

# Summer Of Peace 2012

## Yuka Saionji

[0:00:00]

Ben: Welcome back everybody to the Summer of Peace. This is Ben Hart of The Shift Network and I'm very grateful to have you all with us again for another session. It's been an amazing journey so far. I'm very happy to have these special Fridays where we're going to be featuring younger peace leaders from around the world to share their work and share their inspiration and hearts.

So I'm happy to be hosting today for Yuka Saionji who is the Deputy Chairperson of Byakko Shinko Kai, which is a spiritual organization dedicated to world peace and raising the consciousness of humanity, which originated in Japan over fifty years ago. Yuka also works with the sister organization of Byakko, which is the Goi Peace Foundation, very famous for the peace polls around the world that say "May peace prevail on earth. Yuka also has a degree in law, has a published book called The Notebook of the Heart, and is a board member of NPO that's working on communication and community building after 3/11 earthquake in Japan. She is also a member of the Evolutionary Leaders group working in service to conscious evolution and recently gave a talk at the UN General Assembly in New York City.

Full transparency, Yuka is a dear friend and I was just in Japan visiting Byakko Shinko Kai and just checking the amazing organization and community out there. I'm so impressed with their work and everything they and she stand for so. Yuka, it's such a pleasure to have you on with us today.

Yuka: Thank you so much for having me.

Ben: Absolutely. Absolutely. So I figure we can just dive right in. What we'd love to do is just have people get a sense of what it is your organization does for peace. So if you could share a bit about that, that'd be great.

Yuka: Sure. So Byakko Shinko Kai is pretty much a spiritual organization and it was founded by my grandfather who after World War II really said that there's power in our consciousness and there's power in prayers and our mind and prayer has a lot to do with what is happening outside the world. Because there's so much negativity around the world, there needs to be people who will constantly give out the positive vibration. So our organization pretty much really prays for the peace of the world and the peace of each country of the world constantly for that.

Ben: Beautiful and one aspect that I got to take part in when I was visiting you, I was in Japan, was the SOPP or the Symphony of Peace Prayer ceremony. Could you share a bit about that because I feel like it was such a powerful thing to be a part of when I was there?

Yuka: Thank you so much. Yeah, so SOPP is the abbreviation of Symphony of Peace Prayers. We felt that interface or the peace between or amongst religion is another important element for peace. I think a lot of people don't actually know how each belief or faith is prayed or the spirit behind it and so we wanted each religious leader to offer their peace prayers in they're on faith, from their own faith. But it's a prayer offered for the whole world and the people and not just their country or their group or their members. The thing is that the audience who come no matter what belief or faith you have is invited to pray together of each different faith peace prayer and together creating that symphony of peace prayers.

But can you explain?

Ben: I think that was beautiful, absolutely.

Yuka: Really?

Ben: I would add on to that what was so powerful was the flag ceremony as well following those peace prayers.

Yuka: Oh, yes.

Ben: Can you say a bit about that?

Yuka: Yeah, the flag ceremony is so we pray for each country of the world alphabetically from A to Z and we have right now 192 countries, at least that's what it said in the Japanese government, official Japanese government. So we pray for those countries in their own native language. So yes, may peace be in Albania or Afghanistan in their own native language alphabetically.

**[0:05:05]**

Ben: I love the modesty you bring when you speak about this because I just want people to really get a sense of 6000 people across the field all praying as each flag of the world comes up on stage with this amazing music. Everyone's crying and it's so beautiful and just one of the more beautiful ceremonies and rituals I've ever been a part of in my life. So I really appreciate you sharing about it and really want people to understand the magnitude of what you do year after year and you've been doing it for 40+ years which is just fantastic.

Yuka: Thank you so much, Ben. Thank you.

Ben: Absolutely.

Yuka: I'm so glad I'm explaining so I'm so grateful that you're sharing together with me.

Ben: Happy to do it and I'm so glad I got to experience it.

Yuka: Yes.

