Conversations on Climate JUSTICE with Inamori Ethics Prize Winner & Colleagues

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FRENCH: Welcome everyone, virtually at least, to the International Center for Ethics and Excellence at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. My name is Shannon French, and I'm the director of the Inamori Center, and I'm joined here today by our associate director Beth Trecasa. We're delighted that you could join us in this online world to have another in our series of Conversations on Justice. Today our focus is going to be on climate justice. We truly have some amazing panelists with us here today to make sure that this is a great conversation. I'm actually going to introduce each of them extremely briefly, so I hope you will take some

time and read about them on your own online because each of them is an outstanding ethical leader.

While we are starting our conversation, and I will be using the moderators' prerogative of doing the opening questions myself, I want all of you in the audience to be thinking about questions as well. Beth will be monitoring the chat, and that is where you should type in your questions, and she'll be able to convey those to me during the event. So after I've done a few questions of my own, we will open them up to questions from you. We definitely want you to be part of this conversation. So without further ado, let me tell you who we've got with us here today on this incredible panel.

First of all, we have David Suzuki, legendary environmental activist, and for those of you who follow the Inamori Center, you may also recall that he was our 2012 Inamori Ethics Prize winner. It's wonderful to see you again, David, welcome back. Next we have with us Hans Cole, who is joining us from Patagonia where he is the head of environmental campaigns, grants, and activism. Another connection to our Inamori Ethics Prize, in 2013, our prize winner was Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard. Good to see you, Hans. Thanks for joining us.

Next we have, from right here in Northeast Ohio, Jacqueline Gillon. She is the community engagement specialist and diversity coordinator for thriving communities Western Reserve Land Conservancy. She's also the co-leader of Black Environmental Leaders. Good to see you, Jackie. Last, but certainly not least, we have two of our own from Case Western Reserve University. First we have Ina Martin, who is the operations director of the Materials for Opto/electronics Research and Education, or the MORE Center, and also Stephanie Corbett, who is director of energy and sustainability and interim University Farm director. Ina and Stephanie are the co-leaders of Culture Change for Climate Change. Welcome to all our amazing panelists, and thank you for being with us here today.

Without any more introduction, I want to get right at it because this time is going to fly by, as it always does in events like these. I would like to launch my first question, if I may, at you, David. In your work for climate justice, you've made a point of reaching out respectfully to indigenous populations, such as the First Nations in Canada, to bring in and also prioritize their voices and perspectives for part of the conversation. You've also emphasized the importance of speaking with elders and having more intergenerational dialogue. Can you talk to us about why these things are important?

SUZUKI: Well I think we're at a critical point now where we desperately need to see our relationship with the world in a different way. You may have seen just yesterday that Sir Partha Dasgupta released a big report in Britain showing the way we evaluate economic success through the GDP is absolutely flawed and is in fact driving us in a very dangerous way. That is, it fails to incorporate the role that nature actually plays in keeping the planet habitable for us. If we destroy a forest that injects jobs and money into the economy, but that doesn't take into account what we've lost through the natural services that those forests perform, as long as they're intact and healthy.

For me, I became involved in the environmental movement in 1962, when Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring.* I was a geneticist. I thought I was a hotshot scientist, and suddenly this book came out, and I thought reading her book, the problem was people are taking too much stuff out of the environment and putting too much waste and stuff back into it. So we had to regulate that, but it was five or six years later, I realized we don't know enough to do that. It was when I did a film with indigenous people on an Island Archipelago off the tip of Alaska, and I said to this young Haida, Carver, I said, Why are you fighting logging? I mean logging is giving your people jobs. Many of the loggers are Haida. Why are you fighting the logging, what difference does it make to you when they destroy or cut down the forest? He said, Well yeah, we'll still be alive, but then we'll be like everybody else. I thought what the heck is he talking about, and then as I thought about it I realized that to him being Haida, who he was, his place on Earth, is told to him by his connection with the air, the water, the plants, the animals, all of that is what makes them who they are. When you destroy a part of that, they lose a part of who they are, and that led for me to see the environmental crisis in a very different way.

I think our problem is now, we have elevated ourselves as if we are the center of everything. The action is all about us, and environmentalists come along and say why you gotta be more careful in the way that we interact. What the indigenous people tell us is we've got it all wrong. We aren't the center of the action. We are a part of a complex web of relationships with all other species of animals and plants and air, water, soil, and sunlight, and we are able to live and flourish as long as that web is intact and abundant and generous to us. In that way of seeing ourselves, there is a fundamental reciprocity that in accepting nature's abundance in generosity, we have responsibilities to do everything we can to ensure that web remains intact and flourishes.

That's what comes to us from an indigenous perspective, their drive for the land is not only to protect what their lives get from that land, but to fulfill their responsibility to care for that land as well. I think we've got to look at our judicial systems, our economics systems, our political systems that are all built around us at the center. It's all about us, and we've got to find the way of seeing our relationship with the rest of creation on this planet in the way that indigenous people do.

FRENCH: I have to say as an ethicist that speaks to me very powerfully because so many times when I'm trying to get to the heart of unethical behavior and what has gone wrong, it boils down to that loss of perspective and the centering of oneself, that the ego coming first, and just the inability to recognize other impacts of our actions beyond ourselves. It's very powerful.

SUZUKI: One of the most powerful important words in my involvement with indigenous people that they taught me is, one, respect, that we can't exchange ideas if we don't have mutual respect for each other. The second word is reciprocity, that in accepting what nature gives us there is reciprocal obligation. One of the things that really worries me in North America is we've got this idea of John Wayne riding tall in the saddle and going out and pushing back the frontier and the rugged individualist, and when you look at how that manifests itself today, it's you know freedom, I want to be free. You look at the anti-vaxxer, they think that they're free. I keep saying to them, Wait a minute now, the air you're breathing out is going straight up my nose. Don't you have a responsibility? You don't have the right to wear or not wear a mask as if somehow you know this is an expression of your individuality. We don't have that sense of reciprocity that in living here and being in a community, we have responsibilities, as well as the right to be free and rugged, That's something that infuses so much of conversation in North America today. Freedom, you know I want to be free to make my own decisions. Well there are responsibilities that come with that kind of freedom.

