

Welcome to Turning Conscience Into Action, the Earth Charter podcast. Join Mirian Vilela, Earth Charter International Executive Director, in her fascinating conversations with great thinkers, scholars and activists from around the world who are working in the fields of sustainability, ethics, education and social transformation. Our purpose is to generate new insights on how to face current global challenges and inspire informed action.

Welcome to our Earth Charter podcast, Turning Conscience Into Action.

Today we will have the pleasure of having a chat with Lisa Miller. Dr. Lisa Miller is a professor, researcher, and clinical psychologist at Columbia University, a teacher's college in the clinical psychology program. And she's the founder of the Spirituality Mind Body Institute. She is a researcher, a well-known scholar on spirituality in psychology. Lisa, thank you so much for joining us today here for this episode of the Earth Charter podcast. Mirian, it is my honor and I want to thank you for what you're leading in our global community.

It's tremendously important and your podcast is a platform of voice for the dignity of our magnificent Earth and we as being part of it. So today is really my honor. Thank you so, so much for including me. Thank you. So Lisa, as you can imagine, I'm intrigued by the book you published in 2021. 2021, that is entitled The Awakened Rain, The New Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for Inspired Life. Of course, I want to know more about this book and I know now it's translated into Spanish and probably in other languages.

And my intention is to share with the audience, our audience, a little bit about you and the work you do and the research. I know you are very knowledgeable and you have been working a lot on neuroscience and spirituality, and especially in the importance of bringing that into education. So it's something that is on normal news of every day, certainly in Latin America, in North America, in Europe, in other parts of the world. We find news around how our societies are dysfunctional more and more.

We can see growing violence, anxiety and depression in most urban societies, independently of where we are in the world. And as well as a growing number of people, adolescents, young people, that are struggling with mental and emotional health. And I understand you have done significant work and research on this. And according to your work, your findings, what do you see or what you understand are the root causes of these challenges in ways to address them that could be helpful for our audience.

So, Mary, you're so right. You're absolutely right. That all around the world, we have never seen as many young people, people from every decade of life, but as many young people with addiction, depression and suicide. If you were to write a horror movie, it would be one in which young people full of energy, full of promise, full of their whole lives, full of optimism, start to kill themselves. That would be a horror movie. And yet that's what we're witnessing. We're witnessing a moment in time in which the natural joy and excitement is somehow dampened down.

And there's enormous anxiety and fear. And I think, I think that coming now, you know, this week, officially out of the pandemic, the announcement is made, the flag is waved,

we may be poised and positioned for a new chapter. We are ready to see something else. And I think what we are on the brink of may just be a spiritual renaissance. And what do I mean by that? You know, what do I mean by that? Because the last time we heard renaissance, it was positioned as being somehow in relationship to, to some extent in opposition to traditional religion.

Well, I love all religions. I love Buddhism and Hinduism and Catholicism and Christianity and everything. I'm Jewish myself, Muslim. I love it all, all the world religions. And it is also the case as a scientist that I have taken a very, very strong interest in both religion and our deep human capacity. Every one of us has for spirituality. And what's the difference? What's the difference between religion and spirituality? Well, religion, if you ask a scientist, is the gift of our parents, our grandparents, our community.

It is 100% environmentally transmitted. The sacred text is very strong into our culture and our culture. Yes, indeed. Religion. Now, spirituality, however, is innate. It is an inborn physical capacity, just like we are inborn with natural cognitive capacity to think we are born with the capacity to feel. We are born quite specifically with a capacity for a transcendent relationship. Now, you might say my word is, is God sacred God. For some people, it might be Jesus Hashem. It could be universe or source or higher power.

But whatever one's word may be, we know through the lens of science that there is an innate capacity for a transcendent relationship and to feel the presence of that love in our connection with fellow human beings and all the earth. So whether it's sort of this capacity to feel the connection with a bigger whole, it indeed a relational spirituality. And what kind of relationship, right? It's not, as you suggest, a connection with the whole. Well, that relationship, and we've talked to people again who are Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, spiritual, but not religious.

That deep relationship is one that is loving and holding. We know that we are not going to fall through to oblivion. We know that no matter how bad and painful things may get, we are buoyed up. And that knowing, because this is our birthright and we are incarnate, if you will, souls on earth, incarnate beings, that knowing that we are loved and held, when we feel that, well, if we ask people to have that experience while they're in an MRI scanner, we know that the bonding network in our head, the same bonding network that came online when we were loved and held as children in the arms of a grandparent or parent.

