

The World We Make

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Center for
healthyminds
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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innovations

Resilient Minds, Resilient Planet Transcript

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Presenters: Dekila Chungyalpa, Katharine Hayhoe, Heather McTeer Toney, Gary Besaw, Richard J. Davidson

>>Richard Davidson: Good evening everyone, I am Richie Davidson I am the founder and director of Center for Healthy Minds and founder of Healthy Minds Innovations, our affiliate nonprofit at University of Wisconsin in Madison. It's great to be with you this evening. Tonight is the fourth night in a series of events celebrating our 10th anniversary. These events we call *The World We Make*, where we invite our community to envision a world where human flourishing is center stage. Tonight we are going to be talking about resilient minds and resilient planets. We'll say more about that in a moment. Each night, we have programming beginning at 7:00 o'clock central time. And this is the next to last evening of that programming. Before we begin, I want to thank our sponsors who help us put this program on, without whom, we could never do this. Chris and Sara Fortune, the Madison Gas & Electric Foundation, Jim and Judy Hirsch, the Outrider Foundation, the QTI Group, Atomic Object and Delta Properties. As we're settling in, please in the chatbox, tell us where you're from. We've had folks joining from all over the world over the last few evenings.

And it really is great to have as one of the silver linings of this challenging time in which we're living the ability to offer these events globally for those who might be interested. People from Argentina. Thank you for tuning in this evening. So this is the fourth in a series of events we've had each week. You can go back. They're all being archived online and you can see the events from the previous evenings. We began talking with the mind-brain-body connection. We moved on to the developing mind. Last night we featured the work of our affiliated nonprofit where we are translating the science and bringing it out into the world and talked about well-being in the workplace and also our partnership with the Madison Metropolitan School District, where we are working to promote well-being in both the teachers and staff as well as in the students.

So tonight we have a very special event planned for you. This is an event that we're calling "Resilient Minds, Resilient Planet." And it features the work of the Loka Initiative, which is a new initiative in the Center for Healthy Minds. Someone might reasonably ask: Why are you guys doing this? What does this have to do with healthy minds? And one of the things that human beings all share is biophilia. We all have an attraction to nature. In fact, recent research very clearly indicates that being out in nature, even for a very short period of time, has beneficial effects on the brain and the body. This is something that is really quite remarkable. And these effects are quite pronounced. And so that's one reason why this initiative is so centrally relevant to the work that we do.

A second is that part of human flourishing is appreciating our interconnectedness, our interconnectedness with others and our

interconnectedness with the planet. And so we believe that optimal human flourishing will be associated with increased sensitivity to and care for our environment. And this is something that is central to the Loka Initiative.

It gives me great pleasure this evening to introduce a very dear friend and colleague, Dekila Chungyalpa. Dekila is the director of the Loka Initiative and we're just so thrilled to have her with us in Madison. It's a long story, which I won't go into to describe exactly how she landed here. But let's just say that this is one of those old cosmic coincidence coordinators where the right things were happening at the right time and the stars were aligned. It really is so amazing to have her here. Dekila formerly worked at the World Wildlife Federation, where she did some amazing work in the Mekong Delta and other parts of the planet. She established a similar initiative at Yale University before she came to Wisconsin. And she is a very dear friend and colleague who has been remarkably connected to many different Indigenous and faith communities, both locally, nationally, and globally to help bring the Loka Initiative to life. And so it is my distinct honor and pleasure to have her with us this evening and to have her organize and orchestrate this program. So Dekila, thank you.

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: Thank you, so much. First of all, I'd like to say welcome to everybody. I'm so grateful to have all of you tuning in, all over the world. I can see people are tuning in from Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and across the U.S. So we thought we would start by taking a moment to be aware of what is going on in our minds and bodies right now. Once you have that presence, just tell us how you're feeling. Put it in the chat. One or two words

expressing what you're feeling right now. So comments are starting to come in. I can see "inspired" is the first one. "Fortunate." That's wonderful. "Connected." "Content." "Tired but excited." These are all really great. The reason why we thought we would start by doing this is that we wanted to say it doesn't matter whether we're connecting through technology and not in person right now. It doesn't matter where you are, who you are. The fact is we've all connected in our intention to be present here. We share the same concerns about our planet, about our communities, about ourselves. And we're sharing similar emotions with each other right now. So in order to set the stage for this incredible conversation, I wanted to start with something sobering, which is that 2015 to 2019 were the five hottest years on record since record keeping began in 1880. 2016 is the hottest year on record right now but it looks like 2020 will probably take that record. What does that mean in terms of impacts? Within less than a year, just this year alone, 4 million acres have gone up in flames in California. China has seen the worst floods in 16 years. There were also floods in Bangladesh and India that resulted in thousands of people displaced and deaths and Asia and Africa and other places. Of course, we're having one right now. We've had 25 tropical storms and hurricanes unleashed in the Atlantic. We also know that close to 70% of wild animals, birds, and fish species have vanished since 1970, that's 50 years. Whether it's climate change, ecological destruction or biodiversity loss, human activity, our behavior, is destroying the natural foundations that create life on our planet. By doing so we're making it much harder for ourselves to survive. The interesting thing is climate change and COVID-19 reveal exactly the same things. The same flaws in our societies. We know that our societies as they exist are built upon

