



offers you

# Dharma Friends

**Dedicated to Sharing the Dharma, Healing Each Other,  
All Sentient Beings, and Ourselves**

February 2011 issue # 169

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**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY! LOVE EVERYONE EVERYWHERE EQUALLY ...**

## The Dhammapada The teachings of the Buddha



from verses published by the Forest Sangha and free to readers

### **Verse 9 - EVIL**

116 - Hasten towards doing what is beautiful. Restrain your mind from evil acts. The mind that is slow to do good can easily find pleasure in evil-doing.

117 - If you perform an evil act, then do not repeat it. Avoid finding pleasure in its memory. The aftermath of evil-doing is painful.

118 - Having performed a wholesome act it is good to repeat it. Enjoy the pleasure of its memory. The fruit of goodness is contentment.

119 - Even those who perform evil can experience well-being so long as their actions have not yet borne direct fruits. However, when the results of their actions ripen, the painful consequences cannot be avoided.

120 - Even those who live wholesome lives can experience suffering so long as their acts have not yet borne direct fruits. However, when the fruits of their actions ripen the joyful consequences cannot be avoided.

121 - Do not ignore the effects of evil, saying, "This will come to nothing." Just as by the gradual fall of raindrops the water jar is filled, so in time fools are corrupted by evil-doing.

122 - Do not ignore the effect of right action saying, "This will come to nothing." Just as by the gradual fall of raindrops

the water jar is filled, so in time the wise become replete with good.

123 - As one who is entrusted with precious cargo would remain vigilant and protective avoid evil as if it were poison.

124 - A hand without an open wound can carry poison and remain free from harm; likewise, evil has no consequences for those who do not perform it.

125 - If you intentionally harm an innocent person, someone who is pure and blameless, the harm will come back to you like fine dust thrown into the wind.

126 - Some are reborn as humans; evil-doers are reborn in hell. Doers of good are reborn in bliss and the pure enter the trackless land.

127 - There is no place on earth where one can hide from the consequences of evil actions – not in a mountain cave, the ocean nor in the sky.

128 - There is no place on earth beyond the reach of death – not in a mountain cave, the ocean nor in the sky.



### **A few thoughts on this Dhammapada verse: EVIL**

from anna

Most of us are so entrenched in our traditional, societal, and religious understandings of evil that until we shed these beliefs and go deeper, we barely glimpse what the **Dhammapada** is referring to as evil. But, if we are to know All That Is, we can't just choose to pursue those aspects of the path that promise comfort and happiness. To do so would mean to run from suffering. To be fully present requires being as open to evil as to bliss. These **Dhammapada** verses give us a path to awaken to all wisdom states, but we really do not know their deep and subtle meaning until we achieve such awarenesses ourselves. We can do this by reading the teachings written by those who 'know'. We can meditate. We can practice kindness as a way to purify the inner obstacles that obscure our pure view. Then we can practice and practice and practice in equanimity, balance, and focus. Little by little, we will experience a deeper knowing of all of these words such as enlightenment and evil.

As in all our inner research, we can start by doing some contemplative meditations. We can explore our understanding of evil by asking ourselves some questions. For some guidance, perhaps we could consider a much too simplistic perspective on enlightenment and evil: *Being of benefit to all takes us to enlightenment. To intentionally cause harm and suffering takes us towards evil.*

#### **Now we can ask ourselves some questions -**

Is it evil when the lioness with hungry cubs hunts down the baby gazelle and kills it for the survival of her little family? Is it evil when the homeless man with a schizophrenic illness robs a shopkeeper of a loaf of bread in order to eat? Is it evil when a 10 year old who lives in the ghetto among addicts, including his mother and siblings, and never sees alternatives to violence, beats a younger child to vent his rage? Is it evil when that ghetto is primarily populated by people of color and those living a few miles away never address the issues of poverty and illness that destroy the lives of these children? Is it evil when tax dollars and huge profits go to better the lives of the affluent and because of discriminatory or passive views, the survival needs of minorities are blatantly ignored?

