

# The Future Is Calling Us to Greatness

with Michael Dowd + 56 Experts



## Climate: The Greatest Moral Issue in History

with Kathleen Dean Moore

Big ideas from this session:

- Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril
- How to nurture a deeper intimacy with, and passion for, Life
- Why and how fostering a just and healthy future is key to joy and fulfillment

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Michael: Kathleen, thank you so much for agreeing to be a part of this series *The Future is Calling Us to Greatness*.

Kathleen: Thank you for inviting me.

Michael: You're welcome. I think I first encountered your work in a video that somebody alerted me to maybe a year and a half ago. You and Carl Safina I recall and several others. I immediately then bought your book *Moral Ground*.

Before I even go into that and we get into sort of the formal conversation, some of the people who are watching this or listening to this may not be familiar with you and your work. Could you please sort of give our listeners and viewers a sense of who is Kathleen Dean Moore? What are you particularly passionate about and how did you get to this place?

Kathleen: Well, I call myself an environmental advocate and I'm particularly concerned about climate change, as we all are. My background is I have a PhD in philosophy and for many years I taught at Oregon State, primarily ethics. I am also a writer, a nature writer. For many years I wrote books that celebrate the natural world.

It's increasingly difficult to celebrate the natural world and it's increasingly difficult to stay within the walls of the university when this whole world is calling to us. My work now is entirely climate change.

Michael: Fabulous. That's awesome. Connie and I woke up to climate change in a really personal way about a year and a half ago when we watched David Roberts' TedX talk, *Climate*

Change is Simple. It went from back burner to front burner at that time. In fact, we created I think six or seven days after our wake-up call, we created a video called Climate Change Intergenerational Justice or Intergenerational Evil or something like that.

I love the moral, the way you bring sort of this deep grounding in moral philosophy and empathy and the importance of the moral imagination. I'd love for you to share how you see this as a moral crisis that requires a moral response. A little bit about how you've been speaking about that around the country or around the world.

Kathleen: Sure. I had a similar wake-up call as you did. I was with my granddaughter and putting her to sleep. How she gets herself to sleep is she sings herself to sleep. She was singing, "Laugh, kookaburra, laugh, kookaburra," until she fell fast asleep.

I just said to myself, "It's over. I can't do anything in my life but make a world that's safe for the children." That's been my focus ever since.

My view is that although climate change is a scientific problem, it's a technological problem, in many ways it's an economic problem, a national security problem. It's primarily a moral problem and it calls for a moral response.

What we need, I believe, is a moral consensus that's as strong as a scientific consensus. Scientists have done such a heroic job of convincing us and giving us reason to believe that climate change is real, it's dangerous, it's upon us and created this global consensus.

Now what we need, I believe, is a deeply strong reasoned moral consensus that climate change is a moral outrage, that it can't be allowed to occur. I've been corresponding with a number of the world's moral leaders. We wrote letters to 100 of them. We asked them this question, "Do we have a moral obligation to the future to leave a world as rich in possibilities as our own?" We got back the most extraordinary responses. All short, little essays. We put them together into a book. The book is called *Moral Ground*.

What they do is they fall into 14 different reasons why we really must act, why we have an affirmative moral responsibility. The reasons range from for the sake of the children to honor our duties to steward this world that has been given as a gift to us, this is a matter of moral integrity, on and on I could go with all these important reasons. Human rights justice.

As you open this book you see them all beautifully expressed, all the different reasons why we cannot fail to respond to this call.

Michael: That's one of the reasons I loved about the book is that it came from so many different angles with so many different voices really around a common set of values and priorities and commitments and moral sensibility. It was really all about what I call honoring the

past and being of service to the future in a deep way, falling in love with life and doing all that we can, whatever it takes, to ensure a just and sustainably life giving future.