Ben: So the title of our session today is To Meet in Peace and I think that the ritual that you put together through SOPP is all about people meeting together in peace as one human family. I'm wondering for you what does meeting in peace mean, meet in peace?

Yuka: I really believe that meeting in peace actually starts from within and how do you meet in peace towards yourself. I think that that's really the most important because a lot of us or at least me, many times I was not able to be at peace with myself. What the society says or what people's expectation I couldn't feel at peace with who I am or how I am and so I sometimes need acknowledgement or I sometimes need to feel good about myself. I couldn't do that by myself so then I expect others outside of me to do or try to much to want things from outside because actually I wasn't at peace within and not knowing who I really was or what I am here to do or to really love myself. I think we really have to start from ourselves and to really find peace within ourselves like really true peace and then I think that is one step towards meeting in peace with others.

Ben: That's great. Can you say or speak to how you found peace within yourself in your own life and how you support others to do that?

Yuka: Sure. So I think I was, I don't know, a teenager and I didn't feel good about myself and I didn't have confidence. I was always beating myself up thinking I'm so stupid or maybe I'm a bit **[0:08:17] [Indiscernible]** or maybe I'm... You know, all these things that I think anyone would go through. One day, I decided to – I didn't like that about myself and I wanted to give more love to myself and I started saying I love you Yuka. I actually used my own name and I said to myself I love you Yuka and I'm sorry Yuka. Then suddenly I felt this kind of feeling of love coming from within myself like kind of healing my heart and I realized that until then, I was creating holes or like by myself, I was creating a hole in my heart.

So there was a hole and I always looked for outside like I was sharing with you before. I tried to fill in the hole from outside. But then I realized even

if the hole is filled from the outside, it's just temporary so if someone who has given me that love or has given me the acknowledgement is gone then the hole is always there. But then when I started saying I love you Yuka and I'm sorry Yuka, it felt like the hole was filling in from within myself. Then I realized that that was like actually for me a great process to be in peace with myself and to be okay with who I am no matter what, just the being of it and loving every aspect of it and giving myself love from my – I'm sorry. Yes.

**[0:10:15]**

Ben: That's so beautiful and striking to me that your family has multiple organizations that you're involved in from Byakko, which you're the deputy person to Goi Peace, which does more outward peace work in the world. You bring it back to the inner dimension of peace, which is such an important piece to move to the outer. I really appreciate that so many people that we've had on for the Summer of Peace on this series have been speaking to the inner dimension and then bridging that to the outer. So I love hearing you speaking about that.

Yuka: Uh-hum.

Ben: I'd love to hear how that relates to the work you've been doing in the tsunami affected areas of Japan. I know you've been going there helping create a nonprofit and doing work there and if you could just share about that work and how it relates to people's inner peace.

Yuka: Uh-hum. So after 3/11 tsunami, there is still a lot of problem. Even after a year now, many people are living in temporary housings. Although there are some rebuilding happening and the government is doing things, I think maybe it's the Japanese culture that people don't actually express what's really happening within themselves and try to suppress their feelings or emotions or frustrations about what's happening. Because they don't want to be a burden or they don't want others to have to hear that negativity or there's so many reasons. They don't want to create disharmony. So they put all that, a lot of people suppress those kind of feelings and in the surface level, they'll be normal but inside there's so much happening.

We wanted to create a safe space where people can be authentic and really speak from their heart or what's really happening deeper within themselves. Without that, things is just working on the surface level. So it seems as if things are moving but it's actually because it's not coming from the root deep within each one of us. I use this example a lot of people start to create barriers with each other and it's an invisible one. So it seems like people are communicating, but they're actually not because there's this big barrier between each other. So they can't really

trust each other because they're not really sharing what they're really actually feeling.

So our work is really to create a safe space for people to accept what's happening within themselves and for people to be able to share from their mouth what they're actually feeling and to have a space where people won't judge or criticize or blame you for what you're feeling but just accepting each word as it is said. When that space is created, there's so much trust in the group and there's a bigger, deeper bond that they didn't have before which becomes a greater energy for people to really start moving forward.