systemic racism and inequities, which means that the same groups of people suffer the most. Women and children, poor people, communities of color, in the U.S. Black and Indigenous communities in particular. When they are made more vulnerable, they are also made more simultaneously expendable. And so climate change and COVID reveal that we are at a crossroads and we desperately need to walk towards a safer, kinder and sustainable direction. So Richie mentioned my program, the Loka Initiative. The Loka Initiative is a capacity building and convening platform for faith leaders and culture keepers of Indigenous leaders working on environmental and climate issues. Our vision is very simple: inner resilience and planetary resilience are interdependent. You can not have any one of these without the other two. What do I mean by resilience? Whether psychological, sociological or ecological; resilience is the ability to withstand and adjust to changing circumstances in order to adapt and thrive in whatever the new normal might be.

So it isn't going back to an old normal but understanding a new normal and adjusting to it. It's our ability to bounce back. It's integral for emotional and physical health.

I am thrilled to have the three speakers who will join me here today because each exemplifies resilience and they exemplify the power that comes from aligning the spiritual values to become problem solvers and protectors of their community and the planet we all call home. So I'm going to introduce each of the speakers and then turn it over to one of them. The first speaker is Dr. Katharine Hayhoe. She's an accomplished atmospheric scientist who studies climate change and why it matters to us. She's a remarkable communicator. You should definitely follow her on

Twitter, if you don't already. She has received the United Nations Champion of the Earth and she has been named one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people. Our second speaker is Heather McTeer Toney. She is the National Field Director of Moms Clean Air Force. She served as regional administrator for the EPA southeast region under President Obama and was the first African American mayor of Greenville, Mississippi. She's a renowned leader in the area of public service, environmental justice and community engagement and I heard about Heather and got to meet her after she was involved in Jane Fonda's Friday for the Future events. The third and final speaker is Gary Besaw. He is the director of Agriculture and Food Systems and ex-chairman of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. He has been an educator, vice principal, curriculum director, superintendent and dean of student services over the years. His most recent work is in stopping the Back Forty Mine at the most sacred site of the Menominee people. So I just wanted to say welcome. It's wonderful to have the three of you here joining me. I feel completely privileged and we're so grateful you're here. All of you have 10 minutes each. Please be respectful of each other's time. And I'm going to hand it over first to Katharine.

>>Katharine Hayhoe: Thank you so much. It is a pleasure to be with you here tonight in spirit and virtually. So many people from all over the world, but we are all connected. I'm from southern Ontario myself. I saw there are a few people from there. I grew up in Columbia, South America. I saw some people there. All of my in-laws live in Warrenton, Virginia. And there is someone from Warrenton, Virginia, too. Whoever we are, wherever we are, we're here because we all care about the same things. That's what I

want to talk about, which is climate change and how it connects to us all. If you don't mind putting on the slides. With climate change, the future is uncertain. But the greatest uncertainty specifically is us, humans. Will we continue to depend on fossil fuels for our source of energy or will we be able to transition to clean sources of energy? This choice is what will determine our future. How quickly and how much we do. Now, some people say to care about climate change, sure, if you're an environmentalist or naturalist, of course, you care about climate change. Or you are somebody recycles or a tree hugger then you care about climate change. If you're a Democrat, of course, you care about climate change. If you're none of those things people often say then I don't care. This is the greatest misconception that the largest number of us have because when it comes to climate change what's really at risk is everything! Just think about this. Take a breath. The air that you breathe came from our planet. The water that you drink comes from our planet. The food that we eat, all the resources we use to build our homes and everything that we have – it all comes from this planet. And so that's why to care about climate change. We don't have to be a certain type of person. We don't have to care about certain things or vote a certain way. We only have to be one thing and that is a human living on this planet. And we are all that. But even though climate change affects every single one of us, it does not affect us all equally. Burning fossil fuels doesn't just produce heat trapping gases but it also produces air pollution. We have known for a long time that people living in poor neighborhoods are at much greater risk of air pollution and the harm it causes to our lungs than people who are more well off. We have seen this start to play out with coronavirus. People whose lungs have already been damaged

by living in areas with high levels of air pollution are much more vulnerable to getting coronavirus, and when they get it, getting much sicker. So for example, in the city of Chicago, which is near where I went to school in Illinois, in the city of Chicago 30% of the population is Black but over 70% of the deaths from coronavirus are Black and air pollution is one of the biggest connectors there.

When we look around the entire world, we see these connections between poverty, between coronavirus. The United Nations just announced a couple weeks ago that the pandemic is going to fuel more conflict, more poverty, more starvation, pushing millions more children deeper into poverty, which they define as simply a lack of access to food and education and resources. Things that we all take for granted today. We also know climate change is doing the exact same thing. Since the 1960s, climate change has already increased the gap between richest and poorest countries by as much as 25%. That has already happened! The economic gap has widened by 25%. That has already happened. The economic gap has widened by 25% thanks to climate change. And when we look at the impacts of climate change, we know they disproportionately affect women and children, they affect Indigenous peoples, Native Americans, tribes. They disproportionately affect marginalized communities, people of color, people who are disabled, people who are already marginalized or living on the edge for some reason. Those are the one that are most affected by a changing climate. Here is the good news though. The good news is even though climate change is not fair at all, even though it disproportionately affects the most marginalized and vulnerable in our world, the solutions can help. When we look at solutions – and there's so many of them – when