FRENCH: I also find it funny in a bit of a sad way that a lot of the language that you're describing there, that freedom-based language, they will even harken back to pioneer spirit, things like that, without any acknowledgment that no one who was trying to be a pioneer could have survived without others, that anything that was achieved in those times that they're holding up as rugged individualism was actually not done by individuals alone, but by community supporting one another and without that is it all would

have failed; we all fail if we don't work together and see that web. I really appreciate that point.

With that I think a nice connection can be made to another way in which we are not necessarily listening to all the voices that we should be listening to. Jacqueline, if I can bring you into the conversation, the US environmental movement has not historically centered people of color, and this is despite the fact that they played a significant role from George Washington Carver to Dr. Robert Bullard and so many others, the failure to acknowledge these contributions, plus the lack of diversity and representation, strike me as harmful since they're keeping vital voices and ideas out of the core conversation. As a Black environmental leader in Ohio, you've done a lot in our region to try to reverse this trend, and I'm curious, Do you see any signs of progress? What gives you hope that the climate justice movement is becoming more inclusive?

GILLON: That question is significant because it harkens back to what David is talking about, and he's talking about our humanity. First of all the acceptance that Black, indigenous, people of color are part of humanity, and humanity has to be in a powerful relationship with nature. But when you deny humanity, when you deny Black people's right to land and clean air and water, and deny the indigenous people their basic rights as human beings connected to the earth, you'll lose in the end. We're in place right now where we really have to spend a lot of time raising awareness and teaching not just others that don't look like us, but ourselves, because we've become isolated from the conversation though we've been a contributor for decades. The isolation is real, and we have to deal with that.

FRENCH: Thank you, and it's interesting isn't it, talking about isolation particularly in our current situation with the pandemic, which again connects to David's point about the expanding crisis that has been the COVID pandemic, was made worse by people not cooperating and not taking care for the reciprocity that is required of us as ethical beings. I find that very important as well. Ina, I'd like to bring you in here because of a connection that I just heard in what Jacqueline was talking about. I know that you and others at Case Western have been working on the Culture Change for Climate Change project and that brings in the neighborhoods near our campus. Again an artificial divide that can happen, used to be called town and gown between universities, or the ivory tower. What are the goals for that Culture Change for Climate Change effort and how does it focus beyond the university? What are you doing to work with people from the neighborhoods near our campus?

MARTIN: Great question, Culture Change for Climate Change is one of eight initiatives that was funded in 2020 by the provost's office at Case Western and the mission is to connect, promote, and create initiatives that are going to combat climate change and promote climate justice, not just at Case Western but with our neighbors. The idea is to—our goal really is to harmonize and scale climate action, and the approach that we have is a networking approach, so we're not building a new institute or a new center, but we want to be able to do is bring together people, both at Case, students, faculty, staff, and our communities to talk about how we can do more together. One of the really neat parts of this process has been getting to meet Jacqueline, and I'm looking forward to a lot more a lot more conversations with her.

So we started with this core team of organizers: there's myself and Stephanie, and also Grant Goodrich from the Great Lakes Energy Institute, Julian Rogers who's in the local government and community relations office, two sociology professors Cassie Pittman Claytor and Brian Gran, and physics professor and former dean of College of Arts and Sciences Cyrus Taylor. This is already a pretty broad-reaching group of people at the university, and the idea was we want to do this work on campus that's effectively just lowering the energy level for people to interact with each other across schools and departments on matters of climate change in climate justice. There are a lot of people working on this, there's a lot of great work being done on campus, around campus, between campus and the communities as well together. But we want to look at ways that people can build and expand on what they're doing. How do our political scientists and our engineers and our physicists and our philosophers all work together to be able to do more? Part of this effort and part of how we are currently working with the communities, it has to do with where we're starting. We talk about how we meet people where they are. Well where we're starting in terms of perceptions of climate change and possibilities for climate change action work in climate justice, that's a really varied space. It's not just a point, there's a lot of different people in a lot of different places, so one of the critical components to the Culture Change for Climate Change effort is actually a research project that's being led by the sociology professors and the physics professor, and what they're doing is designing and conducting focus groups in the communities to establish that baseline of what people's attitudes and perspectives are toward climate change. The idea is that conversations which will help us identify the themes that can be used to inform our longer-term actions so that we don't want to just jump in and start, so we want to figure out where we are, what's going

to be useful, how do we foster these relationships, and then how do we then use that information to foster effective action.

FRENCH: Wonderful. I'm hearing a lot about relationships, about partnerships, about working interdisciplinary on all of these problems and bringing together groups that might not otherwise be part of these conversations. I'd actually like to bring in Hans Cole here because, I don't have to tell you this, that oftentimes when people are talking about environmental issues, corporations are the bad guy, painted as the villain of the piece and with some reason, there's a lot of examples we can give throughout history. And yet Patagonia, as an example, is actually held up the other way as an organization that has shown how to remain profitable while keeping the focus on sustainability, which is always been something that Yvon Chouinard has deeply believed in and making it a priority not to contribute further to environmental harm. Is this a model that other for-profit companies and corporations can follow, or is there something unique about Patagonia?

COLE: Thank you, Shannon. I appreciate the question, and it's an honor to be here on the panel. I'd say that absolutely this is a path that other companies and corporations can follow and in fact, it's not only one that they can follow it's an absolute imperative that other companies and corporations join this movement to think about more than just profit. To think about, as David was saying earlier, to move beyond measures like GDP and really think about the planet and people and the intersection of those two things. Patagonia certainly has some advantages I think when it comes to being a privately held company, we have some freedom to do what we want, so we push it, we push it to the very edge as much as we can, but there's some great models out there that companies can use to start to move down this path towards greater sustainability and towards greater responsibility. We're a B-corp, which means that we've incorporated some of these values and ways of thinking into our bylaws, and that's something that other corporations can do. They can become a B-corp. We've helped found groups like 1% for the Planet and the Conservation Alliance that are groups of companies that pool their resources and their funding to support good things. Certainly on climate in particular, there is sort of a baseline responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint, to do everything we can to reduce our impact on climate. We are looking to be 100% powered by renewable energy by 2025, I believe, in our US-owned and operated operations, we're really pushing hard on those fronts. I guess what I would say,

too, in terms of the theme of the panel today is in some ways all that's just table stakes, that's just good hygiene for a company. Those are things that every company should be considering doing and moving down that path.