So could you say that one of the reasons why people are in this struggle or crisis of mental and emotional health is because there is some crisis with this feeling of connection with a bigger whole, with our spiritual capacity? And that our natural capacity has not been built up and exercised. Because if we look through the lens of science and in particular the twin study, we can look at twins raised together, twins raised apart, factor out the commonalities of function of genes and environment.

Well, it is indeed true that our spiritual capacity is innate, but it is one third innate, two thirds environmentally cultivated. And for many people, the environmental two thirds embrace includes their rich faith tradition. For many people, the two thirds embrace is nature, art, music, family. But whatever the two thirds embrace is for the natural spiritual

core, it is the most important work we do as parents, as grandparents. There's no love in the world, like the love of a grandparent, as educators and as clergy, whoever we are in the child's life.

So what is the most important work you are saying? What would be the most important work of a parent or teacher? The most important work we can do is to strengthen and cultivate the natural spiritual core. The most important work we do as a parent, as a teacher, as anyone who cares for youth is to nourish and nurture natural spirituality. And for some people that is done through a faith tradition, whether they're Catholic or Hindu or Jewish or Christian, for some people, nurturing the spiritual core is done in other ways.

For instance, a family that spends the weekends in service, service to those who are hungry, service to those who are ill, building schools, digging wells, you know, a service, deep connection with nature, caring for nature. There's so many ways that we can cultivate the natural spiritual core of every child. But it must be done because the natural spiritual capacity for spiritual awareness is not taught, so to say, it is caught. It is shared through adults, trusted, loving adults walking the walk.

Okay, so that's important. We cannot teach that. We can offer opportunities to experience that. And you said that the way to nurture that is either through the connection with nature, experiencing that, or through servicing the community, is just some examples of how we can cultivate the natural spirituality of a child. Or it could be to pray by the side of your mother or father, right? But I'm not telling my child, go pray. I'm saying, would you like to sit by my side? And as I pray, and through the mother is felt God's presence through the deep emotional connection, the tears of sacred awe, the child knows through their mother God's presence, as well as directly.

But I think that it is walking the walk as parents of lived spiritual life, pray out loud, explain my mistakes and my recovery, my request for forgiveness and my renewal spiritually out loud to my children so that they know the path of renewal. So we could, according to your research, one of the reasons for this mental and emotional health crisis, growing crisis among youth, is precisely a vacuum in the spiritual capacity of people or in the vacuum of nurturing the... Yes, 98% of the reason that young people have depression, addiction, and even suicide is because with the sharp increase in these diseases of despair has been an equally sharp decline in family religious observance, family spiritual life.

And I don't mean go read the book yourself. I mean, let's sit down and pray. Let's sit down and figure out how we're going to help our community. Let me tell you about a story when I was your age and I felt lost and I felt angry and I felt completely without purpose and direction. And then I had a deeper connection, an opening of the heart, an answer that my head alone could not provide and the answer of the heart, the knowing that comes not because I made it up in my head because I receive it like a catch in the catcher's net, a gift, an inspiration.

That is a spiritual form of guidance. So when we just out loud as parents talk about being loved and held, guided and never alone through our own, our heartfelt relationship to God, the higher power, then our children know it's real, then our children know how to

walk the walk themselves. But we can't send them off to do it. We need to bring them in, welcome them in, open the window and have transparency into our own spiritual life. And in fact, that's what the science says in the making of a spiritual child, the environmental strengthening of the spiritual core is 50% the parent walking the walk unconditional love service to others and 50% talking the walk explaining how it is in my own life. I feel God's presence.

Where do I turn for inspiration for collective prayer or meditation. How do we care for our planet. So as sacred creation. So these are the ways that parents can shape their children far more powerfully than when the child grows up.

Mary, I so often hear parents say, we're not going to talk about anything. No religion, no spirituality, because when I was a kid, I had bad messengers. Well, all that means is that they met an adult who was foible to you know was supposed to be the voice of religious or spiritual life was carrying the torch. But they weren't the fire. You know, this person was only human the torch bearer they were they may have been foible, but they weren't the fire of truth and the fire of truth. That's what's real so many times parents don't give their children the opportunity to develop spiritually because they are miffed or frustrated or angry about it with the just experience.

Well, when anything is imposed in the given or taught in a vertical manner. It's very hard to absorb in a natural manner right. Is it. So what do you think is the the worst that parents and even teachers do normally to engage a child.

Well, I think the what we shouldn't do.

Well, I'll try to flip it around and say what the science says is helpful right and the science says that every child is born a knower. We are not a blank slate. We are born already with what psychologists call implicit spiritual cognition, which really means you could say the voice of the soul or our natural capacity to perceive into the deeper nature of life. And so unless socialized out of it. A very young child will perceive that we can spontaneously know we don't need to have been told everything we don't need to have read it in the book.

