

The Work that Reconnects

J.Macy

This Presentation

Explains the process of

THE GREAT TURNING AND THE TRANSITION TO A
SUSTAINABLE EARTH COMMUNITY

as described in the book of Joanna Macy Coming back to life.

ISBN 978-0-86571-391-8

A Guideline also to the practices of the GREAT Work

Joanna Macy and her work

- Joanna Macy, has experienced awakening after awakening since she was 16. (born in 1937)
- From early on there was an intense sense of belonging to Planet Earth and Community of life.
- She has helped thousands of people to discover and live from Gaian Consciousness.
- She went to India as a missionary and later became a Buddhist scholar, teacher and activist.
From her deep engagement to the Earth and her Buddhist scholarship she developed “The Work that Reconnects”.

From Despair Work to Active Hope

- I heard about Joanna Macy in the eighties of last century? Who was this woman who was so compassionately helping people to find some light and hope in the time of nuclear threat.
- She has been very much involved also with the victims of the nuclear disaster in Tsjernobyl, Russia.
- From the experience with intense pain of the people she developed four steps of gaining strength and courage.
- Gratitude and love for life. 2. Honouring our pain for the world. 3. Seeing with new eyes and 4: Going forth in action.



**“ I have set before you life
and death, therefore choose
life” Deut. 30, 15-20**

I. The Great Turning

The process Thomas Berry describes as the Great Work, Joanna Macy calls it the Great Turning.

The Great Turning is the shift from an Industrial growth Society(IGS) to a Sustainable Earth Community.

When people of the future look back at this historical moment, they will see, perhaps more clearly than we can now, how revolutionary this shift is.

The Agricultural revolution took ages, the industrial revolution took generations. This ecological revolution has to happen within a few years.

The Ecological Revolution / Great Turning

**has to be more comprehensive,
involving not only the
political economy
but the habits and values
that foster it.**

To bring about The Great Turning

There are three dimensions that are mutually reinforcing:

- Slow down actions that damage the Earth
- Analysis of structural causes and creation of alternative institutions
- Shift in perception of realities

1. Slow Down Actions

- **Movements of Sustainable living**
- **Campaigning for laws to mitigate effects of pollution, poverty, loss of habitat**
- **Political participation/legislation, lobbying against trade agreements, laws etc.**
- **Going against illegal actions, bio-piracy, cutting forests , seed patenting etc.**
- **Blockading places of ecological destruction**
- **Boycotting corporations that endanger living species, weapon industry, exploitation of workers**
- **Helping the victims of ecological disasters**

Source Image private collection

Protest at USA basis in Northern Italy,
September 2008

This is heroic work.

**It saves some lives, species
and cultures, but it is not
enough.**

**It is insufficient to bring
about the changes
that are desperately needed.**

2. Analysis of Structural Causes and Creation of Alternative Institutions.

- **We need to understand the dynamics by which the I.G.S. causes all the damage to the Earth and her systems. What makes our present extracting economy so insatiable? What is the worldview behind it?**
- **We need to look deeply into this and gain more insight. It does not help to demonize good people who make the wrong choices.**

Not all people willingly cause the damage to the Earth, but are through their unawareness part of damaging the Earth.

We also need to create alternative structures.

All over the world these institutions and grass root movements are rising. Millions of small group all over the globe are finding new ways for sustainable living.

As a Society we are already part of these movements in our networking and pioneering new expressions of our Mission on behalf of the Earth.

Some examples:

- **Club of Rome, World Watch Institute, Fair Trade, Fair Economy.**
- **Community based agriculture, permaculture, composting, recycling.**
- **Education for sustainable living, co-housing, eco villages, Transition Town movement etc.**



Source image website Plumvillage

3. Shift in Perception of Realities

- New values, virtues, insights.
- A cognitive revolution and a spiritual awakening.
- This enables us to turn. It is a spiritual process. More than action and a change in buying patterns. That is the beginning.

**Joanna Macy sees a flowing together of three streams:
this mighty stream helps us to turn.**

- 1. The anguish for our world.**
- 2. Scientific breakthroughs and new understandings about the universe and our place and role in it.**
- 3. Ancestral teachings and their wisdom.**

Some of the sources which can help us

- Insight in Living Systems Theory, Deep Ecology, Ecological Worldview.
- Gaia Theory, Gaia as a Living System
- Creation Spirituality, Laudato Si.
- Engaged Buddhism / Hinduism/ Interbeing(Thich Nhat Than)
- Earth Wisdom traditions, traditional healers and see-ers
- Eco-feminism, Eco-psychology
- Simple Living movements
- Music, Art expressing our interconnectedness

If we have eyes to see....

we will discover the stunning speed of the cognitive, spiritual and perceptual revolution that is taking place.