On climate justice, I just wanted to bring it to that deeper theme for a moment. I think that there is a considerable amount of additional action that companies and corporations should be considering taking that goes well beyond the four walls of our offices and factories and supply chain. This is an area that may feel less comfortable to companies and corporations, but we must do it. I think we must join the effort that the other leaders on this call are a part of, and you know it may feel uncomfortable in many ways at first, and I think there's some critical steps. A lot of it begins with humility, which I think several others have touched on so far, and connecting with community and having relationships. Our first step with this has to be acknowledging the impact that we have had and are having, that businesses are part of this economic system that has not focused on justice and the environment, and instead solely on profit. We have to acknowledge that has brought incredible damage to communities. We have to be transparent about that and humble about that, and open to that reality and criticism. Secondly, and even more important I think, we have to listen and learn. I think we are at the very, you know even Patagonia, and I appreciate the compliments you gave earlier in terms of what we've done in the past, we're in the very early stages of understanding climate justice. We really are. We need to learn; we need to listen to frontline communities. We need to understand, try to understand what they're facing, and we come to this as privileged individuals for the most part, who don't feel the impact of the climate crisis as acutely in many ways. We come in with that humility, we need to listen and learn, hear the concerns, and then think about what we can do to be supportive. Perhaps we can fund and support frontline organizations. We're working with groups like Climate Justice Alliance, Uprose, Asia-Pacific Environmental Network, lots of incredible groups that focus and are led by individuals and people in those frontline communities. We can fund and support. We can bring those financial resources and we can also bring our voice. I would say that again this might be a bit of a shift for many companies, but we need to get better at stepping back and allowing the voices and elevating the voices of frontline communities to our social media, to our web and online resources. We've got these great tools at our disposal, and an incredible audience. Patagonia reaches 2–3 million people whenever we put a message out there, because those are the folks

who are buying our products. Can we bring individuals and voices into that megaphone and that podium and give them you know the opportunity to share the really important message of impact that is happening at the frontlines. I think there are some steps, there are some basic steps that we all need to take as companies and corporations, and absolutely other companies are following and should follow those paths, but there's more to it as well. There's deeper work that we need to do.

FRENCH: Thank you, and I'm finding myself, that word, humility, is really resonating with me, and I'm finding myself thinking around how everything that we've talked about so far in this panel is reminding us in one way or another whether we should be humble in the face of nature itself, or the humility to recognize that it isn't all about us as an individual or even a single company or any organization, and that reciprocity that David spoke of and bringing different voices to the to the foreground, which we heard about already from Jacqueline and Ina, all of that is part of making sure that we make some changes. That we can't simply continue with the status quo and the same voices and the same powerful entities controlling all of this because clearly that's not led us down the right path and that way lies destruction, certainly.

With that in mind I actually want to bring in our final panelist Stephanie to connect this to another large-size entity. We know that there's an ongoing international conversation about the obligations of large developed nations, like the US, who contributes so much more to climate change and its negative effects than smaller and less developed nations, and yet the consequences are not felt as profoundly there as they are in the places that can least survive those changes. Those who are the most vulnerable are being hit the hardest. I'm wondering then if you could connect that to large research institutions like the one that you and I work at, Case Western Reserve University. Do universities like ours have an obligation similar to the kind of obligations that Hans was just talking about for Patagonia to do more to address our climate change footprint then maybe some others do because of the power and influence that we might have?

CORBETT: Yes, and thank you very much for including our efforts on this panel. I very much resonated with what Hans said from Patagonia's perspective in the hope that other companies will jump in. I feel really lucky to be part of a university community that has embraced the idea that we are statesman organizations and that we need to lead at the commu-

nity level. Our former President Barbara Snyder signed our university up for an effort called the American College University Presidents' Climate Commitment, and she believed even though she wasn't a climatologist, she firmly believed that universities had responsibility to take action on climate. Even though we have the will from top leadership, that doesn't mean that it's easy or instantaneous to negate our entire carbon footprint. Very large research institutions like ours use more energy than our counterparts at community colleges or neighboring institutions. We have 1,300 research labs here on campus and they are doing world-changing research. Really, it's important. Research here in Ohio's electricity grid that still relies on burning fossil fuels. They're dirtier than electricity grids in other parts of the country means that there's this inherent carbon footprint tied to doing this great research, and there's no magic wand to immediately reduce that.

Our university has invested a great deal of money in making our one hundred and twenty campus buildings more energy efficient, and that has real local benefit, but we need to go beyond that. We can't meet these big hairy audacious carbon neutrality goals without our community and our neighbors. Some of the solutions that our whole region needs to invest in and look at together are mass transit, and further investment in mass transit of course, and grid scale renewable energy. Those as just two of many potential solutions to helping our carbon footprint will also bring more quality of life to our neighbors. I think that this operational conundrum of trying to get to carbon neutrality can also be one of the entry points for this conversation that we all want to expand on climate justice. We don't have great metrics right now on what climate justice for an institution like Case Western looks like. We measure our greenhouse gas footprint. We report on it publicly, and there are lots of other sustainability benchmarks and goals that we work on very diligently together, but what exactly should our public facing goals on climate justice be and look like. What we count and what we pay attention to with the numbers matters. It means it gets invested in and that people are going to work on it on a daily basis, but we need to have a new and deeper and very authentic conversation with our non-academic neighbors to determine what that success is going to look like.

FRENCH: Yes, and as you talk about these conversations with our neighbors, we're back to this point that it is all of us who will be affected, and if we're not including everyone in the conversation and in the looking for the solutions for these problems, we are all going to fail together. It's a classic we're all going to fall together, which makes me bring up something that

is—I'd actually like to focus this question towards you, David, because of how long you've been working in this in this area.