What I love about the book, in fact the subtitle *Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*, it brought dozens of voices to this question. No matter where someone was at or someone is at on the theological or philosophical or metaphysical spectrums, they found voices they could resonate with and respect that were speaking their language in terms of really loving the future and seeing that how we live in the moment, how we live today individually and collectively. Especially systemically collectively is vital for how our children and grandchildren and not just our children and grandchildren but the children and grandchildren, as my mentor Thomas Berry used to say, of all species. The world that they will inhabit.

Kathleen: I'm so glad that you brought up love. This was a recurring theme in these essays. What do you love too much to lose? Is it justice that you love? Is it your children that you love? Is it the little sea angels in the ocean and the salmon?

Then the question is love imposes obligations. Love isn't just a kind of la-di-da. To love something is to affirm its value and to pledge your life to its survival.

What are the moral consequences of loving so that love isn't just an empty phrase but is really devotion. It becomes a way of life. That, I think, is the key question for climate action.

Michael: I couldn't agree more. I did a program last night at a church here in the Colorado Springs area. There was a woman who came up afterwards and we were talking. She shared something that I had never heard before. We were talking about different religious groups are beginning to find their way into climate as a profound moral issue.

The example she gave, she said that she was at a church, I forget what kind of church, in Florida. I guess it was conservative. She said there were these groups of Evangelicals and one of them said climate change is absolutely a pro-life issue. I thought that's a great way to phrase it.

Kathleen: That is a wonderful way to phrase it and it is exactly right. It is a pro-life issue. All of those little lives. All of them. You start thinking about the extinctions that are going to result if we don't prevent it from climate change, huge numbers of extinctions. I think about how we can start tearing the pages out of our field guides. It's just unbelievable. It's hard to imagine.

Michael: That's a powerful image, tearing the pages out of our field guides. I've begun speaking about this from a new slant, namely that God, reality, I use the words God and reality interchangeably, that God is reality's sacred or mythic name and reality is God's secular name. The question then becomes how do we live in right relationship to reality today and ensure that

future generations are also able to live in a thriving relationship to reality, whatever our names for reality may be.

Of course then the question becomes how is reality communicating to us today and who are the prophets, who are those who are speaking on behalf of reality and doing so with unflinching authority?

I see you as one of those people, even though you don't use that kind of religious language a whole lot. Could you say a little bit about sort of as the people that you've been in communication with who get it, they don't need to be convinced that we face unprecedented challenges and that ours is a heroic time, ours is a time to truly sacrifice, to voluntarily restrain our own needs and serving our own needs in order to be a blessing, in order to be a contribution to the future.

The people that you've been in communication with who get it, share if you could some perspective or stories or anything that our listeners and viewers might find inspiring.

Kathleen: Many of them are talking about the stories we tell each other about our relationship to the world. Philosophers, and I'm sure you do, too, talk about the three great questions of human kind. What is the world? What is the place of the human in the world? How then shall we act?

It's very clear that we've come to the end of a great experiment where we tested the idea that humans were apart from the world, that we were somehow better than it, that we were in charge and in control. That experiment's at an end. The results are in.

Our challenge is this great exercise of the moral imagination to think again about who we are and to rejoice in our relation to the natural world and to understand then the moral consequences of that. Many of the people in the book are talking about the new story.

Michael: Yes, what Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme called the universe story and what now David Christian and Bill Gates and company are calling big history. There's different ways. Connie and I, our main website is [TheGreatStory.org](http://TheGreatStory.org). We're talking about this 13.8 billion year creation story that we now have that's been given by science, given by evidence, that helps us see how we're all related to all of life, how we aren't separate from nature, that we are nature becoming conscious of itself.

It's a glorious story and that's one of the reasons I'm evangelistic about it. I want as many people.

Kathleen: How could that be a diminishment? To understand ourselves as connected and deeply related to these other glorious beings.

Michael: One of the things I wanted to ask you about has to do with maybe some coaching you might be willing to give me around how I can most effectively communicate to sort of traditional conservative Christians who still have something like 41% I believe the last poll that I saw, 41% of Americans believe that these are the end times.

