

March 7 Webinar Questions	Responses
<p>Every big change in history has come from conflict. How compassion for others and the planet could coexist with the necessary revolution we need to harmonize our society with nature?</p>	<p>Liane: The journey towards harmonizing society with nature begins within. By cultivating a deeper connection with ourselves, you can foster more compassionate interactions with others and the planet. Our practices such as mindfulness, meditation, compassion and self-reflection can be essential in nurturing this inner change. And there are examples of changes without heavy conflict: While Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. are well-known advocates of non-violence, there are numerous individuals and communities who have made impactful changes through peaceful means. Learning and sharing their stories can inspire a belief in the power and feasibility of non-violent transformation. So, revolution doesn't always mean large-scale upheaval. Through small, collective acts of kindness and service, we can create ripples of positive change. You can cultivate alternatives to existing systems which can lead to transformation without the need for conflict. Encourage the exploration of sustainable communities, look for likeminded people to create <a href="#">s.th.</a> meaningful in and with nature eg. permaculture, and collaborative economies that align more closely with nature.</p>
<p>In addition to the new wonderful opportunities mentioned for teaching to build eco-awareness into their teaching as a form of personal and professional development, should eco-awareness become a major component of mindfulness/ MBI teacher training now also? Is this happening?</p>	<p>Christine: Yes, in many of the examples that we presented this is exactly what is happening :).</p> <p>Bruce: I cannot speak for MBSR, but would think that eco-awareness should be incorporated in mindfulness trainings whenever it makes sense, but that in some cases it might not fit so well.</p> <p>Margaret: Let's say rather than a major component, that eco-awareness has a rightful place in any offering that is helping us to know our own place in this world, to learn about perceptions (such as anthropocentrism) the causes and conditions of suffering (such as separation, superiority, colonialism, imperialism, extransctionism) and how healing and thriving for all living beings can come through compassion, kindness and action for those living on this planet. Since we're all affected by the climate crisis, let's not shy away from the willingness to name that and to begin to wonder what we can do with our hearts, minds and hands to transform the world to care for the Earth.</p>
<p>Many participants joining MBSR and other MBIs are joining from a place of physical and emotional exhaustion - how can we take that into account when wisely confronting them with the many painful realities of a world shaken by polycrisis?</p>	<p>Liane: Meeting them where they are is I think the first step, that we all know is so helpful. I would less speak about confronting them but inviting them to explore new ways of relating to this world. Creating a safe space for them to share and experience the sense of community. Encourage the perspective that they have the agency to make incremental changes that contribute positively to both their life and the world around them. When approaching them with the challenging realities of the world, do so mindfully and gradually, helping them to build their capacity to engage with these issues without becoming overwhelmed.</p> <p>Margaret: I agree with Liane, and want to emphasize that offering people ways to resource and strengthen themselves through mindfulness and in all the ways people creatively do this then provides a foundation from which to open to the more challenging aspects of eco-awareness. Continuously resourcing oneself allows for gradual growth in understanding and a capacity from which to take action.</p>
<p>Are you still finding people today that are willing to practice an hour a day?</p>	<p>Liane: Certainly not at the beginning. However, those who practice for a while often gradually extend the length of their practice. I would suggest that there are many opportunities to practice throughout the day, and the quality of practice is not necessarily determined by its length. It's better to focus on practicing "effectively", (beginnersmind) than to solely aim for longer durations.</p>
<p>Many of the young people we work with cannot meditate - they find their minds are too distracted. We have been exploring moving meditation practices with them but I'd love to hear other practices that can settle them.</p>	<p>Christine: I know this challenge from my own courses at the University. It is important to offer a kind of buffet of different practices so that there is some kind of flexibility. Often, there also needs to be first a step of "resourcing" before meditation can be introduced/ be possible. Liane: I am well-acquainted with this topic, as I frequently observe it in organizations with younger individuals who often have short attention spans. In my experience, being in nature and engaging in practices outdoors can be very beneficial. Additionally, the 4-1-7-1 counting practice can be effective, as counting helps calm the mind. Mindful listening is also quite effective, as are imaginative practices. Also meditation doesn't mean not being distracted but to observe the distraction and become familiar with it. Often people think practicing means we need to establish a calm and silent mind. Simply explaining that being with the distraction might shift <a href="#">s.th.</a></p>

<p>Do you have tips on how to get out of our comfort zones and have the courage to have difficult conversations and share our offerings in accessible, inclusive and appropriate ways that help to build bridges rather than increase polarisation existing echo chambers?</p>	<p>Bruce: I am reminded of Thich Nhat Hanh's very small book "How to Love" in which he says that attentively listening with the intent to understand is among the greatest gifts you can offer. When engaging someone who has differing worldview, confrontation often causes reactivity, while deep listening, cautious questioning, and search for common ground can be helpful. /Christine: This is one of the key elements of mindfulness-based approaches - which need to be intergrated in the way we listen, speak and communicate.</p>
<p>Thank you so much for this webinar - I was wondering how does this work relates/sees to the work that reconnects?</p>	<p>Christine: The Work That Reconnects is widely acknowledged in the field of inner transformation for sustainability. You will see that it is mentioned in many of the publications and policy reports that I shared during the session. Liane: At least we as the inner Green Deal feel closely linked to Joanny Macy's work, using some exercises and understanding her process model as very close to other models we use.</p>
<p>I'm a member of the student council at the University of Würzburg, Germany/Europe and among students I see a strong commitment to live and buy sustainably. But due to inflation, there is more and more frustration because a lot of us students cannot afford to buy biological/ sustainable goods anymore. What would you suggest them to do, since unfortunately I see a lot of them turning away from their commitment to sustainability in general?</p>	<p>Bruce: These are important yet challenging considerations that each of us has to work through individually. I will say that in general most ecological choices are less expensive than those with higher carbon/waste footprints. Walking, biking &amp; public ground transport are less expensive than autos &amp; air transport. Nuts, beans, legumes and other plant proteins are usually healthier and lower cost than animal-based foods. When purchasing goods, we should remember that of the Reduce, Re-use, and Recycle trio, Reduce is the most important. /Christine: As mentioned during the seminar, it is important to challenge current unsustainable paradigms and approaches. Small activities can be very powerful if you engage in a way that it addressed unsustainable behaviours, mindsets, cultures and systems at the same time.</p>
<p>Great question. Also a student here. I wonder how mindfulness can offer value in how we address the manifestation of the polycrises on this personal level.</p>	<p>Christine: Mindfulness is a way of living - it is a different way of being, thinking and acting in the world, which challenges the mainstream and offers new pathways for addressing the polycrisis, with a new sense of agency and hope. See related input from the presentations.</p>