

LEARNING

HOW

TO

SEE

with

Brian

McLaren

Season 6, Episode 4
Seeing Nature as a Lover (Part I)

feat. Scott Smith

Brian McLaren: I lived for several decades of my life in Maryland. It's where I grew up and where we raised our kids and for almost 20 years, I was a volunteer every spring in a project to study the world's smallest and probably the world's rarest turtle; the bog turtle. We were trying to identify the small wetland habitats where they lived and every spring we would go out and do surveys. We would look for them in different habitats. If we found them, we would measure and mark them. Sometimes we would put radio tracking devices on them.

One day, I was volunteering with a group of people I'd never met before. We were trudging up to our thighs in muck. We were crawling around on our hands and knees in tall grass feeling around in the muck for these little turtles. And I remember, I was in the muck with a biologist from North Carolina. I've forgotten her name, but as we were talking, she assumed I was another biology professor. And she said, "Where do you teach?" And I realized what she'd assumed. So I said, well actually, I'm not a professor, I'm a pastor. And she was so shocked. "What are you doing out here?" she said. And I explained to her that my spiritual commitments intensified my love for this beautiful world, including a little wetland like the one we were getting all muddy in. And I said to her, "I think that we're doing God's work here. I think this is holy work. In fact, I think your work as a scientist is holy work."

Well, that opened up a conversation that went on for a long time as we worked together in the hot sun that day. I thought her work was holy work, it was work done in love. And when she felt that that love was validated, she just started opening up her heart to me about how she felt her work was spiritual and holy work as well. It wasn't the kind of thing she could talk about to many of her scientific colleagues.

Through the years, I've been involved in a lot of different areas of activism and so often what sustains us and motivates us in our activism work is anger, and that's legitimate because wherever we see injustice, we ought to be angry. If we don't get angry, there's something wrong with us, I think. But anger can take us to places we don't really need to go. It can toxify our motivations if anger is all that's driving us, and that's why I think it helps often for us to trace our anger back to grief as Father Richard Rohr often says, and then to trace our grief to love. It's because we love something that we feel grief when it's threatened.

In fact, one of my favorite definitions of grief is that grief is love persisting when what we love is passing away. What you love, you try to save and that's why so many of us see the natural world around us with such tenderness, with such grief, sometimes with such anger because what we love is passing away and we're going to look at how love motivates us to see the world in a way that makes us want to save it in today's episode.

Listen as I read from Life After Doom. This is a short reading from Life after Doom chapter six.

I think you can see it clearly now. Hope is complicated and so is despair. If you've always thought hope was nothing but good and despair was nothing but bad, listen to environmental activist Derek Jensen turn things upside down. He writes, "When we stop hoping for external assistance, when we stop hoping that the awful situation we're in will somehow resolve itself, when we stop hoping the situation will somehow not get worse, then we are finally free, truly free to honestly start working to resolve it." I would say that when hope dies, action begins. People sometimes ask me, "If things are so bad, why don't you

just kill yourself?” The answer is that life is really, really good. I am a complex enough being that I can hold in my heart the understanding that we are really, really in trouble. And at the same time that life is really, really good. I’m full of rage, sorrow, joy, love, hate, despair, happiness, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and a thousand other feelings. We are really in trouble and life is still really good.

Many people are afraid to feel despair. They fear that if they allow themselves to perceive how desperate our situation really is, they must then be perpetually miserable. They forget that it is possible to feel many things at once. They also forget that despair is an entirely appropriate response to a desperate situation. Many people probably also feel that if they allow themselves to perceive how desperate things are, they may be forced to do something about it.

A little later in the chapter, I include this additional quote from activist Derek Jensen. In response to the question, why am I an activist? Jensen answers, “Because I’m in love with salmon, with trees outside my window, with baby lampreys living in sandy stream bottoms, with slender salamanders crawling through the duff. And if you love, you act to defend your beloved.” Of course, results matter to you, but they don’t determine whether or not you make the effort.

You don’t simply hope your beloved survives and thrives, you do what it takes. If my love doesn’t cause me to protect those I love, it’s not love. In this episode, we have tried to see nature like a lover, something we love, so that we will work and strive and sacrifice to protect what we love. There might be a special place, some natural reality, a creature, a little habitat, an environment, a place that has mattered so much to you, you love it so much that you’ve worked to protect it. If you’d like to share that with others, we’d encourage you to just send us a short message or leave a short voicemail so that we can share it with others. We’ll give you instructions in the show notes.