***What is evil and when does the intention to cause harm towards another become more than instinct or a deeply programmed act beyond one's clarity and control? How do we walk the path to understanding and addressing evil as a healer and peacemaker?***

In the Christian tradition, someone who lived this "practice" of addressing evil was the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. Here is part of a sermon delivered at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, on Christmas, 1957. Martin Luther King wrote it while in jail for committing nonviolent civil disobedience during the Montgomery bus boycott. He shares:

**"Let us be practical and ask the question. How do we love our enemies?"**



"First, we must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. It is impossible even to begin the act of loving one's enemies without the prior acceptance of the necessity, over and over again, of forgiving those who inflict evil and injury upon us. It is also necessary to realize that the forgiving act must always be initiated by the person who has been wronged, the victim of some great hurt, the recipient of some tortuous injustice, the absorber of some terrible act of oppression. The wrongdoer may request forgiveness. He may come to himself, and, like the prodigal son, move up some dusty road, his heart palpitating with the desire for forgiveness. But only the injured neighbor, the loving father back home, can really pour out the warm waters of forgiveness.

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act. It means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship. Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning. It is the lifting of a burden or the canceling of a debt.

The words 'I will forgive you, but I'll never forget what you've done' never explain the real nature of forgiveness. Certainly one can never forget, if that means erasing it totally from his mind. But when we forgive, we forget in the sense that the evil deed is no longer a mental block impeding a new relationship. Likewise, we can never say, 'I will forgive you, but I won't have anything further to do with you.' Forgiveness means reconciliation, a coming together again.

Without this, no man can love his enemies. The degree to which we are able to forgive determines the degree to which we are able to love our enemies.

Second, we must recognize that the evil deed of the enemy-neighbor, the thing that hurts, never quite expresses all that he is. An element of goodness may be found even in our worst enemy. Each of us has something of a schizophrenic personality, tragically divided against ourselves. A persistent civil war rages within all of our lives. Something within us causes us to lament with Ovid, the Latin poet, 'I see and approve the better things, but follow worse,' or to agree with Plato that human personality is like a charioteer having two headstrong horses, each wanting to go in a different direction, or to repeat with the Apostle Paul, 'The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.'

This simply means that there is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies. When we look beneath the surface, beneath the impulsive evil deed, we see within our enemy-neighbor a measure of goodness and know that the viciousness and evilness of his acts are not quite representative of all that he is. We see him in a new light. We recognize that his hate grows out of fear, pride, ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstanding, but in spite of this, we know God's image is ineffably etched in being. Then we love our enemies by realizing that they are not totally bad and that they are not beyond the reach of God's redemptive love.

Third, we must not seek to defeat or humiliate the enemy but to win his friendship and understanding. At times we are able to humiliate our worst enemy. Inevitably, his weak moments come and we are able to thrust in his side the spear of defeat. But this we must not do. Every word and deed must contribute to an understanding with the enemy and release those vast reservoirs of goodwill which have been blocked by impenetrable walls of hate.

Let us move now from the practical how to the theoretical why: Why should we love our enemies? The first reason is fairly obvious. Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction.

So when Jesus says 'Love your enemies,' he is setting forth a profound and ultimately inescapable admonition. Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we must love our enemies - or else? The chain reaction of evil-hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars - must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.

Another reason why we must love our enemies is that hate scars the soul and distorts the personality. Mindful that hate is an evil and dangerous force, we too often think of what it does to the person hated. This is understandable, for hate brings irreparable damage to its victims. We have seen its ugly consequences in the ignominious deaths brought to six million Jews by hate-obsessed madman named Hitler, in the unspeakable violence inflicted upon Negroes by bloodthirsty mobs, in the dark horrors of war, and in the terrible indignities and injustices perpetrated against millions of God's children by unconscionable oppressors.

But there is another side which we must never overlook. Hate is just as injurious to the person who hates. Like an unchecked cancer, hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity. Hate destroys a man's sense of values and his objectivity. It causes him to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful, and to confuse the true with the false and the false with the true...."

This is the best that I think we can do with good and evil while we live in a worldly view of reality. Until we are enlightened, let's just do the best we can to walk the path towards benefitting all beings and causing harm to no one. We can start with that mind of *Don't Know* and walk our path with Love, Kindness and Forgiveness. No matter whether we understand or not, we dedicate ourselves to move forward with love given to everyone equally. This is a practice for the most present, the most sane, and the most courageous. This practice has shed all ideas of good and evil and is one that is *lived* from moment to moment. At some point, we might just get a peek at our wisdom mind of enlightenment and perhaps then, we will also truly know evil. Then we will hold these enigmatic energies of light and dark as ONE sacred vastness.

