

The Buddhism and Ecology Summit:

Living the Dharma in a Time of Crisis

Tricycle: The Buddhist Review



Connection, Community, and Compassion: Resources for our Emotional Wellbeing

Susan Bauer-Wu, Dekila Chungyalpa, Elissa Epel, Brother Phap Dung

Carolyn Gregoire 00:03

Alright, thanks so much, Susan for being here with us. I will hand it over to you.

Susan Bauer-Wu 00:32

Thanks so much, Carolyn. Hello, everyone. Welcome. Welcome to Tricycle's Buddhism and Ecology Summit: Living the Dharma in a Time of Crisis. My name is Susan Bauer-Wu. I'm from the Mind and Life Institute. And I'm so pleased to be with you today. And to serve as moderator for this wonderful panel on connection community and compassion, resources for emotional wellbeing, and navigating the climate challenges we face. Today's event is part of a week long series hosted in honor of Earth Day 2022. And Tricycle is grateful to its partners to include the Mind and Life Institute, the Yale Forum for religion and ecology, and the Garrison Institute. And thanks to all of the partners in putting together the panels for this event. And we're also pleased to be able to offer this summit free of charge. And if you'd like to support our organizations with a donation, feel free to use the don't donate links in the chat box. And if you'd like to rewatch any of the events from the series, the replays will be available to all registrants after the week's events have concluded. And we'll definitely leave time for q&a at the end of the session. And feel free to leave your questions in the q&a tab rather than the chat. And we'll get to as many as we can. And we would love audience engagement and welcome your comments in the chat as well throughout the program. So in the spirit of connection and creating community I would be really wonderful if all of you, if you're comfortable can share where you're from in the chat. I see so many people from all over the world right now very exciting, that we can all be here together. I'm currently in Charlottesville, Virginia in the eastern United States, the home office of the Mind and Life Institute. And we're located on ancestral and unseeded Land of the Monacan Indian nation who lived in central Virginia for over 10,000 years. And it's also the location where a thriving African American community was dismantled and hundreds of families were displaced in the early 1960s. So if you'd like feel free to take a moment to share your community in the chat and it's now my pleasure to introduce our panelists. Really excited to be here with some old and new friends. First Dekila Chungyalpa is an environmental and climate leader, originally from the Himalayan state of Sikkim in India, who co-founded and directs the Loka Initiative, a capacity-building and outreach platform at the University of Wisconsin – Madison for faith leaders and culture keepers of Indigenous traditions who work on environmental and climate issues. Previously, she founded and ran the World Wildlife Fund Sacred Earth Initiative and helped establish Khoryug, an eco-monastic association of over 50 Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries across the Himalayas. Next is Elissa Epel, health psychologist, Vice Chair

and Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at University of California San Francisco. And she studies how stress resilience and mindfulness interventions can protect health and promote thriving. Elissa co-leads the UCSF Climate and Mental Health Task Force and the Society of Behavioral Medicine Presidential subgroup focusing on Climate and Health Inequities, and Elissa is the co-author of the bestselling book, *The Telomere Effect* and the author of a new book to be released later this year called *the Stress Prescription*. Welcome Elissa. And our final panelist is Brother Phap Dung who is a senior teacher in Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh's Plum Village community. And Brother's name Phap Dung means Dharma Embrace. Born in Vietnam, he escaped at the age of 10 with his family and became a refugee in the U.S. and worked as an architect/designer before becoming a monk in 1998. He is deeply committed to ecological activism, and represented his spiritual community at the COP21 talks in Paris and at the Glasgow COP26, raising an awareness of the spiritual human crisis that underlies the imbalance in the ecosystem. He currently lives in community in Southern California. Welcome, brother. So let's begin our panel with a brief guided meditation by brother Phap Dung. to ground us and to orient us toward this panel's theme of connection, community and compassion. Over to you, brother.