So through that process, I also realized it's so important that we become who we really are to be able to express what's really happening and to have that alignment in whatever we do. When that's not in line, then things start to become, I don't know, tangled.

Ben: That's great. You just said the phrase when people, when we become who we really are, could you say a bit more about that? What does it mean to become who we really are? How do we connect to that?

Yuka: I think... You know, do you Mattie Stepanek?

**[0:15:10]**

Ben: I don't. I'm not familiar with that name.

Yuka: Okay. Mattie Stepanek is this boy who passed away when he was 12 years old and he was a peacemaker and he wrote books and he wrote poetries and I love him. I don't know, before the interview, his book just came into my eyes and I haven't read it for a long time, but it's called Reflections of a Peacemaker. I was just remembering his words and he always said – because he passed away when he was around 12, and I think his brothers too all had this... I don't know how to say it. Well anyways, he was saying that whether that person exist for more than a second or for more than a decade or a century that everyone who is here or have been created for some purpose, some reason to be in this world and that everyone is a gift. I think there's many ways of seeing what that gift is or who we really and I think everyone has their own definition to it. But I think really knowing that you're here for a reason and I think that...

I'm sorry, can I share you a story?

Ben: Of course.

Yuka: Okay. So I was at a retreat a few weeks ago and they asked me to hold a candle and we walked outside bare feet for a few minutes, yes? There

were two people next to me, to my right and to my left, and I was the one holding the candle and I was walking. But then there was wind sometimes coming and I was so focused in walking that I didn't realize the flame kind of gets smaller when the wind comes, right? So the people next to me just naturally brought their hands and made a shield for the flame so that the flame won't go out.

At first, it was a person right to me using his both hands but then when the wind was gone, we started walking again. Then there was this moment when naturally both of the people next to me gently held their hands together and with four palms the flame was guided so that it won't disappear.

When I was in that moment, I realized that this is who we really are and I felt the candle was representing each humanity in this world and so as human beings, we're trying so much to burn the flame because we're the candle and we can't see beyond that. But actually to be a candle, it felt like there was a person who's holding the candle and there was this invisible hand and palms at times when the candle or the flame is about to fade away. I think for me, it really meant that just the fact that we have a life on earth is because there are so much guidance and protection like the person holding the candle or the hands. We can't see them but its' there and because it's there we are here on earth. So could we feel that invisible palm or the hand that's holding us? For me, that's really knowing who we are. Do you know what I'm trying to say? I'm sorry, I'm not good...

Ben: [Laughs] I think you are absolutely great at explaining.

Yuka: I'm so nervous.

Ben: And yes, I feel what you're sharing.

Yuka: Yes.

**[0:20:00]**

Ben: What comes up for me is actually a question I was going to ask you later but I think it's the perfect time for it. I was going to ask you Byakko is a spiritual organization and so I'd love to just hear a bit more. I mean I think you're going through it right now is what does spirituality mean to you and how does it relate to the work that you're doing in the world?

Yuka: When people ask me what does spirituality mean or what's the difference between religion and spirituality, I always give this answer back of what I believe what spirituality means. For me, it's knowing the deep love or infinite love or the light or the wisdom that we all hold

within ourselves. That we have this power and infinite possibility within ourselves and to connect to that source from within, but also knowing that there's this huge power and huge wisdom and huge love beyond us, this universe that is full of that infinite possibility and all that also.

For me, spirituality is connecting that both and becoming one in the balance of the two. For me, if we don't realize the power and the love we have within and focus too much on the power beyond us and to give all of us to that, without realizing the universe within us, the balance for me is, how do you say? It's not imbalance. When we focus too much on what's within us, the universe within us and don't realize the power and wisdom beyond us, again there is no balance there. How can we connect that two together so that we can live each moment with knowing both within and beyond us. To me, that's spirituality.

