type them in for others to see.

Elissa Epel (45:38):

Roshi, I want to thank you for being one of the founders and builders of Mind and Life, and for your work at Upaya and Zen Brain and Varela Symposium. Those have been my sanghas. Those have changed me. Those are part of my resilience. And boy, do we need those going forward.

Elissa Epel (45:59):

This is a very sophisticated and an engaged group, and there's so much love and intention, and activism in this Zoom room across the globe. And you just delivered the most phenomenal and important messages for us. So, we will be digesting these and discussing these for the rest of the week.

Roshi Joan Halifax (46:20):

Thank you so much. It's a privilege to be here and back in the Mind and Life Institute community. And I'm so grateful that you brought your skills, Elissa, into the braided field, the field of many intersections as we look at our relationship to this earth and to each other, and all species. Thank you.

Elissa Epel (46:50):

Thank you so much. So, our next session is a science forum, The Science of Social Change for Sustainability, with Christine Wamsler at Maybach, and Karen O'Brien. And I'll moderate that. And that happens in just over an hour. So, don't miss that.

Elissa Epel (47:09):

And if you are joining as an SRI participant on the live Zoom, please stay and be together for the small breakout groups. And for the rest of you, we look forward to seeing you at the next session. Thank you.