

Life As It Is
Episode #4 with Paul Hawken
“Regeneration and Reverence”
October 27, 2021



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James Shaheen: Hello and welcome to *Life As It Is*. I’m James Shaheen, editor-in-chief of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*. Each month, my co-host Sharon Salzberg and I chat with Buddhist practitioners about their work, practice, and everyday life. It can be so easy to become demoralized or even apocalyptic about the state of our planet. But entrepreneur and activist Paul Hawken believes we have less reason to despair than we think. In fact, if we act together, he says, we can end the climate crisis in decades to come. In his new book, *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation*, Hawken offers a model of climate activism that puts life at the center of every act and decision. After all, writes Hawken, if we want to save the world, we have to create a world worth saving.

In today’s episode of *Life As It Is*, Sharon Salzberg and I sit down with Hawken to discuss the Buddhist teachings that underpin his activism, the role of reverence in solving the climate crisis, and how he stays motivated in the face of burnout.

James Shaheen: So I’m here with my friend and co-host Sharon Salzberg, and we’re going to be speaking with Paul Hawken, an environmentalist, entrepreneur, author, and activist. Hello, Paul. Hi, Sharon.

Sharon Salzberg: Hi.

Paul Hawken: Hi, Sharon. Hi, James.

James Shaheen: It’s good to be with you both. So, Paul, we’re here today to talk about your new book, *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation*. So why don’t we start by having you explain to us what you mean by regeneration?

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



Paul Hawken: Regeneration is putting life at the center of every act and decision. Simple, clean, clear, pure, but interestingly it is actually what life does. I wanted a word that actually is who we are, as opposed to a conceptual word that is hanging out there like something you have to do or not do. Sustainability is such a word, which is good, I get it, but what does it mean?

Regeneration, on the other hand, is what all 30 trillion cells in our body do. Every nanosecond, they're regenerating. It's the natural impulse of human beings to care for their family, their friends, their children, their animals if they have them. That's innate to being a human being. I feel like the climate conversation, the climate movement, became very siloed in this language. To be frank, it othered everything. It was an othering language. The climate was out there somewhere, and we're going to fix it. If you can find the "it," good luck. There is no "it." It was also riddled with war and sports metaphors of fighting, tackling, combating, which, well, we can guess which gender those came from. But all that language, even mitigating, was sort of off-putting. I mean, who wakes up in the morning saying, "I can't wait to go mitigate"?

It's just this deadening language, and the implication of that language is also a sense of should or guilt or I'm not doing enough. None of those things are really helpful to creating a true climate movement. Now, what I mean by true, I don't say that the one that exists isn't true. It's very true. People are doing amazing things. But I mean true in the sense of its expanse and breadth, and we know that 98–99% of humanity is disengaged from doing anything about the greatest crisis humanity has ever faced.

James Shaheen: Right, a lot of people are disengaged, maybe because they're pessimistic, maybe because they're despairing. So I want to ask you about the subtitle, "Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation." That can sound like a tall order. I wonder what exactly you mean by that and do you think it's possible because what's possible is often what drives people.

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



Paul Hawken: We define ending the climate crisis as by 2030, 2035, 2040 going in the right direction at the right rate. It's not as though at the end of 2030, hey, job done, we're cool. It's not that at all. This is a century-long process. Regeneration is something we should do for the rest of the millennia and then some. It's what we should always be doing. It's not like something that we should do as a response and that when we are successful, then we can go back to extracting and destroying the world. And whether it's possible or not, here's the thing. If you have reasonable goals, they're reasonable because you know how to do them. That's why they're reasonable: I can do that. We need unreasonable goals, and unreasonable goals are things where you don't know. When you don't know, that is when imagination, creativity, innovation, and breakthroughs happen.

Ending the climate crisis in one generation speaks to us on several levels. One generation is usually considered 20 years, but there's also a generation that has arrived. I won't speak for them; I can't. But I know that in polls that have been done by Clover Hogan, Force of Nature, the American Psychological Association, and others worldwide, 70% of people between 15 and 25 are anxious at least, worried, depressed. 40% don't want to have children, are thinking about not having children, or are afraid to have children. They arrived to the situation. They didn't create it, they didn't make it, and so they're also looking to our generations with a question mark, which is, “What were you thinking?,” which is a fair question. And so one generation is also about that generation. I think that they want something that they can organize around that makes sense, that gives them a sense of possibility.