I get frustrated by the fact that here we all are, and we are all obviously concerned and trying to do our best and trying to learn what more we can do, but none of us is needing to be convinced that there's a problem. Yet, unfortunately, we all know that there are people who still don't see the urgency, still don't recognize it as a crisis. When you were given the Inamori Ethics Prize back in 2012, I vividly recall you speaking about the urgency, and you gave an analogy about microbes multiplying and filling up a test tube, and not realizing until it was far too late that after a certain point, there's no reversing the process. The microbes will in fact run out of test tube and all be doomed. What I wonder if you could talk to us about is, first of all, How do we convey that urgency, and then as a related point, Has that point of doom already come and gone, or can humans in fact still make enough changes to stop some of the damage?

SUZUKI: I think the answer to that is we don't know. I just heard a lecture, yesterday in fact, where Peter Victor from York University was saying that the weight of all mammals, that's the elephants, the whale, everything, of the weight of all mammals, ninety-six percent of the weight is humans and our domesticated animals, that's cattle, pigs. Ninety-six percent is us and what we are using for our purposes. Four percent of the weight of mammals around the world are wild creatures. Seventy percent of all of the birds, the weight of birds, is poultry. We say this is the Anthropocene epoch, a time when humans have become the major factor shaping the chemical, biological and physical properties of the planet on a scale undreamed of by any other species ever in the history of life on the planet. We've taken over the planet. A million species of plants and animals are now right on the cusp of going extinct. We have no idea in terms of long-term sustainability what this means, but I can tell you that as a top predator on this planet, we are the most vulnerable as these systems collapse around us. I have no idea. I used to say that I feel we're in a giant car heading in a brick wall at a hundred miles an hour, and everybody in the car is arguing about where they want to sit. It doesn't matter who's driving the thing. Someone's gotta say, Put the brakes on and turn the wheel, but we're locked in the trunk, nobody's paying attention. I don't use that metaphor anymore. What I say is if you remember Road Runner cartoons, where Road Runner is being chased by Wyle E. Coyote towards a cliff, and then at the last minute Roadrunner turns ninety degrees and avoids going over, but Wyle E. Coyote has got so much momentum he

goes right over the edge. There's that moment when he goes, Oh my god, I'm not on the land anymore, and then down he goes. That's where we're at.

Now is that then a reason to say, Oh, it's too late, we can't do anything? Well I think that it makes a big difference whether you fall five feet or five hundred feet, so what we're trying to do now is to find a ledge that's only five feet down, but we're over the edge, and we have no idea whether we are inventive enough to find our way out. Indeed, there are scientists now who are saying human extinction is imminent. It's, well—I don't want to name names cause you'll go to them and then that's pretty depressing. There are scientists that are saying we have very few years to live on as a species. I think the only important thing is we have to try, and trying means that we have to recognize we're not smart enough to keep, to pull out of this. I know that there are companies now that are inventing ways of removing carbon from the atmosphere and you start thinking in order to do something, do you know how many tens of thousands of these machines are going to be needed to make a dent in removing the carbon that's necessary? Maybe it would be simpler to stop putting out more carbon into the atmosphere as our highest priority, and then start regreening the planet so that the system we know removes carbon, trees, will be there to start to effectively removing. That's the big step is that we have got to reign in ourselves, and humans never existed at this point when we had to worry about the collective impact of our species, but that's where we're at now. Collectively, we are undermining the very things that keep us alive, the air, the water, the soil, biodiversity on Earth, and we know if we don't act collectively, we're just going to continue on the path that we are and it's going to be a long way down to the bottom of this chasm.

FRENCH: I got that image burned in my mind now of Wyle E. Coyote where his legs spin for a moment and, then he looks down and realizes there's nothing but air beneath him and then falls. I would definitely like if we could at least make that drop as you said fewer feet then maybe we have a chance. We have to work together collectively to do that, which actually makes me want to bring out something that I have had a conversation with Ina about. You've argued, Ina, that sometimes on this kind of point that David just made it isn't as productive to focus as he indicated, it isn't as productive sometimes to focus on individual choices, like whether I put a particular can in the recycle bin or not. Those actions matter, and we need to do all of them because again the scale is so large, but that we also need to make the kind of changes he was talking about on a systemic level. Changes that involve things like urban planning. Can you talk to

us a bit about the potential impact that could come from more systemic changes? That seems to follow nicely on from what David is reminding us.

MARTIN: Absolutely. I mean this is really the difference between one person saying I'm going to drive less, and then thinking about organizations being able to encourage people to live close to work and teleworking, so there's a large group of people that are driving less. Or somebody saying, Do I buy an energy-efficient vehicle versus what are the regulations for energy efficiency and emissions in vehicles as they are designed. I'm a chemist by training, my research is based on working with solar cells, and then I've been listening to a lot of people recently including urban planners. There is a tremendous presentation at Sustainable Cleveland this year by Julian Agyeman from Tufts, and he's in urban planning, and he was talking about the concept of just sustainabilities and the thing about the scope of this work is that it's immense, and there's things that we can do now, there's things that we have to plan for, we have to make these, what are lowest hanging fruit, but then what are our multiple year plans. There's the work that can be done with for example greening community spaces that don't have a lot of green spaces and this is something that happens a lot along racial lines, particularly in the US. Then there's when new spaces are being designed, how do we make those spaces not only sustainable but usable to a broad group of people. How do we stop this isolation of different communities and as a result of things, like public health is affected by zip code, and zip code is related to race. These are the things that I learn listening to people like Robert Fuller who works in this area, so it is this really broad conversation. Ultimately a system is made up of individuals, I used to look a lot and say, Who are the people that are working on this. In matters of climate and in matters of justice, I think it has to become less about finding the few people that are working on this and finding out how every single one of us can incorporate this into the work that we do. What are the systems that we affect that we can push on to start getting this mass level change that's needed to get that 45% reduction in carbon emissions from the 2010 level by 2030, which is now less than a decade away. These are the kinds of things we need to do. This is a huge effort, and it's something that everybody needs to be thinking about what they can work on. It's not about whose responsibility it is, because it's everybody's at this point.

