

Arlene Samen: Saving Lives of Mothers & Infants Around the World by Awakin Call Editors

Arlene Samen has been a Nurse Practitioner in Maternal Fetal Medicine for over 33 years. In 1997, Arlene met the Dalai Lama and showed him what Interplast could offer children of Tibet. He said to her, "You must go into Tibet and help rural people. When you are on the path of service, all doors will open to you." That meeting deeply impacted the trajectory of Arlene's life of service. In 2004, she left behind her clinical practice to dedicate her life to serving pregnant women living in the most vulnerable conditions in the most remote places of the world. By 2009, she started One Heart World-Wide, which spread its life saving "network of safety" model to 60,000 women in remote villages in Nepal, the Copper Canyon in Mexico, and deep into the Amazon jungle in Ecuador where few dared to go. What follows is an edited transcript of an Awakin Call with Arlene Samen moderated by pediatric cardiologist Ameeta Martin. You can listen to or read the full interview [here](#).

"I Want You to Go to Tibet": Meeting the Dalai Lama

Ameeta Martin: Arlene, can you take us to the beginning and how you began your journey into service and how that led to your meeting with the Dalai Lama?

Arlene Samen: I feel like I'm a conduit and not so much a leader on this path—I guess I just keep saying "yes!" My journey really began in the early 80's when I lived in West Virginia and my ex-husband who was studying to become an anesthesiologist. We were invited by a group called Interplast who is now called ReSurge International. They are one of the first medical groups who went into different countries to perform cleft lip and cleft palate surgery. I was very fortunate, my very first trip I got to work with Dr. Donald Laub, who was the chief of plastic surgery from Stanford. We went to Honduras and when we arrived we were met by a sea of children and families who had walked for days to get there to have an opportunity to have their cleft palate/lips and burns fixed. I remember thinking "Oh my gosh, I don't know if we will have enough time for all these cases."

I was so impressed that every person on the team worked from 6:00am in the morning until 11:00 o'clock at night with the goal that we would get through the hundreds of people waiting. By the end of it, I think every single one of us felt so deeply touched and inspired by the people themselves. Just their confidence in us, their compassion towards us, their own stories of courage and survival and their deep love and devotion to their children, that they would walk days to get this surgery was deeply touching.

It gave a gift to me; I would say in knowing that was what I wanted to do with my life. Because it was far bigger than (I'm not going to say just being a nurse because I had had an incredible nursing career). But that I wanted to serve in a bigger arena than my job at the university. Rather I was also working on a Navajo Indian reservation, but I

just felt that the World was beyond that and that my neighborhood was global I suppose.

I worked with Interplast for over twelve years and it was my journey with them that led me to meet his Holiness the Dalai Lama in India, because there were several Tibetan refugee children from Tibet who had cleft lip and palates. There was a letter that came from the administrative health in India to Interplast and they had asked me to come to Tibet with some surgeons and take care of the children there.

Ameeta: So how did this lead to your visit with his Holiness?

Arlene: Prior to my departure of going to India, someone I had met when I was living in Salt Lake City told me the Dalai Lama's niece; his eldest sister's daughter was living in Salt Lake City. I then contacted her and then her husband's cousin was actually the doctor that ran the hospital in Dharamsala, India. So not only were we invited by the ministry of health but also I was also able to reach out directly to the hospital director who arranged our visit. Who, upon our arrival, had asked us if we would like to have a private audience with his Holiness. And of course none of us said "No", we were so excited!

I remember the night before leaving for India my friend Bill, who is part Chinese and part Irish, asked "What am I going to ask His Holiness?" and Paolo, an Italian plastic surgeon said; "I want to ask His Holiness, why there are these acid burns? How can anyone throw acid on a young bride in Bangladesh? because when that happens it destroys their life!" Then they asked me what I was going to ask His Holiness? And I told them I'm going to ask him "How can I help?"

The next day we were brought in to meet with His Holiness— we had about two hours with him. It was a very informal, sitting in a living room chat. We showed him pictures of the before and after of the children's surgery. He talked to Paolo about karma and that could be something playing out with these acid burns. Then he, His Holiness, said to me: "I know your background is in maternal-child health, I want you to go to Tibet and help the women and children. My mother had sixteen children and half of them died under the age of five. I thought, "Oh, okay." Then we all left.

Paolo and I decided we would do our best to go to Tibet.