## A MEDITATION on EVIL

Loving those who are evil is the measure of our capacity to love. The Dalai Lama said –  
*"When I see beings of wicked nature oppressed by violent misdeeds and afflictions may I hold them dear as if I had found a rare and precious treasure."*

**How is that for a sweet saying for a Valentine's card to your beloved?**

In truth though, it is hard to always be kind even to those we love and who would do anything for us! To embrace a spiritual path where we vow to love those who have a "wicked nature" and who do "violent misdeeds" is to take on an enormous challenge. And yet, we know that His Holiness the Dalai Lama "practices what he preaches". He is a living example for all of us. There are others like Martin Luther King, Jesus, Thich Nhat Hahn, Mother Teresa and those who have shown us that walking this path is not impossible.

**So why should we do it? Not just to be a saint too.**

We can embrace such a meditation path because there is no better way to see our own capacities and incapacities in this mirror of our shaky compassion. Only then can we see that edge where we stop loving and start harming others. It is there where we must do our work. In this way, we will grow more and more every day.

## A meditation on evil

Just for the sake of this meditation, let's call any action where we withhold love, push away, and act with harm, evil. This meditation is to focus on the hundreds of times a day where we withdraw love and act with negativity. It helps to start with 10 minutes on our meditation cushion. We have to get good at doing this meditation first on the cushion because when we get up and go on with life, we are so used to these "opportunities to see our negativity" that we hardly notice them. They just become "life as usual".

### MEDITATE

- Sit on your bunk or your meditation cushion or in a chair. Begin by quieting your mind, relaxing your body, and focus on breathing in and out; in and out.
- Dedicate your meditation to your highest realization and to benefit all beings.
- Now sit quietly. Just continue to focus on your breath. It won't take too long before something will arise that you will want to push away because it is accompanied by judgment, anger, or fear. This is your first opportunity to practice our meditation on evil.
- At first the pushing away will be subtle or you may bolt into a full-blown retreat from the arising and never even notice your response. But - can you watch your response? Can you watch your thoughts? Can you watch the judgment? Can you watch the anger? Can you watch any tension that arises in your body? Can you watch a desire to say something, to react, or to move to escape discomfort? Just watch. Don't change a thing.
- Breathe. Notice all of your responses, stay open, and say gently to yourself, "let it go." Imagine all negativity dissolving into space. As you let go of negative energy, it may be that that same negativity will arise again shortly. It may be that that one focus becomes your entire session. But, each time, let it go. Then rest in your breathing. Notice the next arising, say to yourself, "let it go". Go back to your breath until you have the next opportunity to see "negativity" arise. Let it go.
- At the end of your meditation, dedicate the beneficial experience that you've gained to benefit all.

**That's your meditation.** There is no need to have an agenda to be good or kind or loving. Just let go of the negativity and the pushing away. Love comes naturally after the negative energy has dissipated. There's no plan. There is no thinking. There's no need to shut down any intention to cause harm. There is no necessity to be other than where you are -- just doing the meditation of letting go. Eventually, when we have stability, equanimity, balance, and focus we can take this meditation into even the most trying situations in the world. But first, we have to develop the capacity to just notice when negativity arises and to let it go.

After your sitting meditation, you can also do some analysis and contemplation. What were the catalysts that most likely generated fear, judgment or anger? What arose as a desire to cause harm? Present stresses may have brought up old pain. You may have had thoughts arise about something someone said or did that you are still clinging to. Old life stories may have come to you. With this information of the psychological, emotional or physiological level, you can tackle some of these issues. You can consider the pain that might be at the root of your desire to cause harm to yourself or others. We benefit by knowing what disturbs our equilibrium and a general sense of well being. We are able to see again and again, that "evil" is actually our own inner negative energies. Life's *arising*s constantly reflect our inner world back to us. In this process, we awaken to all that we are - including our often hidden dark side. And, we dissolve it in light and let it go.