FRENCH: I'm encouraged by how these points are building on one another. What you've just said not only connects to what David was talking about,

but takes us back a few moments ago to what Hans was saying about if you have a platform, use it, and what Stephanie was saying about universities are doing certain things, but they need to really leverage everything they have towards this. All of which is coming back to the points around what we need to do collectively and individually in order to survive. I am reminded, I'd like to bring you back in, Jacqueline, if I could, with what Ina was talking about. Sometimes, and I'm certainly guilty of this as an academic, we talk in more scientific terms or in more of jargony ways about things, and that doesn't necessarily get the message out as clearly as it should. I think it could sometimes alienate some of the groups, and we need to be part of this conversation. I'm wondering if you can say something to us about your work and why it's important to use the right language to engage with communities directly. How can we do a better job to connect some of the more abstract ideas, like big terms like climate change or global warming, to specific effects that people feel and have lived, like urban heat islands or increased childhood asthma. If you could speak about that, I'd like to learn from you.

GILLON: I think the things that we hold in common are trees and our bodies and our health, so if we focus on the fact that in Cleveland our tree canopy is very low, and there is a really ambitious plan to plant more trees, about 300,000 more trees. For an elementary school student or for a scientist, they may describe the planting of trees and the effect of it differently, but we certainly can understand the health benefits, the air quality, reduction of carbon, all the wonderful benefits that come from planting trees. That's one basic thing we can do together no matter what language we use, where we live. What's significant is the fact that intentionally where people of color have lived, where black folks have lived, there was an intent to make sure that trees were not there, that the air quality was not enough for us to not get sick. We have to undo some things, some attitudes, and some beliefs so that we can go into our core neighborhoods and support planting trees, creating green space where there has not been green space regardless if we think these neighborhoods are developable or not. We all deserve access to green space. That's got to be a priority, and how we teach that, the language we use being very definitive about what these terms mean is important for adults and for children, because we want our young people to carry this message as well, so we can plant the trees together here in Cleveland.

FRENCH: I definitely want to plant trees with you, that's a deal, but I also appreciate that the history matters here, and what you're pointing out is the

interlocking of these injustices, that these inequalities are so closely linked, and that there was a decision made, there were many decisions made, to actually make things worse for certain populations like the Black urban populations, and that we are still paying the price and will continue to do so unless those are very intentionally addressed one at a time. I think that's important; we can't forget that redlining and getting rid of green spaces or not allowing them to be developed, that wasn't an accident. Those were choices and that injustice has a long, long legacy. That connects to my mind to Stephanie, I know that you and I have talked about stories. It's interesting we had a panel on the general topic of justice in October on which we had another of Inamori Ethics Prize winners, LeVar Burton, and he also spoke about stories being incredibly important for people to connect on issues that really matter on this level. The idea of finding stories that resonate with people seems to be an important challenge when we're trying to address issues of this magnitude to get people to be moved to care on that emotional level to care about something like climate justice. Do you have any thoughts on how do we find those stories? Why are they important?

CORBETT: So for me, I'm an animal lover, and I really care about the Indiana bat population here in Ohio that's in trouble. I know as somebody who's trying to be a changemaker that just because I love animals doesn't mean that everybody does, and there's some people who are going to be motivated in different ways. I had a great mentor, Holly Harlan, who is an industrial designer who started a group locally called Entrepreneurs for Sustainability, and she always said, You gotta meet people where they are, and most people will care about one of the pieces of sustainability. We always refer to sustainability as the triple bottom line, people, planet, and prosperity. When I'm trying to find a story or a trigger that's going to make somebody care, whether that's somebody in an institution where we're trying to change business behavior, or if it's one of my neighbors who I wish was not putting pesticides on their lawn, I'm going to start with something I think they might care about. Maybe they are a people person and they get really motivated by the plight of children who are sick: did you know that childhood asthma is exasperated in our neighborhood by us all driving to University Circle where Case Western is alone in our cars? If I'm trying to talk to somebody in one of our labs about their electricity footprint because they have very intensive equipment, and we want it to be turned off at night, I might talk about how power plants in our area in Northeast Ohio are contributing to heart attack or asthma rates. But for some people it's the prosperity or jobs that really

moves them, it's the economy, so when we're trying to get people to recycle correctly, I want to make sure they know that we're recycling is one of the top five industries in Ohio. When you recycle correctly, you're helping to potentially create jobs. For my kids, it's the love of Lake Erie, so I'm going to try to convince them to not buy the Capri Sun that's disposable at the grocery store so that we don't see single-use plastics on our local beaches. When I'm also talking about the economy and kids, we like to talk a lot about the fact that California is not the number one state in the country for green schools, Ohio is. We have more green, LEED-certified schools from US Green Building Council than any other state in the country, and that's something that we can be proud of. Regardless of the part or the change that we want to see, the only way to know what story is going to move someone is through being in a relationship with them, so we keep coming back to this. We have to know each other, we have to know what that lever is, and sharing stories inside of our organizations and with our neighbors through conversation does more than just hopefully get somebody to recycle correctly, right? It can lead to these deeper paradigm-shifting changes we all want to see.

FRENCH: Thank you, and I am thinking now about sharing our stories if you ask other people to tell you theirs, you can also pick up on what they care most about. I think you've highlighted how that works and then we can take that information to find those threads that tie us together and keep us moving in the right direction. Go ahead, David.

SUZUKI: You're moderating, I'm sorry, but I do have something to say about this. I began, I didn't know it at the time, but I was a scientist trained as a scientist, but I was asked to do a series on television in 1962 on genetics, because that was my specialty, and I realized what a powerful tool this was to educate a wide audience about things, and I felt as science was by far the most powerful force that is shaping our lives. If you look at our media, if you look at a newspaper, you've got a section on politics, a section on finance, you've got the section on celebrity, on sports, but where is there a discussion about the impact of what science is doing in our lives? I thought, This is a powerful tool that we could use. Now even back in the sixties we called television The Boob Tube, and there was, we looked down on it as a medium of popularization.

My colleagues in science really encouraged me to get off television. It was a vulgar way of communicating, but I thought—I knew that it was a cesspool out there, but I thought that I would be like a jewel, my programs

would glisten like a jewel, and people would pluck me out and they would savor it and they would be educated. I have discovered that when you jump in the cesspool, you look like a turd like everybody else. The reason is the way that that is used, and after I'd been on air for quite a while people would come up and, Oh that was a great show you did on breast cancer. I'd say Gee, we haven't done a show on breast cancer. "Oh, that must have been on Mary Tyler Moore," or something. People get it all jumbled up, but they know that I'm the pre-Science Guy. I wasn't Bill Nye, but that's who I was. Information gets all mixed up. We come to a time, then, I thought that I was giving good information so people could make better decisions in their lives. Well guess what, we have more information in a cell phone now then people have had in all of human history. You can get into the US records of virtually anything that's ever been published in the archives there, and what do we do?