Many of us have heard Richard Rohr say, the most important word in the name of the Center for Action and Contemplation is the word and, bringing together contemplation and action. Contemplation among other things is a way of seeing, a way of seeing life, a way of seeing the world, a way of seeing time and experience, a way of seeing our neighbor, a way of seeing that involves depth and love. And that integrates not just our analysis, but also our emotion and our embodiment. Contemplation is a way of seeing the world. And in this season of Learning How to See, we are focusing on learning how to see the natural world, creation, the living earth.

But contemplation is linked by that word and to action and what we grow to love and value and appreciate, we want to take action to protect when it’s under threat. And often that means protecting from our own species, protecting from our fellow humans, our own economic system and political system that don’t understand the true and deep value of what we see. In this episode of Learning How to See, we’ll meet with a real wildlife ecologist, someone who spent his life preserving threatened species and threatened ecosystems. And you’ll get a chance to see the world through his eyes a little bit in today’s episode. I’m so glad you came along for Learning How to See.

Welcome, everybody, to this episode of Learning How to See. I’m really honored and happy

to have an old friend on this episode. My friend, Scott Smith, and I met because I was a volunteer in a program that he ran. I think, Scott, we met sometime around 1990 or the early 1990s and I had the chance to get out in the woods and bogs and fields with you for many, many years. I wonder if you could introduce yourself and tell everybody the basic Scott Smith bio.

Scott Smith: Sure, Brian, it's great to be here. Thank you so much for having me. Yeah, Brian, I think we met in 1992, and you had volunteered to help with some bog turtle surveys that I was leading for the state of Maryland. I just recently retired after a 34-year career with Maryland Department of Natural Resources as a wildlife ecologist. And certainly the last 28 to 30 years of that, I focused primarily on herpetology. That is the study of reptiles and amphibians.

So I did a lot of work with various conservation efforts, monitoring of populations, applied research, and also part of my job was reviewing things like development projects in timber harvest. So I kind of had this pretty all-encompassing job that had its headaches, as any job in the planet has headaches, but I have a sense of fulfillment that I contributed to the greater good in it. And of course before that, I had various jobs and also a lot of schooling in both the wildlife-related things because I was a wildlife ecologist and just general all-around jobs, like in factories to make money while I was going to college and those kinds of things. Anyways.

Brian McLaren: So you are a wildlife biologist. Would that be the title that applied most to your work or would it be conservation biologist?

Scott Smith: Well, my title was wildlife ecologist and I think a conservationist, any of those would've worked because I was involved with a lot of conservation efforts, whether they be research management, restoration, even helping purchase properties, identifying lands that were very important for conservation and working with various groups to try and get them purchased. So it was pretty all-encompassing.

Brian McLaren: I want to ask you some questions about how conservation works, kind of the big picture of how conservation works. But before we go there, you have shown a passion for your work. I guess being out in the field is very different than sitting at a desk five days a week, 50 weeks a year. But you have shown such passion. Did you have a kind of animal or plant that originally sparked your love for nature? What drew you into conservation?

Scott Smith: I grew up in Connecticut and as a kid, the woods down behind my house, which we didn't own, was the Quinnipiac River, which eventually flows into Long Island Sound at New Haven, but it was a fairly small river in the woods behind my house. And as a kid, my friend Kevin and I were down there and we were kind of Huck Finn, Tom Sawyer, the whole thing. I mean we built a raft out of logs and rope and if our parents had ever known about it, they would've freaked out, and went out on the river and that kind of thing. And so I was in nature a lot.

My family did a lot of camping trips in different parts, primarily New England, but some other areas too. And so I've kind of always been an outside person and I actually

originally wanted to be a marine biologist to work with either fish or something in the ocean. The ocean always really, really attracted me. And then when I was in college, I took a class in ornithology and it just blew me away because I really didn't have an interest in birds until that point in time. I just kind of like, "Oh my God." And I became this bird fanatic for many, many years.

And actually when I first got hired by the state, I had already done a lot of work in different parts of the United States, primarily with birds. I did some mammal work too, but mostly with birds of prey because my first job out of college was working with bald eagles in the Arizona desert and it was a really small population in some of the rivers in Arizona there. And, anyways, so I always kind of put the field work ahead of money and ahead of career advancement, which worked for me. I mean you're never going to be rich doing what I do, but boy, well, you are rich. You're rich in other ways, in many other ways. I'm a billionaire in many other ways.