Brother Phap Dung 06:14

Thank you, Susan. Thank you, everyone. I hope everyone can hear okay. I think this is a really a moment where we.. giving voice to Mother Earth, Mother Nature, using technology. So there is a place for technology. And because of technology, it is helped us gather a virtual community. So I like to invite all of you at home or wherever you may be to actually dedicate yourself to this moment, if you choose to be here. Let's, you know, use the screen. And yeah, really feel ourselves a little bit around the earth a little bit everywhere, as we saw in the chat, so beautiful to connect in this way, and not have to fly. That we can still connect each other's heart. So please find yourself comfortable and really commit yourself and nourish your presence here. So meditation is nothing but to be present. If we're choosing to be with the online community here, let us just have that screen on and not have other screens and other gadgets on and it's a practice to be present for our community. So in our breathing helps, so I'll help you guys, I'll guide you in a short guided meditation to help us connect with our body with each other and the planet. So we can close your eyes and relax our body. Sit comfortably. And we come and pay attention to our breath. And this is a practice of being present for ourselves. We use the breath can breathe in and you become aware of your in breath. Breathe out and you can close your eyes you don't have to look at the screen. Just follow my my voice breathing in. I'm aware of my in breath. Breathing out I enjoy my in breath in breath out breath breathing in I'm aware of my body sitting the gravity of Mother Earth holding us this beautiful Solar System breathing out I relaxed my body. Allow Mother Earth to embrace the whole all of us together. Each one of us in our particular place on this planet aware of body relaxing our body allowing our body to be fully inhabited by our awareness in Breathing in. I'm aware of my community, my family of humans a little bit everywhere around this planet are trying their best to find a better way to live with each other. And with our whole planet I can see them in my mind's eye each one have the good intention to better the world to leave it better for our children in aware of our global family out smiling, because we are not alone thank you everyone, for taking a moment to connect in the heart and mind.

Susan Bauer-Wu 12:03

Thank you so much brother. Love the practice. Now Now we'll proceed with each of the panelists taking a few minutes to share some reflections about their, their work and their perspectives. And we'll begin with Dekila.

Dekila Chungyalpa 12:27

Thank you so much, Susan. Thank you, brother. That was exactly what I needed to ground myself. I'm so appreciative. And hello everyone... I'm so happy to be in community with all of you today, during Earth Week. I'm speaking to you from Madison, Wisconsin, which is also known as Teejop by the Ho-Chunk people, the original inhabitants of this land. And I'm really grateful to be able to acknowledge the indigenous peoples of this land because I think it's often ignored in the environmental and climate movements, the debt we owe to indigenous people all around the world. Some of you might have seen this headline that started showing up a couple of years ago which says that 80% of all biodiversity that exists today exists in indigenous managed lands. And that goes to show how much indigenous worldviews matter. As Susan mentioned, I come from Sikkim in the eastern Himalayas and my land is protected by Mount Kanchenjunga. Some of you might know of it if you're from the Himalayas or have traveled there. It's the third tallest peak in the world. Most of you probably have never heard of it. And there is a reason why. The reason is because the original people of Sikkim the lecture, the song limbo and the booty are my people. We have fought off all the attempts that people have made to commercialize and make money out of mountain climbing in our region. We have fought off expeditions, all kinds of lucrative deals that you can imagine, to let people climb mountain junk, Mount Kanchenjunga, and plant a flag on it because it will be sacrilege to us. He is alive to us. He has presence. He has identity. He is a living being. He's our protective deity. And this worldview that Indigenous peoples have all around the world doesn't matter where they are that that nature has a right to exist by itself. Nature doesn't exist just to have utilitarian purpose for humanity is so significant, especially right now, in this era that we call the Anthropocene. Opinion yesterday around the same time I tweeted something that I thought was fairly, you know, something that was of concern to me and that I thought was fairly obvious, which was very short. India has issued heat wave warnings in 11 cities this week. That means 110 degree fahrenheit highs and mid April, it's unimaginable. And yet, here we are. And in that 24 hours, I ended up getting 1000s of lights and responses and engagement, I did not expect it to hit people the way it did. And today, when I was looking at the responses that that tweet received, what became really, really apparent, of course, is the level of acute anxiety, and anger and frustration that so many of us have about the loss of life of our loved ones of our communities, human and non human, of what's happening to the planet of what it means to future generations, right. So when we talk about the Anthropocene, it has these very pejorative characteristics for us. Now, the Anthropocene actually simply means that an era when humans dominate the Earth, but for us, we've kind of imbued it with so much negative value, because that's what we see. And I think in the work that I do, bridging the sacred and the science for environmental and climate work. A lot of the work I do is trying to get people to imagine the Anthropocene as an era of possibility, an era where we can live in interdependence with one another, where we get to reclaim these relationships of kinship, of compassion. And what that would look like and what that would mean. And I think for us, that requires a much deeper paradigm shift. I know I'm in a community of like minded people right now. So of course, that paradigm shift needs to happen internally, very much so. But I also think that it's a time for us to acknowledge that this kind of individualized blaming doesn't work anymore. The fear mongering doesn't work at all, we really need to, to approach people from the lens of compassion by opening our hearts.