Working in Lhasa: Birth Kits Blessed by Lamas

At that time, Tibet was closed to uninvited visitors from the US. It seemed daunting to figure out how we were going to get invited to go there. But I looked around and found a doctor that was from the San Francisco Bay area, who was doing a project there. I contacted her and she then gave me the phone number of a doctor who spoke English in Lhasa and contacted Dr. Palden and then he made arrangements for us to get permission as an outside medical team to come to Lhasa and operate on children with cleft lips and palates.

Then while I was there, I heard many stories of women dying in childbirth and it was a fascinating phenomenon, especially in places like Tibet. Even though I did not say a word

about my background in high-risk obstetrics, news got out somehow, and very quickly, and people began to literally just come to my hotel room.

Ameeta: Would you talk more to us about the childbirth process in Tibet?

Arlene: I find it quite intriguing because we Westerners make an assumption that there is what we call traditional birth attendants in many cultures. I work in many places around the world and that is a myth. In Tibetan Buddhism there is a concept around pollution — around the blood of childbirth and menses, but more around childbirth. So women gave birth outside of the home. Usually in the animal shed where there was hay and it was already dirty. For them it made sense if you were going to ‘pollute’ something, then you would go and ‘pollute’ something that was already dirty.

The women would go out alone, like an animal, because that is just how historically it was and they didn’t ever think about delivering in the hearth of the home where the fire was because this ‘pollution’ would offend the ‘spirits of the home’. And then these spirits could cause harm to the family or cause seizures to the baby, or cause the mother to have post-partum hemorrhage, or cause the cord to wrap around the neck.

There were lots of superstitions around that and so when we first went we took cultural anthropologists that were specialists in Tibetan medicine and Tibetan Buddhism. And we did cultural surveys to understand the cultural and spiritual beliefs. Then after understanding those beliefs and with the community, we came up with an idea; if we were to design a clean birth kit, that had a clean plastic sheet, a clean razor blade, a clean string, gloves, etc., we could deliver in the home where it was warm and people were around then we would contain the “pollution” and then bury it or burn it. We also took the birth kits and had them blessed by the local lamas. And people thought that would completely work.

That is how we first started with birth kits and getting people to deliver in the home. Then the local government was starting to have birthing centers. They were pretty rough looking when we started working there so we also worked to upgrade these birthing centers. Women wouldn’t go there because women did not want to give birth with strangers. There was this belief that these strangers could bring with them hungry ghosts on their back and the hungry ghost could jump into the baby and make the baby sick. So then we trained a health worker in the community and gave them a birthing kit, then they became a birthing attendant. They met with the woman/women early on in their pregnancy and they were no longer a stranger.

We looked at every challenge or every superstition as an opportunity. We adapted to their culture, instead of asking them to adapt to ours.

A New Generation of Birth Attendants... Including Men

Ameeta: How did these women who didn’t know anything about the birthing process, go out into their own shed and deliver a baby on their own and know what to do?

Arlene: They didn’t know what to do, and that was a big part of the problem, they just had the concept that animals do that, and they either survived or not. Sometimes a mother or a mother-in-law would come and give them tea and help with cutting the cord, but then again with a dirty knife. It was a matter of "this is what your mother did and that is what they did for generations and that is the way we are going to do it".

It has been about driving systemic behavior change that saves lives now and future generations because they won't go back to the old way of doing things. That is one thing I remembered was so profound to me. When I was staying out on the Tibetan plateau where we worked in places that were fifteen thousand feet high, just wide expansive plateaus with these magic mountains and clouds that looked like you could touch them. There were wild horses and yaks and fires burning and I realized that this is never going to be the same. This ripple effect will take hold; the women will never go back to delivering babies that way again.

Ameeta: How did the men react to these changes?

Arlene: They were very much a driving force behind the change, because they didn't want their wife to die and they certainly did not want their child to die. It's been really beautiful, the grandfathers and the husbands, in Tibet, were so curious and wanting to learn everything as well. They became very engaged in the process and made certain the woman did go to a place where there was a birth attendant. In fact, some of the birth attendants in Tibet were actually men!

In Nepal, we are actually seeing the men in the community as the driving force for these birthing centers. They were donating their own land, collecting donations and building the birthing centers and made commitments that all women in the communities would be taken and deliver in the birthing centers. Now many men are accompanying their wives and witnessing the births as well. It has been a phenomenal change.