Brian McLaren: Yes, yes, yes, that's true. One more question before we talk about the work of conservation. Because I've been out walking up to our knees in muck with waders on and all the rest, I know there is a special way that people who are ecologists look at the world. They look at the natural world in a unique way. And I'm going to guess that it would be a little bit hard to talk about because it's so natural to you. You can't imagine seeing the world any other way. But you probably know that you do see it in a unique way. I'd love to hear, how do you see the world?

Scott Smith: Well, I see the human world differently than I see the natural world. But since we're here to talk about the natural world, the natural world I see in a lot of different ways because I know that what I'm looking at is a result of all kinds of things that happened in the past, the recent past and the far past and sometimes the way, way far past. And so I often look at it in that lens like, why is there a mound there? Was that from recent humans, early humans? Was that from animal? Is that from a storm? Why are plants growing in these certain areas? And a lot of times you see zonation in plants, like you see plants growing, particularly in marsh ecosystems. You really see this zonation that has to do with elevation and water and amount of salt and that kind of thing. And so kind of always looking at that.

I guess I always have looked at nature also with almost a childlike wonder because I learn something every day. Everybody, if they really have their minds open, can learn something every day. And I'm kind of looking at things in an analytical standpoint also. And so that's the scientist in me. And then there's the human soul part of me that tries to look at the soul of things, kind of feel deep in your interior spirit, what is the land saying? And sometimes, mind over your heart and sometimes you have to listen to your heart and sometimes you have to listen to your mind. But anyways, there's a lot of things going on.

But I also am looking at things analytically and if I'm looking at animals, I might be thinking, well, why aren't there more females? Or why aren't there more males? Or why aren't there more young here? I'm also a little bit of a pessimist in that I'm always looking for, as a scientist and a conservationist, what are the problems here? I mean are there some problems in this landscape? Because I'm kind of like the doctor of that,

I mean in a way I'm testing the patient, which is the earth and figuring out what is wrong here. And of course, there's a lot to make you worry.

Brian McLaren: That's right. Well, you bring a unique expertise that I think not many people will have ever met someone like you, also who's understandable, but to have your expertise and to be understandable, I want to give you this very big question. How does conservation work? Help people maybe step back and see, and let's specify, why is it important to conserve land? Not just putting species in cages somewhere. Why is it important to conserve land and how does the conservation of land work?

Scott Smith: Boy, that is a big question. So, earlier I talked about scale, when I go out into the woods or nature and wetland and I think about different scales. Conservation also is on a lot of different scales. I always say that conservation starts on an individual parcel with an individual landowner. And so, because I worked a lot on private properties through my career, it's landowner by landowner. So there's these human relationships that are really, really, really integral to making conservation happen. And ecosystem is a hard term that a lot of laypeople have problems with. What does it mean?

But we're kind of looking at functioning landscapes, and if you think about river systems, well there's a river, but there's also all these inputs coming from the land. And if you have a forest next to it, maybe when it rains, the forest will take a lot of the energy from that water and it'll absorb a lot of that water so you don't have these huge floods. But if it's all cement or even just farm field, the water's going to instantly run into the river, it's going to be warmer, it's not going to be cooler, so you're going to have thermal effects on the river.

And so all those things at once, looking at the bigger picture, then you think about, okay, from a conservation standpoint, if we want to keep, let's say a river system with associated headwater wetlands like we did with bog turtles, which you helped me out with. In my case, I did a lot of endangered species work. So we start with the habitat the endangered species lives in, but then we look at, okay, what are the inputs from the landscape to this and how do we make sure there's a network of these different sites for this species, so there's genetic flow, so animals can move back and forth? And over what time scales? Over the short term or over the long term?

And of course, we're finding out in our modern world with a lot of development, a lot of human changes to the landscape that we may in fact end up having to do this hybrid of zoo type things and, in other words, maybe do captive breeding, then release animals or move animals around a little bit where you can do that. In some species you just can't do that because the animals won't take, but their young may, and that's a thing. So for instance, we have a captive breeding going on right now with wood turtles, which I know you very much know and love with the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. There's some populations in the eastern part of the state that aren't doing very well, and some of the ones in the western part of the state are doing really, really well. And our geneticists have told us that there's not really much genetic difference between them to make a difference. So we have taken some young from, well actually we've captive bred some adults that were confiscated in a seizure from another state that were being illegally held and are using those young to release back into the wild in the eastern part of state.