This paradigm shift that I'm talking about is not simply something that we look at other people and say you need to change, you know, of course, the global south is bearing the burden of what the global north does. At the same time, it's really important that we understand that it's systems that need to change. It's neoliberalism. It's capitalism, it's all these systems that are completely incompatible with an Earth where biodiversity gets to thrive, where societies get to live in equity, and in harmony with one another. So how do we change the systems in a way that is compassionate, and yet necessary and urgent? For me, I really draw on Buddhism, of course, to be inspired to do this work, I really draw on my own tradition of the Karma Kagyu lineage, I come from a family of female practitioners. So I draw on the rituals and traditions I was raised in. And I think the importance of ritual is so necessary. I think one of the things that has happened, as we've moved further and further away from the sacred is that we've given up rituals that connect us to one another, that connect us to the earth. And whether it is that we are turning to our heritage to revive those rituals, or whether it is that we are creating brand new ones for ourselves, it's absolutely necessary that we do so we have to acknowledge that what happens to us internally affects what happens to our communities, and that affects what happens to the planet. All these three things are indivisible, right? And so we for those of us who are in the Buddhist community, it's really important that we not just sit with our rituals in our meditation mats, that we not just practice compassion and interdependence, sitting in front of our statues in our safe prayer rooms and our prayer mats, right? That we actually embody what these things mean, that we step out into the world where the suffering is so palpable, when we say we want to alleviate the suffering of all sentient being, we have to translate that into action. I'll stop there.

Susan Bauer-Wu 19:09

Thank you Dekila. I invite my colleagues on the panel to ask Dekila a question. Brother, I see you're unmuted want to.

Brother Phap Dung 19:23

Yes, thank you, Dekila for sharing that. And also sharing but the ancestors that you speak for and you speak from can really relate to that. And I see you I feel you in your speech, you have a lot of passion. And I wonder, because we're all I think probably joining this because we all want to do good but how do you stay fresh and passionate like that and not let these negative news things like really, you know, hold you down and how do you you know, how do you process that? How do you decomposed that, because we're bombarded every day with, especially the season to come here, at least in some parts of the world of the summer season and different weather conditions and catastrophe as well as the human. What how we're doing things to each other? And how do you process it so you can stay loving, compassionate, and you know, passionate about your work and not be overwhelmed by it.

Dekila Chungyalpa 20:31

Thank you so much, brother. For me, you know, I'm a scientist, and I'm a Buddhist. And I became a scientist, because everything I learned in Buddhism was evidenced in the science in the study of living entities and the ecosystems that keep them alive. And so when I studied interdependence, write it from the Buddhist tradition, to me was so apparent in the relationships between humanity and and all the ecology that surrounds us. Even the oxygen that we're breathing right now that keeps us alive comes from phytoplankton and oceans and plants outside and trees we may or may not have planted right? There is such a effortless bounty of compassion that the Earth gives me, gives you gives all of us it's,

it's unconditional. Right? How can she be anything but mother because it's unconditional. And that ultimately is always the source of my energy. Don't get me wrong. I, you know, I ended up working with faith leaders because of this eco anxiety and climate distress that I was describing. I was seeing on Twitter I hadn't completely. And what I found was that returning to this unconditional love and relationship and my deep sense of gratitude to nature, is what revived me. You know, when there is such an outpouring of unconditional compassion coming my way? How can I do anything but open my heart and absorb it, and then try to reflect that to all other sentient beings as well. Twitter is, is sort of a microcosm of the worst of samsara. In many ways, it's the microcosm of the best of samsara, you know. And I think one of the things that I've learned in the last few years is that you find in knit community, wherever you are, that what keeps us going, ultimately, is that we belong to a larger group of like minded people. And whenever people come to me to express their equal anxiety and their distress, my first reaction always is do you have a community? Right? Go build it, go find it. Because we as humans, we are animals, too. We so often forget that we are one animal species on this planet, which means that we're warm blooded. We're herd animals, we require just like all other animals, do, we require a family? And I think the beauty of being in the Anthropocene right now is that there is so much flexibility in building the families we need, as opposed to the families we inherit.

Susan Bauer-Wu 23:20

Thank you Dekila. My heart feel feels warmer and I feel less tight just listening to and feeling this sense of the the human family that were together right now. Thank you. Elissa, how about you go next.