We don't need to have seen it in a movie or online, but we can have a direct connection. We have we are built to be able to have a receptive form of spiritual knowing. Unless socialized out of it and far too often are you know most schools will say, how do you know that point where on the page. Did it say it. If you can't tell me where you found that then it's plagiarism. Well, no, no, I knew it from the universe. It touched my heart. God told me that. So direct knowing another example of implicit spiritual cognition, meaning natural spiritual awareness.

The child doesn't know her is that unless socialized out of it. A young child will perceive continuity of spirit life after death ongoing consciousness.

So I'll give you an example when my oldest child was to We lost our dear pop up great grandpa. And in our tradition were Jewish, we gather literally by the physical grave site and together dig the hole because we get it through us body, mind and soul that this person has passed. So my little son took a tiny garden spade. He's too young for the big heavy

shovel. With the little garden spade. He got a little bit of earth and he put it on pop pops casket and he said, look, mommy and his eyes, Mary and they started to sparkle.

And he said, you see The body goes back to the good earth soul goes to God. Well, a week later, he's playing out in the backyard and he says, mommy, mommy come here right now. So of course we come and he says, look, and he part points to the earth and his eyes are sparkling again. There's a dead turkey carcass.

And he says, you see mommy the body goes back to the good earth. The soul goes to God.

Let's talk about the book you published in 2021. The book was called the awakened brain. What is a way on awakened brain. Can you share with us and what what is that. Why is that important. How can we make it happen. How can I make my brain we can So inside of each and every one of us. This moment is the brain ready to go ready and wired to awaken. This is our innate birthright So this is our deep inborn capacity for awakened awareness. We're using our awakened brain. We are choosing to engage the deep transcendent relationship in us through us and around us with our Higher power, the great force of life that's loving holding and guiding In many countries, there's a focus on the ancestors. We see this, of course, in Asia and in parts of Mexico.

And what we find through the lens of science is that the relationship with ancestors that transcendent relationship often serves to protect young people against depression and addiction and suicide, much as a close relationship to the higher power. So it is this deep neuro docking station, if you will, there's a landing pad, we are built as incarnate being souls on earth incarnate With a neuro docking pad a circuitry through which to know that we are in a deep relationship. And when we hold this relationship as real and foundational Then we have a way of handling very negative events. The worst thing happens and yet we do not perish. We know that we are left in health. We know that we will be Guided forward when we're lost when we're depressed. COVID is over. What do I do? What do I do? My business is closed.

Do I go back to work?

What kind of society everything is resetting. There is a 52 card pickup. Every card in the deck is being thrown up in the air before we re stack the deck. So we're in a time of transition and the old way of thinking will not do it alone. We must use the guidance of our awakened awareness, our natural spiritual connection. So awakened brain is our awakened awareness and it seems that one way for us to ignite and just spark that is by finding our inner self, a balance, like Finding ourselves in that space of our inner self and I suppose there are many ways of awakening our brain.

Yes. What's so remarkable about awakened awareness is that it contrasts to what we have built and strengthened in overdrive. It's as if we've gotten very, very, very strong biceps that hadn't built our triceps. And what we have built is narrow, dogged achieving awareness. I've got to have this. I've got to have more social media recognition. I've got to have more money. I've got to have more prestige. Material wealth. Yes. And it's a world of quantity. It's a world that actually when we look in the MRI and people talk about I've

got to have more. I've got to get that job. I've got to get the promotion. I've never got I got to get another 20% of income. I've got to get another car in this whole thing runs in the brain.

The addiction network, the neuro docking station for I've got to have it. I've got to get it. I need more. You know, when you get it, it's great for about a day and then you want the next thing that is actually an addictive stance. Yeah, it's the society, culture, predominant society that is focused on the heavens and the importance of measuring a level of success by how much. Exactly. You put that so I'm hearing the world of measurement. Well, when we live in a narrow, unyielding world of measurement, then it's all about getting more and then getting more its quantity quantity, as opposed to the deep inherent inherent in the world of measurement.

The in and of itself experience of living the deep in and of itself spiritual values of care of love of our planet of love of one another fellow human beings. The in and of itself inherent quality of life in awakened awareness is completely lost in only dogged achieving awareness. And what we see in the MRI is that when we're in awakened state, we are actually an open system where more perceptive or more creative. Ironically, we're actually more outwardly successful, but we have a loving connection we're an open system and we're awakened to what comes with this receptive form of perception.

