

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.

So welcome to the Earth Charter podcast. Today we are joined by Julia Kim.

Julia is a global well-being and well-being economic expert with a career, a long career, as a physician and public health researcher in Africa and Asia, former senior policy advisor at the UNDP in UNICEF, and former program director at many people know as G&A, or Gross National Happiness Center in Bhutan. She is also a member of the Club of Rome, which is one of the world's most influential think-tanks on global challenges and long-term sustainability. Now in a time that we are currently living that's marked by overlapping crises, climate change, biodiversity, people's well-being, and I would say beautiful opportunities ahead also, we'll explore with Julia what it means inner well-being, inner transformation, and how essential it all leads to the processes and movements of social transformation.

So Julia, thank you so much for joining us today. Thank you Mirian, I'm so honored and delighted to be part of this conversation with you. Thank you. So I'm very curious about Bhutan, and you have a long years of experience working in Bhutan, Bhutan is widely known as a unique country that has really placed growth national happiness at the center of its national vision and development philosophy, which is quite unique. Many people around the world turn to Bhutan to look at this experience, which in many ways Bhutan has become for many a global reference for alternative approaches to measuring well-being beyond what people see as economic growth alone.

So I would like to hear from you what is your perspective on this GNH, Gross National Happiness, and what it means, what is the significance of that for today's time.

Thank you Mirian. I mean, when I think about Bhutan and GNH, I feel like it's an idea whose time has really come. It's in some ways pointed to something that feels quite serious and political and academic, the economic system in which we're living, and at the same time it carries this essence of what makes us human happiness and well-being. So it brings together these things that normally don't fit in the same conversation. And I think the first two words, gross national, for many people will cue you into the fact that we're talking about economics, like gross national product or gross domestic product.

So the phrase was coined way back in the 1970s when he was asked by a reporter, what's the gross national product of Bhutan? And expecting him to give this small, modest number, this very wise and young king said in Bhutan, gross national happiness is more important than gross national product. And right there was stating what he saw as a vision for this country that he was going to be governing, that happiness and well-being of all people and not just all people, all life, should be the center of development and growth.

And so I think this was the 1970s when we weren't really that aware of climate change, of biodiversity loss, of global warming. And yet at that time he was saying that the life of human beings and the well-being of all are connected. And that as we think about economic development or economic growth, we have to be measuring and thinking about these things as well. No, Bhutan, so this idea of national happiness and well-being are certainly very connected. But in Bhutan they identified or developed four pillars and nine domains of G and H.

Can you share with us what are they and why they matter?

Sure, I think it's helpful because it helps ground this idea of happiness in that something that people can understand, why it would be relevant to a country and to a government. So a country can't make you be happy, but they can certainly create conditions for happiness and flourishing. And so the four pillars are kind of very bold statements about what are we aiming for, what would create happiness and well-being. And one is equitable and sustainable social economic development.

The second pillar is environmental conservation. The third pillar is culture. And the fourth is good governance. All those need to be working together and they're kind of the vision, the place where you're aiming for. And then the nine domains are a further elaboration of that. And they go into things that you could measure in surveys to know if you're going the right direction. And they're often called nine domains. I would say three of them most people will be familiar with because many countries measure them.

So they would be things like living standards. Obviously people need to be living with access to housing and enough food and so forth to be able to be happy and well. So living standards, health is really important. And education, so important building blocks. But what's unique is that Bhutan doesn't stop there. They recognize how important community is. So community vitality is one of the domains. Cultural diversity and resilience that is really contributing to happiness and well-being. Time use, so something that many of us don't even think about let alone measure.

Yet we know that as we've modernized and become more obsessed with economic growth, our sense of freedom with our time and our sense of time pressure has increased. And you don't need a survey to know that that doesn't do very well for your happiness. So time use is one of the domains. Psychological well-being, good governance, environmental conservation, and promotion and preservation of culture. So you can start to see this holistic vision of well-being that is part of what GNH is measuring and trying to implement.