One of the things that came out in the IPCC sixth assessment that came out four weeks ago was a new bit of science. We have been told by climate scientists that even if greenhouse gases peak—that is to say, if we stopped emitting them—that we were in store for decades if not centuries of more warming, which isn't a real big incentive. No matter how hard we try, we're still going to be on a warming planet. Last August, what they released was that we now know that as soon as greenhouse gases peak, heating starts to obey and go down within a relatively

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



short time. That then gives all of us—not just youths but all of us—a way of saying we know where we’re going, and if we get there, we’re going to achieve something that makes sense for the future of civilization and the future of humanity.

James Shaheen: I’d just like to say one thing before I ask my next question. When I read in the book that if we brought down emissions sufficiently, warming would peak and begin to decline rather than continue for decades or centuries, which is what I had always heard, it really changed my perspective very quickly. I thought, wow, this is possible. So that was one of the things that the book really did for me because I realized how attached I was to my own gloom and doom about the climate and all of a sudden I thought, oh, there’s something we can do, so I really appreciated that. I think that’s something that a lot of people don’t know, that it will reverse once the emissions drop.

Paul Hawken: I was surprised that it didn’t make more news when that was announced. I really was looking for it in *The Post*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, or somewhere. It never showed up.

James Shaheen: It’s just not negative enough. So I just wanted to ask, in the introduction of the book, you write that there’s no such thing as a single individual. That’s a notion that may be familiar to a lot of Buddhist listeners. To quote you, you say that “being an individual is instead an ongoing, functional, and intimate connection to the human and living world.” So how does this view of the individual (or lack thereof) inform how we can take action?

Paul Hawken: Well, the climate zeitgeist, if you will, was formed initially by scientists 40–50 years ago. I mean, we knew it 100 years ago. Eunice Newton Foote was the one American scientist who discovered it in 1856 and published a paper on it, so we’ve thought about the mechanism for a long time. As that became clear, starting 50 years ago, then it was in the public

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



sphere, and then there began the activist phase. So first was the existential threat phase, which is about fear, and then the activists picked it up and said, who's the cause? It went right to oil, Big Oil, Exxon, Chevron, and things like that, cars. When that picked it up, the word was very much about shaming, blame, and guilt, finger-pointing and so forth. Then it got to this is what you can do, sort of like Uncle Sam. This playbook came from the tobacco industry, and it was picked up by British Petroleum in 2001. Ogilvy & Mather, the advertising agency, came up with the carbon footprint. Then it became an era of individuation. That was individuation of the problem and the solution.

As I said in the book, there's no such thing as an individual. Our ego certainly tries to convince us of that every morning when we wake up, but in fact, we are part of complex networks of people and things beyond people, with our family, our friends, who we work with, cities, classes, schools, temples, synagogues, churches. Whatever it is, if you make a list and look at it, you realize you're part of an amazing network of human beings. And that's because we're homo sapiens. That's why we're here and not Neanderthals. We love to work together, play together, learn together, do together, and that is who we are. That's where you have influence, and that is where the vector of change really comes from.

We all hope that the government and big corporations get it and do something. The Paris Agreement was considered to be a big breakthrough because it had 191 signatures. Not one country's pledge actually meets the Paris Agreement. There are no incentives, no penalties. During that time, \$3.8 trillion was loaned to fossil fuel companies, and \$3.3 trillion was given as government subsidies to fossil fuel companies for a total of \$7.1 trillion. So much for the Paris Agreement. I think everyone who's there active with it is amazing, extraordinary. But I'm just saying, we've got to stop looking for that to change. We hope it does, and it's very powerful when the government changes rules and regulations and policies and subsidies and taxes and incentives. But if we're waiting around for that to happen, then we're going to be disappointed and we're going to fail. We're not going to be good ancestors to the future.

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



Sharon Salzberg: Your approach brings together scientific research like you just described and much deeper, almost spiritual tools of transformation, like compassion, courage, and reverence. Reverence is not a word one hears very often these days, which is an interesting reflection. At one point, you say that “the most complex, radical climate technologies on earth are the human heart, head, and mind, not a solar panel.” Can you speak a little bit about this?