What I find is people come up to me and say, That climate change, listen, that's baloney. Why do you say that? "I found a website that says there are PhD people out there saying that it's a hoax." What I'm finding is people scroll, and there's so much information out there, that they just roll to it until they find something that confirms what they already believe. They don't have to change their mind, they don't have to get informed, and this is the real challenge we face now. People get caught up in things like the Q-Anon conspiracy idea, and they get into a tunnel and they go down there and, my God, the places they go. It means that you just search till things come out that are where you want them to be. You don't want to have to face the reality of climate change, and I think this is one of the real challenges. What the hell is our education about if we don't educate people about what information is and quality information, who do you trust, how do you track down who's paying for this particular website, or whatever, but this is what we have to do now. This is a real challenge when you see, I mean we had nine and a half years of a government that was headed by Stephen Harper, who is a pre-Trump Trump, and he did everything he could to deny the reality of climate change, to shut off avenues of information so that he didn't have to face the issue as a politician, and this is what I think is one of the major crises we face now. We're paralyzed by an inability to get people to come together and realize this is an existential threat.

FRENCH: Absolutely, and I'm very concerned, on many levels, about what you're highlighting there that the tremendous flood of information and information sources that's out there, it is out almost as an attack against particularly

young people, who that is their first, and in many cases only, experience of how to acquire knowledge is, I'm going to Google it. They don't know what sources are better than others, and they don't know what to do to verify sources, and this is a huge responsibility for educators everywhere. It absolutely doesn't matter what field you're in if you are an educator, critical thinking has to be central. Teaching people about things like confirmation bias, which you were talking about that if you want to find a particular answer you will be able to go out and find someone who will back it up, but that doesn't mean that it is a good and reliable and valid source. Until we can get more on the same page that way it does scare me. It does worry me a great deal. I also want to acknowledge that there's been a trend against expertise and that is part of this anti-intellectualism, "How dare you tell me something," with authority, and that is quite sad because throughout, again, human history, where we have accomplished anything great and important, we've needed people who became experts in their particular field to help drive that.

SUZUKI: I believe universities really have a special role to play. It's not an accident that in many countries, developing world, when a revolution happens universities are often the place that are the center point of those revolutions. Universities occupy a very special place in society. It's where scholars and thinkers and dreamers can come together and push the envelope of human thought, but of course that becomes very threatening because many of the ideas are threatening to the status quo. What society has done in its wisdom has granted tenure. I can tell you tenure was this unbelievable privilege for me. I live in the province where forestry, where logging is a huge part of our economy, and when I began to go out and oppose the kind of clear-cutting practices, this raised, and a lot of the members of the board of the university were forest company executives. The cry for me shutting me up and getting me off was unbelievable, but I had tenure, and that was an incredible privilege. I felt it was my responsibility to speak out. I think one of the problems we should always have that role of encouraging out there ideas that can be shared, but universities have become increasingly dependent on support and money that is coming from corporations. The corporate impact is unbelievable. The forest faculty here were down on my head like you wouldn't believe because they're being supported by all of the industries that many of us were opposing. Universities I think really have a—they've got—they must play a big role, as in a group of elite people, but I don't think elitism is a pejorative myself. I think that they, that the university, has got to re-examine the whole role that the private sector is playing on them. I've

seen Harvard University continue practices that they should have dumped a long time before, but because there were companies within the university itself fostering that activity, and this is in molecular biology, they continued to support it. Universities have gotten themselves into this awkward position, but they should be places of leadership on many of these ideas and thank God there are people like Michael Mann and James Hanson and others that have been able to speak out because they're in universities.

FRENCH: I'm certainly grateful to have tenure myself and the idea of academic freedom to speak our minds, but we definitely have to be on guard against—just generally the profit motive driving everything, and whether that's in universities or any part of public life, politics, everywhere, when it's about profit and not about flourishing for all the people involved, you're going to start seeing this long-term damage accumulate even faster.

Now with that, I need to take some of our questions from our audience and the first one is for you, Hans, so if you don't mind, I'm just going to literally read the question, Hans, that has come in for you and here's what it says, It seems to me that larger corporations have the advantage of higher revenue streams and predictable sales forecasts which allow for investment into long-term renewable energy technology. What's being done or can be done to help the countless numbers of small businesses or even households reach carbon neutrality when they may not have the available funds on hand to make those kinds of long-term investments?

COLE: Thanks for that, it's a great question, and I agree, I think that there is, the challenge is to help resources flow in some new directions to enable different parts of our society in our economy to really participate in this transition from fossil-fuel, the old ways of doing things, toward greater electrification and clean energy and all the rest, and it really comes to this concept that we've been again learning about, and new to, but really embracing recently called "just transition," which is really bringing in this notion of—as we move, as we make this big shift, as we make all the changes that we know are absolutely necessary that justice is a part of that equation. I think a lot of it comes to where does the money get spent. In the US right now we just had this big change in our administration from several years under the Trump administration now into the Biden administration, and there is a great deal of hope, I think, that this new administration will bring a new way of thinking in terms of how that money flows in our next couple of big packages of relief funding that comes out, that there will be a focus on that

money flowing to communities to dispersed energy projects in frontline communities and communities of color in the communities that are actually impacted the most by the climate crisis. We should be seeing solar projects and wind projects in urban areas that have traditionally borne the brunt of the fossil-fuel industry in terms of all the pollution and all of the climate impacts as well. Seeing that funding flow, from government, through better policy towards communities that really need it, I think is an enormously important thing that needs to happen. Corporations, companies like ours, and others that do have the resources can also think of creative ways to invest. We have a program at Patagonia called Tin Shed Ventures where we take some of the profits that we have as a business and put it towards small business investment. It's kind of a little venture capital concept that funnels money towards smaller creative, environmentally sustainable ideas whether they're about energy or about avoiding pollution, or whatever the concept might be, but I think other companies could follow this example and think of how to—even an investment sort of model—put money into small businesses that need that kind of jump start to get going and it would really focus in communities that need it. I think at the government level and also from corporations.