If that's your world view, if you believe that Jesus is coming back in some kind of a literal, other worldly way and we've got at most a few decades left and the chaos of today is just signs that that's happening. I'm struggling, I'm groping with how to most effectively reach those folks. That's a huge voting block. That's a huge number of people. We just can't ignore them.

I'm trying to bring them, to entice them, to allure them into an evidential, ecological, evolutionary worldview but sometimes I just want to have the Old Testament prophet stance like we're betraying God, we're betraying future generations. I realize that's probably not always the most effective way of doing it.

Any coaching that you'd be willing to give me or what you've found helpful in terms of how you speak to conservative, religious people to invite them to fall in love with life and to make a real moral commitment to the future?

Kathleen: I should confess first that my primary work is preaching to the choir. I very much believe that that's important. If 41% of the people are not on board that means that 59 or almost 60% of the people are. If they would act in accordance with their beliefs the struggle is over.

Really calling to action those people who are already on board I think is very important work. The choir is tired. The choir is needing new words to the songs. The choir is hypocritical. If we can address those issues with the people then I think that's really important. That's the work I've taken on.

I congratulate you and thank you for the work you've taken on. I suppose speaking as a person completely outside of this challenge that if Jesus is coming back I would really want to have my house in order. I would really want to be sure that I was living in ways that honored his father's creation.

The other thing that I think is important is the renunciation of a consequentialist point of view. If the world is ending they say there's nothing I can do now that will make any difference. That's not why we do it, right? Not because we think we're going to save the world. We do what's right because we think it's right. A call to conscience, a call to moral integrity I think is a strong point to make in times that really seem to have very little hope for us to cling to.

Ask yourself why do I live gratefully? Because I think life is a great gift. Why do I live simply? Because I don't believe it's right to take more than my fair share. Not because I think that I'm going to save the world.

Michael: That's beautifully said. You actually reminded me of a conversation that I had with David **Grishon**, a dear friend and mentor of mine. He also was sort of reminding me of social diffusion theory and that going after the most reluctant, the most recalcitrant, is not actually the most successful strategy for change.

Kathleen: Interesting, yes.

Michael: In fact, the analogy he used is you get the choir, you get 15% or 18 or 20% of a population doing whatever, you get the choir singing and let them get the congregation to sing. Don't go after the laggards or the late majority.

Kathleen: That's a good point. The choir is huge. It's like 61 or 70% of American people think that there should be action on renewable energies. Of that number something like 70% is discouraged, disappointed, feeling hopeless. If we can make a difference to that then I think we can make all the difference in the world.

Michael: Yes, I agree. I'm curious, I don't know the answer to this question so I'd really be curious to hear. Who are some of the people or movements that you've found particularly inspiring in your own ecological spiritual pilgrimage? Who have been your mentors or the people who have been most inspiring to you and why?

Kathleen: It's interesting that you mention Brian Swimme's work. Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker, their work on *The Journey of the Universe* I think is very inspirational. They're able to convey the glory, really that's the word, the glory of creation and the glory of our part in that creation. They call us not to think of ourselves, we human beings, as a cancer on the land but to think of ourselves as part of the creative unfolding and with responsibilities that come along with that position. That, I think, has been very, very important.

The other half of me goes to Aldo Leopold who is an ecologist, and many other ecologists, too, who have brought me to this world and invited me to think of myself as deeply embedded in it. From both angles, I know this reflects on your work too, and also from the history of religion and from this emergence of ecology you come to the same worldview of this beautiful, beautiful emerging now that's unfolding.

Michael: Yes, amen. I've begun speaking about what I'm calling religion 3.0. It's not a regional religion that began in one part of the world and then is expanding. I see religion 1.0 as sort of tribal religion. It's the religion or the life ways of indigenous peoples. Religion 2.0 are the religions of the book and culturally distinct from where they emerged and the belief systems.