In fact, I started working more in Nepal because the husbands were more engaged than in Tibet. When I first started in Nepal we were meeting with about seventy of the health post administrative team, which were mostly men—about 80% men.

I posed a question - I felt it was channeled to me - I had not planned this at all but it was one of those organic moments where I trusted my intuition, and I asked: "How many of you have a mother?" So I raised my hand and I said: "I want you all to imagine for a moment—close your eyes and imagine what your life would be like today if your mother had died at child birth." There was a moment of silence, and tears. I continued: "Even if your father re-married, that woman would not be YOUR mother, and probably wouldn't treat you like her only child. And if your mother died, then you would probably be raised by other family members, you wouldn't have the same type of nurturing and that kind of love; your whole life would be different."

The men came up to me later on and said they wanted to take a stand, and wanted to be a part of the solution, and not part of the problem.

Then we broke out into focus groups and it was all about what the obstacles were for women getting access to care and how to solve those problems. Every single group independently came up with the things that men needed to do and to make this shift happen.

Driving Maternal Mortality Rates to Zero

Photo credit: Phil Borges

Ameeta: We all love the idea about being able to do good things, but you truly have made

such a huge difference. Can you give us statistics of what the maternal-child or infant mortality was like before versus now after the initiation of your program and how things have changed?

Arlene: In Tibet 1 woman out of 100 would die in childbirth and 1 out of 10 newborn babies would die. Five years down the line we had zero maternal mortality and newborn mortality dropped from 10% to 3%. It has pretty much stayed that way, as I'm in touch with my staff in Tibet that took over the project after we had to leave. We know that since we started working in two of the rural districts in Nepal —Baglan and Aldopa the number of neonatal deaths from 2010 dropped from 300 to 0 deaths last year in 2015. And the number of maternal deaths went from 30 a year to 0 deaths, the last two years.

Ameeta: That is phenomenal. There are many NGOs operating out there and they can't claim the success that you have reached.

Arlene: I think it goes without saying, "You teach a man to fish and they learn to feed themselves". Everything we do is to empower and to provide the skills to the local people and they have made the commitment and are taking full responsibilities of these outcomes.

Ameeta: But you were able to incorporate their own cultural view and come to a way that they were able to empower themselves.

Arlene: I believe my experience with Interplast taught me a lot of things—one thing I knew for sure was that in global health in general, in the past, we've wanted to drop in and say this is how we were going to do this—our way. We had not taken the time and effort to build an infrastructure within the community, for the community, and by the community. We needed to adjust to them. And I think that is a different way of performing global health. It is definitely a slower process, but I believe it is more sustainable and replicable in the end. It really is a commitment to the behavior change happening and giving them the tools to change their behavior. And by giving them the love, support and the respect, we have a significant change of attitude and success. I think that is what is very unique about One Heart Worldwide is that we have made that kind of a commitment wherever we work. That was amplified when we were asked to leave Tibet in 2008 during the Chinese uprising and despite leaving, the communities continued to follow these practices and continued to have success.

Taking Refuge in the Buddha at Gunpoint

Ameeta: Would you tell us a little bit about what happened in 2008 and how the uprising affected you?

Arlene: Before I was going to work in Tibet, I took refuge with a senior and well respected Tibetan Rinpoche who had been a meditator, in a cave, for thirty years. It was his first time to visit the US to teach and to give refuge to students. He came with one of his students, who was a translator. During that process of taking your vows as a bodhisattva, the translator got up from his cushion, and came up to me and made a gesture that even if a Chinese soldier holds a gun to your head will you take refuge in the Buddha, The Dharma and The Sangha? And of course I said, "yes" but I also thought that was never going to happen.

Flash-forward almost twenty years later, it was made public that I was a CNN-Hero; and that I was going to be live on the Internet and we were going

to celebrate. Because China invaded Tibet on March 10th it was quite a sensitive time. It was also the year of the Olympics and we were worried something was going to happen. There were some minor incidences during that week. We had heard of some little scuttles that happened at several monasteries earlier in the week.