Paul Hawken: Am I betraying my—

Sharon Salzberg: Your roots? I guess you did.

Paul Hawken: Well, they’re not my roots; they’re our roots. They’re the roots of humanity. Buddhism is seen as a religion, but it’s really the science of the heart in mind. It is a science that’s just beautifully articulated and expressed. I got my teacher—I mean, all Buddhist teachers are my teachers, but my direct teacher is Jack Kornfield, and he’s on my board, who you know very well. So here’s the secret. When I was doing the book, I was stressing. There’s no question about it. About the deadline, about it being good enough, my perfectionist OCD self, about facts, the science, getting that right. When I would wake up in the middle of the night, which I would do, I would turn on Jack’s podcasts. I can finish his sentences now, every one of them. I love his jokes. I have my favorite jokes of his. But then I’d go back to sleep, and going back to sleep with those teachings and the wonderful way he teaches as well was definitely a leitmotif that went through the whole book. No question about it.

Sharon Salzberg: I’m writing a book myself right now, so I’m listening very carefully. There are a couple of things I wanted to ask. One is I’ve talked to Jack a lot about your project in general, and it reminds me that sometimes structurally, I’ve looked at something like AA or

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



12-step groups and think, what a brilliant model. Couldn't this be something that could be replicated with various kinds of suffering, bringing people together, a sense of fellowship? Jack was talking about what you did as maybe a model for other very pressing issues like technology and the mind and things like that. I think you really have accomplished more than just the book. I think it's going to be very influential, and maybe you could speak a little bit about the gathering that you did in creating this.

Paul Hawken: Thank you. First of all, there was a gathering on many, many levels. Of course, there's staff, there's board, but then there are the other organizations and people we work with in the world. And in every case, what we're looking to do is to break out of the climate silo, if you will, and even on the website itself. In the book itself, we talk about the—I call it the sick care industry, but the healthcare industry. We talk about the war industry. We talk about the poverty industry and poverty itself and the politics industry and the banking industry. We talk about that. The climate movement has given all these things kind of a hall pass or get out of jail free card. The idea is somehow if we have this straitjacket of thinking that if we all convert to renewable energy, everything's going to be OK.

It simply is not true at all. And that exclusion of 98–99% of the people in the world, the greatest number are people who we classify as poor, and they are. They live in poverty. That's 4.3 billion people who live off of \$8–10 a day. They're excluded because we have had a climate movement that's very much about talking about future existential threat. Interesting phrase. It's true, the brain doesn't care about that. I mean, some people do. But the human brain isn't wired that way. It cares about current existential threat.

Those 4.3 billion people wake up every morning with that every single day: fear for food security, their children, their safety, education, affording the books or uniforms they need, their health, their well-being, their jobs, you can just go right on down the list. And that's what 4.3 billion people at least wake up with every single morning, so the climate movement really

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



doesn't have anything to say to them. If the climate movement isn't going to address poverty, children, women, Indigenous people, if it isn't going to apply to people who are paying the highest price, for not just what the warming is doing, but just what this existing extractive economy is doing to them, then we're not serious.

Sharon Salzberg: Your book offers so many examples of interconnection—networks of trees taking care of each other, the interdependence of ecosystems, just to name a few. That brings me back to the sense of reverence, which is what I actually see coming up within me when I read that. I'm wondering about learning from those models of interconnectivity and interdependence, not only in terms of action, which you spoke about so beautifully right now, but in terms of compassion, in terms of reverence, in terms of those inner states that we also want to cultivate for what might be necessary to sustain this effort.

Paul Hawken: I think it goes back again to what I was saying earlier about the languaging of climate and how we've language it, an other, a thing out there somewhere, and then we've dissociated ourselves from it in that way. I think a lot of people have come to understand climate through that lens, through that way of seeing things. What regeneration is trying to do is not trying to teach but to show the obvious, which is the biosphere and the atmosphere are inseparable and the same thing, that there is no thing out there where it's happening and to point out that global warming is caused by a profound disconnection, disconnections between each other, humans to humans, for sure, we see that visibly and rather horribly right now in the world, between humans and nature itself, and between nature, the fragmentation, the poisoning, and acidification of oceans. I mean, we're fragmenting nature itself. Regeneration is very much about repairing, putting those broken strands together with the knowledge that we know scientifically that the way you heal a system is to connect more of it to itself, whether it's an ecosystem, an

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



immune system, or a social system. In other words, all the pieces and parts are there, and what you've got to do is reconnect them.