It is a narrow dogged unyielding rigid form of perception I've got to have it. I did strategy I did tactics, why did I not get it I did everything right. That running I got to have it is literally the insulin this triad and through the fmri. It is the same neurosurgery of addiction to drugs addiction to internet gaming addiction to it doesn't matter what the object of the addiction is. It's the same neuro stance. And that is something that is literally in the air and water of our global culture right now. We have a situation. We're having thrown spirituality and religion out of the public square, perhaps the greatest casualty of all of so called globalization is that we through spirituality out of the public became a toxic, transactional public square.

Where you go to dinner and does someone say tell me about the most beautiful moment with your children. Does someone say tell me about something you've seen that's so beautiful on our earth and mountain of notion.

Now, it is not an open I vow transformative relationship. It is in a public square minus a spiritual core. Unyieldingly transactional and the dinner party goes like this. So, where do you work. Where does your partner work. Where do you live. And I feel like I can hear the clicking of a calculator as they add me up. And young people's view of life is that somehow you figure out what you want and you go and you get it and you close the deal. You will like doing an X-ray of a person through a dinner conversation and just looking at that person by how much they have where they are. So depending on where they were.

How much do you have how much have you accomplished. Oh, now what about your innocent little kids. What about them. How are they doing. Yeah, so it just doesn't stop when that should be a tender protective joyful loving unconditional sweet relationships so I think this is very poisonous and who is the most poisoned of all is of course the

children and the teams, because rather than live a life in dialogue with you know what is my call. What am I to discover, you know, what did we see today, life is a discovery ready to go. Life has become a shopping cart. What do I want. How am I going to get it. How am I going to fill the cart. Am I good enough to fill the cart.

Am I clever enough to it's all about life as goals met or unmet like a shopping cart and that is a very transactional over instantiation narrow instantiation of a market. So certainly a social construct. Apply to human beings. And to our beautiful life giving earth. Do we have an awakened relationship or in relationship where I look at the little frog and I learned something about my life where I see the radical change and from rain to sun and I learned something about existence. And so a relationship or is you know, earth, a shopping cart where I get the trees I need and I get the minerals I need and I own it in this radical sense that property, because we humans decide we've divvied it up.

You know, no, that's just an agreement amongst humans that's not an agreement amongst the rights of the animals or the earth itself or the trees. We need awakened thinking we will not have the problems we have when we use our awakened awareness. So, in your book Lisa, you talk about how I understand you talk about how spirituality can prevent depression. Is that right. Can you share a little bit more about some highlights or key ideas we can find in your book, the Awakening Rain. The most important findings is that suffering is often the beginning of a spiritual awakening that depression can be a knock at the door for an awakening, literally the ignition in the car that you are rising up so that you might inherit the next station in your life love more deeply.

So, as we take on a position of care for your family or the community, you are expanding your deep perception and as spiritual growth emerges again, it's hardwired. So just as suddenly we shoot up in high school and look tolerant start looking like women and men. It is timed there's a biological clock. Well, it is also time that we arrive spiritually and adolescents and emerging adulthood. Again at midlife and again at elderhood there's three bridges. And in addition to these chapter breaks written into our genes, our spirit mind body, our nature.

There are also life events, beautiful the birth of a child, the passing of an ancestor, often at the edge of life and death, life events that also awaken us. And as we grow, as we expand spiritually, it can feel. Like a half empty glass of spirituality. What is the deep nature of life? What is my purpose? I don't mean by be a teacher or a lawyer. I mean, ultimate purpose is a soul on earth. And again at midlife have I lived my spiritual values? How have I realized this gift of being a soul on earth as a parent is enough.

Well, I think you put it in a nice way when you brought the soul, our soul on earth, because when we often ask ourselves the question of what's our purpose, my purpose in life, we come to a very, even say narrow way of looking at talking my job or like the purpose is to fulfill certain things. But when we the question, we bring the question to a higher level in terms of others, the purpose of your soul, it helps us to to expand our thinking in terms of what the purpose is a soul on earth. That question is not immediately and simply answered for many people. It is so central and the struggle to know my ultimate purpose, my calling, the struggle to understand the deeper nature of reality. Does God exist? How does God exist in my life?

How do I build a relationship with God or the higher power of the spirit? These are profoundly important, the most important work we do at each of the three bridges and every day in our lives. Well, it is often a very hard existential struggle to wrestle this to the ground. We can say, I don't know what my relationship with God is. I don't know what my purpose is and spin and ask and spin and ask inside our head until finally we release and we get an answer of the heart. I think that part of what we need to learn as an adult world and give our children perhaps in our schools is that we are knowers in many forms. We are very good logicians and we are very good empirical scientists and we are intuitives, we are mystics.