Elissa Epel 23:43

Thank you. Thank you so much. Dekila. I always learn so much from you. Every time you open your mouth, and you inspire me. And I am going to talk about how much I have relied on inspiration from, from my community from Dharma teachers from eco Dharma teachers. I'm a Western scientist. I have been studying stress and coping for the past 25 years with this question, how do people get through adversity and trauma? How do we recover? What is stress resilience? And so now I'm trying to apply this to understanding climate stress resilience, and so I'm going to take you on a very quick journey through my own climate distress. I am here on the unceded territory of the Aloni with the ancient rainforests, sorry, ancient redwood forests, and just vast land that in the last two years has had on unprecedented fight wildfires and death of wildlife and our ancient trees. And so I started off with before the 2020 fires with some climate distress, and and of course it got worse into the most, let's say maladaptive, despairing type of distress. And so I'm just going to give you a little research on how I have moved toward a more healthy type of climate distress. And I'm going to show you some data from other people. So it's, so there's going to be a quick data Blitz. So the first question is, how is this different than what we know about stress and coping, we are facing an unprecedented challenge. And our animal brain is not great at perceiving it, because it's a mega phenomena, it's so vast across time and space, it's much easier to look at what's in front of us, we're geared to deal with threats and with our day. So we so this leads us to avoidance of thinking about it. This is unlike other stressors, this is not an individual threat. This is a communal threat. This is an existential threat, it threatens everything we know and love. So, in maladaptive climate distress, which I'm sure we have all been there is very much about feeling despair, overwhelmed, feeling hopeless. And that leads us to the avoidance response. And the Healthy Climate distress is what I'm going to call distress to action, it's being able to embrace the uncertainty, being with sadness and fear, and finding a way for using this caring, this

painful carrying we have for action. And so I going to just summarize it as the New World mindset, our old coping doesn't work our old views, we must adopt a new world mindset to survive and build our communal resilience in this era, of, of global warming that we are so in the thick of. And as it I will just compare it for you the mindset that I my default mindset, which has caused me the distress, a Western individualistic mindset built on linear causal models, I am limited by only what I see, I am one person, I can't affect this world. And so that leads to the avoidance and living your personal life, the freedom of the contemplative mindset is so critical. It's a completely different model of reality, I am part of a complex and interconnected system, I am not alone, I am deeply connected to all of you. And if we really believe this, this applies to how we change. So change doesn't happen without a social movement. And a social movement starts with us and our small community. And so I have moved towards embracing the system's view. And this idea of social quantum change, we cannot see our impact. We cannot assume or have the hubris to think that we know the future. And so rather than money, I've spent a lot of time trying to use information to predict the future and find the most impactful path. And that has led to a lot of misery. Because in asking climate experts all over the world, there are different answers. There are so many ways that we need to work together to move this system that we're all in. And so it's right here in front of us, I finally feel like I have found my work. And and it is partly about this distress to action. So what is this, we've been talking so much about community and how important is to not feel alone in essence that is, doesn't lead anywhere. And I will just say that the fundamental finding from my field stress science is that social support is the biggest predictor of well being resilience and recovery from stress and trauma. It also applies to health. So it's the social connectivity as Dekila said, We're these social mammals that are in such need of each other. And particularly in this moment. I love this quote from Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, that's the only thing that ever has." So part of this contemplative mindset is the ability to see beyond that fearful animal when we when we see reality as it is, and to to actually be able to be with the sadness, the grief, that the reality of how things are at this moment, takes mindfulness takes metacognition. So So that brings me to this study this question I had, we know from experience and from what you've been hearing this week, how important a contemplative mindset is, so we simply measured ability, levels of mindfulness and a large cohort in this bay area, and ask does this predict protect people from that maladaptive climate distress that avoidance. And what we found was that those with higher levels of mindful thinking of being able to tolerate distressing thoughts and seeing them as just thoughts, predicted 30%, lower climate distress and avoidance, then we went through another fire season, and everyone went up in climate distress. This is what happens, this direct contact puts us back into that fear mode mode. I smell, I was with smoke for a month. And so while we can have our, you know, we can try to think our way out of this, but when you're living in it, you tap into the despair, your body feels sick. So we found that after the next fire season, people who were high in mindfulness did not increase in this maladaptive climate distress and avoidance of thoughts about climate. So we have data showing that it really is phenomenally important with a very significant impact on keeping calm, keeping clear headed seeing reality as it is, we'll be experiencing more climate disasters and this ability to be mindful, and help us weather these so that we can act wisely is absolutely critical. And I'll just end with my a few tips for my just finished writing the book that Susan mentioned, a stress prescription. It's not about escaping stress, but how can we live well with the volatile uncertainty of our era? How can we embrace uncertainty, and know that we can live with this discomfort of not knowing. So part of it is while things feel so uncontrollable, it's finding the control that we have, right in our local environment, because the global warming is local warming. And

this is what we can touch and influence and our actions, our emotions are so contagious. So this is part of the systemic change, trusting that we are part of social quantum change, change can happen non locally, change can happen where we don't see it. Of course, taking refuge in nature, as tequila talked about is, is a unique and critical way to build our resilience. And there's so much research showing how direct contact immersion, nature and art and letting our senses be one with nature be really experiencing it fully, is actually phenomenally restorative to our body and our biology as well. And then lastly, finding joy and purpose in our day. And I'll just end with quoting some very famous people, you know, in this journey as we move toward action, in our short lies, as we walk each other home, May we kiss the Earth, with our caring and our stewardship of it for our future generations. Thank you.