One of the things that's really important to reconnect is ourselves with life itself. Our food, our advertising, our work, where we work, how we work, what we work on—so much of it gives us the illusion that somehow nature is a nice place to go to on vacation rather than seeing soil as a community and the source of all nutrition and well-being and then to understand we're killing the soil. It's called industrial agriculture, and it seemed to be a good idea at the time. Now we know better.

Reverence comes from the experience of—there's a really beautiful book on trees. The Italians have done a lot of the original research on plant perception and plant intelligence. The literature describes how trees and plants have all five senses that we have, and they have 15 more. I'm looking out the window right now, and I'm looking at Redwood trees that are on the property. There must be 25 of them. I remember reading that and walking there and realizing that all the trees could see me. All they can see is kind of a chiaroscuro movement, black and white, as far as we know. They don't have a brain. They don't have an optic nerve. They're completely different organisms, obviously, than we are. And now every time I do it, I think, Whoa, this is community. We know the trees live in community, of course, and that there's mother trees. Susan Simard first came up with that understanding. She called them mother trees and talked about altruism, and she was pounced on by her fellow male scientists. Pounced on. She was right; they were wrong. They saw the forest as competition rather than community.

I feel like reverence is the awakening to being alive, like “I'm alive, oh my gosh, this is amazing. I'm not going to be here long. And so while I'm here, my brothers and sisters aren't just human beings, everything that is in the living world is my sibling.” You can have that experience looking at a screen. You can be prompted to have an experience, and you could be moved very much by documentaries, videos, and so on. But the actual experience of connectedness comes in being outside.

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



James Shaheen: You know, Paul, you said something almost in passing that really jumped out at me in the book. We think of life as this endless Darwinian competition, yet you're saying, as the trees show us, it's really also if not primarily cooperation.

Paul Hawken: Absolutely. And think about industrial agriculture, just to take a step back. What happened? People invented artificial fertilizers. There were chemicals that could be applied that were affordable, like nitrate in the Haber-Bosch method in the early 20th century, which actually was used for bombs but can also be used for fertilizer. You put that stuff on the soil and you get greener, bigger plants sooner, and you go, Oh my God, fantastic. What's wrong with this picture? Nothing. But what happened is it produced very weak plants actually, and so pretty soon the insects figured that one out, and then they're all over it. Then you need insecticides, and then the plants were very shallow rooted because they were like plants on an IV drip system. Everything they needed was pretty much on the first few inches of the soil. And then the weeds came in and were competing. Now we need glyphosate, we need herbicides or our plants can't grow to full production.

What's really interesting is that if you look at a field of degraded land—it can be a farm land, which most farmland is degraded land now—and you study the weeds that are growing there, the weeds are trying to heal the soil. If a weed is deficient in certain minerals, you would get Canadian Thistle, which is a deep taproot, to bring up those minerals. You're getting amaranth and pigweed. Each of them is an indicator of the earth trying to heal itself. If you see it that way, then you're starting to see that where we live, life creates the conditions for life. That's what it does. And it does so in such ingenious ways. And people who've been here for thousands of years, we call them Indigenous. They're Indigenous because they are largely the original inhabitants of the land, and that's what indigene means. But you have the Nipmuc First Nation in Nova Scotia and Canada and so forth. They can go by a spruce tree, and they can listen to it, the

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



wind stopping through the tree, and then they'll name the tree, and the name is the sound they're hearing. Then they can go by that tree ten years later. They remember the name. They listen to the sound to see if the sound matches the name. If it doesn't, then they know something has happened to the tree: air pollution, lightning struck, or whatever. So this extraordinary sensitivity exists on both sides. I don't want to separate humans from nature, but I'm just saying, we had that as people on this planet, and understanding the living world is about observational science. It's a science of place.