It's amazing. So Bhutan has been doing this for over two decades or three decades. Don't know how long, you know, more or less. Well, the surveys have been done since 2008. So the measurement and using that to shape policy is more recent. But what's interesting about Bhutan is that the spiritual and cultural roots for this idea of happiness and well-being go back hundreds of years. So we're talking about founding leaders saying that the well-being and happiness of people and life should be the center of what the government does.

Otherwise, the government has no reason to exist. Like all important statements that have shaped what became the modern kind of application of GNH. So for all these years, after all these years, do you think Bhutan has implemented GNH in an effective way? How effective it has been as a framework for governance and development?

I think within the country, it has been really a guiding star and kind of a vision that has been very, very much cohesively built into things like their budgeting and their planning and their policies, and especially in recent years.

I think what I've noticed being in Bhutan, as many visitors tend to come with this almost Shangri-La expectation that that means everything will be perfect and everybody must be happy all the time. And of course, that's not the case. Bhutan is, you know, in a middle income developing economy. They have also to make sure that there's education and jobs, especially for young people. They have the reality of being surrounded by two giants in terms of GDP, China on one side and India on the other. So trying to go in a different direction has not been without challenges.

And I think especially after the COVID pandemic, which shut down tourism to this country, where tourism is one of the main sources of revenue in the country, was a big blow. And I think they're starting to come out of that now. So I would say there's a reality to Bhutan in the sense of it trying to do something differently and stick true to the vision. And one of the ministers said early on that Bhutan can't be a GNH bubble in a GDP world. And I think that says it all, you know, that as a country is trying to really implement a well-being economy, and really, as I would say, only one of very few countries that have committed to doing that at a national level, there's going to be bumps in the road and challenges that come from the larger system.

That's very interesting. How important it is to think that doing things in the different ways possible. I keep thinking about GDP didn't exist 100 years ago.

Someone invented it was a great idea at the time, about 1934, 1940. But the point is it didn't exist, but someone thought, let's create this. And suddenly, many people are following that. So certainly it's wonderful to have this experience from Bhutan in thinking outside the box and creating new ways of doing things. It requires a new mindset and lenses of course. Within that context, Bhutan has also developed tools and policy processes to help embed GNH values into public life and decision making.

Could you share with us some concrete examples of how this works in practice in that context?

Sure. I think it's helpful to think about it from the perspective of somebody who is just visiting Bhutan for the first time. And I think about when I first landed at the airport in Tempu. And one of the first things I noticed was the silence. And I don't just mean the physical auditory silence. I mean the silence of not being barraged by advertising. So there's a national ban on billboard advertising. And so what you see...

I have to celebrate this. A national... What did you say? A national ban? Billboard advertising.

Is it for real in Bhutan?

Yeah. So as you are leaving the airport, you won't see like big electronic billboards advertising this and that. What you see are mountains and trees and rice paddies. And I think there's something about...

Something about that that's really important when we talk about well-being and also a little bit. About disconnecting from the onslaught of advertising. And that's so linked to the GDP growth economy. So it's a small thing you might think, but it says volumes about what is a priority. So that's one I think that stands out for me. I think their commitment to caring for people, although they don't have a huge national budget like many wealthier countries have to spend on people, they still have prioritized free basic health and free basic education.

So many wealthier countries are not doing that. And I think that says a lot about how policy is supporting happiness and well-being. They've committed to keep at least 60% of the country under forest cover, not just until we reach however many degrees of reducing global warming or until a particular UN declaration, but in fact for all time. And that's extraordinary. They're really saying as the country develops, we're not just going to cut down trees for building and construction. And I think it's linked to why Bhutan is one of the first carbon negative countries in the world actually sequestering more carbon from the atmosphere than they put out.

