

Daily Meditation 4-21-25

Two Announcements for DM Readers

Good morning.

Tomorrow is Earth Day, and I will be speaking in tomorrow's daily meditation about the sacredness of the Earth, and what it means.

I think it's very important on this Earth Day Eve, to call our attention, sad that it is, to what's happening with this new administration regarding love of the Earth, preserving the Earth, caring for future generations, and not just generations of human beings. There are millions of other species that are endangered today.

Just looking at some headlines about these important topics is scary in itself. Here are a few headlines from The Independent:

"Trump administration is working to end habitat protections for endangered animals, environmental groups say." Another: "Trump is gutting environmental programs. It will be costly for Americans." Another: "Trump takes an axe to more than a dozen pollution rules in rapid fire deregulation." Another: "Earth Day Massacre? Environmental groups fear Trump ready to take aim at nonprofit status."

This is a recent article based, of course, on his attacks on the nonprofit status of Harvard University. This is putting fear into environmental nonprofit groups, that they too could be vulnerable to such attacks. However, there are lawyers who are standing out and saying, this cannot be done. For example, here's one lawyer's statement:

The procedure for revoking federal tax exemption requires individual case-by-case IRS audits of each organization, with ample opportunity for the entity to defend itself, and including multiple routes of appeal. And yet, spokespersons for these groups say the rumors feel credible, because this is the playbook they use. And he's citing the example of the attack at Harvard University.

That's why people are taking it very seriously – "it" being the threat of taking away tax-exempt status for all these many nonprofit organizations that are trying to defend Mother Earth.

So let's go into more detail about some of these happenings. For example, under the article which is in the LA Times entitled, "Trump is gutting environmental programs, it will be costly for Americans, we are told that *to repeal key protections could have raised \$254 billion in annual benefits in public health – \$254 billion – and the environment, public health and the environment, compared to \$39 billion in savings for regulated industries*. In other words, the hoarded reason for gutting these rules is to help regulated industries, in other words, corporate capitalism. *But the benefits to public health and the environment are \$254 billion, keeping the laws in place, and the regulated industries would only get \$39 billion in profits*. So just from an economic point of view, its beyond stupid.

Looser rules around air and water quality could also lead to worsening asthma attacks, increased ER visits, and other adverse outcomes. It could significantly increase the cost of living for millions of people, and bring about hundreds of thousands of premature deaths.

Yes, this is a death sentence. We are talking about killing human beings, and other species as well, in fact, rendering them extinct, to save \$39 billion for corporations.

Now, many heads of corporations do not want this to happen either. For one thing, it introduces insecurity in their future plans, because their plans include trying to take care of the environment. It says, *These rollbacks could lead to nearly 200,000 additional premature deaths in the next 25 years, cause more than 10,000 extra asthma attacks each day – 10,000 asthma attacks every day – and cost the public \$6 for every dollar supposedly saved by regulated industries.*

We've never seen anything like the scale of the attack that we're seeing in public health, and at EPA in particular, says the senior advisor. It's alarming to me that these rollbacks that will so profoundly impact the air we breathe and the water we drink, may get lost amid all the other noise and chaos that is coming from Washington. It's beyond troubling. It's infuriating.

Of course, that's true. One reason I'm talking about this, that I have seen very little coverage in the media, about the environmental destruction and chaos that is being unleashed by the present administration. Most of the emphasis has been on immigration and so forth, those scandals. But this is a scandal too, but it's a scandal to all of our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren to come. It's a scandal that the administration and its supporters, the entire Republican Party apparently, in Congress, are actually talking out loud about these things,

Blow after blow in the environmental agencies, canceling grant funds, shuttering offices, laying off workers and targeting projects geared toward air and water quality, electrical vehicle infrastructure, and curbing planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions: All this to save \$39 billion, but it will cost a minimum of \$254 billion, plus hundreds of thousands of lives, and tens of thousands of asthma attacks happening every day because of these rollbacks. As one expert put it, this is an assault on public health, an all-out assault on public health. Really max damage for smog and soot and mercury and other harmful pollutants. Air pollution from burning fossil fuels costs each American an average of \$2,500 per year in health care expenses. Currently, that is the case, \$2,500 a year, totaling \$820 billion per year nationwide. This includes emergency room visits for cardiovascular events. And it includes the pollution of vehicles.

And the projections do not include the increase of cancer, because we really don't have the means to analyze the outcome from that. So that the whole area of cancer is not even included in these statistics and in these costs, financial costs and health costs directly, meaning deaths. Yet the EPA under Trump and the administration are plowing forward.

The agency spokesperson has said, *We can protect the environment and grow the economy at the same time, but this is not proof of effects. They are eliminating 400 environmental related grants, and allowing some of the biggest air polluters, just as the coal strip power plant in Montana, to give it get-out-of-jail-free cards. That plant is among the dirtiest coal plants in the nation, and they are giving out these free passes to some of these. They are cutting funds for the Department of Energy, which works with reliance on fossil fuels, and initiatives, for example, to develop hydrogen, which is clean fuel. They are seeking to approve new liquefied natural gas terminals, which will add to our reliance of fossil fuels, and add \$100 a month to American household electricity bills.*

So the argument that they're saving money is simply untrue. Now, all this in the context of whether or not we recognize Mother Earth as sacred, and as worth defending, and as our very nest, as human beings and for all the marvelous species we share the Earth with. If we believe this, that Earth is sacred, then obviously what we're doing here is folly. And it seems to be all based on greed, greed for corporations that are already making plenty of profit. A scandal in our time.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.