On Friday, March 14, 2008 around noon I went out for a meeting. I usually didn't go off by myself when I was working but I did this time. My driver dropped me off and I looked around and I just felt something was a bit off. I went into a restaurant and when I went to leave, I could see that there were some demonstrations happening and I saw cars being turned over and set on fire and people running. I knew there were a lot of military tanks because when I arrived in February we saw thirty or forty tanks coming into the city. It was very clear that an uprising was in motion and I went back into the restaurant and I called the US embassy. I was the first person to call in and I asked; "what do I do?" I asked if someone could come get me because now I was surrounded by danger. They told me that no one could come because they didn't have an embassy there. They said they could call my family and they gave instructions to stay away from the windows and to make sure I had water. After three or four hours of explosions and gunfire, I just decided I needed to get out of that restaurant because I felt I was in harm's way. I don't know where I got the courage to walk out of that door but I did, and once I walked out there was no way to go back. I walked until I found a hotel where I knew there would be other foreigners and banged on the door until they let me in.

For the next 36 hours we were wondering what was happening because then it was martial law. I was trying to stay in touch with my staff and my daughters and people that I knew. The phone was going down and the Internet was sometimes off and on again.

Then the next day the police came and they wanted all the foreigners to leave the hotel. I asked to be taken back to my office. I was put in a police car and driven to my office where I was even more in harm's way because we were surrounded by military and it had been an area that a lot of the riots had happened earlier. They had taken over this Muslim area in Chinese. There were a lot of attacks on the Muslim shops and Chinese shops as well. And there were still a lot of gunshots in the area.

One of my Tibetan staff that was there said we should go to my apartment and get my passport and some belongings. She went out there and spoke to the Chinese soldiers and they said, "Okay, you can go, but we are not going to protect you", so the two of us went out on the abandoned streets to go to my apartment to gather my passport and some belongings. We were caught off guard by a Chinese soldier who was interrogating a Tibetan family. They just turned and held us at gunpoint. I remember at that moment looking at this young Chinese soldier and having absolutely no fear. And I remember thinking to myself: "I take refuge in The Buddha, The Dharma and the Sangha." And he put his gun down and apologized and let me go get my things. We had to go back through the fire, the chaos and everything thrown in the streets. Then we were held by a tank so that we could not leave and forced to witness Tibetans being arrested and being beaten in front of us. When the police officer thought that we had seen enough, he put us in his car and said; "see what the Dalai Lama has done?" Eventually we were able to get outside of the city and stay close to the airport and leave.

Ameeta: Wow!!

Arlene: I know. I was an observer to something going on. But there was also this voice that kept saying to me; "everything is in Divine order and you don't need to know what it is right now. Just trust".

Ameeta: Do you feel like this was your path? That this is what you were meant to do?

Arlene: Oh absolutely. It really is unstoppable because after the uprising we were not allowed to continue to work in Tibet, and I had to leave behind my staff, my adopted daughters and my apartment. And most of all I left behind my heart and soul. I thought there is no way I could put myself through this again, I'm done!

But I did meet with His Holiness, and with my staff in Tibet and they told me to never give up, they begged me to take what I learned from them and pay it forward. At the time I thought: "no way, I'm not going to start this all over, it is just too painful." Yet I did start it all over and it is growing by leaps and bounds and has this beautiful life force in Nepal, far beyond what I could have done at the time over in Tibet.

The Tibetans took over the project and just recently won the Charity of the Year Award. So they are thriving. It's all about trust. And really trusting the Higher Force that it is all in Divine Order, and I don't need to know what it is, but to be willing to serve.

Never Accept No on the Path of Service

Audrey Lin: I was reading in the bio about you on the Awakin Calls website, that the first boy you met, Nicolas, who had a cleft lip, in Chile, and how you helped him and several other children as they went through surgery. Would you share more about Nicolas and how you never accepted "No" as an answer on this path of service?

Arlene: Wow. That is a long time ago but thank you for reminding me of him. He was a boy that I met in Chile with cleft face. The cleft went through his mouth and all the way through his face.

Developing as an embryo your face comes together as two halves that meet in the middle, And so, something happens that can be genetic, or environmental, or taking medications may interfere, or we just don't know. It can be the lip, the palate, or it can be a cleft through the whole face—instead of the two halves coming together; there is a slit, where the two halves are not complete. That is what happened to Nicolas.

He had had some surgery in Chile, but needed to have more cranio-facial surgery because they needed to move the orbits of his eyes closer together and the other parts of the cleft in his face that were still wide apart. They didn't have that type of surgery available or the equipment in Chile at that time. So when I met him I came back and I was working for a pediatric cranio-facial surgeon and I told him about the case. And he said he could operate on him for free if I could get the hospital to take care of him for free and find someone to take care of the family to bring him here. And so I did!