But again, I would come back to this phrase I mentioned earlier that GNH can't be a GDP, GNH can't be a bubble in a GDP world that even while they're doing so much to try to reduce global warming, they will still get the impacts of global warming felt in that country because of our global interconnectedness. But I think those are interesting and then they have high value, low impact tourism. So that means rather than just opening wide the doors to everybody who wants to visit the country, they're trying to be deliberate and have a sustainable development fee to come into the country, which although it might hit your pocket as a tourist, I think it's good to know it goes towards helping to sustain the economic and cultural aspects that make Bhutan such a unique place to visit.

Outstanding, amazing. Just to hear that and these are certainly not small things. I keep thinking and dreaming of places that have banned billboards ads in cities. It's a huge thing and so I really appreciate that. So in a nutshell, what do you think we can learn from Bhutan's understanding of happiness and well-being? And what role community plays in Bhutanese culture? I would say that one of the real take home messages of Bhutan and what is unique about Bhutan as an example of a well-being economy is the very clear statement that inner and outer development need to go hand in hand, that material and spiritual development need to be supported together.

So that's quite unique and I think that's very much connected to the way that happiness is described. So it's not just the happiness that you get when you are able to buy a new car or you're doing well in a material way, but it's also related to your relationship to others, to yourself and to the natural world. So there's a beautiful definition of happiness that the first Prime Minister of Bhutan, Jigme Tenzin, mentioned at the UN High Level meeting in 2012 on happiness towards a new economic paradigm.

And he said, true abiding happiness cannot exist while others suffer and comes from serving others, living in harmony with nature and coming to know the true and brilliant nature of your own mind. So really profound definition of happiness that touches on our well-being and happiness in relation to others, in relation to the natural world and perhaps most profoundly in relation to ourselves and our own wisdom. And I think that is quite a deep message and one that we need to hear more of in our times.

It is beautiful, beautiful that a Prime Minister goes to the UN and shared this. Thank you. Let's talk about culture and spirituality. Sure. Could you share a story or an experience that captures the spirit of Bhutan and how present spirituality is in Bhutanese culture?

I think about one of the early days when I was in Bhutan working with the GNH Centre and we had a workshop for young people and I was told these are kind of the troubled youth, the ones who are having problems with addiction or behaviour issues or their parents are going through divorce and they're acting out and it was kind of a camp and I was sitting in circles with different groups of young people. And I think one of the questions we asked was what do you want to be when you grow up or what is your hope for the future?

And I was so used to those kinds of responses from young people in North America where it would be, I want to be an astronaut or I want to invent this or I want to do this. And it was kind of coloured with this whole idea of I must have these superpowers and I'm going to do this, which is kind of enchanting and so on. But it's a very different response from what I was hearing from these so-called troubled kids, the troubled children, troubled youth, which were things like I would really like to be able to make sure that my mom and dad have a house to live in when they get old, when they retire.

I really want to make sure that my best friend is able to go to school. I'd really like to, they were all about other people. And if there was something about career or job, it was in relation to others, not about me and my ambition. And I thought that said so much about the culture and spirituality, not in the sense of this is what you're told to say or this is the right thing to do, but it was so much coming from the heart. A natural sense of, for me, happiness would be if the people around me were going to be okay.

So that really struck me. And then the second one was more recently when I went to Bhutan for kind of a Buddhist gathering at a large monastery in Bhutan where thousands of people had come because there was going to be a kind of a great teacher who was going to be teaching. And first of all, how many people volunteered to make this happen? So people serving tea and looking after each other and making something function, which had where there was so much less of a budget or infrastructure for a public event that you would see in other places.

And then because it was kind of almost monsoon season, it started pouring and it started raining. And people who had come who were staying in tents, their tents started to collapse. And instead of the kind of chaos and anger and kind of turmoil that might happen in other settings, I could hear people laughing and helping each other and really cooperating to make sure that things were still going to happen. And I thought this is such a good metaphor for what might happen if there is climate instability and crises that in countries

that may not have the government power and infrastructure and the budget to deal with these things, you might still get people climbing over each other and fighting and complaining.