Ben: That's beautiful. Thank you. A question comes up in relationship to that is you have grown up kind of in the midst of this large community that's committed to peace and committed to love and committed to doing great work in the world. Your grandfather started these organizations and your mother has been a part of them and your father and you kind of had grown up in that. I think you offered a unique perspective to, you know, it's easy for us to kind of imagine when we go out on a retreat or when we're on a summit like this to connect to those feelings of our deepest connection to who we are. Then people kind of have trouble in the day to day like how do we continue to meet in peace with everyone we're around. I think you coming from a community that is committed to doing this work in the world have really seen people learning how to do it day to day and every single moment. So I'm just wondering for you or from what you have seen in the communities you're a part of, what are ways that we can really learn to meet in peace in every moment and take that in all aspects of our lives?

Yuka: I think it starts very small, at least for me it does and I've learned a lot from people around me how they live. Like my mom or my grandfather to have that kind of role model in my life I think I was very, very lucky. But I think I realized that we're all human beings right and we're not even close to perfect, anyone of us. But I think to meet in peace actually for me to find a role model in everyone we meet was such a powerful thing for me to do. People that are walking down the street or people you don't know or anyone could you find something in them that you don't have that you can look up to? Not just like special like, I don't know, an icon but anyone that we meet, how could we be not humble but how could we be a person who can see the beauty of each one that we meet and to say, oh, wow, this person is amazing because of this, this or that, that and to be able to see that in anyone.

**[0:25:19]**

When I started doing that, I realized that everyone is so beautiful in every way. For those many times, I couldn't really find what I can learn from the other person or it felt like they were not nice or not kind. But if you look deeply and if you really listen to what they're feeling or why they became who they are then there's a lot of respect that comes out from me. So that was like one way I learned to meet in peace and then that made me like – excuse me – realize that we are, each one of us are divine and it's the way we see it, the way we feel it. To grow our ability to see the divinity in anyone, that really made me grow. Yes.

Ben: Beautiful. Thank you. What you're describing there actually – yes?

Yuka: I was going to ask, how about you?

Ben: Well I'd actually prefer to keep the focus on you for now--

[Laughter]

-- as our beautiful interviewee. But thank you.

Yuka: No, because I mean I think it's – okay, yes, never mind.

Ben: Well I mean actually what you just did right there relates beautifully to what I was just going to ask you, which I was going to ask you about leadership and how it kind of plays a part in your life. I feel like what you are just doing right there was evoking my own genius and my own divinity by kind of calling me in and just speaking to it as well, which I so appreciate. But I think sitting at the center of a huge community, you have a lot to offer and I know that you're learning about leadership and I'm wondering what you have to share about what does leadership mean to you in the context of us all being divine?

Yuka: I think can I give you another example?

Ben: Please.

Yuka: Okay. So recently, I was at this Zen temple in Kyoto, the oldest Zen temple and I was sitting there watching the inside garden of that Zen temple and it was so beautiful. You know, how the Zen garden really expresses the universe in the smallest and the simplest way within that garden, right? I was sitting there and watching it and I couldn't help but to put my hands together in gratitude. Because while I was sitting there, I was easily able to connect to the divine source and to realize that there is divinity in every moment and every space and every single thing in this whole universe. But because we're human beings or because I am me, I don't realize it every moment and I don't see it. Even walking in the nature, I forget it. But that was the expression of the people back in 200,



300 years back. They saw the divinity and tried to express in the most beautiful, most harmonious way they could ever do. After a few hundred years later, I'm sitting there and I could easily connect. Because of their wisdom and their expression, I was able to find that and see that so easily and clearly.

I think sometimes we need that leaders – okay maybe the Zen temple isn't the leader. But what I was trying to say is we need that kind of help or support or like a ladder that enables us to see the truth that kind of truth and beauty in everything and everyone. To me leadership are the people who are able to offer that to us.