We can have skepticism and when we bring all forms of our deep organic knowing into dialogue, we can ask of the head what is my purpose and receive in our prayer and an inspiration and a mystical experience or a guiding synchronicity, an event in life that is way too unprobabilistic to happen by chance. Guidance, question of the head, answer of the heart, illumination of the heart through a mystical experience of dream and discernment with the head. Head and heart connected when we do that in the MRI machine, we have literally myelinated the tracks we've paved the highways between regions of the brain for a more innovative, creative, situationally aware brain in both our work but most importantly our lives.

We are built this way and it is untaught in most schools, but I want to elevate Mary and what you're doing because you are teaching multiple forms of knowing so that the child can inherit and strengthen their birthright to be innovative problem solvers to be more loving and aware of the world and the people around them. So what you're doing in schools is exactly what the science says is the realization the environmental nourishment of our spiritual birthright you are nourishing awakened awareness.

So Lisa's through the research you did you have been doing for vacancies. You have seen that. Is it right to say that the more spiritual someone is the less likely of being a depressed person or having mental or emotional health issues. Can we see that. So it is absolutely the case that over the lifespan when we strengthen our spiritual core. We are 80% less likely to become addicted 60% less likely to have major depression.

70% less likely to take dangerous risks like driving much too fast, or jumping off the cliff without checking the water, you know the things that are truly dangerous and to the pandemic, the global pandemic of youth suicide, where 62% less likely to take our lives and that goes up to 82% when spiritual life is shared when I both know myself as a soul on earth and know you Marion and whoever walks in the door, whether there's someone who's here to help or here to be annoying.

They are a soul on earth. When we see each other that way. We are 82% less if you told me there was a tiny little pill that protected 82% against the pandemic, the real pandemic for Gen Z. Young adults 18 through 25. I would take that little pill and I would smash it into my children's food. The real pandemic generation C is the spiritual core. The source of all pain, the source of fragility, and what is statistically directly linked to depression addiction and suicide is the atrophy of the innate spiritual core in the young adults of our time, and it is 100% because we have a very silenced spiritual life in public spaces and I

don't mean, you know, I'm Jewish that doesn't mean I want everyone to celebrate Hanukkah. I don't mean religious, you know, conversion.

What I mean is the rich embrace of pluralism, where we know ourselves all as spiritual beings and I look right into your eyes as my sister my brother as a soul on earth, and I want to hear about, I want to hear about Christmas I want to hear about Easter, I want to hear about Ramadan, I want to hear about the birth of your child as you know a spirit arrives and the crossing of your beloved grandparent I want to put that in the deepest way, and then spirituality is shared. And why are we then 82% less likely to take our life in the square task dystopic film that we seem to be in, because we have realized who we really are as souls on earth body mind and soul incarnate with our awakened brain ready to connect to the transcendent loving holding guiding relationship.

So you have really. I think clarify to our audience here. And what's the, this relationship between spirituality and religion. That's not the same. Make sure it's not the same. And being a spiritual person doesn't mean that you are against any religion. Being a spiritual person doesn't mean that you are necessarily linked to a religion. Absolutely. In fact, if you look around the world, about two out of three people will say I am spiritual and I am religious, whatever their tradition may be that their tradition their religious family life has shaped their natural spiritual core. And then about a third of people will say no I'm spiritual, but I am not religious there. Their natural spiritual core is shaped through acts of service time in nature.

What's very, very important is to know that we are all spiritual beings and when we look through the MRI. There is one spiritual brain we all have it I call it the awakened brain. And one we all have it. Now of course there's human variability in its subtle components and when we practice it grows stronger. But there's one foundational in its core components spiritual brain, every human being is given this on day one. Can we choose the environment the two thirds embrace that really will cultivate our deep transcendent connection that we might know and feel God and feel the godliness in one and did you know both forms of relational spirituality, the very same neuro docking station through which I feel God's presence is the same neuro docking station through which I feel the godliness in you the love in you.

So just as we're loved held and never alone, we're built to know that we're also certainly this feeling of connection, the connection with the with the large. And unlimited love unlimited love and so that notion of turning to one another with deep connection unlimited love showing up to be loving guiding and holding never getting one alone is the very same form same neuro docking station. Every faith tradition through time says if you love God and treat each other well.

You know it's interesting to like to mention that we did a publication to 2012 exploring synergies among different faith traditions and one of the commonalities that we find by looking at the voices of different religious tradition was a similar notion on the importance of connection and in the connectedness with the whole as something that we can find very similar in different religious tradition.