But in these countries where the community essence and the sense of inter-carrying and interdependence has been shaped and developed over time, when these things happen, they don't have to learn the stuff anew. They're relying on things that have been tried and tested before.

And I think in some ways they may even be better off, better able to respond in a human way than we who have our systems and our budgets all set up but don't know our next door neighbor's name.

All in itself is a different approach to life, more sensitive. And I love this, the first example also of your happiness depends on how happy or how well you see those around you and the importance to contribute towards that. So looking back at your own upbringing, how did spirituality shape your own worldview in your sense of well-being? So I think I'm not so different from others who felt a little bit of tension between this idea of spirituality and religion. And I actually grew up in Canada and was in a Christian environment and really was trying to understand how this comes into my personal life in a way that isn't just about Sunday or about a particular belief system. And it was a question I carried with me. I loved the values and a lot of the kind of urge towards goodness that I was hearing in the Christian message. But it seemed a bit disconnected from my life in the world.

I always wanted it to somehow integrate in a different way. I also was looking, when I look back there was a point in my university education where I was looking for something that would touch into mystery and wonder. I was fascinated by the stars. I was fascinated by how life worked. And I didn't feel that that was coming for me in the way I wanted to through religion. So I went into science and genetics and I was trying to unlock how does the world work through science. And that got me so far but also not really answering the deeper questions was very much framed within scientific methods and what we can measure by objective means and scientific methods. And then I think later in my life when I started to get interested in meditation, I started to understand how the inner dimensions of our consciousness and our mind is actually connected to the outer material world.

And to me, Buddhism opened up a way of thinking about it that wasn't rigidly religious but almost invited questioning and curiosity and experimentation. And that to me was a way of also integrating how I was thinking about my inner life and the work I wanted to do in the world. Because one of the central ideas in Mahayana Buddhism is this idea of a bodhisattva, of somebody who wishes to attain spiritual growth and awakening, not just for themselves but in order to benefit others. And I think that is so much a place where many people are feeling they want to contribute to the world. They want to feel a spiritual source that feeds on and also a way that that can connect practically to their work and to what they're doing in their community. So I think gradually these pieces have been coming together from for me.

Wow, beautiful. Let's talk about inner transformation and systems change.

People often say that change starts from within. So how do you have been working? You have been working a lot on inner transformation. So how do you see the relationship between inner well-being with inner transformation and systems change?

I think this is where becoming a member of the Club of Rome was very inspiring for me because I realized that a lot of great systems thinkers who didn't necessarily connect to any particular religious view already were understanding this connection between the inner and the outer dimensions. And I think about Dana Meadows, Danella Meadows, who said that actually when you're thinking about changing a complex system, you can try to change the policies, the technology, the rules by which society operates. But if you really want to move things from the place that has the most leverage, that would be our consciousness, our mindsets, our values, our beliefs. Because if you can shift those, everything else follows.

The technology that we develop, the policies that we come up with, although we don't recognize it at the time, are shaped by what our values and our vision are and often limited by that. So if we can go upstream, you could say, and really focus as Bhutan has on what is our priority, what is the purpose of the economy, and then work from there, then I think that kind of change is really possible. And I think it's important because when I first heard this phrase change starts within, it can sound almost, I don't know, naive or optimistic in a way that I don't understand how that's supposed to happen. But I think when you think about it in the way I described, the worlds that we create, the policies, technology, governance systems are a product of our thinking. Then it becomes very clear. And it gives you something to work with too.

Because I think the shift in consciousness is not just wishful thinking. It's not just being told, you need to think differently. I think there are actually practices and tools and ways of engaging with our inner life that present a possibility for us really working at that deeper level. So inner transformation plays an important role in contributing to a broader social and ecological transformation. What role or how can we cultivate inner transformation in a peace, in self-awareness?