FRENCH: I find that helpful the idea that it isn't a single answer that we're going to need some government support for small businesses and even households as the questioner asked to want to make these changes and then also corporations who do have that power can channel it in those ways to help the people who have the will, but not the way to do these kinds of changes. The next question from our audience is directed at Jackie. Jackie, as I did with Hans, I'm going to read you the actual question that got sent in from our audience so here it is: Much like what has been shown with recent developments in medical research, historically ignored communities have indicated that lot of trust is lost because of our history of negligence in including them. My fear is that the conversation will not begin without some effort on our part in rebuilding trust in the first place. How do we as a society best approach conversations with our neighbors who have been historically ignored or harmed with regards to climate change, and how can we rebuild some of that trust?

GILLON: I really appreciate that question. I work with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, and about five years ago there was a real effort to bring more people of color into the space around natural resources and to really organize. We ended up here in Cleveland with Black Environmental Lead-

ers, and our group has a group of allies, people that are, everybody that's not Black is in that allies group, but my point is we move at the speed of trust. Our conversations are intentional about how we feel, just being honest as human beings, dealing with and leaning into our discomfort, because these are not comfortable conversations at all. I invite the person that asked the question and all of us to begin with one person at a time that doesn't necessarily look like you. We don't have to talk about anything complicated like climate change, but just to begin a conversation where we can discover our own humanity, I believe is the first step. Our allies group has changed and grown. We captured the attention of almost thirty white-led environmental organizations. We come together with them on a quarterly basis, as well as our affinity group of our Black environmental leaders. The idea is that we have to build trust, and that's one conversation at a time.

FRENCH: Themes again, the one conversation at a time, those individual stories that we tell one another, working together, humility, cooperation, all of these themes that keep coming up in each of your comments. I find them all together starting to point the way, so I appreciate the way that that's going. I like that. I have a question that is directed towards Stephanie. Stephanie, this is the question from our audience, How can we start a global campaign to ban plastics and go back to sustainable packaging for everything? Is that realistic? As an individual, I can't impact the use of plastics, but could we start a marketing campaign to end plastic use, kind of like the campaign to wear seatbelts. A group started that campaign and then later became law. It became the new norm.

CORBETT: Wow, that's an awesome question. I may punt and ask if any other panelists want to jump in at some point, but I will just say we have some amazing researchers at Case Western. If I had a chance to live another life, I would like to be an industrial engineer and get to design those new materials that we need so that we could kick the plastic habit. Going back to Ina's comments when she was talking about the design of our communities, this is something where an individual consumer choice at the grocery store isn't going to win the day, we really need a systems-wide approach and manufacturing responsibility to choose new materials and have a plan for materials end-of-life more of a cradle-to-cradle design approach in everything that we do. I do think consumer campaigns can be really meaningful, the seatbelt campaign is a great example of how to do that, but at this point we are so reliant on this quick fix and disposable nature of what we buy in the

convenience plastics. Even now with COVID here in Ohio, in Cuyahoga County where we are, we were on the verge of having a plastic bag ban right as the pandemic hit and that got put on pause because those fears about handling materials that were coming out of people's cars and homes that might be contaminated. I think we found out those are unfounded. I think there are lots of two steps forward, four steps back on the plastics front because of COVID, and I will welcome other input from panelists who have big ideas on how we're going to kick the disposable plastics habit.

FRENCH: David, please jump on in here.

SUZUKI: I believe you've gotta make the word "disposable" the most obscene, disgusting word. If someone says I got this disposable, you cover your children's ears and say, That man, don't listen to him. The whole idea of disposability is feeding the economic machine. It's ridiculous to think that we can use something once and throw it away. It's not just plastics. We were wiped out by the World War II, we were incarcerated as foreign aliens, anyway that's a whole other story. As Japanese Canadians, we were incarcerated and kicked out of British Columbia at the end of the war, and we were very poor. I've worn blue jeans all my life because denim wears like iron, and it just horrifies me to see people's now buying brand new pairs of denim jeans, that for hundreds of dollars that are already ripped, like what the heck. I thought clothing is what you do to keep warm in the winter and cool in the summer and cover the naughty parts, but a fashion statement? I think the whole clothing industry has got a huge day of reckoning coming. This idea that fashion somehow is what pushes product, that you're going to just throw away when the next fashion comes in. Get rid of the idea of disposability.

FRENCH: I have to say, Hans, you will appreciate this story. David, when Yvon Chouinard was, as you've been in this position receiving our Prize, I was waiting on the curb with him for his driver to take him and his wife off to the airport. I took a misstep and the heel broke off my high-heeled shoe, and I expressed, natural dismay, "I loved these shoes, I guess that's the end of them." In perfect true to form, he said, Hang on a minute, went into his bag, pulled out some kind of wonderful glue, and right there on the curb sidewalk, fixed my shoe for me, and did a little reminder that it's just broken, you can fix it, you don't have to dispose of it, you can just fix it. I am proud to say I still have that pair of shoes, but what a vivid reminder that we go so quickly to, "Oh it's broken," "Oh it's disposable," "Oh that's the end of that," and we know that things are built with obsolescence intended into

them and the idea of making that shameful seems very powerful. Hans, had you known of that particular story, or is that just one of many for Yvon?

COLE: That's one of many. David, I couldn't agree with you more, as the guy here from a clothing company, I could not agree more with what you're saying. Patagonia has been working on this where we got a program called worn wear, if you haven't checked it out yet, it's all about repair, reuse, resale, renting clothes rather than buying. If you need a ski jacket if you need it once or twice, don't buy a new one. We don't want that. I think there's a revolution that needs to happen.

SUZUKI: What we have to do is make durability one of the big selling points. After the war, we were very poor, but we moved to Ontario where it was really cold, and my parents had to buy me a coat. I was in the growth spurt and a year later I had outgrown it, so it went to my sister and when she outgrew it, went to my younger sister, and my parents would brag, This coat went through three children. That's no longer a bragging point.