And I think it's certainly the message that is emphasized very much in your chatter, anything that we have to do with sustainability I would say is this the importance to understand our deep sense of connection with the large living more be humans or the living beings, the universe, etc. I would like to hear from you a little bit more on the work you do at the teachers college in Columbia, I think our audience will be eager or also interest curious, I would say, to learn about the key objectives, mission or the work you do at this spirituality mind body institute that you have set up in the teachers college in Columbia University, could you share with us what, what's the, what are the objectives of that work.

15 years ago, we started the spirituality mind body Institute, putting quite deliberately spirituality first. We are ourselves as taking three braids science MRI studies genotyping studies epidemiological studies on spirituality and its impact on the rest of our lives. Service, what that means about how we show up for one another in education and mental health training leaders. And third science service. We need a more spiritual world to seed a more spiritual society. So convening people putting people on a national or global platform, such as yourself, Mary and when you so graciously came and spoke at Columbia.

We need a spiritual voice into environmental renewal and protection a spiritual voice into a new vision of education, a spiritual voice into corporate and private sector leadership, a spiritual voice into. And then we need to hit the conversation. And again, we're doing it through science practice and convening on to a global platform a spiritual voice, and all three have flourished because quite authentically, people come from all over the world, ready to share ready to contribute into the oneness.

And we often think that what you've just said the oneness is this deep knowing we have that, well I say to my students we are a point and we are a wave. We're wonderfully diverse, different bio body suits with different gender and different appearance and different GPS and we are one we are part of one sacred consciousness field one spirit one family of life, white caps on one wave, interbeing in the words of Tick not on. So we need to know as we are distinct that we are making choices that our heart can guide through the oneness. The oneness is the deep knowing the oneness is the source, who I call God of guidance, the oneness is the receptive knowledge that I don't know how it will unfold but I know it's true and real and indeed its information in time will be revealed.

That is a form of knowing the oneness, the separate this is how we implement or you could say the heart is our form of knowing.

And the head is how we implement achieving awareness the head is strategy is tactic how we're going to actually go about protecting and sustaining our beautiful earth. When the heart guides the head, then you have the goodness and the direction guiding implementation, but as many traditional elders have said such as a Larry on the Kulioff the last elute shaman. We have it very backwards in our post industrial world we have the head guiding the heart, so that the strategy and the tactics and what do I want and how will I get it moves the appetites of the heart to craving to hunger to comparison to envy.

And that is a very lonely and destructive way to misuse our birthright opportunity to take awakened awareness the knowing of the heart and use it to point what direction shall the

strategist get busy in towards you fixing working strategist and we're all built and we get it lined up right when awakened awareness drives achieving awareness when heart drives had we are in a state of quest. Life is about a sacred contribution that sense of quest doesn't mean that I know where I'm going in five years, or what the answers are to ultimate reality.

But what it does mean is that I'm in a stance through which I receive perceive in a receptive way, God's guidance the guidance of the universe the force of nature the source of life, and then I am a servant of that source. Listen, with Mary Evelyn Tucker's work in the universe story that there's a great propelling force in and through all life and nature, therefore certainly as part of nature through us. Could you share with us. What, what are you doing in that realm. I do understand that it's a huge effort that focus the importance of fostering the capacity of teachers and schools to bring spirituality to school but I also envision.

What challenges, because of the misperceptions of different people parents and education systems in that regard. Can you share with us what is the collaborative for spirituality and education doing. Mary and well I will say that we had a very strong clear basic science that showed we are innately spiritual beings and when we support and nurture the natural spirituality and every child. They are 80% less depressed. They are far less likely to be depressed and addicted and suicidal. We had a very good basic science that said the natural spiritual core when strengthened is the child's greatest resource for mental health for wellness for thriving for ethics, and for the ability to interact and care with fellow classmates with animals with all of life. Right.

So, who, what parent wouldn't want their child to have a strong spiritual core in order to flourish and thrive.

The science was clear but the question as I went around sharing this science in my first book the spiritual child was parents would raise their hands and said thank you for writing this virtual child I see that spirituality is more important than anything I can give my child. But I don't know how. And is there a way that you could do this in school. And I thought we'll rather than have a bunch of scientists answer that question. Let's go out and look at spiritually supportive schools of all different cultural traditions of all different religions and those that were spiritual but not religious.

We went to Catholic schools and Jewish schools and the Sufi school and Black Panther school and Muslim schools went to all these different schools, spiritual but not religious and sure enough, after looking at many spiritually supportive schools. There was a common DNA that was seen across all different traditions all different cultures all different levels of resources. Some were highly resource some had very little resource, same DNA. And I thought well, if all of these spiritually supportive schools have this common DNA. Can't we make that available. Can that be taught and supported in teachers at any school who might choose to develop a spiritually supportive school.