I was just again with someone and I love animals, I really do but I'm not so good with bugs, I'm so sorry. There was this man who was showing me this small ant that was a bit crippled and I'm not so good with bugs so I felt so bad to the ant, but I still had a barrier towards the ant. So I was just looking at it, saying, oh, and then he puts my hand, like he takes my hand and puts the ant on my hand and I was thinking why is he doing this. Then he kind of told me to bring the ant outside and so I was like okay and I was going outside with this ant that's suffering on my hand, right?

**[0:30:47]**

But when I was outside along with the ant, suddenly I had so much love and the ant was so beautiful and I was so one with the ant and I was so sorry for the ant. I was sorry for the ant in the beginning too but in a such more oneness. Again, if it wasn't for this man who was sitting next to me, I wouldn't have been able to see that divine in the ant. So those are the leaders for me who help me see again who everything is and we need that kind of leadership everywhere. Anyone can be that just by sharing their beauty and their wisdom and how they see the world and how that supports others to see it the same way or a higher way.

Ben: That' beautiful. Thank you. All right, I appreciate the image of you and the ant and the open heart. [Laughs]

Yuka: [Laughs] I'm not really --

Ben: What --

Yuka: -- answering directly to your questions but those are the things that --

Ben: I think you absolutely are, so sure.

Yuka: Okay. Okay.

Ben: At least for me, I'm certainly feeling the leadership and hearing the spirituality in all of your answers. What it brings up in me is a question about the work you're doing people who have been affected by a tsunami. When you go up there and I know you work with groups and I'm curious how you and how the group you're working with how do you kind of bring that leadership into those spaces? How do you create that safe space for them to connect deeply and be authentic and could you share a bit about that?

Yuka: Sure. I mean the people I work with have been working with groups and people a lot so through them I learned a lot about how they hold the space. I think those people who I see holding the space or the facilitator role are so important. It's not the skill, it's actually the being of that person in the space holding and how they can be the symbol of everything is okay. Everything is okay, from that deep level holding the space.

To create that kind of energy from the beginning you can't see it and it's really hard to describe because it's not a skill. But to have someone in the center that comes from a deep spiritual, I guess, level of holding that space and that intention. To let everyone speak what's happening and to hold it so that people don't start to judge or blame or even any negativity that can happen. To know that it comes from again the source of everything is okay and that everyone comes from the source of divinity. It's just through that process of expression that we can see beyond it, that the core of level of what they're trying to say.

So I guess being really able to listen not just what they're saying but where they're saying it from and to see it and to say yes and okay from that accepting it.

**[0:35:20]**

Ben: Yeah, that's great. I think it's so true what you're saying about that's not a skill, that really is about the beingness that the person is holding and where they're saying it from. I also know the way you've lived your life and so many of the key speakers that we've had on that there is a way to cultivate that beingness. I know that you and your organization supports people in cultivating that beingness and I'm wondering what practices you use in your own life or what practices you find from your organization using that you support coming from that place?

Yuka: So for us, actually it's very simple. The simplest thing is the peace there that we offer that may peace prevail on earth. In any circumstances we say may peace prevail on earth because in that moment our mind or our consciousness suddenly goes from me to the whole world. It just takes you outside from me, myself by just saying this word may peace prevail

on earth. That to even realize that even in the midst of your troubles or whatever suffering that's happening that you're actually still capable of sending this peace towards everyone and anyone around us through this simple peace prayer.

There's also ways that we use our intention and mind and writing. Through writing, the spiritual words or the teachings or just really using the words, your words speaking it loud. Or we have the in which is a movement like a mudra that uses the breathing and our body movements to express the divinity of each of one of us or the peace that we have within.

So I guess for us in our teaching, it's really fully using our body, mind, and being the expression of the vibration of peace.

Ben: Beautiful. Thank you. As we get closer to the top of the hour, I want to give people on the line the opportunity to ask questions of you, Yuka, also. So if you're on the phone, feel free to hit \*2 then we can call on you to ask Yuka a question. If you're on the webcast, you can type your questions right in. Again so hit \*2 if you're on the phone and for the webcast dial your question in. While people are doing that, Yuka, one question that I'm always curious about I think is beautiful as we create this community together of peace builders is, what do you feel like is your growing edge in terms of your beingness of peace and in terms of your leadership and because of who you're being in the world as a peace builder? What is it that you're working on right now internally?