we look at a few of the solutions, which range from clean energy which means we can supply energy to many countries that don't have fossil fuel resources. When we look at allowing Indigenous people to manage their land, when we look at the education of women and girls, when we look at smart farming practices and reducing food waste which helps with hunger. So many of the solutions to climate change also address the inequities and injustices around the world. So, when I look at the United Nations' sustainable development goals and down there at number 13, you have climate action. I actually would just take it out. I don't think it should be on the list because the only reason why we care about climate change is because it affects everything else we already care about. Poverty, hunger, basic access to health, education, gender equality, having clean water, having energy. All of these basic things that we take for granted are affected by and threatened by climate change but in the same way addressing climate change addresses them too. So last question: If that's true, why aren't we moving forward faster? I only have one word. Now, it's a lot more complicated than that but it all begins with this one word. The one word is "fear." Fear of what? First of all, fear that nothing we do will make a difference. And fear that somehow the solutions are going to make us worse off than the impacts. But the reality is neither of those fears are founded. I'm not a big inspirational quote person but I really like this one so I wanted to share this one here. It's by an author called Roy Bennett. He says, "Don't fear failure. Rather fear not trying." So if we're going to try, what's the most important thing we could do? Every single one of us are individuals no matter where we live. The most important thing we can do is talk about climate change. You might say talk about it? What are you talking about? Why is

that so important? Well, here is why. When you ask people across the whole U.S. if global warming is happening, most people say "yes." You're looking at results by county here. This is from the Yale program on climate communication. Anything in orange is more than 50%. Darker orange it is, the more people say "yes." But then you ask people a different question. You ask them this: "Do you think it will harm you personally?" All of a sudden the country goes blue. Nobody thinks it will harm them personally because we're not talking about how it affects us. This is not the darkest blue map. There is one more. "Do you ever talk about it?" No. Now, put the pieces together. What do we talk about? We talk about what matters to us. If we don't talk about it why would we care? If we don't care, why would we ever do something about it? The first step to action is using our voices to tell people why it matters, what we can do to fix it, and to advocate for change at every level. In our organization, school, university, business, city, place of worship. Whatever we are part of, we can use our voice. Today voting is part of using our voice, too. Why don't we talk about it? It's because we don't think it matters to us and we don't think there is anything positive that we can do to fix it. So instead we develop this negative feedback cycle. So climate changes. Then we get worried. Who wouldn't? So we share more scary data with people. But here is what neuroscience says. The more scary data we dump on to people, the more people reject it. So what happens? Inaction results. As neuroscientists Tali Sharot says, fear and anxiety causes us to withdraw, to freeze, to give up, rather than take action. So what do we need to do? This: Rather than climate changing more as part of a vicious cycle, instead when climate changes, we need to talk about why and how it matters to us and – this is a little fluorescent so I'll read it – all

the positive things that we can do to fix it. Here is how this works. Climate changes as we saw before. We get worried. But here is where we break the cycle. As researcher Matthew Goldberg says, he says climate conversations with friends and family create a true positive pro climate social feedback loop. So instead of sharing more doom and gloom information, what we share is how it affects us here and now and what are some things to do to fix it. Then as a result, people feel empowered rather than discouraged and action results. As neuroscientist Tali Sharot says, our brain is built to associate forward action with reward, something good, not with avoiding harm. So we have to reframe how we talk about this issue to provide hope, not dread. And here is the last piece of good news. The last piece of good news is this: The most effective messenger is you. Friends and family, people you know, they are the best people. You are the best person to talk about climate change. How? Not by starting with something we disagree on. But starting with something we agree on. Bonding over a shared value, love, concern, connecting the dots between how climate is changing and how it's affecting what we already care about. And lastly, inspiring each other to work together, not alone, but together because together we really can fix it. Thank you.

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: Thank you so much, Katharine. That was a really wonderful way to start. Heather, I'd like to ask you to go next.

>>Heather McTeer Toney: Thank you so much. It's wonderful to be here and absolutely amazing to see this wonderful collection of people from all over the world who have gathered for this conversation. I'm going to pick up right where Katharine left off.

She gave us a challenge of what we are supposed to do to talk about climate. The fact that we have to talk to each other.

I'm going to talk a bit about how we do that. How do we talk about climate? Who is a climate and environmental advocate? Often our images of what an environmentalist and a climate advocate look like vary based upon our backgrounds. I am a Black woman from the Southern part of the country, from Mississippi. A place where often people stereotypically don't think we have a lot of climate activists, they don't think we have environmentalists and certainly we don't see a lot of Black environmentalists. But unbeknownst to many, we're everywhere. Why? Because it's how we talk to each other. It's the fact that these conversations take place in our own communities in different ways, in different languages. I start with my place of faith. One of the differences that I noted a long time ago as a kid growing up, just sort of trying to identify things that connected me to nature and to climate and why this was such a burgeoning part of my life, it was all around me growing up. I just didn't realize it. But there are these little sayings that come up if you're raised in the South: "Lord willing and the creek don't rise" or "It's hot as hell." All of these different sayings that were connecting both faith in some way to my natural environment. And it made me begin to think and realize how people talk about what is going on around us and connected to the things that we know on a regular basis. In fact, in the African American tradition, a Christian tradition, I grew up in a nondenominational, Baptist church, going to church on Sunday, Wednesday, Saturday, Friday prayer just about every day. That faith instilled in me a sense of community, connectivity and also an underlying theme of connecting all things to our world. But it also created, as I got older, an understanding of

