

## **The Garrison Institute Presents: The Common Good Podcast Transcript**

Judy Lief: Buddhist Practice in Life and Death (Episode 16)

[Please note: Although the transcript is largely accurate, in some cases it may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription software errors.]

[00:00:00] **Judy Lief:** So often we're at fixed views of how people should go about their end of life and a lot of kind of panic and tend to grasp at straws. So if somebody gotta do something, I gotta do something. Sometimes the best thing is not to do anything, but just to be there and accept and listen to what the dying person is saying, what they're manifesting.

[00:00:42] **Steve Varley:** Welcome to the Garrison Institute presents. I am Steve Varley, managing director of the Garrison Institute, and today I'm stepping in as your host. Many of you know this show through our usual host, Jonathan Rose, and his thoughtful conversations on the common good from time to time, though I'll be dropping in to share some of the voices and stories from the community here at the Garrison Institute.

[00:01:05] If you don't know, the Garrison Institute has a beautiful retreat, sanctuary physical campus overlooking the Hudson River, where teachers, practitioners, and leaders from many fields gather to. Floor contemplative practice and how it meets the challenges of our time throughout the year. People come here on retreat to teach, to learn to sit with some of life's most important questions, and occasionally we have the chance to capture those conversations and bring them to you.

[00:01:34] Today I'm speaking with Judy Leaf, a long longtime Buddhist teacher, editor, and author whose work has helped shape how Tibetan Buddhist teachings have been understood and shared in the west. Judy is perhaps best known for her decades of editorial work with the teachings of Cho Trunpa Rinpoche, her longtime teacher, including her multi-volume, profound treasury of the ocean of Dharma.

[00:01:58] She's also the author of Making Friends with Death and has spent many years exploring how contemplative practice can support us in facing mortality and caring for one another at the end of life. In our conversation, Judy reflects on her unlikely path into Buddhist practice. What it was like to study with Rinpoche in the early days, and how teachings that began on a meditation cushion ultimately show up in the ordinary and sometimes very difficult moments of life.

[00:02:28] Here's my conversation with Judy Leaf.

[00:02:49] I'd really just love to hear about, when you think about your younger self, what was she hungry for? What were you looking for before you discovered Tibetan Buddhism? What? What were you thinking about for your life?

[00:03:06] **Judy Lief:** I think I was, uh, looking for a certain adventure and also exploring of the world and, uh, finding something meaningful.

[00:03:18] Uh, the combined variety of components, how to, uh, make a living, how to sort of connect with community or explore places where seeing people seem to be. Engaged passionately with what they had their heart in some discipline or in some topic, et cetera. Like when I was in college, I changed majors all the time based on where I saw a teacher who actually cared about what they're teaching.

[00:03:50] You know, I had a whole way, not just as a expert's way, so I was looking for that to be wholeheartedly engaged in a way other people that I had admired and finding it. Sad that so many people I felt were not, could do well, good things, but they were kind of going through the motions in a different way.

[00:04:12] It wasn't kind of integrated together somehow.

[00:04:15] **Steve Varley:** Hmm. What was your first major, do you remember?

[00:04:19] **Judy Lief:** I first majored in English, then I was in sociology and then, then I was, then I was in philosophy. And then I was in pre-med.

[00:04:36] **Steve Varley:** That's great.

[00:04:37] **Judy Lief:** Just not for any interest in it, but just because of trying, looking for that something I think you're, you know, it's an interesting question.

[00:04:45] I hadn't thought about it that way, but, uh, I wanted to, to be like that, you know, where what I was doing in my living my life both had a quality of, uh, meaning and being integrated together.

[00:04:59] **Steve Varley:** Was there a religious or a spiritual texture to your childhood, or is it something you found yourself?

[00:05:08] **Judy Lief:** Well, I mean, I grew up in an ordinary family with, uh, they were Christian, uh, Protestant Christians and, uh, which is fine, you know, I, I sort of, I was sort of more towards the religious side a little bit, so I developed a lot of.

[00:05:23] Curiosity, you know, about Christianity, so was doing things weird for kids to do, like studying the Bible and all that kind of thing. But then I, I found the problem is that then I ended up asking lots of questions as though it mattered, you know, and not finding that they religious leadership, very interested in, in that kind of approach.