Yuka: Growing edge? What am I working on for myself, right?

Ben: Yeah. Yeah.

Yuka: Okay. So I'm working with my ego.

Ben: Great. Can you say more about that?

Yuka: [Laughs] Sure.

Ben: I have a big smile on my face.

Yuka: Okay. So lately I've been doing like this event or working with people around me or I'm actually besides work, doing this movement for Gift Economy and working with teams, you know. I realized how much I want it my way. In having that wanting to do it so much that, although I say I talk about listening and appreciating others when it comes to project, I really want it this way. So there are times that I don't actually share what I want to do and do it by myself.

[0:40:02]

Even though I talk a lot about working together and that collective wisdom, I believe so much in the collective wisdom and so much the next leadership is about working together, I myself have sometimes problems in doing that. Because I don't want my vision to fade or dilute and I hate that about myself. I guess I'm seeing it as my learning process and I just had to experience it my way once, I'm so sorry for the people who are working around me. I accept that too that this is like for me the ego stage and I just had to do it my way. Once I do it, okay, I can relax and say, okay this is how it was and now I can ask others to work together. I guess so for me that's the learning that I have been having for the past few months.

Ben: Beautiful. Thanks for sharing that. I think it's such a shared thing to experience and I so appreciate your transparency in going through it. Because definitely as we're divine, we still have these ways we're dealing those things as well and it's beautiful to embrace them and share them and go through them together so thank you, Yuka. We have a question coming in based --

Yuka: Thank you.

Ben: Yeah, absolutely. We have a question coming in based on what you just said. You mentioned the Gift Economy and so the question is how have you been involved in the Gift Economy?

Yuka: So for me, I have met Nipun Mehta from ServiceSpace I think two or three years ago and I was so fascinated by the work that he does. For example, the small cards or the Karma Kitchen, I think it's all there at the ServiceSpace and I really wanted to bring that back to Japan and I've been talking --

Ben: Yuka, for people who aren't familiar, could you just briefly share what that is?

Yuka: ServiceSpace?

Ben: The Karma Kitchen and --

Yuka: Oh, the Karma --

Ben: -- the gift economy.

Yuka: Oh, right, yes. Okay. The Gift Economy, so right now the economy, our economy is based on consuming and so taking with all that. But that creates a lot of fear because you have to take, take. You have to buy and

then things created and that's how our economy that we know is moving. Gift Economy is like a totally different concept. It comes out of love and generosity and it's not about taking but actually create the economic going, it's actually the giving and serving. So Nipun has started this thing called the ServiceSpace where he first started created websites for free, this was like 12 years ago, for NPOs or the homeless shelters because he wanted to serve and wanted to do something out of kindness and generosity and not for money. Then a lot of people started to really understand this serving and wanted to help out too and now they have over 100,000 people and this economy is running by giving and a lot of million dollars are really just running through generosity.

So I met him a few years ago and I really loved this concept of Gift Economy. Because it's running by love and generosity, there's so much trust and bond and safety or security that you could never have when you're just buying things through money. Karma Kitchen is one of the projects under this Gift Economy where you just come in to a restaurant and you eat, but at the end the check reads zero and it's because of the people who are working at the restaurant are volunteering and it's actually the people that came before you paid for the meals after you. So you're invited for a free meal, but it doesn't mean free meal, it's like meal out of love and generosity that were so many people behind it that wanted to give love to you and it's up to you how to pass on, pay forward the gifts that you received. That's how the Karma Kitchen works.

**[0:45:12]**

So I wanted to bring Karma Kitchen back to Japan and we started our first experiment of Karma Kitchen I think last month or two months ago and now we're trying more and more different kinds of Karma Kitchen and Gift Economy projects.

Ben: Beautiful. Thank you for that. Another question that's come in for you is are you hopeful for the future of humanity and if so why?