creation care and what that is versus the idea of dominionism. I want to talk about that a bit. It's a bit different in the African American traditions than the Evangelical traditions. I want to break it down. When we think about creation care, we think about it as a conversation. It's a conversation that we're having with our creator, a conversation we're having on our faith because the idea of salvation means freedom. It means the ability to look forward to something that at a point in time my ancestors did not have access to. The very being of our faith is a being of being free but also a responsibility to take care of our creation and be given a responsibility that there is something God is trusting us with. And part of that something that God is trusting us with is his very own creation. The Earth that we are here and responsible for. And so as a part of the African American tradition, the way that we have that conversation about it is interwoven into everything around us, "Lord willing and the creek don't rise." It's making sure everything we touch, that we see, how we move and live and have our being, it is interwoven even in the minute details of our environment. It's me knowing how the seasons would come and go, not because I was a horticulturist or outside every day. It was because I knew that my godmother had a garden out in her backyard and when certain things were planted and when they came up. It was that regular connectivity to people in the community and those conversations that we had.

And all the ways in the Bible that we saw – seed, time, harvest, as a responsibility and connection to what our ancestors sowed, worked and toiled for. Let's fast forward to today and talk about the ways we see and connect the very same elements of faith, responsibility, caring for each other and caring for creation to justice. Because I believe that climate change and climate justice

is an underpinning for every single social justice issue of our time. As we see an increase in the climate crisis and the impacts of extreme weather in our country, around the world, we see an increase in the social justice problems. This past week the New York Times did a story on the connection between climate change and education. Finding that in places where there were higher levels of heat, where there was more extreme heat, that there were disparate impacts to Black and Brown children when it came to how they performed in their education. This isn't new. Back in 2012, there was another study reported on in the New York Times that made a similar connection between climate change and violence. Showing that in urban communities and once again in Black and Brown spaces, that where you had extreme heat and where we could document the science and show where climate was having a disproportionate impact in vulnerable populations, there was an increase in violence.

And we could outline every social justice issue in our country and across this world and connect it to climate. Connect it to the climate crisis. Connect it to each and every underlying social justice issue that we know disproportionately impacts people of color. So how do we talk about this? How do we recognize that we're already talking about? I believe what Katharine just shared is absolutely the first step. Having the conversations but taking it even a step further and beginning to understand the language of people who don't look like us. Beginning to understand how we talk about climate, how we talk about these issues that are impacting our homes and friends and family and neighbors in different ways is connected to one another. Understanding that the more and more we break down the silos of what we think a

climate advocate or an environmentalist looks like, the better suited we are to come up with cultural competent solutions that would help us to understand these impacts and help us to really, really get to the nitty-gritty of what we should do together in order to help us to solve this climate crisis. It's understanding that the wildfires that are taking place out West are connected to the hurricane that is barreling right now up along the coast – toward the coast of Mississippi and Louisiana where I am. It's connected to the derechos that happened in the Midwest. Understanding that the farmers in the Midwest that are impacted from extreme flooding are those very same connections that very same system and have the same needs as those farmers in the Mississippi delta that are impacted because of that very same flooding.

We've sat in silos for so long that we've begun to get an image of what we think an environmentalist looks like. What we think a climate advocate looks like. What we think that person is talking about. It's why we don't assume that there are folks that look like me in the Southeast that are working and talking about climate. It's how we have the conversation. So here's my challenge to you. Here's where I think we take some next steps. It is listening deeply and convening ourselves together to understand that the more we have these conversations to discuss what are solutions that help us identify not only how we're being impacted but how we can equitably resolve these problems in circles that don't look like us, is a good step. It is building trust in communities that may not sing the same songs that we sing, may not speak the same language, but are certainly feeling the same impacts and want the same solutions. It is understanding that all environmentalists are not white. All environmentalists are not vegan. All environmentalists are not tree huggers. And those are not bad

things. But certainly removing the barriers that keep us from one another is a good step in having the conversations so that we know how to move forward collectively and Lord willing and the creek don't rise, we come to competent cultural climate solutions that are equitable, that are fair, and get us to the reductions that we know we have to have as a planet and for our children. That's the goal. And I look forward to talking about it more. Thank you, Dekila.

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: Thank you so much. That was lovely. Our final speaker is Gary Besaw. Gary?