Religion 3.0 I see as sort of a global metareligious perspective. It's not a religion in competition with other existing religions. It's more a set of values, priorities and commitments that are uniting tens of millions of us around the world. Some of us are completely secular. Some of us are religious of all different kinds.

What we align around is the need to live in right relationship to reality as evidentially known and collectively discerned and the need to ensure a just, healthy and sustainably life giving future. We can differ on a lot of other things but if we align on that, the need to live in right relationship to reality as collectively understood and the need to ensure a healthy future, those other differences can be beautiful. I find we don't have to worry about them.

In fact, my own personal credo trying to articulate where I find inspiration, and many others have resonated with this language, I say it's in six points. I say reality is my God. Evidence is my scripture. Big history is my creation story. Ecology is my theology. Integrity is my salvation. Ensuring a just and healthy future is my mission. That sort of sensibility is something that I think unites a whole bunch of us, religious and non-religious alike.

Kathleen: I think you're right. My colleague and I have taken the *Moral Ground* book all over the country, spoken to many places. We do workshops with it. We start by asking people what are your deepest values, what do you most deeply believe and treasure? What do you love too much to lose? Trying to get people to go right to the core. We find almost universal agreement.

Michael: Wow, that's great. I love it. What do you love too much to lose? That's a great question.

Kathleen: The first answer often comes in it's the next generation, it's my children and my grandchildren. Then by analogy all the children of the world. It's this renewed growth. It's this future that people treasure. It's also a relationship with something greater than they are. Often that turns out to be a forest or a place. Sometimes it turns out to be a divine being. Something that takes them outside of themselves and their own limitations.

Then the notion that you're talking about a thriving, of this kind of joyous flourishing. It's in every human being, this collection. Your notion of religion 3.0 that is broad based and just grows out of people's shared values I think is very, very important.

One more thing, if I may, is when people ask me what my religion is I tell them that I believe in the secular sacred. I really believe that this world is astonishing, it's wondrous, it's beautiful, it is crazy creative, it's irreplaceable, it's mysterious. If the good English word for that is sacred then I'd be happy to accept that.

Michael: I love it. Just very recently, a few weeks ago, I delivered a TedX talk in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It's not even up online yet. In that talk, and I've just started using this language, that's why I love the secular sacred because I've started using language that I'm a sacred realist or I'm an evidential mystic. I practice factual faith.

Kathleen: Very nice.

Michael: Trying to pair these secular terms and religious terms in a way that is fresh or at least opens up new possibilities for folks.

Kathleen: The paradox often reveals something new. That's why it's really important to bring together ideas that don't usually mesh, to shake loose something that's new and complicated and interesting in new ways. Good for you.

Michael: I used to hold this dichotomy, the sacred and the secular. I just don't anymore. For me, the secular is simply a way of saying a secular orientation is one that doesn't take scriptural authority as more authoritative than evidence. It doesn't take anything as more authoritative than evidence. Evidence is scripture. Evidence is divine revelation. Even if secular people don't use that kind of religious language, evidence provides our best map of what's real and what's important.

I celebrate the ongoing emergence of the secular. I just want to also invite people who identify themselves as secular to also fall in love with life and to not fall into this existential there's no meaning, there's no purpose, there's no value beyond ourselves, and to really be present to the mystery, to the divine if you want to use that language but you don't even have to. To the awesome, to the inspiring aspects of reality, both our inner reality and our external reality. Then, as we've been saying, being of service to the future in some way.

Kathleen: Yes. What you're inviting is a kind of trust [INAUDIBLE 00:22:26]. It's also trusting the evidence of our hearts, our feelings of reverence, our feelings of awe, our feelings of wonder and astonishment are true.

We should pay attention to them rather than discounting them in some way. I think that's important. There are many, many ways to come to know and we need to honor them all.