Yuka: I am definitely hopeful because why, but I don't know. I don't see in what level are we saying hopeful. I think if we're talking about the manifestation of peace on earth or like manifestation in this planet or in this lifetime, I don't know. But I know that each humanity is really connected to the true universal source and for that I know that we're all hopeful. Whatever happens, whatever that occurs, occurs from a divine -- how do you say, like divine nature? Order?

Ben: Uh-hum.

Yuka: Ben?

Ben: Yeah, that sounds good.

Yuka: Okay. So in that sense, yes, I'm always hopeful and that no matter what could we always find the end be, the divine who we really are. Yes, I am very, very hopeful and each one of us holds that but could we really realize that and manifest that. The more people who can really connect to that and express that, more and more I believe the future is hopeful. If we're not able to do that then maybe it's not this lifetime, maybe it's not in this time era, or in this time, I don't know. But it all ends up for me is 100% hopeful and positive because I know or I feel, I believe that we're all connected to the divine source.

Ben: Beautiful.

Yuka: Because we all realize that, I don't know.

Ben: That's great. Thank you. So people who are joining us late, in case you'd like to ask a question, you can hit \*2. I see that people on the live phone line a little shy in asking questions today, which is totally fine, but if you have one, you're welcome and jump on in. Also, people on the webcast, keep writing in your questions, I'm happy to share them. Another question for you, Yuka, coming is, do you feel like the tsunami and the nuclear crisis in Japan has helped support a shift in consciousness at all to more love and connection?

Yuka: Absolutely. Just the example of me wanting do to Gift Economy for two straight years. I've been speaking at a lot about Gift Economy and a few years back people will be like, oh, that's a nice idea but I don't need to change or why do we have to do this, you know, like love and generosity why or a lot of people had this huge belief on this world it's going to be this way or this system that we have. Now it's totally fine and I have no problem with it. I work, I have money, I have a house, I'm happy kind of leave me alone kind of thing. Why are you talking about like love and connection, we don't need that. That kind of energy was there a few years back, but after 3/11 it's shifted so much.

Once there was this huge corruption in the mentality of this is how it should be and easily that corrupt and then people started saying what is it that we really want, how do we really want to live our life. The things that they thought so strongly was so vulnerable and actually then they started to think what's really important in life. Then a lot of people started to understand the importance of community or connection or love and those are the things that helped and supported people at the tsunami too. It wasn't money, it wasn't a strong house because that like was gone instantly and what they had was each other and they all shared and they all helped and there were a lot of volunteers coming to that area and we realized that that's the most important thing. We were so

not caring about that because of the outside world seemed so fine and secure.

[0:51:01]

So, yes, a lot of shift is happening right and have been happening. But I also know that this shift or this opening can easily close and a lot of people tend to go back to their normal life so how can we in this time use the shift in the most powerful, effective way before everyone goes back to their normal or the system that they are used to? So that's like one of the focus for me too.

Ben: That's great. Yeah, and definitely, you know, I've never been to Japan before but definitely being there for a week with you and your organization, it felt that way. It felt like people are really alive and activated and ignited and connecting. It's all very, very exciting and like everything was possible so thank you for all you're doing in that.

Yuka: Thank you.

Ben: Yeah. Another question here for you as we're getting close to the top of the hour is, as a young person, do you feel like much of your generation is moving into being leaders for peace and love and how can we support the next generation to create the world that is possible?

Yuka: Uh-hum. At least around me I do feel a lot of people, young people are really wanting to work for peace. I think a lot of people in our generation their value is changing a lot. Especially maybe after 3/11, there's a lot of young people who are not interested in money or things anymore and they're really more interested in relationship, in community, and living sustainable, harmony with nature. I think this is really a big change. Because I think we're living in this time where there's so much corruption and natural disasters which is like a big wakeup call for us every moment so I do feel this change happening and this new kind of way of thinking or values are really happening a lot around us.

