



One Earth Sangha

Session One: Intro

Transcript of EcoSattva Training 2022-23 Video

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Session Profile

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Speakers in this video

- Kristin Barker - director and co-founder, One Earth Sangha
- Lou Leonard - co-founder, One Earth Sangha

Transcript

Lou Leonard

Hello everyone, I'm Lou Leonard, and together with Kristin Barker, I'm co-founder of One Earth Sangha. And as we stand here on the threshold together of another EcoSattva Training, the fifth that we've done, I feel this strong combination of both wonder and privilege to be with you today. Wonder at this ever-evolving training, five editions and the way that it continues to speak to caring and committed people from across the world. People who know that caring for a world in these times can take the form of active and bold creative responses to living with a world in crisis. And privilege, privilege to stand together with Kristin and the growing team at One Earth Sangha, who have put so much into this new version of the training and to make it come to life starting today.



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But as we step back and think about your experience standing at this threshold of the training, you really have set up a challenge for yourself. The challenge to face the enormously big, complex, and overwhelming times in which we live and to do so with purpose and intention. Times of fire throughout North America, the North American West, Australia, South America, Indonesia. Times of flood recently in Florida and Pakistan. Times of fear in political systems that are struggling to hold a space for democratic decision-making and long delayed justice. But hidden within the bigness of these challenges, I suggest to you, hidden in plain sight actually are the keys to facing them skillfully.

Because these challenges are so big, they can only be held within expanded hearts, open minds and caring community—in Sangha. And cultivating those qualities is something that we know how to do, something we will do together in this training. This new edition of the training keeps the powerful U-shaped arc, the journey of fully accepting the enormity of this moment, allowing ourselves to be transformed by it so that we can come out the other side, seeing with new eyes, feeling with renewed hearts, our own path ahead. We'll keep the format that allows you to proceed at your own pace in groups if you have them, which is a really powerful way to do this training and also to periodically connect with the larger community. But we have refreshed key content in the training, and we will introduce you to new teachers who are practicing in powerful ways who we can learn from together. Kristin will say more about this edition of the training in a moment.

So two years ago when we last updated this training, and I last offered some introductory thoughts, we seemed to me to be in the midst of a major shift in the landscape of our reckoning with climate and other ecological crises and their intersections with justice and people. It seemed then that we were shifting from a time of waiting for climate change to arrive, to beginning to feel its power on a regular basis from a time of setting goals and trying to get these issues on the global and national agendas—to beginning to do the hard part of implementing goals and seizing political moments. Being at the big table. Now, here in 2022, a couple of years later, it feels to me less like a crossroads and more like being on a long road across a broad plane, a road where we must move ahead without knowing where the next turn or major milestone will be. Many of those milestones we used to mark our way in the past, they sit behind us now, and sometimes quite a bit behind. It's somehow now been seven years since the Paris Climate Agreement was reached. I don't know how that happened. And even that—that sometimes felt like a



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mirage, that Holy Grail of meaningful climate legislation being passed in the United States, we can see that in the rear view mirror now.

And yet the road ahead still seems so long. In some ways longer, without those milestones in front of us. And I find this new reality, in some ways, much more complex to hold than when reaching for these clearer, longstanding milestones. Because in this moment, perhaps our greatest risk in a way is that we move from a culture of denial to one of despair, or worse, resignation. As we face the long road ahead, and as we live in the extreme reality of climate and ecological crises every day, it seems, it can begin to feel commonplace. We become numb to the truth, or our overly adaptive human selves reset our sense of what is normal.

And as society attempts the largest intentional transformation in human history across all sectors of our economy, at all scales of government, it can be hard to find these new meaningful milestones, these reliable handholds, to know whether we're making enough progress. So to face these risks and prepare ourselves to stay engaged and to respond appropriately in these times, I think will require four capacities of us—capacities in us. First, the endurance to stay connected to the growing harm and suffering from climate and other ecological and social crises without getting stuck in despair or numbed resignation. Second, the steadiness to face the inherent uncertainties of this age, the complexities of the transformation without getting stuck in confusion in the mind. Third, the determination, some might call it faith, to act fully and strongly without getting stuck in needing to know whether we will succeed on this long road ahead. In other words, without getting overly attached to outcomes we can't see and touch.

And lastly, this quality of buoyancy of heart to keep joy and awe accessible by leaning into rather than away from the bigness of these challenges. And so being able to feel the wonder of being connected to a growing community of life that's responding in these times. So you might notice that these capacities aren't ones you can develop in a physics lab or an engineering class or a courtroom, though that kind of work is needed too. We're just not gonna do it here. These capacities are of the heart and mind. Cultivating them is not about reaching individual milestones, but layering on and strengthening and nurturing ourselves and each other. And this training, my friends, where you are now, is a place designed to support that kind of transformation. A journey that can sometimes feel individual, but can only be truly done in community: in Sangha, this Sangha that we're bringing together now. And so I am so glad you are here to walk this path of discovery,



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this field of cultivation together with us. And I will now turn it over to Kristin, who can give you some more information about this year's training. Good luck everyone.