Michael: Yes, amen. I just watched something that was up online. I got an email about it, I think Humans in Nature or something like that. Connie and I just watched it this morning. There were a couple things that you shared there that I would also like to invite you to share anything you'd like to.



One of them had to do with the moral imagination, this ability to get inside. My own way of phrasing it is inside the shoes, the skin or the scales of other beings and feel from their perspective. Anything that you'd like to share about the moral imagination and how to extend that sense of in group to include beyond where perhaps your grandparents defined their in group?

Kathleen: I can't think of a capability that's more important at this time than the ability to imagine yourself inside someone else's spirit, shall we just say. It's about imagination, it's about empathy, it's about accepting grief. I think that if we weren't so afraid of being frightened and alone and we weren't so afraid of being disregarded that we might have more of the ability to welcome the perspective of other means.

If we want to start thinking about how it must be for animals who are the last, perhaps, of their kind, animals who are finding toxins, animals who are losing their habitats, we really start measuring ourselves in that way. That will be a hard moment of grief. It's no wonder that we don't practice that regularly.

This is going to be our task, isn't it? To open our hearts to what is present. If the evidence is an evidence of suffering then, as you say, this is something that we have to pay attention to.

Michael: What you're sharing, I'm so glad you brought it up. I thought earlier in our conversation of mentioning Joanna Macy because she's another one of my main mentors. I think I find her work, as I suspect you do, too, to be so valuable. Precisely in helping us to both get inside the experience of others, even non-human or other than human creatures, beings, the whole council of all beings thing that she and John Seed did.

Also to honor the grief, to honor the sadness, to honor the anger, to be present to those very difficult emotions in community because when we vocalize, when we can share our despair, our grief we find in our hearts, we don't do that Joanna says because we're afraid of our hearts breaking. Well, that's exactly what happens but they break open with compassion so that we feel our relationship, our interconnectedness with all beings. That unleashes a lot of energy, in my experience.

Kathleen: I think that's right. I know that's right. I call that the duty of the moon. We have to take on the duties of the moon, which never looks away. It never turns its face away. It always is witness. Even as it turns it's a witness.

Michael: Wow, the duty of the moon.

Kathleen: We're called to witness and not turn our faces away.

Michael: That's beautiful. I've never heard that phrase, the duty of the moon or anything like that. I like that.

Kathleen: I work with writers. I have just recently issued a call to writers. One of the things I called them to is this social witness, which I have described as the duty of the moon. We have to be out there telling the truth because people don't believe us. Cassandra comes to mind, who had the gift of foresight and tore her hair and cried in grief because people didn't believe it. That has to be okay.

Michael: One of the things you shared in the conversation that I listened to earlier today was that you are trying to help create a national conversation about our obligation to the future. A new set of virtues might be being called forth. Could you say something about either of those?

Kathleen: Yes. If we take seriously what the ecologists tell us about the world and our place in it I think a certain set of moral duties come from that. If the world is finite and has actual limits then we're called to a certain kind of self-restraint. If the world is gracious and giving as it is, then we're called to a kind of gratitude. Do you see how I'm proceeding?

Beginning with some sort of a fact that the ecologists tell us about and saying that that's not simply a fact about the world, although it is that. It also has moral importance because it tells us what we ought to do. It's almost a kind of I hesitate to use the word but it's almost a moral biomimicry. Can we make ourselves match in some way with the way the world works?

I believe that in your talk that you also referred to that, that the world works one way. You were quoting someone. I'm sorry I can't pull it up. The world works one way and our minds work another way. That mismatch is what causes so much harm and so much grief. Let's be careful about the way the world works and then let's see if we can't in some way bring ourselves to be integrated in and worthy of that way of working.

If the world is regenerative, if the world is able to restore itself and to flourish again then we are called also to a kind of forgiveness. We are called also to lives that are lives of regeneration and nourishment for the world. We're called to return the gifts of the world with our own gifts of restoration.