It will save us from succumbing to either panic or paralysis.

We come to see that the Earth self-heals through our humble efforts to reconnect again with her and all her functions.

We can see the chaos as a seedbed for the future.

We will choose life.

J.Macy, Coming Back to Life.

II. The Changes We Face

1. At a global level

. Moving from an extracting economy to a sustainable economy.

Will we be able to take from nature's resources according to what she can provide and what we need and produce without waste?

. Sustainable use of land and sustainable food production.

. Where is the Universe (story) in our education systems?

Can we develop an education system that will teach the necessary skills to survive on a planet of diminishing life and global warming instead of preparing for the I.G.S? Can we take into account the cosmic wisdom and cosmic principles?

. Our legal system: can we move from a human centered ethic to an Earth Ethic?

Can we accept that the Universe and not the human is the ultimate Lawgiver? (Thomas Berry)

- Can we learn the lessons of Earth about interdependence?
- We can do this by participation in the local Earth Community (Bio-region) and we can observe the functioning of Earth as an integral life – community.
- Can all decision making and planning we do be in line with the life of the Earth community ?
- Can we learn to connect with the self-healing of the Earth?

Each ecosystem has the power to heal itself.

Will we look into the processes that make us sick. It are the same processes that diminish a healthy life of the Earth. Will we learn from the Covid 19 pandemic?

Can we reflect on the origin of all healing powers of the Universe and Earth? We will find our unique and humble ways of participating in the self- healing of the Earth.

Religions and the Ecological Time.

Great changes are ahead if we move from God-human and human-human relationships to human-Earth-creator relationships.

We will need to move from a stewardship model to kinship with the whole of creation.

2. Changes at a personal level

We need to understand that a paradigm shift is happening all over the world – we are part of it. We only need to follow.
How?

*“The old consciousness acts like a bully,
keen on attacking and dividing.*

*Realize that this old way of being is constricting in fear
and your compassion will quicken its demise.
We can alleviate unnecessary suffering by discriminating
what is false and what is true.*

*Walk your path with passions, composure and pure intent.
This will help create a world you love to live in.
Remember you are unique and interdependent
and your decisions do affect the whole.
This is the beauty of your creation.”*

F.Coppieters, Handbook of the Evolving Heart



Source image private collection

The Process of Change

At the personal level

Concepts/insights

- . To know the systems and processes of Ecology**
- . Principles of Universe-and Earth functioning**
- . Understanding Evolutionary processes of consciousness**

On psycho-emotional level and personal growth

- . Experience of self, meditation, uniqueness of self.
- . To be able to face the suffering of the world/Earth.
- . Deal with feelings of anger, despair, powerlessness, loss.
- . Capable of new ways of bondedness and inter-dependence.
- . Clear perception, clear thinking, observation
- . The gift to see hope.

On the spiritual level/ inspirational level

- . The old wisdom cultures
- . To understand the spiritual journey in the context of growing ecological awareness and conversion
- . The growing importance of prayer, meditation, contemplation
- . Presence to and immersion in the natural world

Socio –political awareness and growth

- . To choose one's role / ecological call and mission.
- . Intent is more important than manifestation
- . Walk your talk, ecological life style, networks.

Enlightened Community

“Enlightened community is a place where each of you is a channel for spirit. It is a place where each of you is respected for your contribution for who you are. It is a place where truth is investigated; not just once but all the time”.

F. Coppieters
Handbook for the Evolving Heart
ISBN 0-9753559-9-6

**Enlightened community is a place
where you challenge yourself
where you step forward
in the full glory of who you are .
It is a place of patience,
tolerance and non- judgement.
The freedom of one person
ignites that of another.
It is a model for Society and
helps humanity to evolve.”**

F. Coppieters Handbook for the Evolving Heart

The community as a place of learning and initiation in ecological living

- Learning , reflecting, sharing on an Ecological Worldview
- Sharing about insights and learning
- Continuing formation, reading and study
- Initiation stories, personal support, encouragement for spiritual growth.

The Intentional Community – participation in the Evolutionary process

Out of the ongoing process of initiation into an ecological worldview and lifestyle grows an openness to the Intention of our Creator.

The Source of Intention in us, the desire of our soul is the desire of the Universe and the Earth. They are becoming one.

We will move more and more into a place of great clarity and insight.

With dreams and visions that direct our action, we are more and more part of the Great Transformation that is happening.

The community as embodiment of the Earth community.



Source image free internet

This is the place where we come home to with our delight, joy but also pain, anger, despair and a sense of loss because of what happens to the Earth.

Where we celebrate, pray, grow, work with the Earth community.

Where we rejoice in simplicity of common life, joy of frugality. Where we welcome other Earth -

pilgrims in a common understanding and vision.