Susan Bauer-Wu 33:02

Thank you, Elissa. filled with wisdom filled with science and heart, as always, thank you, Elissa. Other panelists have question for Elissa, comment?

Dekila Chungyalpa 33:20

I do. I'd love to. Alyssa, when you were talking, one of the things that really sort of rose up was the number of headlines and studies we've seen showing that loneliness is such a crisis in the West, you know, and hearing you talk about the importance of social support. And you know what that means that it builds resilience to trauma? Can you can you talk a little bit about how we overcome this kind of individualism, that hyper individualism in the West that has led people to feel like they're completely isolated? And also whether that's a generational thing, you know, is this something we see that's changing? Is it getting better? Is it getting worse?

Elissa Epel 34:02

That's such a great question, Dekila, this, you know, even just starting for our mindset, to quote Dan Siegel, our sense that we are separate is a fatal flaw that we have made. And so, so part of this climate distress is also thinking it's ours. And thinking we can talk about it, of course, socially, and we just have, I think, a phenomenal unmet need in being able to talk about climate and our different varied futures and, and our next step, because we can't do anything alone. So it's a discussion that is lacking, we need to be talking about climate at dinner, in our work in our schools and in a healthy way, because the of course the headlines are the counter narratives. So how do we live with all of these different narratives? And you know, and stay hopeful? So the loneliness is a it is a phenomenal epidemic right now. Not that we're not together in with people necessarily, but the feeling of loneliness is actually what is leading to depression, not just social isolation. And so it is a I mean, the I'd like to hear, have discussion and hear from the audience where they think about the generational differences, because I am absolutely most concerned about our young adults and our youth. And so they are growing up with this narrative. And we know from a recent study by Brett Ray and colleagues that 56% of young adults worldwide This is a study of 10,000 young adults feel that humanity is doomed. And that is a very scary thought. And we need to be countering that with a more balanced view of reality, and are our local power that is, of course, becomes more of a communal or, or social action. And I would love to bounce that back to you tequila. If you wanted to comment on the generation,

Susan Bauer-Wu 36:14

Anything to add Dekila?

Dekila Chungyalpa 36:18

Well, I see a lot of hope in younger generations, because I think they are crossing boundaries. They're comfortable in boundary areas. So I'm, for example, seeing the topic of equity just being the root, the thing they ground themselves with, in a climate action or climate dialogue, which means that automatically, there is so much intersectionality. Right, the the conversation is so much richer. And I think the solutions are so much richer. But one of the things I mean, this tweet that I mentioned, one of the things that's really heartbreaking for me is people's describing humanity as a pest, quite often in this language to humans are a pest on the planet, they should not exist, they should be eradicated. And that kind of self hatred is so worrying for me, you know, which is also why I talk so much about this effortless compassion the earth gives. As far as the Earth is concerned, we're just one life form. We have to let go of the hubris in so many ways to remind ourselves that we might have destroyed so much of diversity, but we're still one life form. And the earth wants us to exist, like it wants every other life form to exist, there isn't the singular kind of pulling us out and telling us we're terrible, and therefore death and destruction will rain on us. And I've, I'm myself really, really aware of and concerned about what's happening to young people and what we're kind of bequeathing them with, if we are not focused on building their inner resilience now, right? All of us who are in this, all of you who are listening, our energy has to be in building the inner resilience with people who are most impacted by climate change, because they will carry the weight of it. I'll leave it at that.

Susan Bauer-Wu 38:04

Thank you to Dekila, thank you, Elissa. And I invite brother Phap Dung, to share his reflections.