[00:05:46] Not wanting questions, not not having that, whatever it was. Also as a young child, I felt it was important to cover over those kind of tendencies towards spirituality and whatnot as it would be, uh, embarrassed or made fun of. There was much more, you know, wanting to be kind of with it and hip and cynical and all that, and those kind of tender and, and kind of experiences related to, um, more of a.

[00:06:22] Contemplative spiritual nature. They're just not really welcoming in the world I was in. So I sort of hid that side of myself.

[00:06:32] **Steve Varley:** How do you see the world as different now? I mean, there's a, a different context for contemplative practice and spirituality.

[00:06:42] **Judy Lief:** I think it swung the opposite, the other direction of over hyping that side of things.

[00:06:48] So from having to hide it or be embarrassed to more of an overroad approach. And, uh, there's a lot of interest in just to having some kind of special experience and being somewhat special and all of that things that part. Religion I don't like at all.

[00:07:09] **Steve Varley:** Can you say more about that observation and how that's influenced your own teaching?

[00:07:14] **Judy Lief:** The sense it can pull you away from others and give a sense of, uh, like a religiosity and, uh, self satisfaction in, uh, privilege kind of way. There's not the humbleness and, I mean, it's, it's positive inspiration, but then I think it's. To disconnected it. I've grown to really want the so-called spiritual and secular are one, you know, not one versus the other.

[00:07:41] And this is higher and that's lower and I'm higher and that kind of thing. And then putting a lot of credence in every little experience you have. And to the point where I say, okay, who cares? I don't wanna hear your experience. That's the other side.

[00:07:59] **Steve Varley:** I want to talk to you about CHG Trump over Rinpoche and his, his life and teaching for a moment.

[00:08:05] And he was this brilliant and transformative and controversial teacher, uh, Gallic Rinpoche, who's, you know, deeply important to here at the Garrison Institute. Uh, considered him to be the father of Tibetan Buddhism in the United States. Rick Fields, uh, has a quote that he said. He caused more trouble and did more good than anyone I'll ever know.

[00:08:29] What was it like to walk into a room where he was teaching for the first time for you?

[00:08:35] **Judy Lief:** I first met him in 1971 and he was teaching at what was then called. Tale of a Tiger in Vermont and I just kind of entered not, I literally just was going up to Vermont with some friends to get I, I was living in New York, get out of the city and go to the countryside.

[00:08:57] I wasn't actually looking for anything at that point. So I sort of stumbled into that, uh, a program, a weekend program. And that's where, uh, I received like a meditation instruction, stuff like that. It's like a three, three day program, I think. Maybe. So I guess I was struck. It wasn't like I thought, whoa, I found my teacher not at all.

[00:09:20] Uh, not like that. He was so unusual in how he carried himself, how he spoke. It was quite informal in those days. Became much more formalized over time. Quite informal, talking

about simple experiences. In a way that was so true and direct and penetrating, it was kind of, uh, intense that way. The topic of that seminar was called Work, sex and Money.

[00:09:47] **Steve Varley:** Oh, you still remember that? Oh, yeah. The title of that content.

[00:09:51] **Judy Lief:** I have a bad memory, but I memorize those kind of things. Of course, they're all pretty interesting topics with, to a 20 some year old that I was, so there was something striking about him and then there was something really striking about first experience of meditation practice beyond that, it was, it took a while to, to actually even consider, I was actually pretty opposed to the whole idea of having a teacher and being in a, some kind of really SGA and all that.

[00:10:18] Uh, and it hadn't been what my main. Focus had been. And, uh, I was wary of that. So I, I remember Junk Room, which I taught in, in New York City quite a lot in that time period where I was living at the time. And I'd go to things that, that he was teaching and et cetera. And so, you know, I began sitting and I found what he said was really amazingly true.

[00:10:42] And how he spoke was different than other people. I found that it sort of opened my eyes to the way we use speech always with agendas, and I felt that he, the way he talked, he had no agenda. He, he didn't care. He would try to impress or try to do anything, but just say what he, how he saw it. I thought, that's really, I never heard speech like that.

