

About Joanna Macy

Joanna Macy web site: <http://www.joannamacy.net/>

Eco-philosopher Joanna Macy, Ph.D., is a scholar of Buddhism, general systems theory, and deep ecology. A respected voice in movements for peace, justice, and ecology, she interweaves her scholarship with four decades of activism. She has created a ground-breaking theoretical framework for personal and social change, as well as a powerful workshop methodology for its application.

Her wide-ranging work addresses psychological and spiritual issues of the nuclear age, the cultivation of ecological awareness, and the fruitful resonance between Buddhist thought and contemporary science. The many dimensions of this work are explored in her books Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age (New Society Publishers, 1983); Dharma and Development (Kumarian Press, 1985); Thinking Like a Mountain (with John Seed, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess; New Society Publishers, 1988; New Society/New Catalyst, 2007); Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory (SUNY Press, 1991); Rilke's Book of Hours (1996, 2005) and In Praise of Mortality (2004) (with Anita Barrows, Riverhead); Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World (with Molly Young Brown, New Society Publishers, 1998); Joanna's memoir entitled Widening Circles (New Society, 2000); and World as Lover, World as Self (Parallax Press, 2007), A Year With Rilke, Harper One.

Many thousands of people around the world have participated in Joanna's workshops and trainings. Her group methods, known as the Work That Reconnects, have been adopted and adapted yet more widely in classrooms, churches, and grassroots organizing. Her work helps people transform despair and apathy, in the face of overwhelming social and ecological crises, into constructive, collaborative action. It brings a new way of seeing the world, as our larger living body, freeing us from the assumptions and attitudes that now threaten the continuity of life on Earth.

Joanna travels widely giving lectures, workshops, and trainings in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Australia. She lives in Berkeley, California, near her children and grandchildren.

The great turning is about finding our power to respond to global crisis. Bringing together ecology, psychology, spirituality and global issues, it offers events, news and resources to support the shift towards a life sustaining society. Our starting point is a recognition that our world is in danger. We face a number of serious threats that include climate change, depletion of resources, rising toxin levels, destruction of ecosystems and a growing gulf between the materially rich and poor parts of our world.

The Great Turning is a name for the essential adventure of our time: the shift from the industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization.

The ecological and social crises we face are inflamed by an economic system dependent on accelerating growth. This self-destructing political economy sets its goals and measures its performance in terms of ever-increasing corporate profits—in other words by how fast materials can be extracted from Earth and turned into consumer products, weapons, and waste.

A revolution is underway because people are realizing that our needs can be met without destroying our world. We have the technical knowledge, the communication tools, and material resources to grow enough food, ensure clean air and water, and meet rational energy needs. Future generations, if there is a livable world for them, will look back at the epochal transition we are making to a life-sustaining society. And they may well call this the time of the Great Turning. It is happening now.

Whether or not it is recognized by corporate-controlled media, the Great Turning is a reality. Although we cannot know yet if it will take hold in time for humans and other complex life forms to survive, we can know that it is under way. And it is gaining momentum, through the actions of countless individuals and groups around the world. To see this as the larger context of our lives clears our vision and summons our courage.

We cannot have peace in our world until we make peace with our world. Deep ecology pioneer Joanna Macy has developed an approach to ecological activism that draws deeply on her Buddhist roots. She says, "A revolution is underway because people are realizing that our needs can be met without destroying our world. We have the technical knowledge, the communication tools, and material resources to grow enough food, ensure clean air and water, and meet rational energy needs. Future generations, if there is a livable world for them, will look back at the epochal transition we are making to a life-sustaining society. And they may well call this the time of the Great Turning. It is happening now."

In the face of global crises Macy provides teachings that move people from despair to empowerment, without creating distinctions such as good/bad, and us/them. These teachings have changed the lives of people around the world, from the redwoods in California to the devastation of Chernobyl, helping them find the courage to transform their relationships to this troubled planet from helplessness and overwhelm to healing and genuine transformational change. This series will reflect the principles and teachings of this great work through interactive activities and exercises that Joanna Macy has used so successfully in her workshops.