8 Steps of Reconnecting with the Web of Life

This inspiration comes from the Ecological community in Findhorn, Scotland.

The clarity of these steps has been a help for many people already.

Where is work to do for yourself, for others?

In what areas can you work on Ecological Restoration and healing?

1. To reconnect with nature, the natural world.

How to create place, opportunities, activities to connect with nature? Invite people to participate in Earth Work, Earth care.

2 . To help people to reconnect with the place where they live.

(Bio-regional education) To know the community of life in an intimate way. The waters, soils, history of the place,
the animals, plants, trees. Teach people to know their family! In this process they will learn what needs healing and restoration. Hear the Earth in your backyard!

Bio region De Gaarde
The Netherlands

3.To help people to reconnect with life

To discover the choices we make, that are not life-oriented.
Unhealthy foods, ways of living, recreation, work etc.

To refuse any chemicals and toxins as much as you are aware of. Our body does not deserve this.

4.To help people to reconnect with each other.

To create ways of encounter, sharing of life at all levels.

5.To help people to reconnect with their power.

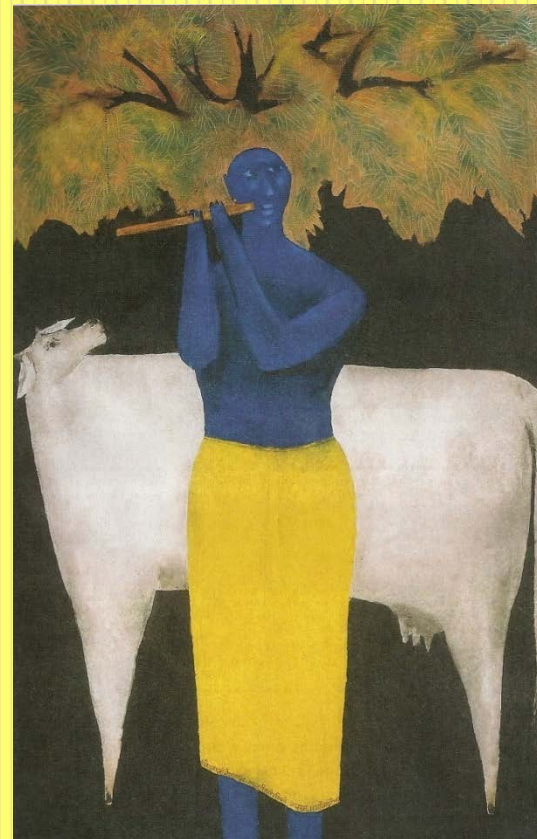
Moving through and beyond feelings of apathy,
powerlessness, despair. Reclaim our power as consumers,
buyers! We determine what will be produced.



**By simply sharing your own essence,
you make already a difference.**

6. Help people to reconnect with their self healing power.

Helping in the restoration of the web of Life is healing for the soul. Help people to tune in to the self- healing of the Earth.



Source image gallery resurgence magazine

7. Help people to reconnect with hope.

Where do we find hope? How to connect with the hope in the human soul. Create places and opportunities where people can grieve, find words for the pain for the Earth. Only by going to that process we can find hope and strength.

8. To help people to reconnect with their spiritual roots, faith, spirituality.

The present worldview, dominated by IGS and economic growth and profit has given us a consumers society. So many people have been separated from their spiritual foundations and of the natural world. To create ways to help people to find their never broken relationship with the Divine is a deep consolation and source of strength.

To Conclude:

Steps to an Ecological Commitment

- 1. Open your eyes to face the present situation. Wanting to know is the first step in ecological conversion.**
- 2. Lamentation, conversion, change. A new vision, decisions about life style .**
- 3. Gather people around the cause of the Earth. Looking for new values and spirituality. Actions.**
- 4. To speak for the Earth and her life. Warning. Jonah goes to Nineveh.**
- 5. Political action, projects.**

Inspiration / Sources

I am grateful for the inspiration of Joanna Macy and her Work -that Reconnects. From her clarity of vision I have shared in this presentation.

I am grateful for all the insights from Conscious Evolution and the clear vision and insights of Barbara Marx Hubbard.

I am grateful for so many people who have shared their hope and vision with me in the past decade.

Elly Verrijt

Reflection time

It is time for a vision quest.

**Though the world is in crisis, you need not be..
Look at what strengthens you and is worth living
for..**

**When the time comes, just write, draw, make a
poem about your place in the world.
Who are you? Now...**

Listen to the Earth, to all the voices of life, as you humbly open yourself to the invitation of the Creator, the Earth or who or whatever..to be and share your love...



With thanks to Joanna Macy for her work and inspiration

Elly Verrijt
Email : e.verrijt@ziggo.nl

Rev. 2015