Kristin Barker

Well, thank you, Lou. So I just want to start out by saying welcome, welcome to all of you, every part of you, whether you are excited to be doing this, hesitant, unsure, enthusiastic, relieved, reserved. I want to welcome the anxious, the guilt ridden, the ambivalent, all those parts. All those parts and more are welcome. What parts are hiding right now? Can they be brought to the surface? And included in this space, I want to welcome not just all parts of you, but all kinds of you, whether you are new to Buddhist Dharma, mindfulness practices, or you've been doing this for a long time. Whether you are new to One Earth Sangha, or you have been part of our community for some time. Whether this is your first encounter with the EcoSattva Training, or whether you've done it before and you're now returning—perhaps with new friends, or just to be here to take this journey again, you are all welcome and all of you are welcome. Whether the places in you and the identities that you bring find easy connection or whether that's difficult. I want to welcome all of the identities, the quiet parts, the parts of us that go underground and make sure that they have at least the invitation to belong. I am so grateful for you joining us in this journey at such a time.

So now on planet Earth, this age of hyper extraction continues and we seem to be collectively running ever faster towards increasing disasters, even as they manifest all around us. It's important to say that we have important, important progress, just as Lou was mentioning to point to. And yet we know we have so very far to go, to get to the kind of response that we sense in our being is commensurate with the level of threat to our world. So here we are moving faster and harder in so many ways towards this recklessness with life on earth. Why? It bears a big space to ask, not in a reactive way, but in a grounded way and a curious way: Why would that be? Why would humanity be systematically undermining the very conditions for life, including the conditions for humanity's ongoing survival with a kind of enthusiasm that seems to be ever increasing? Why would this obvious threat to our well-being fall prey to the fickle outcomes of short-term profits or political winners and losers? Something is clearly out of sync. Something is clearly not being seen.

And so we come to a space like this where we can ask those questions and see that to some degree, that dominant conditioning is in our cultures, in our way of seeing ourselves. And the world contains a fundamental misunderstanding about who and what we are.



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And also maybe the true source of wellbeing. That is we misunderstand our true nature as inseparable from nature. It has always been thus. And certainly we abstract ourselves from that. And my people as a culture have a history of separating not only ourselves, conceptually from Earth and the living Earth community, but separating other peoples from their land and lands from people. So this history of separation from nature runs deep in the dominant culture.

And so that misunderstanding multiplies in a cruise over history. And we find ourselves to these tipping points where all the policy and technical solutions cannot counter themselves this basic misperception. And so again, we come here. But even—we could ask, why do we do that? Why, if the need is so urgent with so much at stake, why would we take the time, the energy, the resources to invest ourselves in what can look like a sort of selfish spiritual endeavor? Perhaps because the grounding and wisdom, clarity, a warm recognition of the causes and conditions that got us here, and what can support a non-reactive, robust, reliant, adaptive, energized, devoted response over the long term is enabled by just such an inquiry, just such a space for the deep looking into our own hearts, into our own conditioning, into our own cultures. So we offer here this purposeful journey that, as Lou said, is modeled after most specifically Otto Scharmer's "Theory U", but it's really the hero's journey into deep uncertainty where we pack our bags, prepare ourselves, and then go deep together, supported by each other and supported by a wealth of wisdom and practices to allow us to remain, to increasingly open to what is difficult.

And out of that, perhaps we can see ourselves, our maladaptive understandable strategies more clearly, to see each other more clearly, to come to terms with what is unfolding and to discover in that our hearts' longing, our place in this, what is already a kind of outward practice that can be more beautifully held and supported and nourished to continue. Or perhaps to discover some new line of engagement that's calling us. So this journey, which really in some ways follows the overall strategy of One Earth Sangha, is a structured one in that if you look at our About Us page and you scroll down a little bit, you'll see a triangle there that has at its base wisdom and practices. And that's really the foundation for what we're engaged here, engaged in here. And then on top of that, resting on that is community.

And whether you're doing this training as an individual and joining us on a monthly basis for the monthly gatherings, or whether you're part of a small group that's either in person or online, whether that group is publicly available or a private group of friends and fellow practitioners—that support of community, that nourishing of community we see as



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absolutely essential to this. And of course, everyone is invited to the monthly gatherings. You can be part of a group and join those, but it's especially important for those of us who are doing the training as individuals.

And then on top of that layer of community is action. And we won't be telling you what to do, or trying to convince you to join any particular initiatives, but rather we're trying to root in and support you in discovering your EcoSattva expression, your EcoSattva engagement activities, while relying on the whole network of all that's emerging right now that is responsive to that, and not feeling like you have to do everything. Because you can't. And there's something in that pull to do everything that itself can be addressed perhaps through this process. So always in development is our process, my process, our team's process, this journey, this structured training always in development. And we've revised it again this year with some new teachers and some new support for facilitators, some which you will, if you're a facilitator, hopefully you'll appreciate some of the revisions that we've done there. We're upgrading some of the videos so that you can see chapters and more easily navigate them. They're also available for download. And in a different video I'll kind of preview the whole journey itself so you can get a sense of where we're going together.

Always, we welcome the invitation for you to share with us how we're doing, how it's going for you. So you can email connect@learthsangha.org, certainly with any technical issues, but even just your reflections. And I really hope that we see you in the monthly gatherings. Welcome to the EcoSattva Training. I'm so, so glad that you can be here with us.

Dana

We hope you have found this transcript helpful. We invite you to help offset the cost to produce this transcript and the rest of the training by [making a donation to One Earth Sangha](#). Whatever you offer will be used wisely and is deeply appreciated.