>>Gary Besaw: *Posoh...* (shares a greeting in Menominee language). I'm told when I speak, I'm first always to introduce myself in our way, in our language. So I said "greetings, my relatives" because we know we're all related. Not only the humans but everything in this world is related. Those animals, those fish, those trees, that water. We're all related. And we need to understand that. We need to systems think and understand that. I said my name is (speaks Menominee)... that's the name I use when I pray every morning. That name means "messenger" or "translator" in our language, in the old language. I also said I'm Bear Clan. Bear Clan is the speaker and keeper of the law. That's partly why I knew that responsibility then to my clan to work for our tribal legislature and work with the tribe. I also said, I am but a common Menominee man. You should always see yourself as that. That you are just another person here on this world, and you do your best during that time that you're here. So what you see here on this slide is the Great Lakes and they are probably over 20% of the world's fresh water. Along the eastern side of

Wisconsin, that's the part that looks like the glove, the thumb, the thumb on the glove, you can see Michigan has copied us, but that's the thumb, Menominee had at one time in our ancestral territory... See we're called... when the Jesuit missionaries and French fur traders came and when others migrated to this area, they called us *Omaeqnomenaewak* – people of the wild rice – because wherever we went, there was wild rice. It just grew because that was our staple food. And when we knocked it down, it reseeded itself sustainably. And we made sure that we didn't get all of it. We kept it sustainable. But the Menominee call themselves something else. We call ourselves *Kiash Matchitiwuk*. That means “ancient ones” or “ancient movers” where we move from ricing camps to fishing camps to hunting camps to gardening camps to berry-picking camps to wintering camps. And we move sustainably, never taking too much from the Earth. And making sure that we left things in a sustainable, good way. Well, we have no – we have no migration story like others might have. Can we move to the next slide, please? You can see there – you can see an outline. It looks like almost by the center of the picture but you see a green rectangle. You can see that that's from the approximate – right there. There we go. You can see it better, that rectangle. From the approximate 12 to 15 million acres after we went through treaties, we come down to this land here. We had made agreements with the federal government and ceded lands to them for health and for education and for other reasons. But we got down to this. And it's about 235,000 acres. It's all forest. That's why it's so – why it looks so green. A squirrel, an animal, could start on the canopy on the east and travel to the West without touching the ground. And we know it needs to stay that way. We speak of some of the perils of climate and risk

impact to at-risk communities. As I said, I am but a common Menominee man. Let me speak towards some of what could be reflected in the Menominee but it also applies to other Indigenous communities. We are place based. We made treaties and ceded much of our territory. Luckily, we're only 60 miles away from where our creation story started when that ancestral bear come out of the mouth of the Menominee River. So we are lucky in that sense, not that many can have that. But we're place based. We're here. All of our stories are from this area. And when Menominee says when we say we're forest people and forest keepers and we say we are the forest, well... we are! We've never had until just lately some of the vaults and coffins and all of these concrete and metal types of burial types. It used to be people would be buried in the forest under logs so the animals can dig it up. But we were told, "Yeah, that's your shell. That's not your soul. That's your shell. That part is going to feed the rest of this forest. Some day your children are going to come by and they're going to pick blackberries or going to get hickory nuts or other things from that forest that they're going to eat or that other animals have eaten and they kill them." So in a certain way, that whole cycle comes around where those nutrients from your relatives that have passed on, your ancestors, are feeding us. That's what we're told. So we are that. We are that forest. And we understand that. We have certain rights on our reservation to where we're separate. We're like a state within a state. We can levy taxes or not. We have – we're a separate sovereign entity, so we set our own laws. We don't follow state laws. We follow federal law and tribal law. So while it's complex with other tribes, that's what we do. We're a separate entity. And we can't move off the reservation and move it anywhere. It's here. This is where we are. So when the

environment, when the climate changes, we struggle. We've seen where studies have shown and we've seen this because we're a forest, we're forest keepers, we harvest trees from our reservation and we do it in a sustainable way so that we never take out too many trees and diminish what is there. In fact, we've cut the equivalent of two and a half times that whole reservation and now we have more trees and a denser, higher quality trees than we did 150 years ago when we started this effort. But we see now as we study that we're losing some of those gifts the Creator gave us. Slowly, the maple trees will move out of here as the climate warms. We're seeing that now in some of the Southern boundaries of where maples are in Iowa and Michigan or Minnesota. So we're seeing that, and we're told that at some point in time the maple trees will not live here very well in a healthy way because of climate change. We're losing ash trees. Black ash are ceremonial and used for making baskets and other things for us. Those are important gifts. We have animals through here that we're seeing disappear. We are seeing – we're seeing all types of invasives come through and harming the fish that we're depending on. We are like canaries in the coal mine, not only for our understanding of the climate but also with the health of us. So we struggle. We struggle with what we're doing. When we talk about this understanding of really seeing the patterns and understanding the systems and what we are looking at, we're sad. We understand though that we have to – we have to keep passing this on. We were told that the light-skinned people would come here in huge, huge canoes. They would come here. And they would change things. That was passed on. And it happened. But we are told we have to keep our stories. When people talk about natives being stoic, we're told, "It's not stoic," we're told, "Don't look at the

world with a filter. You try to observe and see it as it is.” For instance, if you had a filter of jealousy and you were always jealous, your husband or your wife could be talking across the room, and you could think she's trying to – she's trying to cheat on you or you could think those types of things if you're seeing it with a jealous filter. But it may be they're planning a birthday party for you. When you have a filter that is of greed and of trying to collect things, when you see a deer, when you see those animals, when you see those plants and that water, you don't see them as spiritual beings. You end up seeing them as something you can make a profit from. And it's wrong.