I went to the hospital directors and told them the story and asked if we could please bring him to the hospital. I then raised the money to get the family there, and I found a family that would take him in. The family would need to take him for a while because the surgery is done in many stages. I just remember Nicolas who was 5 or 6 years of age at the time, asking me if he looked like a monster, and just being able to say "No, you're so handsome." Then seeing his face after going through these surgeries and knowing that he would never be able to look completely "normal"; but just the love that his

parents had and watching him go through all of that and seeing the confidence he had afterwards. It was amazing to watch the transitions through love and care and expert medical care. And as far as I know, he is thriving, doing well and has grown up to be a very kind and very compassionate young man.

Audrey: That's beautiful. And you ended up doing this with several children during your time in Chile—correct?

Arlene: Yeah. I actually met a little girl with a similar story from Ecuador. Nicolas ended up living with me at the time and this other girl Katrina who was older, who needed to have hand and foot surgery AND the cranio-facial surgery. She stayed with a family that I am still very close to and it changed the children's lives in that family, because they were about the same age as Katrina and everyone had to take care of her. I still know the daughters and recently was talking to one of them and asking her what that was like for her, to have Katrina living with them. So, it can be challenging, but you get so much more than you can ever give.

Audrey: Would you tell us additional stories of experiences like Nicolas and Katrina where you have been able to witness a shift in your patients or in yourself?

Arlene: Well, I have three girls from Tibet that have been in my life. I met the oldest one who was 9 years old at the time. She was begging on the street. She was dressed in rags and with her she had a little baby that the family later learned that she had found in the garbage. The baby was in a box and this young girl was feeding it coke from a dirty bottle and she herself was eating noodles out of the garbage. I saw her, and stopped to talk to her and gave her money. But then I thought that this is not enough. This has to end right now. I went to my office and got one of my staff so that I could have a further conversation in Tibetan. When we returned, there were two other little girls that were her sisters, and her mom. I put them all in my car, took them back to my office, which was in a really nice hotel. So here I come in with these little ones in rags and I'm sure the hotel staff was thinking what in the world is she going to do now?

I brought them out to the back courtyard and got them whatever they wanted to eat. I heard the story that they were very poor farmers from another area and this was their only means to make money; to put their girls on the street to beg and then they had found the baby in the trash.

I said; "This ends today!" These girls are going to go to school and make something of their lives and this begging is stopping right now. We got the girls in the bath, and the water was completely black. One of my staff then went out and got them all matching dresses and shoes. The girls then all twirled around in my room and I remember one of them asking: "Do we still look like beggars?" And I said: "No, you're my three little princesses."

And that has been another life lesson and still a struggle and filled with courage and tears and love and joy. The two eldest girls have just graduated from high school and are headed for college and the oldest of the three is married and has two children. These are my three girls. And I remember when I met them there was a tour bus with some people and one of the people on the bus was a minister from a church. She asked the girls to tell a little bit about their lives and tell her who I was. The girls responded; "Oh she's our Angel."

I had watched them while other beggars tried to get money from me, and they would fight

with them; they would push them away and start arguing. And I said to them that they didn't have to defend anything. Everything they needed they would have no matter what. Then I instructed each of them to give money to the beggars. So I gave them money each day that they had to give away—that they would know that they had more than enough. I remember one day after lunch there was extra food. They each got packages of the extra food, which I thought they would have taken back to their parents, but they wanted to give the food away to other beggars.

Ameeta: What a powerful way to teach them about abundance. Three kids that were born in to scarcity and you took this lesson and you taught them abundance. Are the girls still in Tibet?

Arlene: They are all in Tibet. And the two that graduated high school will soon be applying to go to University. One of the girls may end up going to the University of Lhasa, or right outside of Lhasa. And I'm not sure if the other will end up in Mainland China. Once they apply and attend school over there, I'm going to see if I can get them to come to school in the US. But it is very difficult for them to get a visa to leave Tibet.

Ameeta: So you are not able to see them while they are in Tibet?

Arlene: The only way I can see them is to meet them in Mainland China—which we have done. We also Skype with each other.

The Strength That Comes from Knowing We Are All One

Audrey: In a way it is like you have no fear of what could come down the road and no sense of scarcity. What gives you that expansiveness to take the time to engage in that way?