What can we find, and what was put into this DNA that is now delivered at the awakened school Institute. The first thing we saw was that although there's many beautiful ways to put this forward in curriculum. There was nothing on the desk of the students that was about spirituality. It was in the relationship, the relationship between teacher and students,

the relationship fostered between the students that the way that the head of school spoke to his or her teacher was the way the teacher turned around and spoke to the child. It was deeply vertically integrated this clear articulation of who are we on earth.

Souls on earth and whatever language was theirs. Who are we to one another to walk alongside to love holding guide relational spirituality. That was why why do we come to school each day to help each child realize their deep spiritual core find their calling and purpose and learn to serve the highest power in life God, the source of all life. That's a very different reason for why we come to school, then we want our test scores to get up another 2% so we can be better than the school across town right that that is a very different reason.

So, that was actually teachable, it was teachable, I'll give you a taste. So we took the common DNA we offer it now for free through the awakened school Institute, and then we work side by side with whole schools that choose to re invigorate and bring a spiritual relational culture that is a relational culture and awakened culture. Here's an example. Awakened schools have a practice of receptive transcendent awareness. We are open systems, we are guided by a force we are more than calculators. They build achieving awareness and and we also build awakened awareness and we teach students to integrate all forms of knowing mystical intuitive with logical empirical together one knower right.

There's multiple epistemologies many ways of knowing and thinking that are welcomed and real. So there's a receptive practice some people have a meditation. Sometimes it's prayer. Sometimes it is one place calls it as spasio creating space to receive. But whatever the practice is it is one of receptive transcendent relationship to spiritually supportive schools have a language of the sacred. There is an understanding in everyday talk of parlance of spiritual values so they say things like my deep inner wisdom says God put on my heart, my higher power showed me.

There was a dream I had, I am going to you know every school that we visited was very proud of their stem program, they all want to build a stem program, and they're particularly proud if they have a 3D printer. So here we go were ushered first, you know, down the hall, the senior person to see the 3D printer. Well the question is, what are you using it for, what is all this computer literacy, going towards, and a spiritually supportive school, we find out the students are learning to program the computer to generate through the 3D printer a prosthesis for the children who are burn victims down the way in the hospital.

So everything I learn is fed to my ultimate relationship with loving guiding world and the knowledge, the purpose of acquiring knowledge and skills is to serve or contribute to the common good. So there's that green or cultivated right through those groups. What it's not for is to create harm and what it's not for is to narrowly advance myself over others. And you know there's a sense that knowledge itself is sacred that you've been given a tool, you've been given a mind and education and a tool, and all of those were gifts.

So the way that you touch and hold can be used to serve God, the great force of source of all life that brings us together or it can be used in a way that is not listening narrow cheating awareness without an open ear and open heart life and one is a way of destruction, and it's up to schools to draw that distinction. So the property for spirituality and education,

what you're doing is you're strengthening helping nurturing the capacity of schools, could I say K 12 schools in in bringing creating spaces for spirituality in the school, no education practice.

That's how it started, and then colleges wanted it so now we have awakened campus and a university level. And so the campus universities said, you know, we see in our 18 to 25 year olds, enormous suffering. We realize say the university deans say the deans of student life that the old method of waiting for them to suffer waiting for them to be addicted, waiting for them to attempt suicide. We cannot do this. We need something else. So it is scientifically supported option for spiritual support. The universities were very excited. And finally, we started getting calls from people outside of education. So I worked three years with the United States Army, 18 through 25 year olds need a spiritual support.

And they have a spiritual core like every other young person right now that needs support, nurturance that natural spirituality that we could assume would be embraced 40 years ago is now left, let left fellow, and it is not strong and young people. So every child, every child if we start early doesn't need to start to suffer 1015 years later, we start early supporting in schools, natural spirituality again, I am not saying religion, you know, Dr Miller is Jewish, I don't want everyone else to be Jewish and celebrate Hanukkah.

I'm saying their own natural spiritual awareness, their love and connection their sense of oneness, and their ability to be guided and connected to the force that's in and through life that has information that we don't even have yet. It has guidance that we don't even know where it goes but we are built to perceive that we are indeed being given sacred direction. This is beautiful Lisa so I'm here imagining this different context on the K 12 school primary secondary schools, the universities, different university campus in different contexts, and other contexts such as the one you just mentioned the US Army.

So you, when you, you come up, you go into these different realms, different contexts and, and offer some guidance on how to bring or people more open to bring spirituality into education into the work they do. What are the kinds of barriers that you find, and how you address them. Are there some skepticism, or do you ever find some difficulties in entering into that territory and how do you address that to help someone in another context that is trying to bring your work and this knowledge and importance of bringing spirituality into some context such as education.