How could the elders help us is really we respect so much of the elders because of their experience and their wisdom and that should be more and more work together with the new ideas coming from the youth and it can't happen either or just one. The new ideas or the new values is important, but it's more important that it works with the elders and their wisdom and their experience. Together it creates harmony and together we can do a change. It can't happen just with the young generation and it can't happen just with elder's wisdom because we need change and we need new ideas. So I think I always believe that it's intergenerational work. It's really to love and respect each other for what they have is so important for all of us.

**[0:55:10]**

Ben: That's great. Thank you. I want to flag for people who are listening just to notice the way that every time I've asked you a question, Yuka, there's about a four-second pause and having been with you in person and even feeling it in the phone, you're really checking in deeply. I can feel you checking with your heart and your intuition in all of these answers like they're kind of bubbling up from a deeper source that isn't just your superficial mind. That to me is really meeting in peace as well. I think you demonstrate that just the way that you're responding to everything kind of the deeper beingness that you're coming from so I just wanted to point that out before we finished. I also want to --

Yuka: Thank you.

Ben: You're welcome. I have one last question for you and then I want to have you just offer a final thought to people. But my question is in your work or in your life, what is it that is unfolding that you're most excited about? I think **[0:56:11] [Indiscernible]** like what's most inspiring for you right now in your own development or in what you're seeing in the work you're doing?

Yuka: Right now, I feel that a lot of things are happening in such rapid speed. I think the world that I hope for or the work that I've been doing, I mean it's not long, but like at least for ten years or so, I have been working around this area and things happen but it was a very slow speed. The past one, two years, the manifestation and the speed of it is so fast and... Okay, I just blocked out, I'm sorry.

Ben: Beautiful.

Yuka: You were just saying how I -- I'm sorry. But yes, I'm sorry. What?

Ben: [Laughs] Very sweet, Yuka. I appreciate hearing that a lot and I have a big grin on my face. Certainly everyone here in The Shift Network has been sharing the exact same thing that's kind of a quickening in people's hearts and consciousness itself and this is so much more going on popping. I feel like we have so many beautiful things to look forward to in the months and year and years ahead so. Thank you for reflecting that back to us all.

The final thing I just love to have you leave everybody with and we've been doing it with most of our presenters is what one or two actions would you say our listeners could do to really ground in peace and make changes in their lives? I know you've already spoken to it a bit but just kind of final thought on what listeners can take away into their own lives to ground what you're sharing.



Yuka: Well maybe because I shared but I would love everyone to love and accept who they are. Not like what they're doing or they're not good enough or I'm this or that, but just as we all are right now at this moment. To fully accept it all and love it all and to have peace with who we are at this moment. Every moment will change and every moment will grow but for now with all the flaws and all the beautiful things that we are to love it and say I love you. I think that's this call with you and talk with you reminded me how important it was for me and it is for me right now too. So I hope everyone can just even for a second or before you do anything to just say I love you, even with your name, I love you Yuka, I love you Ben like using your own name and giving that love to themselves. I really hope people can do that.

Also for me I would love to invite the prayer of may peace prevail on earth, which is they're both working within, inside but it's very effective to the outside if we're able to do this, you know?

Ben: I do. Yeah, thank you, Yuka, it's beautiful and thank you so much for being with us today. It was an absolute pleasure to get to bask in your energy and your wisdom today so thanks so much for sharing it with everybody.

**[1:00:00]**

Yuka: Thank you so much for having me.

Ben: You're so welcome and thank you everybody for joining us. I just want to let you know that our next session will be back on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. Pacific time and my colleague Philip from The Shift Network will be interviewing Dr. AT Ariyaratne who's been called the Gandhi of Sri Lanka. So they'll be talking about spirituality and peace on Sunday 9:00 a.m. Pacific.

So such a pleasure to have you all with us and for the next coming months, I don't even remember how many is ahead of us. We have so many great speakers ahead. So thank you so much for who you're being in the world and for being a part of this summit and everybody have a beautiful rest of your day, your evening and we'll see you back here soon. Bye-bye.

**[1:00:45]**

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