[00:11:04] I thought, so that was intriguing to me. It was just like one of those strange things to notice. And then at, uh, one point, uh, must've been early, early 72 or something like that. My friend I Hickson, who was at this, he had this radio show in New York and he was, you know, one of these guys who went to all the spiritual stuff.

[00:11:26] I was sitting in front of him and he said, Hey, I see you, you found your teacher. And I said, I have not. And then shortly after that I moved to Boulder too.

[00:11:37] **Steve Varley:** Somebody else had to recognize it first, though. You didn't see it yet. That's great.

[00:11:42] **Judy Lief:** Yeah, I, I, uh, dropped outta school and moved and that was it.

[00:11:47] **Steve Varley:** And that, that earlier connection that you mentioned as you were looking at your teachers, your professors in college and you saw them going through the motions, and then you found somebody else who was passionate and fully integrated, and then you moved to them.

[00:12:02] And you moved to them. Is that So I sort of, is that what you saw

[00:12:05] **Judy Lief:** with my mo? Mm-hmm. Then I found someone who's like really integrated with Yes. What he's doing. I'm sure that was a, was I was looking for something. I didn't know what I was looking for exactly. But it sort of fits together in a funny way, huh?

[00:12:18] **Steve Varley:** Not only, um, have you edited and collected, um, the profound treasury of the ocean of Dharma, the three volume, uh, really. Exceptional and, um, dense and lengthy work, but 14 other volumes that you've edited, I think something like that

[00:12:38] **Judy Lief:** need out.

[00:12:39] **Steve Varley:** And how did you move into that space? Was it something he asked of you or that you started working on with, with him?

[00:12:47] **Judy Lief:** Well, most things I've entered into have been somewhat haphazard and sometimes, 'cause he asked, in this case, in the. Seventies. He was starting to work with, um, editors creating source books, and they created a magazine and things like that. It was a very small department to share. Cohen, who's done edited some of the other books anyway, he was in charge of what's called VA editorial.

[00:13:13] We had a little pub publishing thing. And he was going to move to, to Europe to uh, be one of a representative of the, the Jotter in, in Europe and doing some teaching and things. And so he was looking for someone to replace him. He kind of out of the blue, asked me to to do that. So virtually what he did, he said, okay, I have to leave.

[00:13:38] We need to have, uh, someone on budget publication ahead of that in editing. Here's the Chicago manual style buy. That was pretty much it. That's literally true. And then here's how you make the marks where your pencil and paper, you know.

[00:13:55] **Steve Varley:** The proofreader Mark, this was your, this was your first editing, uh,

[00:13:59] **Judy Lief:** work ever?

[00:14:00] Absolutely. I mean, I, I knew how to write stuff 'cause I was in English and went to college, but, uh, so I had no idea about that. And so it was sort of like sink or swim. So I had an able assistant that did know something and I found another able assistant knew something about them, the practicalities of how to print things.

[00:14:21] And you know, in those days, those weird. Machines and how you create the proofs and all that kind of stuff. I learned all that from the people that worked for me and that's, I started editing, so sometimes horrifying to think of. So some of the results that came out, but that's how it started on the job training or on the job.

[00:14:41] Non-training would be the approach and doing the best he can. And he was around so you could ask him questions, but for the most part you kinda had to. And we didn't have all the, it was a different world. We didn't have computers, you know, we, we, we had, you know, little cassette tapes and things like that.

[00:15:00] And from those who sort of try to make edit transcript and on and on to books with,

[00:15:06] **Steve Varley:** and, and were most of your source material, were they recordings of his talks or, or his writings that you were reworking and assembling or

[00:15:14] **Judy Lief:** Almost all of his books, not all, but most, all of his books are based on oral teachings.

[00:15:21] Very seldom were based on writing, so there's kind of a, almost like a translation project, being that oral spoken English and written English, and he had a few guidelines. They were pretty basic, but he had priorities. He, he said clarity was one of his priorities. 'cause we, people working with him tended to prioritize the voice and he prioritized clarity.

[00:15:46] Even if you lose the voice, but you know best, you can do both. And he said, if something's mistake or missing, put it back in and take out what's you don't need head. Put in what you need, take out what you don't need and try to go for clarity. That was it.

[00:16:03] **Steve Varley:** Yeah. This is a, this is like a very minimal starting guidelines for what it became, right?