I think there's so many ways we can do that. And it's, in some cases, looking at the reality of what our current state of mind is. So we're living in a time when we are more inundated with news, with social media, with advertising than we have ever been in our human history. And we're starting to understand through neuroscience what that does to our state of mind and not surprising that we're seeing very high levels of anxiety and depression and a mental health crisis. So I'm not sure human beings were meant to receive that much information, often from places that are so far away that you have no possibility of intervening. So it creates also a sense of helplessness. So I think the first point I would raise is that working on our inner well-being and our state of mind is almost, is not a luxury these days.

It's kind of required just to stay sane in a world that is so packed with distraction and things competing for your attention and pushing your emotions and especially your hope and your fear up and down many times a day. So what I'm talking about here is just treading water, just staying sane amidst all of that. That's one element. And I think there are really interesting programs that have now taken some of the practices from wisdom

traditions like Buddhism, meditation, contemplation, and really put them in a context that they're accessible to a secular audience and combining it with some of the research from neuroscience that shows how it interacts with our bodies and with our psychology. And healthy minds, I think the Center for Healthy Minds has been doing a lot of that work.

They have a great program that looks at four dimensions of well-being, awareness, which you mentioned, connection, insight, and purpose. And they're bringing those dimensions into schools, working with healthcare workers, frontline workers, climate activists who are suffering from burnout to try to at least bring that sense of genuine healthiness so that people can continue. And then for those who are interested in going deeper, then there's many, many different ways to explore how these wisdom traditions can connect to your sense of well-being and your sense of wanting to be of service in the world. Thank you for sharing this awareness, connection, insight, purpose, and ski principles. Wonderful.

Now in their Chattaday's quote, in their Chattapreamble, in the preamble of their Chattaday's quote that says, we must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. Could you relate these reflections about inner well-being with this idea that we find in the preamble of your Chattaday?

You know, I've always loved those words since the first time I read them, Mirian. I think they're so appropriate to our times. And it does very much connect this idea of awareness and inner well-being. It's, I was thinking lately, you know, there is this new, not so new now, but this sort of pharmaceutical product called Ozempic that was really popular, has become very popular for weight loss. And the way that it works is really, it helps people feel full. Many times people aren't connected with the sense that they're full. And in that way, it suppresses their appetite so that they can lose weight. And I thought to myself, in many ways, as a society now, particularly in the wealthier countries, we have lost touch with our sense of being full. We actually do not know when we've had enough. And so we are over-consuming.

And what's sad about that is that the over-consumption doesn't make us happier. It actually makes us feel worse in the same way that if you overeat, afterwards you feel kind of queasy and you know it's not very good for you. In this case, the increased consumption and material consumption on an individual level doesn't lead to greater happiness. And there's good social science research that shows that. And then of course, on a collective level, it is destroying our planet. So it's not leading to our long-term well-being.

So I think although well-being might seem like a kind of luxury topic in the context of the crisis we're facing, to me it's at the heart of a lot of the crisis that we're facing, that if we were to be able to connect to our sense of inner well-being in the ways that I described earlier, in the way that wisdom traditions have been teaching us, then we would be able to be more immune to the constant pressure to over-consume, to worry about things, to feel anxious, to feel like I'm not enough, I'm not thin enough, young enough, tall enough, white enough, whatever enough you can fill in the blank, which makes us feel unhappy and makes us consume and look for happiness outside of ourselves. So I think that's one of the areas where it's really at the heart of a lot of the systems crises that we're seeing right now.

Now music and art are key to our well-being, key to our culture, to our human identity. I understand you are a musician and I love to learn that. Could you share with us how do you see the role of music and art in nurturing our well-being?

