



One Earth Sangha

Session Six: Introduction

Transcript of EcoSattva Training 2023-24 Video

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Session Profile

Session Six: Creating and Discovering the Way

[Session Resources](#)

Speakers in this video

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

Transcript

Kristin Barker:

Welcome friends, to Session Six. So we've spent some time with uncertainty, allowing, to the degree that's possible for us. It's always messy. It's always tricky. But allowing as much as is available to you, the fullness of that which is underway right now. We're supporting ourselves and allowing this discovery, that perhaps, indeed, maybe, we can be with that which has previously seemed intolerable. And it's a practice, attuning to what is complicated and jagged in our hearts. And then meeting that with some kind of soothing, perhaps finding a calmness, and amazingly discovering that there is strength there. There is a resilience. That is the stuff of resilience, that strength. This ability to be with this. The ability to not resist that which is underway. This opening to our situation as it is, not needing it to be different, and that, my friends, is a lessening of suffering right there.



One Earth Sangha

And now, in this emergence part of our journey, we can discover and also create a kind of mystical holding for ourselves and for this world that can really help us, really anchor us, one that leads onward. Of course, what we're involved in here is not a stepwise process. It doesn't unfold in this perfectly linear fashion, but in each place there is a kind of generative aspect and here, included in that, it does lead to this next step of moving from the formless to some kind of form. Earlier in this series, we had a resource from Dan Siegel with some basic meditation practices. And there was something quite wonderful that he said in that, even if you didn't partake of that, I'll just share that phrase, which is "the healthy mind is an integrated mind."

So once we've given ourselves ample support to allow, to explore this massive ecological transition underway on Planet Earth, when we're integrating that into the mind, body, heart, we're no longer fractured. So once that integration process is starting to take hold, and perhaps for you, another level of it is coming through as you move through this training. The wonderful question we can ask ourselves is "now what"? Parker Palmer: "Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you've decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what value you represent." So the premise here is that we have the opportunity to live lives of extraordinary meaning in such times. It might not be the life that you or I was conditioned to want, the life that the current culture would recognize, not to mention reward.

These are ambitions that are discovered at the level of the heart, at the level of the soul even, and they will always be, in some ways, against the stream. And isn't that kind of the point of being in this Dharma context for us? The Dharma has always encouraged the blessings of aligning ourselves with things as they are, with reality and not just a superficial understanding of that reality. Not the first blush that our conditioning has handed to us, but what is more immediate, more intimate? What is deepest, what is deep-er? What is transformative? Those understandings, those pursuits have always meant swimming against the stream. They have always meant running counter to the streams of culture.

So in that way, we are deep in the Buddhist tradition here with just us, our messy selves. So as we let these forms emerge, that which is calling us, we need to be perhaps wary to some degree of the popular images of what responsiveness looks like, what being aligned, and attuned, and engaged, manifests as. For now, let's just make it all available, not narrowing too quickly. Because I would argue what is needed from us collectively is so



One Earth Sangha

diverse and so inclusive. So the forms that we've seen so far, whether it's the image of the activist or the artist or the civil servant, yes to all of those and so much more. In the next session, Session Seven, we'll talk more about the marks, some of the marks of the EcoSattva, but for now, allow your notion of what meaningful response looks like to be soft.

Allow yourself to listen deeply because with this degree of alignment and attunement that you've been cultivating, you can allow and even seek new ideas, new images to come through, or get to know better that which is already really calling you, really clear to you. Always we can come closer, come to know more. What might guide you, who might guide you, to what might you devote your energy.

For me, my experience of this kind of thing came through, not in a meditation session, but a very kind of mundane, literally walking down the street in my neighborhood. I suddenly had this sense of offering a prayer to the Earth: "Use me, use me." There have been since that moment many, many experiences that have built on that: deep in meditation or other contexts where images have come through, and there's a kind of relationship there, where I'm in service to either Earth herself or a myriad of astounding creaturely rooted forms. But there's a sense of that relationship of service, and it has been extraordinarily important to have that experience, that knowing to call on as I do what I do, to be in relationship with what is unfolding in our world day in and day out. It's been unimaginable for me to be without. I would not be here doing what I'm doing, I suggest, without those ideas and sense of that service relationship. It's gonna look really different for every one of us. Who knows what kind of form it will take for you? Probably won't look anything like what I just said.

My point is that we're in this really precious place to discover that for ourselves. You are in a precious place to discover that for yourself, that movement into form, from the formless, where you are in relationship with some kind of ideal of sorts. And in that is this possibility for a beautiful resilience and autonomy. You offer yourself in service to that ideal. And then of course, you fall short. Falling short is inevitable. That's how ideals operate. You set the direction of your compass and then go about the sometimes mundane work of navigating the terrain, tripping and falling, getting lost, getting confused, sometimes inspired, sometimes demoralized, and then continuing onwards sometimes with companions, but willing to go alone as well. No regrets, come what may.



One Earth Sangha

For me, this hearkens back to the suttas on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. One of the phrases in that – abiding independently, not clinging to anything in this world. Abiding independently, not clinging to anything in this world. That intimate relationship with this moment, as I perceive it to be, looking deeper always and not clinging, not needing things to be other than they are, not needing some experience that isn't here to be here. Not needing any experience that is here to end, to go away. Robust to setbacks so that the terrain changes and the navigation point remains.

Here at this moment, let's just spend some time to listen for your longing. Listen to it, listen for it, and then trust it. Find out not what the identity needs, but what this whole body is waking up to, responding to what the soul longs for. Allowing ourselves to be surprised by what we might discover, and also to participate with it. To experiment, try out ideas. That feels like that's leading somewhere. That, I thought, would lead somewhere and just fell flat. <laugh> See what the mind, the body, the soul responds to. I trust that every one of us here has that kind of calling. It's innate in us, and these practices nourish and cultivate it. Maybe there'll be so much that comes through, it'll be difficult to choose – what a wonderful problem to have. Some duty will come through. This I trust. I trust it for myself. I trust it in each of you. So in the next video, Lou will introduce our featured speaker, but for now, I'm just so excited for us to explore together what's coming through, what's meaningful for us, what's on offer for each of us and all of us in these times.

Dana

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