[00:16:10] **Judy Lief:** Yeah, it was, it was helpful. I mean, sort of empowered in a certain way 'cause. You probably do that kind of work. Sometimes there's a lot of choices all the time. And with Dharma, a lot of, especially Dharma from someone who's so much more further along in Dharma than you, you know, having to make choices can be really nerve wracking and sometimes, 'cause once it's in print, then it's in print.

[00:16:32] **Steve Varley:** Some years later you had an encounter with the person who really is credited with bringing hospice to the United States. She had been the Deane at Yale School of Nursing, Florence Wald. And left that role to take Dame Sicily Saunders hospice idea from the UK and really start that, that first hospice.

[00:16:52] How did you and Florence find each other, and what was that conversation like when you first talked?

[00:16:59] **Judy Lief:** I'm friends with her daughter Shari. And it was in the late seventies, mid to late seventies. Another strange story ended up was teaching at Naropa. I was doing that because the person who was supposed to teach it disappeared at the last moment.

[00:17:18] That was a vivid experience. You know, I said, I don't. Know anything about it. He said, oh, that's okay. Yeah, I'll help you. And so I somehow survived teaching that course and ended up teaching it more than once. It was, you know, people were very interested. And then during that period of time was really the grow growing strength of the AIDS epidemic.

[00:17:41] There were people in those days. It was death sentence really. So that brought in a lot of interest in how to and death and dying and relating to that. And of course contemplating impermanence is a central thing in Buddhism. So anyway, I started out more technical going through that text and then started talking more generally.

[00:18:02] A lot of people just want a more general discussion of can Buddhist any. Ideas help deal with death and, and treat one another with better, more sanity. And so during that time, people started saying, well, what, what book do you recommend for us that want to go further? And I couldn't figure out one. And so then I wrote one.

[00:18:25] From that, I became known for teaching some of these things

[00:18:29] **Steve Varley:** and that, and that was making friends with,

[00:18:31] **Judy Lief:** making friends with death. And then somehow. I got invited to a conference, met her there first time, and we really hit it off. And then I went to New Haven with her and. Met some of the early hospice people there, and then we ended up doing a number of different things together.

[00:18:52] It is really interesting. It's so, such an impressive group of people. They might not be, they might be rolling in their graves right now for what happened to that beautiful vision, but they, they were into transforming the healthcare system altogether was a kind of, uh, type of things that Cecily Saunders had brought in in terms of holistic care and all that, and realism about death and life.

[00:19:15] **Steve Varley:** You mentioned earlier that Buddhism has a, has a lot to say about death, but of course there's a, a difference between teaching or thinking in an academic sense and the bedside. What has shown up or surprised you about what really translates and is useful and helpful in in the bedside?

[00:19:37] **Jonathan FP Rose:** That's a great question.

[00:19:39] **Judy Lief:** Well, first off, I mostly learned is from observing other people that are involved in this hospice movement and spent many, many, many hours at the bedside. I did spend hours, but not, not in the same way. And I did a lot of my teaching with the providers, you know, with the hospice providers. Although I would be called to the bedside for various reasons, but not as a full-time thing, mostly.

[00:20:04] But what I noticed about people who spent time with the dying, they were particularly joyful. They did had no fear, they had humor. They were able to stay with suffering, and that's one thing that Buddhism and dying have to teach us. You know how to be with one another. And kind of come to terms that the death is a part of life all the time and, and how, how to have a more ongoing relationship to it instead of trying to gear ourselves up for final moments without any preparation.

[00:20:44] So Buddhism beliefs, you can prepare and I think being able to be stable and stay with uncomfortable experience of any kind while it's happening is one of the. Primary powerful tools, practical tools. I mean, it's not about sitting down and meditating. It's about practically coming to be present and trust that by being with someone, not seeing them as broken, seeing them as like a mistake, seeing as a horrible tragedy, but just being with someone, going through a hard experience.

[00:21:15] It's very healing and changes the environment actually. And so often we're at fixed views of how people should go about their end of life and a lot of kind of panic and tend to grasp at straws. So if somebody gotta do something, I gotta do something. Sometimes the best thing is not to do anything, but just to be there and accept and listen to what the dying person is saying, what they're manifesting.