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: Hi. Thank you so much, Gary. So I was so moved with all three of you speaking because it seemed like it was a natural flow about what you said. Katharine talked about the importance of talking and reaching out and building these connections, right? And Heather talked about the importance of listening deeply and reaching out and building connections. And Gary, of course, you talked about all the interconnections that we have, not just with human life, but with all life forms on Earth.

So with this energy, we've seen a lot of questions coming in. I'll invite Shaun to come in and take us to the Q&A session so all three of you can respond. I already see wonderful questions.

>>Shaun Huffman: Hello, everyone. So happy to be here and thank you all for joining us today. Our first question we'd like to ask is looking at the lack of consensus with the highest levels of governance and denialism that exists and the individual level especially in the United States, we are so deadlocked and environmental and climate issues. So why are we? I'll repeat that.

Why are we so deadlocked on environmental and climate issues? I hope that makes sense.

>>Heather McTeer Toney: I can try to jump in here. I don't know that we are deadlocked in a sense because people on the ground level are very clear about what they want. They want clean air, they want clean water, they want to make sure their children are healthy. And how this is translated to the highest levels of government, I think we're seeing that shift right now. In the United States this past year, there have been over 100 roll backs of regulations within the Environmental Protection Agency. And time after time, we have seen more and more people testify, advocate, send comments about the protections that they want to see for their children. The other piece of that is as we continue to see pollution flourish unfortunately throughout our country, places that folks previously thought were protected are not. So in the suburbs around Philadelphia where people and folks used to think that pollution would just stay in the inner city, now suburban families are seeing pollution out in their community. In Houston, Texas, when folks thought that the pollution around the petrochemicals were staying around the harbor area, now they're seeing it out in West Houston. So I think it's really becoming more apparent and we see those changes happen on a local level. And anything you see happening on the local level, trust and believe it will make its way up eventually. Maybe just not yet.

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: Katharine, do you also want to say anything about the question?

>>Katharine Hayhoe: What we're seeing is we're seeing a world that is increasingly being fragmented and divided into smaller and smaller groups or the word that people actually use is "tribes" but I believe that does Native Americans and Indigenous people a tremendous disservice. And the reason for that is fear. The more things change, the faster they change, the more afraid we are. The more we emphasize what divides us rather than what unites us. It's not just climate change. It's a toxic stew that has racism, it has sexism, it has looking down on us because they look differently than us or they act differently than us or they sound different from us in some way. It's this entire emphasis on what divides us rather than what unites us. And as I pointed out what unites us is far more than what divides us. And when it comes to making choices of clean air, clean water and a safe future climate for all of us, these things matter to every single one of us and we are starting to see that groundswell now. The deadlock at the highest level of politics in the U.S. remains. But at the ground level, well over half of the people in the U.S. – between 55 to 60% of people in the U.S. – are either alarmed or concerned about climate change already. The number of people who are flat out dismissive about it even though those people are predominantly concentrated in Washington DC and in the comment section of online news articles, those people only represent 7%. A very loud 7%, but only 7%. The vast majority of us understand that the world is changing. We understand that wildfires are burning greater areas and hurricanes are getting stronger and we understand that it affects us and we need to fix it. So change is coming. The only question is: Is it going to be fast enough?

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: Gary, would you like to respond?

>>Gary Besaw: I can say something, yes. I fully agree with what our esteemed panelists have said. And when we try to stereotype and categorize people and put them in boxes and shame on us, we're in 4 boxes here – when we do that, it's very easy for social media to take that and to exaggerate what happens. We see that happening. One of the – and while there is that potential, there also is the positive potential that I see with social media. So many times big business was able to use money and sell stories and sell realities. But now you're seeing people with cell phones showing the atrocities that are happening whether it be to individuals of color by police or whether it's fires and climate problems anywhere in the U.S. So we see the polar opposites that can happen and we've got to accentuate the strengths that can happen using social media. We're saying that from someone who while I'm not a luddite, I'm pretty darn close.

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: I think it's also worth mentioning that 100 companies are actually responsible for 75% of carbon emissions. A lot of this idea of a gridlock or any kind of denialism or disagreement actually some of that is quite manufactured. And for those of us who get put into these arguments that is it individual activism versus collective action, it's down-played in all kinds of actions. We need everybody to be involved. Ultimately it's the people that are powerful and we need everyone to be part of this movement. I can already see questions coming in that are all about dedicating the rest of their lives. Thank you for making this happen. Shaun, do we have more questions?

>>Shaun Huffman: Of course. Thank you so much for answering those. Speaking of communication here. What top two to three positive messages might advocates for climate action spread across the U.S. and who are the best messengers?

>>Katharine Hayhoe: Well, I can tell you what the social science says and Jonathon you're probably familiar with this too just as I am, but the number one best messenger is somebody who shares your values. Somebody who cares about the same things that you do. Somebody who lives the same way that you do. So if you're a parent talking to another parent. If you're a Christian, talking to somebody else who is a Christian too. If you're a member of the military, talking to somebody else about military experience. If you're in Madison, Wisconsin, talking to somebody else who lives in Madison, Wisconsin. The more we share with someone, the more effective a messenger we are and what are the messages to share? You don't have to hit people upside the head with a huge book of scientific facts. That actually doesn't work, remember? That's the cycle that just gets more and more vicious the more we do it. Instead sharing positive information on "hey, did you know that this is happening here, that this is happening now, and that you already care about it? You might not have known about it but as soon as you hear about it you already care about it because you're the type of person who would care and here is something we can do about it." Together working together to fix it. Because again working individually often just discourages us. We feel like we're the only person trying to roll a giant boulder up a hill. But we're not alone. There are millions probably hundreds of millions, maybe even billions, of hands on that boulder. And so working together gives us that hope that we need to keep on going that