I'm quoting from what's called the Blue River Declaration. The group that I founded called a number of people to the mountains to think about this, scientists, ethicists, writers, and began with those three questions. What is the nature of the world? What is the place of people in that world? Then we tried to generate answers to that third question, how now shall we live? That can be found online, that set of new virtues.

Michael: That was what I was just going to ask you about. I'm always now thinking about how to create litanies or poems or something that can be used in a ritualistic context that

reaffirms this sort of deep, ecological wisdom and helps us come into right relationship with reality. You're saying that what you just were articulating can be found if someone Googles Blue River Declaration?

Kathleen: Yes, they'll find it under that name.

Michael: That's great. Thanks. I'm actually working with several other ministers of different denominations and faith to come up with an electionary or science-based ecological set of readings and prayers and litanies that can be used in any kind of religious setting or ritualistic setting that helps reinforce these values and worldview.

Kathleen: Yes, and music perhaps. I'm glad you're doing that. We who have left the church have not left behind the emotional what is the word for it? The celebratory language of the church. We have not left behind the harmonious music. We haven't left behind the call and response. These things are so deeply in us that I think that you're absolutely on the right track, absolutely doing the right thing.

You just stand in a church and you hear the human capacity to sing in harmony and you think, "We can make this work."

Michael: We have to make this work, exactly.

Kathleen: We have it within us.

Michael: I actually fell in love with my now wife Connie Barlow, we've been together for 13 years. I fell in love with her first through her nature writing, her science writing. She had a book *Green Space, Green Time - The Way of Science*. It's really the spirituality of science. It's all about how to fall in love with life. In fact, she interviewed in that book both Mary Evelyn Tucker and Brian Swimme who are dear friends and colleagues and mentors.

She has in the appendix a ritual, a stardust ritual, based on what we now know about stellar nucleosynthesis, that our bodies are made of stardust. I read that ritual and I just wept and I said, "I love this woman." That was before I ever met her.

Kathleen: Then you tracked her down and found her and it turns out you do love this woman. Isn't that great.

Michael: Amen, I really do. Yes. Well, Kathleen, anything that you'd like to share? The title of this conversation series is *The Future is Calling Us to Greatness*. Anything that you would like to share? Perhaps something that you share with young people that anyone who perhaps is still feeling overwhelm or depression or anger which are all healthy, normal emotions when you get climate and you get some of the other large-scale global challenges? Anything that

you would offer that would be encouraging or inspiring for folks in this sense that the future is calling us to greatness?

Kathleen: I think that's a beautiful phrase. Yes, when I speak to young people what I find is that they absolutely get it. They have been beautifully educated on this. They know exactly what's coming down. They don't know what to do. Everything that seems to be offered to them is some sort of a sacrifice or some sort of a relinquishment. It's so sad.

I quote Frederick Buechner and I say if you're looking for your calling you'll find it at the intersection of your deepest joy and the world's greatest need. "What do you love?" I say to them. What can you not do? What keeps you up at night? What would you die for? What are you good at? Which is this joyous question. Yes, I can do this, I love doing this. I can spin music, I can ride a bike.

Then how can you turn that to the working uses and the needs of the world? That, I think, helps the young people.

The people of my generation and younger and so forth who get it also don't know what to do. We're seeing, I think, the development of what Mary DeMocker calls the new deniers. They're really old deniers who simply say it's not happening. They're dangerous but there are not that many of them and we can, I think, let them go. They will learn. Everyone has the capacity to learn.

The danger is from the new deniers who say, "Yes, it's here. It's real. It's dangerous. There is nothing that we can do." That's a huge cohort of people and it's extremely dangerous.

I point out the fallacious reasoning there, being an old magician. On one hand you have blind hope where you say, "Everything's going to be fine so I don't have to do anything." That's a kind of moral abdication, I don't have to do anything. On the other hand you say, "The only other option to that is this blinding despair. If everything is going to go to hell no matter what I do then I don't have to do anything." Either way I'm off the hook, moral abdication each way.