You know, I trained originally as a violinist in the classical music realm and for me it was, I loved classical music and I think it was useful for learning the technique, but I think I really came into my own as a musician when I let go of the notes, when I learned that I could improvise and to me this is the aspect of music and the arts that is really helpful for us in envisioning a future because we know that we can't actually predict how systems are going to change. We can't actually program a future, but we can play, we can trust, we can improvise and we can learn to listen and look for patterns and to me that's what improvising with music is about.

You can actually improvise with other musicians if you don't hear them at the same time as you're playing and some of the best improvising improvisational musicians I know are silent most of the time because they're listening and they're playing into the hole, they're not waiting for their solo, they're waiting for what wants to emerge and I think that's a really powerful metaphor for how we need to be responding to the various things that are emerging for us as a human family.

Being a musician is a good metaphor to help us think about how important it is to further develop a capacity to listen and feel, right, but I understand in order to improvise the music to improvise well, the musician needs to master its knowledge on his or her knowledge on music, is that right?

I think yes and no almost to a sense like you need to learn the rules in order to break them properly. That's wonderful, well said. Also you need to have the confidence to sound bad, that's going to sound really funny, but if you are too much trying to sound good, it restricts your freedom to improvise and I think a lot of us are educated to be good and to do things right and real creativity comes when you can let go of that need to perform and look good and laugh a little bit or use the funny notes, just keep going, just oh that sounded funny, let's keep going from there and then something surprising sometimes can arise when you do that.

How about if you play a piece for our audience, we'd love to hear you.

I'd be happy to, and I'll try to improvise something that's just coming to mind after our conversation together. Please go ahead.

Music Thank you, bravo. It really helps us to connect with our inner selves. Beautiful, thank you. Julia, let's talk about ecological civilization and part of that has to do with understanding that we are part of a community of life and compassion. What are your thoughts on the importance of cultivating our understanding, our sense of we are part of a nurse community and the importance to live with care for the community of life?

I think it's really important in the sense that many times we feel like we're just living our own little individual life and that can feel quite lonely and a bit futile and there's something that happens when you feel connected to an earth community, like even that word is quite

deep and for me that sense of an earth community happens whenever I step into a forest. I'm suddenly in the community of trees and birds and so on and it makes me feel smaller and bigger than I am at the same time and I think we don't get that if we're just in buildings and with people and I think it's hard to be happy and flourishing if we just feel like we're part of the me community or the community of my office or my friends so there's something limiting about that and then in terms of a foundation for an ecological civilization, I think when we feel a part of the earth family we can't help but care.

It's as if we're widening our sense of loyalty. Right now we have a narrow sense of loyalty to the people I know or the people I love and when that starts to widen we naturally start to cause less harm because why would you harm the people that you love? So our sense of care, our sense of expanding who we're responsible for, responsible in the sense of able to respond starts to grow and we're less prone to just protect the ones that we think look like us, sound like us, shop like us and more inclined to have compassion for others who are sharing this earth community with us. So would this be part of your understanding of how we can move towards an ecological civilization or more ecological and compassionate civilization?

How do we envision the path for us to get there?

I think it starts with ourselves, with the inner dimensions I mentioned earlier because if that isn't strong it's hard to reach out and expand your sense of self and belonging to others. So it's not selfish to look after oneself but it is limiting to only look after oneself. So that's sort of a foundational point. And then to expand to the people around you, I don't think it's helpful to be just jetting around the world and going to important conferences or meetings and being out there in the world and completely neglecting your family and friends. That also seems like a strange disconnect.

So there's an embrace of the people immediately around you even though they're the ones who often push your buttons and don't see you doing what you do and work and they're the people who oftentimes test you and help you grow the aspects of yourself that are helping others in the world. And then expanding that to consider how that ripples out into the world through everything from how we shop to how we vote to how we think about do I really need to have two cars in this family to all those things they start to get infused with not just what's best for me but how does this connect to what's going on in the world and coming from a place that is kind of natural like it's coming from the heart rather than the government pushing down some kind of fuel tax or policy or something that makes you feel like oh I have to do this.