Brother Phap Dung 38:15

Dear friends, hello, thank you for that. The especially for the youth, the awareness that we need to reframe a little bit and bring some more wonder and magic into the movement and not stress so much on the negative although it is crisis and so on. But you know, as a human body as a human mind, we can only handle so much. And but yeah, I just wanted to reframe a little bit in my reflection, what is the Buddhist monk have to do with any of this? Because sometimes we're mistakenly framed as Buddhists, spiritually leaders or like renouncing the world and retreating back to the mountain. But I've reflected a lot, especially before I went to the Glasgow conference, because we had to contribute, what is our lives what is our choice and how we live have to do with any of this. So I had to reflect a lot about my choice to become a monk. And so it brought that reflection back to the time of India when this young man who was married, had a child and he was deemed to be the ruler of his kingdom. He could not handle any more he was suffering so much torn, because he was not able to, you know, you know, follow his father's footsteps, because he saw so much you know, that time the militarization because people are getting wealthy so they have to protect so they were hired military I basically so it's been militarized men and all. So becoming having economy and rich people becoming rich and the class system. So he saw that torn in his heart because he was living a very privileged life. And he was also suffering because he saw the suffering in his father and his family. So that moved him to look for a better way for a spiritual path. So I just want to reframe that Buddhism is not a religion. But it came from a movement from a young person trying to find an alternative way to be in the world. Of course, he left his wife, his child, and I've always reflected that way, it was so important, he loved his wife, he loved his child very much. What could be more important for him to do? Because he felt conflicted inside, maybe he

reacted differently to his family. So he had to go find this piece for himself and come back so he can have something to transmit to his child. That's what he was worried about is like, How can I actually, if I can't handle my anger, if I can't handle my emotion, if I can't handle my negative, depressed state, because you I imagine he was torn that no one talks about that, but I kind of re imagine myself in this time, and we are in a very particular very similar time. So this is nothing irrelevant. So this reflection helped me a lot to reframe, like why people left the, I guess, the conventional way of living, to go and beg and to depend on people for food and sustenance. That is real action of acknowledgement of our dependency, to actually go into the village and beg and, and to be humble and to find a spiritual answer to things that you are enough, you are okay, you don't need all this. Because after they would receive the food, the people would come with their suffering. And they would ask, okay, how do we get out of this? So I just wanted to reframe that, that, you know, our choice to become monastic is a kind of resistance to the conventional way these all these words, right, these capitalist system, the militarization, the individual, you know, we can categorize many things that we, we know that is being is very detrimental, not just to environment, but to the human heart as well, you know, so many messages to young people now is that they're not enough. And that's how the economy works. And that's how the economy keeps alive. And in this, if you can go on to that formula, and you see why the planet and the climate is in the state that it is, but I don't want to go into pointing fingers or blaming. But so our monastery our practice centers, and our retreats is to help people come in, in touch with themselves. So in a way the Buddhist practice is the technology for us to actually come back and reconnect and not feel alienated to our ancestor to our parents. But first the real mechanism first is to relieve the resentment the anger that we have towards our parents towards our loved one towards the people we are afraid of in our you know it because if you're not in harmony, if you're not at peace with that, it's very hard for you to do activist work. It's like meditation, it's hard to meditate if you have resentment. It's hard to do good work sustainably. Resilience and all that it with, out of anger, you will burn out. So out of the we need to help people and this is what we do as a community. And it's funny you used when there was a shift to focus on young people. We just had a retreat the wake up. We have a wake up movement for 19 year old and 35 year we just had a retreat for over 100 people. Young people came to Deer Park monastery in and it was beautiful. Anyways, we just in our Sundays are open. And it's been two weeks now since the retreat and one of the young woman who lives in San Diego, she came up for our Sunday service day of practice. And you know, yeah, it, you know, I experienced during the retreat, and it was a young woman that was actually traumatized. She wanted to leave the retreat, you know, and on the first evening, so this is something and I remember being with her and breathing with her and showing her the technique of following your breath coming back to the body and staying out of that mind that is like a it's like a spiral. So with that Deep breathing, and I taught her belly breathing. And this is a real example of very, very practical ways for each individual and as a collective, to handle when things come up. That is stressful. But that, you know, I was so surprised, because the Sunday she showed up, and I was really because she was afraid of people. What is it because of social anxiety, young people now are afraid to beat each other. And we have three people had, during the whole five day retreat, we had three people had breakdowns, because they were afraid of others, not afraid them for a particular reason. It's just they've forgotten how to be with people. And to look people in the eye or like when people look you in the eye, these these basic things to help us. And I think that's fundamental. And that's what we're doing at Glasgow, we're teaching these leaders, very, very powerful and educated leaders, but they didn't know how to like, take care of their feelings, and their emotion. So my brother and I were there, we basically every session that we had, we taught them to

