# Abstract & Intro

**Abstract:**
This analysis of Deep Ecology was created for the course, Eco-spirituality for Action. At the School of Environmental Sustainability, the primary topics of focus are environmental studies, science, and policy, as a response to today’s environmental crises. However, there is an important aspect missing—deep ecology. Deep ecology allows for humans to change how they view their relationship with the environment; from seeing the environment as a useful resource to seeing it as having intrinsic value. This perspective replaces the idea of one’s individual “self” with a sense of interconnectedness with nature. Well-known deep ecologist, Joanna Macy, has created a framework of 4 methods for one to see the world with a deep ecological mindset.

**Introduction:**
The Work that Reconnects was created by Joanna Macy and encourages personal growth and spiritual transformation by reconnecting with consciousness & awareness that is often accidentally repressed in everyday life(1). This work is structured for us to “wake up for the sake of all beings”, to remind us that we are connected with all of the life on this planet (2). This awareness will empower us to take sustainable actions & to treat all of earth’s organisms the way we would want to be treated. The Work that Reconnects guides people to reconnect with their inner consciousness and nature through a spiral of 4 methods: Gratitude, Honoring our Pain, Seeing with New Eyes, and Going Forth. At Loyola University, many of us have busy school schedules and forget to reflect on the environment that surrounds us. This poster will introduce new ways that we can integrate a deep ecological mindset—no previous knowledge necessary.

# Method 1: Gratitude

**Gratitude**
Gratitude is the first phase of The Work that Reconnects because it grounds us and makes us fully present amongst all the distractions we face. Human life is a beautiful gift that is often forgotten about and taken for granted. We may be made of the same atoms that formed celestial beings and dinosaurs; however, we are given the gift of self-awareness. This self-awareness allows us to make choices for the future of our own species and the planet. Having gratitude brings us freedom because it allows us to be content with ourselves in a consumeristic society. We live in a society that breeds dissatisfaction—having gratitude reminds you that as an individual you are sufficient, and therefore set free. Joanna introduces two Buddhist practices: reflection on the preciousness of human life and the brevity of human life. We must remember that human life is so precious but also finite.

# Method 2: Honoring Pain

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Living in a time where satisfaction is constantly chased after, it’s easy to distract oneself from feeling & acknowledging pain. The effects of climate change—global warming, reduced biodiversity, rising and acidifying ocean waters, make many people feel immense pain for the universe. This pain must not be ignored; pain alerts us that change is needed. The pain we feel is natural because as human beings we are of the earth and the earth is of us. An excerpt from the poem, Vivienne’s Last Words, shares how we can honor this pain (3):

> “Who will hear the sound of the earth crying? who will feel the earth suffering? she’s hurting i am hurting her sickness is my sickness i love this earth i am aware of her suffering oh god, i am not fantasizing i can feel it we must wake up to the earth suffering we must stop putting holes into her she is our blood and flesh she is me and we must start feeling her pain. my pain is her pain and its everyone’s pain everyone’s pain, and if we can not start feeling her pain we will die. and that’s why we are hurting because we try to be numb. numbness is death. the earth is one. We are the earth. The earth is us.”

# Method 3: Seeing with New Eyes

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This phase comes from our newfound awareness and interconnectedness — it allows us to acknowledge the power we are capable of to change; this allows us to look at the world with a fresh perspective. This will come naturally by utilizing the Gratitude and Honoring Pain phases and by meditating on your journey thus far. This experience is unique for each individual but should allow everyone to sense a change in the future.

# Method 4: Going Forth

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We must come from gratitude, we must not be afraid of pain, and we must realize that each one of us has the power to change. The current climate issues stem from isolating ourselves from nature and from exploiting nature as an infinite resource. We all can make a difference but must find our passion. Be grateful for the steps along the way to finding your passion—some doors might close so that others can open. One person alone cannot solve all the world’s crises; however, one can find their passion work and stick with it. Share the spark and excitement you get from your passion and be inspired by the passions of others. Sharing these passions is essential to keep the fire going in sustained change.

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**References**


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