So I think we have to be working together from the inside to meet what's coming from the outside in terms of policies, politicians, governance in order to make that work. I don't think governments and policymakers and politicians will have the courage to look at how we move our consumption of fossil fuels if they don't feel that their population that the people who are voting for them want that also.

They will be too scared it's too politically dangerous to do that. So we have to cultivate that ourselves for those of us who are in the position that can do that to be able to meet the challenges and move into the eco civilization and then for those who are in countries

that are less able to do that that are not over consuming that are actually living far below what those in wealthier countries are doing we need to be able to give them a seat at the table allow them to expand the more sustainable earth-centered ways of living that they have been holding on to instead of marketing and pushing our over consuming lifestyles onto them. So I think those start those are building blocks for a truly ecological civilization that start from ourselves expand to our families and those who care about and they'll go further into the communities and the places where we can influence.

Yes very clear from this idea of starting with ourselves and expanding to various dimensions of the communities that we are part of. At the end of the earth charter there's a principle that talks that invites us to think about how we are relating how we ought to relate to ourselves to other people or the cultures or the life earth and goes on expanding in the larger whole of which we are all part. So this similar idea of the importance of nurturing in thinking about the right relationships maybe as a foundation for an ecological civilization. So we are coming to an end of our conversation today I'm so happy and inspired to hear you and the last question is something around leadership and education. I see the importance of ethical leadership playing a key role in contributing to social transformation.

So could you share with us an example of a new approach of leadership or even also a new approach to education that can help guide society towards a more compassionate and meaningful direction that maybe lead us to an ecological civilization? I like to think of leadership as something that is not just the formal positions of power and leadership but also leadership of the self.

So the way that we show up in the world actually the current king of Bhutan speaks of leadership of the self. He says don't just look to us as your rulers as your political leaders to lead the country that there is an aspect of really inner leadership leadership of self that we are all being called to and that is around the connection to ethics of to being a good human being of cultivating compassion of recognizing our interdependence. And I think you mentioned education there is a school that I've visited many times in Bhutan called ELC high school and they are really trying to live compassion in education and they have an entire program for students that is dedicated to well-being and compassion and it's woven through their curriculum so the kids will come up with solutions to things like bullying and name calling and bring it up to the teachers.

They will come up with projects to donate money to charities or they will go to visit children in poorer schools in rural areas all as a means of trying to cultivate their self leadership and their compassion. When they're running for a class president or so forth it won't be around this idea of trying to out compete or put down the other candidates but really to what is the message of self leadership of servant leadership that you are bringing. So I feel like they're also trying to resolve conflicts in a way that is not just punishment but really looking at reconciliation and healing circles. So really trying to advance even though we think of them as children these are the things that as adults and as formal institutions we could be learning from and I think that definition of leadership of the self brought into institutions could be a really powerful force for change.

Thank you so much Julia. I mean deep appreciation, admiration for the depth of this of what you brought to us. Thank you also for bringing your music, the sounds, how they vibrate, I think the energy it brings.

Thank you so much for joining us today. It's such a pleasure Mirian and I'm so glad to hear that this series is happening and I hope it will keep that spark alight for people. I think one of the last things I would want to say about the inner dimensions of systems change is that we are so used to wanting evidence that we can measure that we're making a difference but with the kinds of change that we are undertaking and the long time frames that we're looking at a lot of times that evidence of success or change will not be immediate and we can't get disheartened by that.

So although you may not have a lot of faith in the ripple effect of the consciousness shift or the inner dimensions of being kind and compassionate, it is absolutely happening in that resonance level in the same way that music notes continue to resound after you're hearing on the human level, maybe can't pick up that note. So I think part of it is really trusting that the inner dimensions are having effects even if we can't measure and see them in the way that we normally do. Beautiful, thank you so much. My pleasure Mirian, such a joy speaking with you.

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