FRENCH: This seems like something that gives me some hope and encouragement. Ina, you and I have talked about this a little bit, did you want to jump in on this point as well?

MARTIN: About the plastics I was going to say there's the things that we choose to use that are perhaps optional, but then there are the things that are essential, for example the medical industry uses a lot of plastics, and those aren't going to go away anytime soon. Things like IV bags and there are things that you can't just—have a canvas bag for, especially in medicine. There's also the technological piece of this, and as a university there's a lot that's done here and in other places to develop, like Stephanie said, new material so people think about biodegradable plastics, what are alternatives, what are lessons that can be learned from the way things used to be done and can those be reapplied to use more materials that don't get into the environment the way the plastics do, but it's not just an option to not have them in the world that that we live in.

Going back to the question that went to Hans, I wanted to make a brief mention that there's this Department of Energy industrial assessment center at Case that's headed by a professor in mechanical and aerospace engineering named Chris Dewan, and they offer free energy efficiency assessments to any qualifying manufacturing companies and water treatment plants within a hundred fifty miles of Case. It's an example of where the university can interface with the neighborhood, and this is in a really practical technologi-

cal way. The research university has resulted in the establishment of this program that can then be used to help companies figure out, so these are small and small mid-size manufacturers, how can you impact emissions, how do you become more efficient, how do you lower your energy bill, it's sort of a win-win all around.

GILLON: If I can jump in as well. Workforce development is essential to all of this, so how we utilize our workforce, whether it's creating the end products of recycled plastics or how we use all these clothes that we like to throw away to create other things. I think there's a real opportunity to think about how we put people to work and how we develop their entrepreneurship as we look at reusing things we throw away.

FRENCH: Absolutely. You all aren't going to believe this, but we're almost completely out of time. I have a question that came in for David that I aim at you, David, since that was the way the questioner wanted me to, but I think you all might want to make a closing comment on it. It seems like a very apt broad question for all of you, so we'll start with David and then see if anyone else wants to add on. Here is the question, In Western society particularly, it seems that a huge problem in creating momentum towards climate action is that society doesn't generally reward actions for the collective good enough. Instead the biggest perceived rewards appear to be given to those who take or work only for themselves. The question that we have is, How do we shift that reward system so that we are instead turning the rewards towards people making these contributions for the good of all?

SUZUKI: That's interesting because all along the west coast of British Columbia, indigenous people had a program or a practice called potlatching. In order to potlatch you can't just say, Oh I'm going to throw a potlatch. You have to acquire a certain level of standing in the community so that you can throw a potlatch, and what you do in a potlatch is you give away everything you own. What you get from that is an increase in status in the people that I work with a lot because I have two grandchildren who are Haida, for the Haida people when they build, carve a totem pole, if you throw a potlatch you can carve a ring around at the very top. If you go into a community and you see a totem pole with three rings on it, wow, that is a really important person. You gain status, when you give away everything you say, Oh my gosh, but you get it back many times more, not just in standing. When I go out and catch a fish or catch five or six fish, the best one goes back to the guy that threw that potlatch. It gets

returned through the actions of the community, but the most important thing is that you gain respect by that event. Of course when Europeans came here they said, Look at these savages, they don't have any idea even of ownership or property, and they banned it. It was banned for almost a century, and people went to jail because doing a potlatch was a part of who they were. They had them. They had the potlatch, and thank goodness it's been brought back now but of course they are still learning how to have a potlatch, but I think it's a fantastic model. I don't understand why, I find it an obscenity that we have people who are billionaires, what the hell is that? A billion dollars, that's such a monumental number, but why can't we when you achieve a certain status of economic value then start giving medals of some sort, bronze, gold, silver, platinum, or whatever you want. Give them the status. There's no way they need that money, so let that money go to society and give them the status and recognition they deserve, but this whole idea that we have to reward this on the basis that they're worth a lot of money. They say Jeff Bezos is on his way to becoming a trillionaire like what the? That is so disgusting an idea.

FRENCH: Where you literally couldn't spend it all in your lifetime you literally couldn't. Unless you did give it away, there's no other way to. I agree, and there's some ideas there. I'd like to hear briefly if anyone else would like to jump in on how we shift towards more of the potlatch idea or the idea of putting time, status, to contributing to the community and to caring about our collective good. Are there ways that we can do that? Go ahead, Ina.

MARTIN: There's a Pew Research poll that came out a couple years ago about how two-thirds of Americans think that the federal government needs to do more about climate change, and the younger you are, the more that happens across political aisles and in fact for the youngest people it's well over half on both parties that think that this needs to happen. This isn't exactly an answer to this question, but it's more than I think there's a lot of people that want to do work on climate action on climate justice. I think there's a lot of people that just don't know where to start, or they're doing something small, and they don't know how to expand that. That's part of why these conversations and these groups become so important because if we can sort of lower that energy to action, lower that participation, and we start providing more paths for people to be able to move forward I think that can be a really powerful thing. People do what they are rewarded for that is true, but I think a lot of people do care. People that have families

care, and that they want to make sure that things are okay for their kids and for other people's kids. I don't think that's so far removed from our whole society. Certainly there are areas maybe, but I feel like there's still a lot of hope for action there, and there's going to be a lot of talk about this reciprocity at the three o'clock Beamer-Schneider Professorship conversation that's part of the Ethics Table. I hope the audience is able to see that in the chat, the link, and join for part of that.

FRENCH: I'm being told that I have cheated and kept us over time a little bit here, but I couldn't resist it cause the conversation was so valuable, and I've certainly learned a lot here today, but we will use Ina's note of hope as our closing comment, I think that's encouraging. I hope that everyone who has joined us here today has not only valued this conversation, but sees themselves as part of it, and will continue this conversation. All of our incredible panelists are, as you can tell from their comments, deeply committed to making sure that this is an effort that is collective and is inclusive so we want this conversation to continue long beyond today's event. Thank you for joining us and please keep an eye on the Inamori Center's website for future Conversations on Justice. Once again thanks to all our panelists, and I do miss the good old days where you would hear the applause, but I assure you, you all deserve it. Thank you so much for inspiring us here today.