we can really fix this thing. Somebody asked “What organizations should I join?” Join an organization that shares your values. If you're a mom, there is the Moms Clean Air Force right there! If you are a birder, the Audubon Society is huge on climate change and birds. If you're a young Evangelical, there's an organization called Young Evangelicals for Climate Action. If you love winter sports (as I know Jonathan does) there is Protect Our Winters which is an organization for people who love to do things outside in the winter. Whoever you are, there are organizations that share your values. Join them, use your voice, and advocate for a better future for us all.

>>Heather McTeer Toney: I could not agree more. I like to think about future focus solutions. When talking to people about climate and climate solutions and positivity, I say all the time “Think future. Think future” focus. Kids, absolutely are some of the best messengers on climate because they are thinking very innovatively and their creativity is just miles away from most of us who have gotten old and in our own little funk. When you see the energy of Alexandria Villaseñor or a Greta Thunberg or any of the young people who show up on Climate Friday's, you cannot help but to be truly engaged and say “Yes! We can do this! I can go out here!” I also want to say that when you're thinking about future focus solutions we should think about things that are impacting every aspect of our life. So it is saying to that mom, you know, thinking about good climate solutions can save you money at the grocery store, it can save you gas in your gas tank, it can reduce utility costs. Think about the things that touch people each and every day and make those very intimate connections so people are thinking future focus, not so much doom and gloom but the

real things that will better their life. One more thing, and this is something that Katharine said, and it reminded me about something my pastor used to say when I was little. We'd talk about fear and he would always remind us that fear was false evidence appearing real. That's what he would tell us. Fear is your false evidence... Look at what the evidence is. See is it really true? And if it is, what's the science behind it? And then what does your faith say and what does it do? Oftentimes that fear comes from us not knowing, not finding out the reality of what is possible. It's us deciding that the doom and gloom is out there and there is nothing we can do about it when reality is there are sound solutions that we can work through to make sure that our planet is in a good space for not just us today but for our children in the future. So we can change a lot of these things if we're willing to have those conversations and really think future focused.

>>Shaun Huffman: Thank you so much. I'm definitely going to have to remember that quote here. That's really insightful. Our next question is how can mindfulness move us from fear based negative self-narrative to a space of empowered activism?

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: I guess I can take that question. So I think at least from a Buddhist perspective when we talk about mindfulness, we are just allowing ourselves to experience is basically just embodiment, being in our body, taking that moment to be in our body. And I think what happens when we allow that to happen is we just spread our sense of awareness and how we connect it to the natural world. Because obviously even the oxygen that's coming in is coming from the trees and coming from

elsewhere. It allows us to have this sort of interdependence with nature that I think should be the basis of activism because we ultimately, as Gary pointed out earlier, we have to cultivate a sense of gratitude to the Earth, to nature, and to creation. Without it, none of these things could happen. Mothers couldn't be mothers. Children couldn't be children, right? And so from that place of gratitude, I think what happens automatically is – I'm going to try to get this right – is that all the false evidences fall away and we know what's real. The reality emerges because we live in a state of compassion.

>>Heather McTeer Toney: I want to just piggyback on that. Speaking from again my faith perspective it is woven into everything that I do. I can't and nor would I ever want to escape that. I think of the mindfulness, in the sense of spirit, of being very connected to – in my faith spirit is connected to wisdom – even in those spaces being very fearful, looking at what the international panel on climate change says in terms of how long we have to fix this problem would insight this anxiety and fear. But my faith tells me to become mindful, to be peaceful, to listen to my spirit, connecting to those things that are wisdom-related and looking at what are solutions and the way that I do that in terms of being mindful came from a therapy session. If you don't get therapy, people, I suggest you do it. It's great for everyone. It actually came from therapy of connecting and grounding myself through my five physical senses. What can I see? Smell? Touch? Taste? Hear? I can hear myself breathing. I know there is life in me and that I am taking in oxygen. So has the world come to an end because of the climate crisis? No, that means there is still time for me to be a part of the solution. And, that to me is

centering and mindfulness and wisdom. It moves me away from the negative narrative into a space of conscious solution building. And that's just something – I wanted to add that to what you were saying because I think it is very important for us to acknowledge those things we do feel but also turn it around into how do we have positive action that propels us forward for solutions so that we don't stay in that space.

>>Gary Besaw: I don't know how good my reception is here. But we're always told, remember your stories. Remember those prayers. Remember them. And don't give up. We're told at some point in time we're supposed to – people will come to us for those lessons and that's of sacrifice and that's of the connectedness. And you should be ready. You should know those so you can pass those on. While that might apply, in my case I'm talking of a native perspective, but it also applies to others who have that understanding and that skill set and that perseverance. You need to be ready when others come forward. Please keep that – keep that as that spine that you can live with. Remember it's important. Don't give up.