I say that's a false dichotomy and ignores this broad ground, this moral ground between them which is integrity, which is acting in ways you believe are right because you believe they're right. Regardless of the consequences.

Americans are so bizarrely consequential. Can we focus instead on this matching between our actions and our beliefs? Can we imagine ourselves free of those who would make us foot soldiers in the war against what we love more than anything else in the world? Can we design a life that is a work of art, that embodies our deepest values?

The answer to those questions is absolutely we can. Is it a sacrifice? It is not. Is it an imprisonment? It is an absolute liberation.

Michael: Amen. I'm so glad you went into that because that was one of my notes, was to ask you about this spectrum that so many people tend to fall at one end or the other, what John Michael Greer calls the myth of perpetual progress on one end, the sort of blind hope. The myth of the apocalypse at the other, it doesn't matter what we do, the whole thing's going to hell in a hand basket anyway.

I love you talk about moral integrity as this middle ground where we're engaged to be in action, to do something. Joanna Macy calls it active hope, something in the right direction where your joy and the world's needs intersect. I had been using that for years before somebody reminded me that I had originally gotten it from Frederick Buechner. I had completely forgotten that I had read it in the 1980s. I had been using it with audiences for years. Finally somebody said, "Did you know that Frederick Buechner was saying the same thing?" Oh, I never gave him credit. There you go.

Kathleen: There you go.

Michael: I want to mention one thing that you might be interested. Connie Barlow, my wife, asked me specifically to bring this up. She created, some of our viewers and listeners would be interested in this, too, because it's something that any of us can do.

One of the things I tell people is we can all do little things. We can all change our light bulbs and drive less and fly less and all that's great. The most important thing that we can do until it's done, until we actually do it, is the one systemic shift which is whether you call it fee and dividend or tax carbon or whatever, to basically marshal the power of the market to help us all do the right thing.

I always encourage people to go to [CitizensClimateLobby.org](http://CitizensClimateLobby.org) or [CarbonTax.org](http://CarbonTax.org) and learn more about how they can participate in furthering that so that we can all look young people in the eyes in another two, three, four, five years and say, "Yes, I helped make that happen." That's a concrete thing we can all do.

Kathleen: Yes, I helped make that happen. It has to be, "Yes, I did everything I could."

Michael: I love it. You just upped the ante. I'll use that.

Kathleen: It's a matter of integrity, isn't it? If I don't believe in fossil fuels and I'm making money from selling and buying them, that is an absolute lack of integrity. Pushing our

institutions, too. I think you're right, that the forces of the marketplace, as much as we might not feel comfortable with those, they should be directed towards the common goal.

Michael: Yes. Another thing, and this is the thing that I wanted to mention that Connie is involved in, it's called Leaf a Legacy. Leaf a Legacy. It's something that average citizens can do, which is to help. Now that climate change is happening so fast this is what the consensus position is now. You can actually see maps of different tree species and where they are now and where they'll need to be in another 30 years or 60 years or 90 years. Unless you're a wind-dispersed tree you're not going to be able to make that unless we assist them. This whole field of assisted migration.

People can take whatever warm adapted seeds from their favorite tree and just move it a little bit further north. They're actually helping the entire green world move at a faster pace than typically they've needed to in the interglacials and the glaciers and stuff like that.

If anybody just puts Connie Barlow or just Leaf a Legacy, you can learn more about that. She thought specifically that you might be interested in that as well.

Kathleen: Yes, that's very, very interesting. I am nervous always about adaptation plans, to the extent that they may take our energy away from stopping this madness.

Michael: Yes, I agree. I agree.

Kathleen: She's absolutely right. It's an act of generosity and it's an act of renewal to do your best for the animals and the plants.