The difference between Indigenous observational science and the science we've come to rely upon is about repetition. You do an experiment. It's empirical; if you can't repeat it, it's not good science. And in nature, of course, nothing repeats itself. You have, like the Yupik people on the Bering Strait who could predict the weather accurately two years in advance. We can't predict six days in advance with all our satellites. In terms of reverence, I think we have this amazing amount of knowledge. It's still here. 5000 cultures. It's 5% of the world's population. But 80% of the world's biodiversity is where that 5% is. I don't think that's a coincidence. That is due to language, and their language is passed on in songs and stories and obviously words themselves, and these contain the science of place. They taught the children, the new people, how to live in that place, and they grew. The song lines of Australian aboriginal people, the songs change, and they contain what to know about that place in Australia and how to care for it. When I think of reverence, Sharon, I think of how it's just all there. If we stay inside, we're missing this extraordinary beauty that's here on earth in people, in place, in creatures, in plants, in ecosystems and so forth, and it's enough to make you weep for its beauty.

Sharon Salzberg: Well, it's so inspiring listening to you because I've also been thinking how, of course, in any kind of activist work, it's so easy to become overwhelmed, to feel it's fruitless or you're just burning out. It's too much. Certainly the way the climate crisis is often presented, the news can feel so apocalyptic. I want to talk to you about what helps you stay motivated and what

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



helps others stay motivated as far as your experience and drawing from the quality of reverence, it's right there, as well as compassion and those other qualities.

Paul Hawken: Well, I usually refer to the Wendell Berry quote, “Be joyous, though you’ve considered all the facts.”

James Shaheen: That’s good.

Paul Hawken: Of course, he’s right. But I think all of us have to say again, “Got the facts. Thank you for this brilliant, brilliant science.” The IPCC, the science is brilliant, what the women and men have done there over the years. But how do you want to live your life? You can live it as a victim like “This is happening to me. That’s unfair. I didn’t do it or I didn’t do so much or whatever.” Or you can live it as the subject. I don’t mean that in a narcissistic way, but I mean it as it’s happening for me. This is a gift. This is an offering.

The way I look at it is we’re being homeschooled. It’s fantastic. My father was the one who made me drop out of university. He said, “Your education begins when you leave school.” I took him at his word and left. But all our education never stops. And that’s the point. We’re being educated, and lesson plan #1 is to get in alignment with biology. If you’re not, then you’re going to have a tough time here. And the thing is that nature never makes a mistake. It’s hard for humans to understand that. They finger-point and blame and see everything that’s wrong with the world. Nature never makes a mistake. Only we do. When we talk about climate, again, we talk about climate change as if it was a bad thing. It is a fantastic thing. Climate is perfect. It’s responding to what’s happening in the biosphere down here. Villainizing it or making it somehow a source of terror, it isn’t true. If the climate didn’t change every second, we wouldn’t have hummingbirds and glaciers and rivers and jungles and food and food trees and mangoes and parrots. We wouldn’t have it. We have it because the climate keeps changing. And so again,

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



reverence, thank you. We live on this amazing Goldilocks planet. We're not Mars; we're not Venus. Venus has a lot of carbon dioxide; Mars has none. We're just so fortunate to be here. Basically, we unintentionally meddled with planet stability. OK, let's go. Let's fix it. "Fix it" means *us*, not it out there. Let's fix what we're doing down here. That's what regeneration is about.

People ask me sometimes, "What should I do?" I say, "I have no idea what you should do. But you do." And the thing to do is to look at this amazing, complex variety of ways in which you can be effective and engage and make change. Find the one that lights you up, that makes you go, "I want to do that. I've always wanted to do that. Or I used to do that. Or I'm curious about it. I want to learn more about it. Or I care about this creature, this animal, this migratory corridor." You decide, and that is what you should do.

Sharon Salzberg: So often in Buddhism, as you know very well, we talk about compassion and caring being born from being able to open to suffering, being able to acknowledge it, not disguise it, not hide from it, not run away from it, but to actually be able to do something, we need a different energy. It's not only the feeling of dismay, like this isn't right. It's an actually energized posture of going toward that situation, that person to see if we can be of help, if we can make a difference in some way.