Shaun Huffman: This will be the last question that will conclude our Q&A session. Thank you to everyone for your participation. There were so many brilliant questions that were asked tonight. Our last question is for the wonderful hosts: What lessons have you learned from your own experiences, ancestors, community leaders, about inner resilience that informs how we should work with our planetary level with environmental and climate issues?

>>Heather McTeer Toney: I will kick off because I just sent Gary a private message and I think it's perfect for this. He's absolutely right! We are all ancestors in training. I am an ancestor in training. And it is incumbent upon me to not only remember the ancestors and leaders and to make sure I'm training the next generation and that I am creating and continuing those stories to pass on because this is not a one time, let me try to do everything that I can do. It is a collective of all of us together. It is a historic string. My resiliency just in my being is evidence of ancestors, of people who were enslaved, were resilient enough to cross the Atlantic, arrive in this country and then sustain all of the travesties they sustained and still survive and use those resources to be resilient in a way that allows me to even exist today. My very being and my skin is the picture of resilience. It is so important to carry that on and remember it because that is what propels and gives us energy to really find these solutions that we need.

>>Katharine Hayhoe: I think building on that it's so important to recognize that we're not alone. Our culture today is so individualistic and we often feel like the weight of the world is on our shoulders. No wonder people feel overwhelmed when we hear about climate change, it's a huge global issue. We think to ourselves, I'm just one person. What can I do? Someone said recently, you're a drop of water in the ocean and it's a stormy ocean tossing you from side to side. But, the reality is the giant world is made up of individual people. We're not alone. We're all in this together. By connecting with each other, using our voices, using who we are to connect with other people, we really can fix this thing. Each of us is just called, I believe, to do only the things that we can do. And it's not up to any single one of us to fix this.

It's up to us to simply do what we can. Then everyone else will carry it along.

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: Thank you. That was so lovely. I think one thing I do want to say about resilience is that it's something that is constant. It is in constant motion. It ebbs and flows but it's something that we can build all the time whether in ourselves, community, or for the planet. So I hope everyone that is watching is feeling the sense of resilience just being part of this conversation and will continue to build resilience for themselves, their communities, and the planet. I think we are going to close with Richie joining us. He's going to have a few words to close us off with.

>>Richard Davidson: Thank you all so much, Katharine, Heather and Gary, we so deeply appreciate your engagement this evening. And Dekila, a very deep bow of gratitude to you for organizing this and for your extraordinary tenacity and energy. I love the messages that you left us with which is a hopeful message about what each of us can do and needs to do to create a more sustainable future. We're really so grateful. I want to just remind viewers that tomorrow evening at 7:00 o'clock we have our last program which will be a dialogue that I just recorded very recently with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of our center. I'll actually be joined for discussing His Holiness' remarks by Dekila who will share the stage with me and we'll have a discussion about some of the pearls of wisdom that he left with us, including comments about the importance of acting in response to climate change. I want to also just remind all of you that the work of the Loka Initiative and other work in our

Center is possible because of the generosity of all of you. Please connect with us through our websites which are listed on the screen and on social media. And if you are so inspired, reach out and help support this work through a donation. We're so grateful. Tonight we're going to have a special ending to this program. Dekila will lead us through a practice that is a contemplative practice specifically designed for this topic. So, Dekila.

>>Dekila Chungyalpa: Thank you, Richie. So because we've spent so much time talking about resilience, I think it's important we take a moment to replenish our own. So with that, I thought I'd lead a simple grounding practice which requires that you get comfortable. If you need to move around, you can. And start straightening your spine and relax your shoulders. Bring it down from your ears.

And just be aware of where you're sitting and how you are connected to the Earth. So if you're sitting in a chair, just imagine how through the chair it touches the floor and how through the floor it eventually goes down all the way to the Earth. You can be seated on the floor. Then you're imagining your sit bones. Just allow your awareness to move down through your feet. As you extend your awareness, just imagine how the Earth is responding to you. It's literally holding you up. Some of the issues we talked about actually create a lot of grief, a lot of sadness. We talked about fear. It's okay to feel all of those things. Feeling anxiety or grief. These are all the right responses because we are experiencing existential threats. So you can acknowledge these feelings with gratitude, with compassion, even with love. All of us from all around the world are right now sitting together in our own spaces connected to each other. Wanting to do better. Wanting to

protect the planet. Protect our communities. Take care of each other. So when you breathe in, I want you to breathe in compassion that's coming from the Earth, that's coming from nature in the form of oxygen, water, even the clothing we're wearing, the food we eat. As you breathe out, I want you to breathe out gratitude for all of these things in connection with each other. We are in kinship right now. Breathe in compassion. Breathe out gratitude. You can take this practice with you as the evening ends and wherever you're going next. It's a very simple practice that you can do every time you feel any despair, anxiety, grief, fear. Just remember the Earth is giving you all the conditions for life out of compassion, out of love. And that is more than enough. Thank you to our wonderful, wonderful speakers. They are all dear friends of mine. I'm just really grateful to have their wisdom here and that we can share with all of you joining us. Thank you, Richie.

>>Richard Davidson: Thank you all so much. Really wonderful.

>>Heather McTeer Toney: Thank you.

>>Gary Besaw: Thank you everybody. Thank you. Let's keep this movement working.

>>Heather McTeer Toney: Absolutely.

>>Katharine Hayhoe: Together.