Arlene: It's quiet simple. I absolutely know that we are all one, and that God loves through me and that there is no lack of love. Those living in scarcity are me. They are all of us. They are a part of us. I grew up in poverty and yet my mother always made us believe that we had everything. Even though we had nothing. I thought I had everything. And I did. Because what do we all ultimately need? We need to be a part of a community and loved. There is no lack of that. We can always tap into that—always!

Maybe I don't have money to give a beggar, but often I will stop, look them in the eye and acknowledge and vow to them.

Audrey: Would you describe your childhood?

Arlene: We lived in a two-bedroom apartment with all three kids in one room, which we loved and all the animals that were there, the cardinal birds and the robins. I just thought they were all part of the grounds that I had to care for. I would take food out to the animals and I would just meet with anybody and everybody!

I remember there was a man that was alone and he would feed the squirrels and all the children were afraid of him, but me. I would just go and sit on the bench and learn how to feed the squirrels. He, in my mind, was the caretaker of the animals. So I just had this whole thing I had made up—that we lived in Buckingham Palace! And it was all a part of the grounds, all of the apartments and streams and the trees. And it was expansive. If you ever saw the movie *Life is Beautiful*, my mom was that person—in a way she believed we

were in a play. We would get a cardboard box and just think, look at all the things we could do with this! We could make a house! We could make it into a train! I never felt a lack of anything.

Audrey: What gives you the ability to be fearless?

Arlene: My faith. My connection with the God I am inside of me. Whether it is my Buddha nature or God, or that Life Force.

Ameeta: Are you a meditator?

Arlene: I am. I could meditate far more than I do. It was funny, the other day a girlfriend asked me how much time I spend practicing? And I said every single moment of my life. Every breath I take.

Audrey: How does spirituality influence you in your work? You carry such a strong conviction. What is your spiritual practice?

Arlene: Well, I was raised Christian and by a mother who absolutely under all circumstances, no matter what, has believed that things were in Divine Order. And when I was really young I studied Eastern Philosophy and Buddhism. I didn't truly understand Buddha nature at that time but it just seemed to be a part of who I was. I can't remember a time when I wasn't connected to a higher power. Even as a child. In fact, I remember when I was about 10 years old—that I had this sense that I had a conversation with Jesus. Knowing I had no fear of death. I've never had a fear of dying. I just have always felt protected. And even more and more knowing that when I am anxious or fearful, that those are the moments that I feel separate from my spiritual practice. The God that I am, the Buddha that I am. When I forget that, that's when I lose who I am. It is very important to stay connected to that. I do that through acts of service. That keeps me connected.

Audrey: What is on the horizon for you? Where do you feel like you want to focus your time and energy now?

Arlene: I'll continue to work with One Heart, but I'm also studying right now to work with patients with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and end of life care. I'm very motivated to continue my path reducing suffering in our world. It is where I have a lot of compassion. Especially with our soldiers that come back from war. They've witnessed so much violence and committed violence.

Audrey: Have you had a chance to work or interact with any of those soldiers?

Arlene: Not yet. I'm early in my course and right now we are watching a lot of videos of teaching working with PTSD soldiers.

Audrey: How is it to come back to the U.S?

Arlene: I'm incredibly grateful yet sometimes very sad. In a way having to navigate my feelings of knowing that I've left—that I've left behind people that are suffering. For example, after the earthquake in Nepal, I came home but my staff and villages were there without anything. So sometimes I struggle with how best to deal with my own emotions around that and realize that what I am doing here will serve them greater than me being there. I feel sorry for them but it haunts me to think about that

when I can come to a place where I do feel safe. And that I have everything. A roof over my head and food and everything else and that I am leaving behind people who don't have that. I struggle with that. I want everybody to have everything.

Ameeta: You live from your heart, you live from love without fear and that is what we all try to achieve. It is inspiring to know that some people can actually do it; you provide the rest of us a model.

Arlene: The secret to all of it—the wind beneath my wings- are my friends. It's the love and the community that hold me up. And they hold me through all the trials and tribulations with so much love that it just fills me back up. I have to say that it is really community and my faith. That's what holds me together. It feeds and nourishes me.

Audrey: And we'd love to know, how can our ecosystem be of service and support you and your beautiful intentions and work in the world?

Arlene: I can feel all of your love and support. It comes back to me and it just goes back out to feed this beautiful Universe. What I ask now is that we hold all of those who are suffering in Turkey, in Syria, in France, and all over that our prayers and our love reaches all of them today and every day.