And at the same time, they're being released at land that is already conserved and there's been an effort of local, state, et cetera organizations and government to purchase some land or get it protected through conservation easements. So you end up with a patchwork. If you just have a bunch of little spots and landscape that are protected that don't have a lot of large scale to them and are isolated, you're basically wasting your time and your money because those are just going to blank out just from stochastic events, from random chaos type things that just happen from something bad that happened. Whereas if you have interconnected populations in a landscape that at least has some connectivity to it, they have some resilience too.

And resilience too is really a big part of conservation planning; how can we build resiliency into a preserved design or even into a, I mean there's no way we can buy it all, nor do we probably want to. So how can we link up private properties that landowners own doing some maybe best management practices on those properties, whether they're agricultural properties or if they're growing trees to eventually harvest them, what are things that they can do to minimize impacts of those and have some added value even? I mean can they add to the hydrology of the wetland, et cetera?

Brian McLaren: I think a lot of people don't realize this, that if the only interest that's affecting the land is how people can make money, how they can make the most money fastest, then eventually every environment gets plundered, it gets reduced and its biodiversity is reduced and it's altered in ways that make it inhospitable for so much life that could live there before. So you need some people who have some interest that doesn't begin and end with money. And it seems to me what you and your work did, and I got to observe, is you would try to help individual landowners take better care of their land and see some value in it other than just, how can I get the most dollars out of it? And you help the state to acquire land that would be useful to protect biodiversity. Is that a safe way to say it?

Scott Smith: Yeah, that is a safe way to say it. And the human element is not disconnected from this. It's very strongly connected to it from the private landowners, but if you also think about people who are in poverty, and I also do a lot of work with homeless. I mean I volunteer with homeless and people who are in a poverty situation and generational poverty or live in impoverished countries, they're thinking about survival, they're not thinking about saving an eagle or a rare salamander, a rare turtle or whatever. And so, we have to address the human condition in order to address the environment. We are not disconnected from the environment in any way, shape, or form. And the future of the environment is linked to those individual relationships with landowners, but also how we deal with poverty and issues with equity and social justice. I mean they're all interlinked.

Brian McLaren: Scott, a few minutes ago you used the word a stochastic event, an unpredictable chaotic, disruptive event. And this is where maybe we can help people see the interrelatedness between the human civilization, human activity, and the natural world. People might not think of it this way, but a war happens, lots of people are displaced, those people are in great need. They're not going to be thinking about, as you said, conservation of species when they have to put food to save their children's lives.

So, political events can have a huge effect. A change in political policy can have a huge effect on what gets preserved, what gets destroyed. And then, of course, we've got events like

climate change that it feels to me is kind of like the mega event that is unfolding that some people are waking up to, some people still aren't waking up to, that is going to have a huge effect on everything we do relating to conservation. I'd love to just hear your thoughts on any of those major challenges we face.

Scott Smith: Certainly climate change is a major challenge and the thing is, as it destabilizes governments in parts of the world, there goes your conservation. I mean you do need a framework of government, at least I believe you need a framework of government to make conservation work, because it's really hard. I mean there's plenty of private NGOs out there that are doing a great job, but they'll probably be the first to tell you, in a bad political climate, it's really hard to get things done. On the other hand, there are opportunities for maybe buying land cheap, but if that land is just a piece of paper, but there's people living on it that are just trying to survive, a refugee camp or whatever, you're not going to get conservation.

So climate change, how it's going to destabilize, even the United States of America, it's going to destabilize us in many ways unless we plan for it, because if you look at the majority of our population lives on coastlines. You live on a coastline. I'm only 16 feet above sea level myself. So, I mean it could impact my family directly. And of course, sea level rise is part of it, but there's other parts of it too. The whole way weather occurs has changed dramatically in my lifetime. I mean just think about winters. I mean as a kid, winters were a big thing. In fact, I really came to dislike them they were so long and now I really wish they were long just because a lot of species need that period.