[00:21:42] So there's a lot of simplicity and profundity. I, what I found in my, you know, personal experience, what I've been called in. I mean, everything is different, but there's a sense there's such power in confronting that end of life. That so cuts through and almost dissolves on the spot, the kind of petty concerns that we grow around in all the time.

[00:22:09] None of it matters things, little things we think matter so much they don't, and that there's something much more basic going on, and it's such a privilege to be able to be in those situations to see that. Whoa. Yeah.

[00:22:25] **Steve Varley:** Hmm.

[00:22:41] I want to go back to your editorial work, and it occurs to me if, if my math is correct, that you have been editing repo's work. Now longer than he was alive. So he passed of course, at a younger age, just had accomplished a ton. But died and, and now it's been more than 50 years that you've been editing his work.

[00:23:09] He, and he really seemed to me because he was such a vigorous, robust personality that he was gonna be recontextualized and thought about in different eras and positioned. But I'm mostly curious about how you have re-contextualized. Your relationship with him and his work through the teachings, because you, you've continued to work and spend this very intimate time with his words.

[00:23:39] How has your relationship with his teaching and him changed for you in these years of editing him?

[00:23:46] **Judy Lief:** Well, he wanted the, at least 50 books published, and we had this goal of doing that, this group of editors. So it feels like continuing of a. Kind of a plan or promise or something. And I think over time I see him a little bit more in the way you're talking about as this pivot figure of some sort.

[00:24:09] Uh, and that's a long journey from when I first met him. Even when I first started studying with him, I'd even consider him Buddhist. I, I didn't, I just thought as somebody who happened to know things. He didn't wear robes. He didn't, you know, he, he spoke and drank and, and looked like a regular person, but, but person who had incredible, amazing insights, but it took me a while to have a sense, cut me on the complete ignorance sense to the next level of realizing He's a Buddhist teacher and he's very helpful and, And so pretty committed to taking his advice and not trying to be of service.

[00:24:49] Then it was quite a while before. Another pivotal point is now, we were very, very casual at kind of hanging out and we were practicing and studying, but pretty ragtag for a lot of

ways. And then in, I think 1974, I think the, this first visit of the Karmapa 16th Karmapa who's invited to North America and suddenly this Tibetan stuff comes in.

[00:25:16] We were, didn't. Relate to that before, that was kind of a shock to most of us. You know, we knew he was Buddhist, but that's really weird. So he was like fierce in getting his students ready to, to meet the Karmapa and he wanted to impress the Karmapa and had tried to clean us up, you know. So he told us he had to go grow decent clothes and the guys had to shave their beards, and we had to paint and redo the whole little center that we had on on Pearl Street.

[00:25:47] The, he is cracking the Whip, you know, to, and how to be, how to be manners for Tibetans, how to do this, how to, and he'd look at you to make sure you're doing it right, you know, like a, And so we were kind of like, ah, and uh, and then we saw him relating to his teacher. And that, and wasn't his main, but as the head of the lineage, but he, he demonstrated what it means to relate to a teacher.

[00:26:16] Oh, you know, he saw, you never saw, saw him relate to anyone like that before. You know, like with that kind of tion and that type. And so we saw that. And that was the shift that he saw that he's part of this bigger thing. It's not just an individual teacher out of the blue, but he's actually representing a whole lineage of things.

[00:26:38] That was useful information. And then a little bit after that, in the early eighties, the, that died and was a big funeral in, in, uh, room tech, right? So some of us are there for the party, the funeral. Group, and we got there. The roads were lined in all directions with Tibetans. Offering scarves and, and we said, huh, I guess she's a big deal over here.

[00:27:08] That kind of thing, like we had, it was sort of gradual understanding of, of that, and in a way it's good we didn't have that understanding to begin with. We didn't have that sense of we're trying to hang out with this famous, amazing. Person renowned in within his own country. We didn't know that. Uh, some of, maybe a few, but most didn't.

[00:27:29] And I kind of appreciated that in retrospect that we had kind of fresh view, you know, just listen to what he said. And that's what you're supposed to do with dormer. You, you follow the words, if not the personality, who would send, if it makes true, if it makes sense, if it's helpful. So anyway, so gradually there's difference.