Paul Hawken: Absolutely, right action, right livelihood, right? I mean, it's all there in Buddhism. What I try to do when I write is make it as accessible as possible to as wide a variety of people as possible. I'm always looking for when I'm editing, always going back and always going back and so forth. I always knew what my touchstone was. I knew what I relied upon. Where are you standing? Well, this is where I'm standing. I can't imagine what it would be like for me, certainly, but. what the book would have become without my Buddhist practice, I just

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



can't imagine without that. It's not a framework, and these words beggar the complexity and beauty of the practice. But there's no question about it.

James Shaheen: I'm going to try to formulate a question that I didn't write down, so I'll go out on a limb here. You were talking earlier about the people who live on \$10 a day and it's not possible for them to think beyond that if they're going to survive, so we need, as you say in your book, to come up with climate solutions that also address that fact. Otherwise, it makes no sense to half the population or more, and we need everybody. But then I was thinking those of us who are not living on \$10 a day, I think we should be able to think long-term. We have that luxury. But maybe our minds aren't wired that way. But then I think—I was having this conversation this morning—of the people who built cathedrals. They started something the completion of which they knew they would never see, so I thought what kind of mind would undertake something that would be completed long after their death? You and Sharon have been talking about reverence, and that's kind of an answer for me. Reverence would allow me to do this regardless of whether I'm there for the result or not. I wonder if you've given that sort of thing some thought because there is something in us that can think long-term, but what kind of mind is that? What kind of belief system is that? What kind of commitment is that?

Paul Hawken: Going back to poverty, we don't have to come up with climate solutions that address poverty. They just do just the way they are. The qualities of the work that regeneration offers the world give all people a sense of purpose and meaning and dignity. Too often, people who are impoverished lack all three. The number one cause of depression is living a life of no purpose, just feeling purposeless yourself and having no purpose. It leads to all sorts of strange activity. When we think about 2 billion hectares of degraded land, I mean, what can you put more water in, an empty glass or one that's half full? Those lands are carbon poor, and there are so many different ways we can treat that land in such a way that brings it back to life. That brings

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



jobs, that brings work, and it's really great work because you get to see the difference. Every spring, you can see the land growing and changing, birds coming back and water coming back and rivers coming back and streams. You're bringing life back, and regeneration is really about bringing the earth back to life, and when you bring the earth back to life, you bring yourself back to life. You can't do one without the other. And so to me, regeneration is about starting with the end in mind. What is the end in mind in the end? What I mean by end isn't the finish, the ending.

We can see this in the work of people like Nemonte Nenquimo, who's in the book, or Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, who is an amazing Indigenous Chadian woman. It's so beautiful. She's a pastoralist. Her culture goes back I don't know how many thousands of years. And she said, "We always think seven generations ahead." And here's the surprise: because we know what happened seven generations ago. We remember, we know exactly what each generation did. And so you see yourself as a whole, a part of a whole, a continuity of an expression of human ingenuity, of kindness, of culture, of song and learning. We've cut that up into little bits and pieces in our culture. But it's there. Your question is really playing to something that's really important, because I think when you have that way of being and feeling and seeing in the world, then your sense of connection and responsiveness, responsibility, the ability to respond, changes dramatically.

Sharon Salzberg: One of the things you say in the book is regeneration is not only about bringing the world back to life, it's about bringing each of us back to life, which I think is really what you're talking about. I love in that section when you're offering twelve principles that are phrased as questions that any of us might consider when undertaking any actions: Does the action create livelihoods or eliminate them? Does it provide workers with dignity or demean them? And just having those kinds of questions, it's not about pass-fail, it's about bringing consciousness to what we're doing so that it becomes an alive action rather than just something we do by rote.

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



Paul Hawken: Yeah, one of them is are you meeting human needs or creating human wants? Are you pandering to desire or are you alleviating suffering? I didn't do *Shantideva*; I made it as simple and as accessible as possible for the reader.

And the thing about regeneration is that it's not like you can do it overnight. That question is putting life at the center of every act and decision. We have an economy where if you pull the string on the flower bag on every single service and product, you'll find in the supply chain that life is being taken. Life is being destroyed. Life is being harmed without exception. And so we know that we're all part of the degenerative economy because that's what taking life is, degeneration. So it's really about knowing and seeing. I think this is what we all see, and this is what's causing a sense of ennui and depression is that I can see the end of that road. That road doesn't go much further. And you're telling me to go down this road? It's a dead end down there.