The other thing is, for conservation, there's a lot of planning going on. Okay, let's talk about coastal marshes. So a lot of what is marsh right now is going to be open water in the next 50... Well, it's changing as we speak, but there's a lot of animals that use our coastal marshes, and if that becomes open water, is new marsh being created behind that and is it being created on the landward side at the same rate that it's being lost? And the answer is no. But are there things that can be done to help that? And I know that there has been, some of the National Wildlife Refuges and some states have been doing this too, purchasing upland land on the upland side of some of these areas, assuming that in the future that is where the marsh is going to develop. So doing that.

And of course, there's the human side to that. With so much human beings living on the coastline, what role is the government going to have in... They're going to be losing their properties, and so we're going to have all these people that are going to lose their properties, this huge financial loss. And how are governments going to deal with that? Because that's also part of the picture. Again, I keep bringing these things back to humans, but we really can't separate the human animal and the human society from conservation. You just can't do it.

Brian McLaren: That maybe is a good place for us to go to a final question. I got to volunteer with you as we tried to preserve land for one of the rarest and smallest turtles in the world, the beautiful little bog turtle. In those beautiful little wetlands, we got to observe incredible plant species and other animal species and birds and all the rest of it, just great memories and great experiences, but so much depends on helping people have a new way of seeing the natural world. And I know you're doing some things now, getting people out and engaging with the natural world. Talk to me about how we help people see things in a way that

cherishes them, values them, and ultimately wants to protect them.

Scott Smith: Well, they need to experience nature and not as a negative thing. So I'm leading these, it's called Trinity Outdoors, and we go on these monthly hikes and it's a lot of church parishioners, mostly elderly folks, but there are some younger folks who either don't get out that often themselves or maybe they do, but they want to do it as a group or they want to learn from me or the social interactions of it all. And there's some of them who are from the other side of the political spectrum that I'm at, which is okay because I have the best man at my wedding is from the other side of that. And I still love him and respect his right to have his own opinions. I do think we need to, in talking about that, this duality, we really need to learn to look at each other as people and as humans and people worthy of our love and respect. And if we do that and introduce those people to nature, if they're not involved with it, it's going to help.

Now, one thing I have noticed is more and more people realize that climate change is real. They're suddenly like, and they're getting frightened and they're thinking, "Oh my God, what can we do?" And so I think there's an opportunity and there's more of an opening up of people that are having the veil lifted from their eyes and saying, "Oh, the environment really is important and we can't divorce ourselves from it." And I do think we need to hold our politicians and our public officials up to that and say, "Hey, your policies are killing us. Your policies are going to result in death and destruction. While a few people, a few greedy people are going to make a lot of money, but overall this is not sustainable. I think we just need to hold them up to that and bring that to light.

I mean we are in the age of communication. I mean here we are doing this blog and there's so many ways to communicate things now. Of course, there's a lot of information coming to people and there's a lot of people who are fighting against, well, the alternate factory or whatever you want to say. So that is a problem. But when people experience something when their own property gets flooded, I know a friend of mine in coastal Connecticut a month or so ago, his entire neighborhood got flooded out and he posted some pictures on Facebook and was like, "Oh my god, don't people see this and somebody doing about it?" And he got it. And I don't think he got it before that, but he suddenly got it, that his neighbors and his own property were at risk now. And it's like, okay, if that's what it's going to take. And I think, in many cases that is what it's going to take, but we really shouldn't accept any political candidates not taking this seriously. I think they need to be called out each and every day called out on it.

Brian McLaren: Yes. So well said. So well said. I'll close by asking you a kind of personal question. Could you pick one of the species that you've worked with, whether it's barn owls or bog turtles or something else, and just tell people why you love that species so much, what you value about that species and why you think folks should fall in love with something that they want to protect?

Scott Smith: That is such a hard question. I've been asked before, what is my favorite animal? And I always say it's the animal I'm working with that day. And of course in some cases, I'm not working with any individual animal. I'm going out and looking at all kinds of stuff. So it's the places I'm going to that day. Obviously, my history with the bog turtle, which you're familiar with, was very long and expanded pretty much my whole career. And I want to feel

like we accomplished a lot, but I also realize that there's so much more that needs to be done and it's an animal that's critically endangered. I mean it's not doing well. And so back, what was your question again? I'm sorry, I got off on a side thing there.

Brian McLaren: I'm not sure I could do this. So I'm asking you something difficult, but what would you say to people, apart from utility, why this thing is useful, when you look at them and you think, this species is wonderful and precious and in that way deserves to be conserved, protected, but just describe a creature for people. Or you know what? You may want to describe actually a little wetland for someone too that would help them see, yeah, this is a place, something you've never seen, you've never been, but it's beautiful and good and deserves protection.

