COMING BACK TO LIFE – Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World

By Joanna Macy & Molly Young Brown
Foreword by Matthew Fox

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This book manages to bring together theory and practice based on many years experience by the authors, of travelling nationally and internationally to lecture and lead workshops, addressing the urgent need for a 'great turning' in the way we understand the environment and our place in the natural world. The book is a good resource for all those who are concerned about environmental and ecological issues regardless of their faith tradition.

Joanna Macy is a Buddhist who has lectured on Buddhist philosophy, systems theory and deep ecology. She has written six books previous to this one including: World as Lover, World as Self and Thinking Like a Mountain.

Molly Young Brown as well as being a workshop leader and consultant has written three previous books on spirituality and healing the environment including: Growing Whole: Self-Realization on an Endangered Planet.

Coming Back To Life is accessible to everyone even though it offers ways of thinking and being which are challenging. It is no academic tome but will stimulate scholars and the general reader alike. The first half of the book puts forward the arguments for a changed way of thinking and the second half offers clear guidelines on how to lead workshops and meditations. Although the exercises are aimed at group work I have found that some of the practices are equally valuable in offering ideas of engaging with the material when alone.

Non USA readers might find some of the expressions and exercises different in that some of the exercises are nation specific. In spite of this the basis of the theory and
exercises are applicable universally and can be adapted to the workshop leader's own experience.

The 'Table of Contents' are detailed and perhaps the best way of offering a review of this valuable resource. The detailed index demonstrates that in this book of 220 pages the chapters are broken down into short manageable sections.

Message from the Dalai Lama
Foreword by Matthew Fox
Preface by Joanna Macy
Preface by Molly Young Brown

TO CHOOSE LIFE
THE CHOICE FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD
THE GREAT TURNING
"Holding actions" in defense of life on Earth
Analysis of structural causes and creation of alternative institutions
Shift in perceptions of reality, both cognitively and spiritually

THE GREATEST DANGER: THE DEADENING OF MIND & HEART
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Fear of despair
Fear of appearing morbid
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Fear of causing distress
Fear of being unpatriotic
Fear of appearing weak and emotional
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Fear of powerlessness
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Sense of powerlessness
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The holonic shift in consciousness
Gaia Theory
Positive disintegration
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Asking deeper questions
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Earth-centered religions
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Power-with
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The power of disclosure and refusal
Synergy and grace

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THE SHAMBHALA PROPHECY

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The Remembering
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The Council of All Beings

GOING FORTH
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Communicating Our Concerns and Hopes – Guidelines
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APPENDIX C: A COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS: THE SITE SPEAKS
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Resources