Michael: Yes, amen. Kathleen, this has been wonderful. In addition to your RiverWalking.com where can people go to learn more about your work? Is that they'll just find access to everything there?

Kathleen: They'll find a lot there, that's RiverWalking.com or KathleenDeanMoore.com. Same site. They also should go to MoralGround.com. Moral Ground is a website that gathers blogs and work about that moral ground project, of the reasons why we need to act on behalf of the future.

What they'll find there is a discussion guide. If they have a circle of caring, if they have a study group and they have a book club they can get together with other people and they can discuss these various reasons for acting.

Michael: Wow, this is great.

Kathleen: Also, there are a lot of suggestions on that discussion guide for how to turn those ideas, that moral principle, into concrete on the ground forward-moving action. They might be very interested in that.

Michael: I'm very interested in that. I speak in churches two or three times a week typically. Both on Sunday mornings and evening programs. I'm now going to recommend. I've been recommending your book but I wasn't aware of the study guide.

Invariably church groups, and secular groups, too, sometimes but certainly church groups often will ask, "If we want to go deeper into these ideas, if we want to have a study group what will I do?" Now I'm going to recommend that to them. Thank you.

Kathleen: It's ready, it's right there. I use it in my classroom. At the beginning of the class I have what I call a hope meter where I ask students of zero is there's no hope and ten is there's no problem, where are you? At the beginning of that class they're three or four. These are college students, graduate students.

At the end of studying the moral ground where you've heard so much about the challenges, [INAUDIBLE 00:41:50]. I say, "How can that be? You've spent the whole term learning about the facts of climate change and at the end you're more hopeful?" The answer they give me is we came into a community of people who really care and a community of people who are smart and engaged and interconnected and that is what gives me hope.

There is the study but then there is the collective coming together for action that is so important.

Michael: Yes, this is great. I just realized there's one other question that Connie has wanted me to ask. I've remembered to ask most of the people that I've interviewed in this series. It's a little off the wall and I purposely don't let the people that I'm interviewing know about it ahead of time because I just want your fresh, "Wow, I've got to think about that," response.

If you were to invite for dinner or have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee or whatever, a conversation, with any three figures in human history who would those be and why?

Kathleen: Well, Thomas Hobbes would be there. He's the person who said that the life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. I want somebody there who we could argue against. You do want to have a good conversation.

I would love to invite the Dalai Lama because he's so funny. His laugh is so beautiful. When you ask him about climate change he doesn't talk about compassion, he talks about survival. I'd love to see those two minds together. Who would be the third?

Michael: It doesn't have to be somebody that would be the four of you together. It could be just a one-on-one.

Kathleen: Then I'd want to talk to Rachel Carson. I'd absolutely want to talk to Rachel Carson. I'd like to see her in a dust up with those other two guys, too. She could absolutely do it. I'd love to see Thomas Hobbes and Rachel Carson in a debate.

Here's something about Rachel Carson. We need her so desperately, a person who could bring together the communication skills, she's such a beautiful writer, and the science and the ethics.

People tear out their hair and say, "We don't have Rachel Carson anymore and we need her." I've been urging people to form what I call Rachel Carson trios. Find a person who is a natural scientist on the scale of Rachel Carson. Find a beautiful writer. Find an ethicist. Come together because the three of you together could be what Rachel Carson was alone. That's my way of trying to honor Rachel Carson is to say you've set this beautiful example and some three of us could maybe do as well as you did.

Michael: I love it, I love it. Kathleen, thank you so much for taking the time to be part of this series. I just so deeply honor you and your own bringing together of moral philosophy, beautiful nature writing, a love of life and a deep commitment to the future. Blessings on your work and, again, thank you for participating in this series.

Kathleen: Michael, you're very kind in fact. I've been listening, I've been reading, I've been on your websites and your YouTubes and I think that you're doing exactly what needs to be done. Thank you.

Michael: Thank you.