Scott Smith: Well first off, I'll say that I had that feeling to the core of my being. I mean it goes deep, deep through my soul and each animal out there, each species is really unique. It's the result of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution and the forces and many, well all the natural habitats are just amazing. I really like to learn plants. And so when I go into an area knowing what I'm looking at, not just the animals, but knowing the plants and knowing everything, I will say I'm awful with insects. I really need to, in my retirement, that's one of the things I need to brush up on, my entomology. They all become friends.

So it's like your friends and your family, you know them. When you see a family member or a good friend walking a long ways away and you see a silhouette, you know it's them. And why is that? What is it about that essence of the way they move? Well, you can become the same way with animals and with plants, the growth form where you find them, the way they move, the way they might move their neck around. I mean there's all different kinds of things that help you. And of course, then you get animals that are maybe genetically a little bit different. They might be melanistic, which means they're darker. They might be partially albino, which means they're very light. And so they may look a lot different. And there's some other terms we have, which I'm not going to go into.

So there's variation in that and that way when you see something like, "I've never seen that before," and then you go kind of like, "What is that?" So there's always this desire to learn. I mean I think you have to have that if you're going to... As you're going into nature, "I want to learn. That is so cool. What is that?" But also just getting to become familiar with things that I can go back into a habitat that I haven't been into in decades. And sometimes it's changed dramatically and often not for the good, unfortunately, but sometimes it looks very similar or sometimes I'll just see, okay, there's been a natural progression here. The trees are now 20 years old or whatever, they're much bigger. This plant community has changed to that plant community. And kind of getting to know an area like that is... I mean our lives are short, but they're long too. And so it's kind of a blessing to have lived so long to be able to see those kinds of things.

On the other hand, I'd love to see how things are going to be 100 years from now, and I'm not going to be around for that. And if I could jump in a time machine, I would love to see how things looked, at least before Europeans showed up here, even possibly pre-human and see how things looked. And obviously, the geology and a lot of other things would've been different. Things would've changed. I might not recognize where I'm at, but gosh, wouldn't that be something?

Brian McLaren: Yes.

Scott Smith: Anyways, I have gone off on a tangent here. Sorry about that.

Brian McLaren: Well, you brought to mind a memory that we shared. I can't even remember where it was, you might remember, but one landowner whose land you had gotten permission for us to go on to survey and see the health of a wetland. He had a little St. Francis statue, one of those little famous St. Francis bird baths that he was very proud of. And I remember he showed it to us. And I know your faith is very important to you and obviously his Catholic faith was very important to him. And as you were talking, I thought, it's really what St. Francis saw. We're all related. We're all in one family. Some of our relatives happen to be human, some of them happen to be mammals or birds or reptiles or fish or plants or trees. But when we see the world in its interconnectedness and with that deep, deep love, we see that we're all related.

Scott Smith: Yeah, and you said it so much better than I could have. Thank you.

Brian McLaren: Oh, no.

Thanks so much for investing your precious time and attention in Learning How to See. I'm especially grateful to have you along this season as we learn to see nature in new and deeper ways. I believe a transformation in the way we see the earth and all her creatures will deeply enrich your life personally. And I also believe that our shared future and the future of our planet depend on more and more of us learning how to see nature in a new way. This change in seeing isn't just a matter of enrichment, it's also a matter of survival.

As a result of our being part of the season of the podcast, I hope we will learn to see ourselves not only in relation to nature, but also as part of nature. I hope we will learn to encounter the spirit or presence or glory of God incarnate in nature to see the divine and all creatures and all matter and energy, including ourselves as part of one sacred web or cosmic dance of life. I hope we will all be converted from destroyers or consumers of the web of life into its lovers and healers.

If you're interested in learning more, be sure to check out the show notes for links to our guests and the resources they offer. And you may also be interested in my upcoming book, *Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart*. Thanks as always to Corey Wayne, the skilled and kind producer of this podcast, and to the whole CAC community; staff, faculty, students, and supporters. If you'd like to leave us a question, brief message, or story, you can write us an email or send us a voicemail and you'll find instructions in the show notes. If you enjoy this podcast, I hope you'll share it with some friends. Again, I thank you.