Regeneration is like a 180, saying I didn't want to go this way. It doesn't mean we know or the book knows or our staff knows or all of us know. We know the questions. That's the most important thing and to ask those questions and to move step by step towards regeneration. Everything we do, we do things every day that cause harm. We don't mean to. It's unintentional. It's not our purpose. But we do. And then we just can look and watch and observe, understand, take in, ponder, consider, which is, by the way, one of the best English words of all because it means *considerere*. I took four years of Latin, which I detested, but I remember that one, which means with the stars, to look at something, to hold in mind, to consider. But we can do that. And that is the path.

Sharon Salzberg: Beautiful. James said sadly to me on the phone the other day, “I guess you never took Latin,” which I had not.

James Shaheen: Of course I did.

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



Paul Hawken: Me too.

James Shaheen: I guess we can close with one question. You quote Gary Snyder, who says that the only way to restore the planet is by loving it, not causing harm. So how does love factor into your work?

Paul Hawken: It factors into my work in several ways. One is that if you look at the imagery, I mean, I was born and raised a photographer, so I had a huge appreciation. When I was a child, at our home, there was Ansel Adams and Ed Weston and Brett Weston and Imogen Cunningham, so I grew up with people who looked at the world in a really profound way. It was all black and white pretty much back then, but it didn't make any difference. And so I chose all the imagery in the book, and the purpose was to have someone look at it and go, “Wow, look at that. That's beautiful. What's happening? Why is this oxpecker on the head of a rhino in the water? What is it and why is it there?” Just the beauty of the eyes and the bird and all the different images there are. I've heard a discussion about this recently around the question of what is love? Because love seems so temporal. It comes and goes in some ways, at least in popular literature. But to me, at the core of love is beauty. All cultures, all people see beauty, and beauty just does something to us.

I think when Gary said that, I mean, we all know where he lived and where he spent his days. I went to school up there, by the way. I went to school in Nevada City and spent most of it outside on horses and in rivers. And it is about falling in love. We have one of our social media posts, “Are you madly in love with nature? www.regeneration.org.” And we're even going to have it on b-line advertisements. These are bicycle delivery vehicles in Portland, Oregon, and a friend of mine has designed these pretty big carts actually powered by a bicycle. It says, “Are you madly in love with nature?” and shows a picture of the book. Things like that. Thank you

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



both. Thank you for this. It's lovely to talk about it in this context or just shared understanding. It's so relaxing instead of being questioned. It's been a really great conversation to be with you.

Sharon Salzberg: Well, it's beautiful being with you truly. And James, you're going to stop doom scrolling, right?

James Shaheen: I'll stop doom scrolling now that I know that once we peak and bring down emissions, it's not going to go on for centuries, so thank you for that, Paul. And thank you so much for joining Sharon and me. For our listeners, I can't recommend a book more highly than I can *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation*. We'll also have an excerpt in the November issue of *Tricycle*, but it's no substitute for the book. So now I'm going to hand it over to Sharon. As with all these podcasts, we have a nice way of closing with a short meditation.

Sharon Salzberg: Thank you so much. Why don't we sit together just for a few minutes? You can close your eyes or not, however you feel most at ease. We'll start with just feeling your body and feeling the earth support you. Feel space touching you. Usually we think it's something we have to do, like poke a finger in the air, but space is always touching us. It's already touching us. Feel your breath, which is truly a miracle of life, one of the many, many ways we are connected to a larger whole. We breathe in, breathe out. From that sense of having a home, being centered, being present, we can allow all things to come and go. Thoughts, feelings arising and passing away, and we're home. Thank you.

James Shaheen: Thank you, Paul Hawken, thank you, Sharon, for being such a great partner in these podcasts.

Life As It Is

Episode #4 with Paul Hawken

“Regeneration and Reverence”

October 27, 2021



Paul Hawken: Thank you.

James Shaheen: You've been listening to *Life As It Is* with Paul Hawken. We'd love to hear your thoughts about the podcast, so write us at feedback@tricycle.org to let us know what you think. *Life As It Is* and *Tricycle Talks* are produced by As It Should Be and Sarah Fleming. I'm James Shaheen, editor-in-chief of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*. Thanks for listening!