[00:27:49] Component, but he's kind of a many things to many people. Everything from the most horrible being in the world to people who see one aspect and that's it for them, and then another person equally inspired, but a totally different aspect of how he taught or what he, how he manifested. And he changed over time from, well, he changed a lot from when I first.

[00:28:13] His, uh, later days. So all of that was shifting and changing in interesting ways.

[00:28:20] **Steve Varley:** In your editing work as you have had, I, I imagine it as sort of this romantic but maybe lonesome sort of hours and hours of life spent deep inside these, these

teachings. Did you have any discoveries that have surprised you, that was a layer that you hadn't understood before or perspective that suddenly made sense?

[00:28:45] **Judy Lief:** I find that all the time and that that continual around where you have some AHA moment, then you go back to the material again, you realize, nah, they have another AHA moment. It happens a lot. He has a way, the way he uses language in words and structures, have a way of producing that. He, he kind of can get into the flow of what's being said.

[00:29:08] And then there's a sense of just being dropped. I dunno how he does it. You're just sort of like where boom drop, like the branch broke or something like that. He has a way of like dropping it, which wakes you up in a certain way. He was totally interested into language and word origins and the Oxford English dictionary and he very proud of his Oxford English dictionary and looking up things and asking questions about words and meanings in front of his students.

[00:29:34] 'cause he was also learning English all this time. His English, it was incredible and his understanding of English. So yes, the answer is yes.

[00:29:46] **Steve Varley:** Stepping back and looking at your life and your work, you've worked in these really important moments, bringing resources to the world. You've worked in education through the origin of Naropa University.

[00:30:02] You've worked in death and dying with really important work and resources and, and scholarship and and editing. And I wonder if you could reflect for me. About how you know where you belong. So is it intuition, is it opportunity or being more deliberate than that?

[00:30:23] **Judy Lief:** Not very deliberate at all. I mean, as they kind of alluded to, I've ended up in places by surprise.

[00:30:31] And that probably that one of his teaching approaches was to set up situations, put people in situations. You know, like when I became the head of Naropa a long time ago, again, it was sort of like the teaching the Tibetan book, and they did like to go do it. I said, what? Yeah, uh, that kind of thing. And then learning from that, being put in these situations that are kind of groundless and kind of how to navigate.

[00:30:57] That way. So it wasn't all, you know, go to this retreat and sit on these cushions. A lot of it was like really how to mix dharma with things and not be afraid to jump into situations where you have no credentials and no background and no training, and then deal with it. I came to appreciate that and you know, after like Princess and Nopa thing, I thought.

[00:31:21] The last thing I wanna do. 'cause I had this really great job working with him at, at these retreats and editing. So I had to stop that when I did the Naropa thing. But then I later realized it's actually was really strong dharma that I never would've gotten in the more, you know, conventional forms, like GO programs, dharma study, there's sitting on a cushion doing good works and all that stuff.

[00:31:48] So, you know, I think. It was kind of easier, you, you could say when he was alive. Right. I remember my husband and I, we kind of were end up because we were both involved in various aspects of that Sangha. We'd end up where he was living. Right. So at that we ended up in Halifax there where he lives the last part of his life.

[00:32:10] And then once he died, we'd had this conversation once. How do people decide where to live? Okay. We just going to follow him as he lives there. Okay. That's, that's cool. So we did have that funny little moment, but I had a lot of unfinished business there in terms of editing and, and things I knew he wanted and I was trying to.

[00:32:32] Fulfill what the things that I could do. We actually tried to get out of it, but it didn't quite work. We, we all knew he wanted it and nobody wanted to do it, And that's how we drew straws.

[00:32:43] **Steve Varley:** And literally you drew Strauss and you got the, the short string.

[00:32:46] **Judy Lief:** Yeah.

[00:32:46] **Steve Varley:** Okay.

[00:32:47] **Judy Lief:** So there, what, six years of my life?

[00:32:49] **Steve Varley:** Yeah.

[00:32:50] Yeah.

[00:32:51] **Judy Lief:** And since then I've sort of gone just by instinct. I, I sort of feel that it has kind of a calling and I, I don't make it sound my way, but I sort of. Have what I think can contribute the most. I, I keep thinking I only have a few years left. How can I contribute the most? And it sort of end up coming back with I am good at a few things.

