

I love wildlife programmes and constantly marvel at how the amazing advances in camera and optical technology, when combined with the skill, patience and deep understanding of camera men and women, can bring the beauty and elusive natural world into our homes. It has never been so easy for us to witness the raw splendour of nature, at once magnificent and gentle, yet red in tooth and claw, and humbly recognise and understand our place and responsibility as the only humanoid species currently extant on this unique planet.

It has also never been so easy for us to witness the devastation that we as a species have inflicted upon our oceans, forests and formerly pristine wilderness areas in the pursuit of power, convenience and commercial gain.

Here then is, as they say, the rub. How can we celebrate our beautiful planet without becoming anxious or depressed about the systematic destruction of its biomes and habitats, and their startling diversity of flora and fauna?

There is a deluge of information and imagery that continually alerts us to the real and perceived dangers of our individual and collective mismanagement of the environment. As meditators and teachers, it is important to be aware of how we react to all this information.

Once, whilst riding upstairs on a bus travelling through central London and discussing the environmental crisis with my adult son and his friends, I was, as a child of the 60's held to account along with my generation, for much of what was wrong with the world in the twenty first century.

Of course, the Climate Crisis is far too complex to be blamed on a single generation or even individuals who hold power.

However, self-blame, inadequacy and guilt are common emotions that rise in response to the Climate Crisis. Feeling guilt is to be aware of wrongdoing but the emotion doesn't have to be self-incriminating, negatively tying us into a virtual past from which we are unable to step forward and act.

Wholesome remorse can allow us to really feel grief around our species actions with gentleness and humility. To mindfully change our behaviour and take action to protect our planet, our home, in whatever ways we, as individuals feel able.

Kaira Jewel Lingo<sup>1</sup> suggests, *'Self-compassion in particular is a tool of climate resilience that can help us meet the pain of eco-anxiety and climate tragedy'*.

Clearly, we cannot ignore what is happening to our planet and anger nor guilt will not stop what has already started.

Perhaps we should be wary of dwelling in a 'present moment bubble' when we practice. Through compassion for self and others, including all beings and our environment, we have an opportunity to reach out, to accept what we have done and in so doing, begin to mediate change.

We should try to remember that nothing can change until it is faced and accepted, and that often denial is our first response to loss, or the overwhelming reality and grief of what is happening around us and to us.

Clearly then, the task ahead of us all is to make a deep and honest self-appraisal of this global situation, and work without guilt or self-blame, understanding that over time our practice of compassionate mindful awareness can support the emergence of a new human story.

<sup>1</sup> Befriending Eco-Anxiety: A Practice of Adaptation -Kaira Jewel Lingo

<https://ethical.net/health/eco-anxiety/>