They may find some roadblocks. What are they, and how do you address them. So in that the awakened brain in my book the awakened brain I share science with lots of references in the back but I tell it in a way that I think is immediately relevant to our lives. And the science really does kick open the door, because our society still likes to see evidence you know. For instance, I was invited to come speak at a very well known international bank to their top clients their top investors, and I started with science, and they were riveted.

These were people from all over the world their clients were from India and China and Latin America from all over the world, but the language of science was absolutely convincing that this is real. So I started with science, and then, seeing them absolutely riveted so connected and interested and curious. I shared with these top investors, the practice that you and I just shared hosting Council, the people at your table. And then I

had a dry eye in the room. What everyone knows that the deep inner wisdom within us is what is true, we know the truth it is self evident.

And there has been a disavowal there's been a dismembering of our trust in our own inner wisdom. It has been educated out of us in many cases it has been culturally tattered, but when we are given the validation. Yes, the science says it's real and here you have it. There is a reawakening the awakened brain is right there waiting for us. When I hear you of course I can, I can easily relate that to the work that we are, we have been doing here for the past over two decades with their chatter, and with the message that is articulated in their chatter.

And I would like. Now we are coming towards the end of our conversation here today, but I would like to hear your thoughts on some of the synergies or linkages that we may find between this. The world view and the message that our ideas that are articulated in their chatter and the work you have been doing in emphasizing the importance of spirituality, for instance into education. We can already find some strong spiritual voice and message in the way in which the Russia was crafted for instance.

There's a sentence in the in the preamble that talks about the interconnectedness of the environment social, political and spiritual challenges, I think there's another importance reference on this notion of the mystery of being also in the preamble of their chatter that says the spiritual of it says the spirit of human solidarity and kingship with all life is strengthened when we live with reference for the mystery of being so it's an invitation for us to spend our consciousness in our sense of connection awareness with this mystery of being.

There is a principle principle 14 of their shadow that emphasize the importance of moral and spiritual education. So we're asked you to to offer some comments on the synergies or linkages that you find in the work you were doing in the work that the shutter global movement is trying to do. Absolutely, I think, as you say the oneness the deep awareness of our relationship with all living beings the child starts with that. The child is in relationship to animals, so the child is born in relationship and the internet in its very finest moments is full of images of children and animals connecting of animals of many species connecting everybody else children animals of many species are in relationship.

And I think that the synthesis of that we are both a point distinct unique and a wave white caps on one ocean is that we find a way to hold on to the deep knowing of our oneness as we move as people of great diversity into relationship. The relationship is the meeting of the oneness and the distinction of the knowing of the heart of who we really are with the strategy and operations of the head, how to be that to one another, how to be loving holding and guiding to one another. The child is there already and less socialized out of it. The innately spiritual child is a knower.

If we look at adults who lose this wisdom in times of enormous despair and struggle, but yet use the struggle and the own felt isolation of being only a point and only in competition and only not enough and only in this world of measurement. When they break through very often we are built to break through through despair to an awakening to a deepening

of spiritual life developmental depression. When this happens, and we look in the MRI, we strengthen over time a sustained spirituality over eight years.

We strengthen the regions of the awakened brain, which means that we are then protected against the next unwanted event we are protected against the most unpleasant unwanted moments of our lives post traumatic spiritual growth, and far less likely to get depressed again we are resilient. Because we now look through life in a much more awakened way. Once we find it, it sticks. We might need to strengthen again. There's a new bout of growth, round and round we go, but not only are we girded against a subsequent depression we are neuro protected against depression with a strong spiritual pool.

We look through life in a way that is entirely different we see the oneness, and we see its expression through the separateness the distinction. This way of being this awakened we have been also has another scientific correlate, which is, if you put on an e e g little electrodes on the back of our head. People who recover from developmental depression through an awakening and a sustained spiritual life walking through life, looking at life as a spiritual experience. Well, Dr. Lisa Miller. Thank you so much for your time for sharing with us here your knowledge your experience in the work, the wonderful work you have been doing.

I have deep appreciation and gratitude for the work you have been doing and let's just envision that there will be more and more spaces that are created to nurture our spirituality in our connection with the large living world. Thank you so much for the work you've been doing neuroscience and spirituality, and in bringing this importance of awakened brain and awakened cells and spirituality into education.

Thank you so much. It is such an honor and a joy to share today with you Mirian. Thank you. And indeed we all have an awakened brain, and it's been translated into Spanish and I hope that we will collaborate on and on together in the oneness. Sure. Thank you.

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