how to come back to their breath, how to relax, because you cannot negotiate, and have a dialogue and how, if you're tight, if you're angry, if you're, there's no way they're going to come with any kind of solution that is respectful from all sides, and to hear each other and understanding each other's different perspective. Without them, having a technology a method of practice to actually deal with the present. And this is something very important in all our movements, whatever scope, we're at whatever front we're dealing with, we need the technology. And this is what the this man 2005 And years ago found it was not just a philosophical, ideological idea about connection into be, but he had very practical tools, the breathing method, the sitting, the letting go of our thoughts, so that we can take a break, and to nourish ourselves. And so for me, for young people, we have a teen camp coming up with over 150 teenagers, no parents, they come and they will put all their electronics in a glass box and put it in a Ziploc put it in there. And they will have six days of being in nature. And they will camp will have a fireplace. And the first thing I teach them is how to hug a bush. Do not be afraid of the bush, because young people they don't they're afraid of being dirty. They're afraid of being barefoot. They're afraid of touching bushes. And out you know, they they have this anxiety in them. So I teach them how to hug a bush and say, look, it's beautiful feeling. And so the way education reframing our place in nature, I recently call it we start we have to start domesticating nature. Like anywhere you feel safe, that means nature has been devastated. I'm sorry, that's very extreme. But this anywhere that you feel, you're afraid to get dirty. That means you've taken over too much like our detergent, when we walk in the forest, it swept myself with sage because I feel the coyotes can smell my detergent. So things like that we have to reframe a little bit our place in nature. I'm sorry, I can go on. But I just want to just do a shout out for our attention to the young people because that is and to give them the tools to connect with themselves. Because you cannot do anything. If you don't know how to take care of yourself in terms of food, in terms of sleep patterns, these things are fundamental in any type of in depth. So I'll just kind of end with that, you know, to continue our discussion. Thank you for listening.

Susan Bauer-Wu 49:12

Thank you so much, brother. I we're going to open it up to some q&a from the audience. And I will begin with a question that came in. If you have a question, put it in the q&a rather than the regular chat. And there's a question actually for you, brother, from Rachel, Rachel A. And she says I'm interested to know what resistance you brother young found from world leaders in doing these practices at ... and how you got around it. You're muted, brother, you're muted.

Brother Phap Dung 50:00

Yeah, I'm sorry, what resistance? I don't understand the question what my

Susan Bauer-Wu 50:05

The question was... maybe just share your experience at COP? What it was like?

Brother Phap Dung 50:09

Oh, yes, yes, yes. You know, inside the, the, the blue zone, the way we were at where all the executives were making stuff. Every morning at six o'clock we had meditation. So we had, like, people in suits and stuff come and we meditated under this globe. So we taught them how to be okay, and be relaxed and how to be in their body. And to trust more, you know, because a lot of tension there there is like, the suspicions of each other and trying to get their agenda that intensity is so it's so detrimental to

like, human vibes or dislike, love. And yeah, I don't want to say these words, because, you know, they might be but it's just basically relax, okay, you know, and then that's how you can communicate. And that's how you can listen, as opposed to when I went outside to the student, young people's march, it was fun, music alive, and like, celebratory, you know, my brother and I, we we follow we could we had a session and we're like, God, this is worth it. You know, and we follow the because there's something that we're afraid of, that we call nature that we call the passion, youth noise music is missing in the blue zone. This are like you think you can solve it with technology with system presentations. But they should bring those two together. And I think, I think we should, when I say resist, I think more like the word is we need to combine and not be afraid of things that are, you know, people dress differently, you know, everybody looks so professional in there and you go outside people are much much. I know it's a very stereotype. But I see this in the movement in the because it we do need to depend on the corporates and the leaders and so on. Unfortunately, they're in the place of power. And so young people will try indigenous people are trying to break in, and they will have these protests, that is great. But you can see you see that there's somehow in our human mind, there's this kind of separation of like, okay, and we're gonna do the real work, you know, get this silly children's stuff out of the way, or like, we're now we got work to do, we'll do the real work. Now, now that you've done your say that those kinds of comments, really, I had to resist. And I had to really breathe, because it's dividing parts of me. You know, I think both are needed. I don't know how you can frame that. But that's my experience that there's something missing. And I saw some leaders really come out, emotional and cry. I mean, I remember leaving, I wish some of these leaders would cry. I will I wish they would like laugh in front of public cries because they know this is important to them. So for me, this is something very, I don't know if it's resisted, but it's more like bringing together Thank you.

Susan Bauer-Wu 53:21

Thank you. Thank you, brother. There's a there's a question from Jennifer. That I think is a really good one. Does how do we connect with people who have no exposure to mindfulness or caring about the planet and inequities for example people who just want to live their lives and push away their suffering so it's speaks a bit to what Elissa Thank you are talking about but uh, welcome you responding or Dekila.