[00:33:14] I should try to do that. I don't know. But it's a think ever ask themselves, right? You always have so much time. What's what's gonna benefit? And you never know for sure. Who knows? Maybe you'll do something totally different. I wouldn't be surprised.

[00:33:30] **Steve Varley:** What gives you hope right now as you look over the landscape of contemplative practices in meeting the world?

[00:33:39] There are organizations and people and movements and trends I'm sure that, that you must have seen over your career and maybe are you hopeful? I mean, do you see that work moving out into the world?

[00:33:53] **Judy Lief:** I have a mixed. I see a, a lot of dharma groups paging out, fading and one way of looking at things like, uh, those tribes that, oh, everyone dies, no one speaks the language.

[00:34:07] That kind of thing. There's some of that. I think that there was this upsurge and it's, it's on its down surge, and that's why actually where it's been, I guess you'd say. Where I place my hope. A lot of my energy in the last several years has been trying to mentor and new leadership that are younger, And that's gives me a little bit of hope, but it's a lot of work.

[00:34:32] But trying to empower newer people to be able to carry on this kind of lineage in a way that's appropriate to the times in the new generations, which is, they even know, but I wouldn't know. Recognizing there are generations and there are different, so I've been really spending a lot of time, kind of a little bit, not to the same skillful way that term perpetrated in terms of pushing people into situations, but more, you know, less enlightened version, but pushing people into situations and giving the confidence that they can, they can hold it, the whole thing.

[00:35:09] And younger, I don't mean like, you know, they're like 40, 50 year olds. 40 40 year olds, 40 year olds, 30 year olds somewhat. But that gives me hope that they can actually take it over. And I've made quite a bit of progress in the one main retreat that I do, and we'll see the main course that's I did for many years, this year is being taught by all younger generation people.

[00:35:33] It's leadership, not just the course, but how to create World Strong Worlds is much more than teaching and they're learning to do that too. So I'm, hopefully they'll, they won't drop the ball. I don't know.

[00:36:03] **Steve Varley:** How do you know as you're adapting the teaching to a new context and a new generation is doing something different, how do you know that it is not violating something core about the tradition and causing some damage or harm?

[00:36:23] **Judy Lief:** You never know for sure is do the best you can. You recognize that's a possibility, and I mean there's certain really core principles I think I'm not too worried about.

[00:36:33] Current core principles of awareness and kindness and values of practice, and joining that with study value of community, the common themes of refuge invoice off of ow and those paths and all that's laid out pretty clearly, but you never know. You never know. Question of ego, whether people, charism is always possible and always has been.

[00:36:57] But you know, it's hopeful for if the intention is right, there'll be enough blessings, some kind of protection, but life is a risk. Right,

[00:37:08] **Steve Varley:** right, right. Well, thank you Judy, for your work and your your life of sharing these resources and these teachings and for being with us today. Oh,

[00:37:20] **Judy Lief:** thank you, Steve.

[00:37:22] **Steve Varley:** Yeah, it's real, real pleasure.

[00:37:23] Thank you.

[00:37:28] Thanks again for listening to my conversation with Judy Leaf. Speaking with Judy. I was struck by the way her life is unfolded through a series of invitations, often unexpected. To step into situations without a clear roadmap and discover what practice looks like in the middle of real life. If you'd like to explore more of her work, you can find links in the show notes, including her podcast, Dharma Glimpses, where she shares short teachings every week.

[00:37:58] And as I mentioned at the beginning, from time to time, I'll be sharing more conversations from teachers and community members who spend time here at the Garrison Institute. Alongside the wonderful conversations, Jonathan continues to host on the podcast. Thanks so much for listening.

[00:38:17] **Jonathan FP Rose:** The Common Good is a production of the Garrison Institute and is hosted by me, Jonathan FP Rose. We'd love to hear your thoughts about the podcast. Please send us a note at [podcast@garrisoninstitute.org](mailto:podcast@garrisoninstitute.org) and let us know what you think. If you've enjoyed this episode, please consider leaving a positive review on Apple Podcasts.

[00:38:37] This show is produced by the Garrison Institute with Production and Marketing from the Podglomerate. Its theme music was composed by Jonathan FP Rose, and performed by Jog Blues. We look forward to being with you again soon.