Elissa Epel 54:03

I'll briefly answer that. The reaching people and Katharine Hayhoe talks about this through what they do care about, and finding that conversation where it's tied to climate because everything is tied to climate. And Susan has a great example, if you want to give that really quickly. And last week about mindfulness, we're not going to get the world meditating. The measure I used was trait mindfulness, most of those people hadn't meditated. And so it's really a, you know, a way of seeing and thinking and a mindset. So I do think we can promote that more through education and through practices. Susan.

Susan Bauer-Wu 54:40

Thank you, Elissa. I have lots of examples and I don't have time to go through it, but it's it is actually an edge for me that I am every day leaning into. I actually am talking about this all the time with people who try not to think about it or actually don't even think about it and following Katherine's advice does seem to be making a difference. Dekila, actually, I'd love for you to share it because this is a Buddhist

oriented gathering. Your work is very interfaith, I think it's really important. And maybe you could just share a bit about your work with people across faith and contemplative traditions.

Dekila Chungyalpa 55:25

So, I was just trying to read through some of the q&a. And I think someone else asked a question, how do you speak to climate deniers? And how do you speak to people who are not like us. And I never planned this. But the last 14 years of my life, I've been working with faith leaders, and called zookeepers of indigenous traditions on environmental and climate issues. The local initiative, which I created here at UW Madison, we work specifically with evangelical church leaders around the world, including here in the US. And I do have moments where I'm like, What am I a Buddhist, doing, working with all these evangelicals past pastors. So I think we we have to understand, first of all, to do this kind of work to to be able to cross these boundaries we've created for ourselves, we actually have to do inner work ourselves, to to let go of all of the judgment, we have all the anger, we have all the protectiveness we feel for our communities, right, as someone from the Global South, who's a very outspoken eco feminist, my concern for people like me, or is very high. And so how, how do I let go of that? The first way I let go of that is to understand that these people who do not agree with me actually are being driven by this exact same emotion. They are trying to protect who they love. Most of the time, in these conversations on climate change, and climate science, behind closed doors with climate denialists, what I learned is they're not rejecting the science, they're rejecting the implications of what the science tells them, which is their way of life is in danger, they have to change their way of life. And that means they cannot give their children and family what they want to give their children and family. And so being able to understand that they've been driven by the same protective loving instincts that I am, really helps to, to break through that boundary where they are the enemy. I think the second thing too, for me now, on an institutional level, working with fates, what I've learned is that you find the issue they care about the most. And that's the issue you begin with. So I've been working with faith leaders now 14 years, I rarely start the conversation with climate change. What I almost always start the conversation with is disasters. Because it turns out the most generous, generous donors in the United States Post disasters are the churches, they really care what happens to people during disasters. So if I can lean into what they care about the most, and bring the dialog there and say, Well, let's talk about disasters. Let me just tell you what we are predicting and for seeing for these communities you care about, I don't need to talk about climate change. I don't need them to even you know, politically say they've shifted, although I'd love for them to and part of locals work is to actually influence policy. At the end of the day, what I need is for them to understand that they own this piece of climate solutions, that this piece of Climate Solutions is there. And by owning that they are protecting who they love the most. Right. And I think that means that we also understand, and I this is very long ago, so I don't have a reference, I apologize. But I remember seeing, you know, in a lot of social social science theory, when we do this othering right, when we have this us and then well we don't acknowledge is that we've been driven by different sets of values, that just because they are climate denialists doesn't mean that they do not have a valid set of values that that influence them in terms of the decisions we they make, right? So we know conservatives really lean into, for example, family loyalty, right? And it turns out, liberals really lean into individualism into curiosity into into it into independence into exploration of new ideas, right? I think understanding that just because people have this set of values doesn't make them lesser. They we are all ultimately the same. We're looking for happiness. I think that becomes we can build enough of a dialogue and build a bridge with that.

Susan Bauer-Wu 59:56

Thank you so much Dekila. I think we're out of time. So I'm going to just wrap up and take a moment. So thank you Dekila, and Elissa, and Brother, this is really a delight to be together. And I'd like to just take a moment for us to pause and to dedicate this time dedicate any merit, any goodness that came from this time together, may you use it, to inspire others to serve your community and your mother earth and all. Its wonderful beings. some closing comments for the summit. like to invite you. If you'd like to offer any support the donation link is in the chat. And we hope to see you and at other events, Joanna Macy is going to be coming on soon. And the summit continues all week. Check out the lineup for the upcoming events. And thanks so much for joining us, everybody, be well.

Elissa Epel 1:01:01

And the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute is a phenomenal resource on climate. Thank you.

Susan Bauer-Wu 1:01:08

Thank you, everybody. Yeah, check out all our work. We're all doing great things as well as all of you that are watching. So remember, we're not alone. We're in community when this beautiful interconnected web. Lots of love. Thank you.