## From Your Letters

**#1 – The Mindful Money Book – If you would like a free copy of Linda’s book, Mindful Money to help you get an excellent education in finances in this concise course, write to us (address on the back page) and put on your envelope- ATTN: Linda. For the **Money Book**.**

**#2 - If you have a Meditation Group** that would like to receive our love, prayers and support, write and give us your group name, the name of your institution, and the participants' names, if you wish. We will send your group a Compassion Works for All/Dharma Friends CERTIFICATE affirming that you are a part of our sangha too. We will be sending prayers out daily to all of you (of course we do that to all of you already...) Write for your group certificate and put *Attn. Linda - Meditation group* on the envelope. This drawing is by J.P. and R.F. of the Shared Breath sangha

**#3 - Jeff's Kids and your heartwarming letters:** Jeff is our friend who counsels kids in a Juvenile Detention Center. He thought that sharing your thoughts or stories about your journey to prison might benefit kids that are in the same situation that you might have been in once upon a time. Well, many of you have written very powerful letters that are full of wisdom and caring. The kids have sat in rapt attention as Jeff read your letters to his groups. But, you have not yet received a letter back because there have been some surprises that have taken our breath away. Let me tell you how you have touched these kids in ways that we never expected.

Many of the boys in the groups do not have dads in their lives. Either they never knew or met their dads, or their dads have disappeared along the way, or their dads are in prison. The big surprise has been that your letters have awakened that deep longing in their hearts for their disappeared dads. The boys, ages 10 – 18, are still very innocent and childlike despite their often tough exterior. Hidden away in their hearts have been fantasies of their dad coming back to them. Without any of their usual armor of self-protection, many of these kids listen to the letters and they are SURE that the letter being read to them is from THEIR DAD. Jeff is not reading any names or revealing what state they are from, and he is telling them that the letters come from all around the country. Still, against all logic, the kids have such strong longing for their dad that they magically think that THIS letter is from their dad who has tracked them down, somehow found them, and has used this way to communicate with them. These are indeed “wonderful dad” letters that many of you have written. You ARE the perfect dad who shows them the caring and guidance they never had. So, as kids will do, they believe that through your letters, their dad has appeared to them. Their hearts have glommed onto the letters as way of holding onto this manifestation of their missing dad. As you can imagine, to urge them to write back to you right now and take this process away from them, might compromise this imaginary dad’s existence that they need for a while. For now, Jeff will read the letters and allow the kids to talk about them. He is very skillful and these letters can be a path to healing for these kids who have lost their dads.

Know how much your letters are all appreciated for your stories, your advice, and for being such a wonderful vehicle to reach broken hearts! The healing that is coming from these letters is extraordinary.

We would also like to compile your letters into a book for teens and kids who are having troubles and for whom your guidance would be helpful. Some of you mentioned that we can use the letters in any way that might be helpful. If there is any question as to your intent, we will write back to you and ask specifically for your permission. We will keep your identity confidential in every way. At this point, we are thinking that we will begin by putting each letter, one by one, on our JustUsFriends.org web site so that families with kids can read them together. As soon as we can, we will put together a book that has some small commentary, with the goal of sharing the book with kids and families, juvenile detention facilities and other groups who serve at-risk kids.

**If you would like to write a letter to Jeff’s Kids the address is CWFA, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708 and put JEFF’S KIDS on the envelope. Keep those letters coming. For those who have written to Jeff’s Kids, thank you so much!**

**#4 -Chelle and friends** want to explore the development of a post-release support program for those of you who will be leaving prison. She believes that those of you who will benefit from such a program will have the best ideas of what should be offered. So

write please and let us know what you will need upon release. How can a support person or group best help you? Do you have ideas about how such a program could work?

Chelle says: Ideas need not just come from those to be released soon. I'm sure that there are guys and women that are a long way from being out, but still think of their release.... that have fears of what they will face and know what would help them the most.”  
**So write us and put on the envelope: Ideas for Chelle’s REACH project. Thanks – know that you will help many through helping to develop this program!**



*Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean—the one who has flung  
herself out of the grass, the  
one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—  
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.*

*I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
With your one wild and precious life?*

*Mary Oliver*

**From P.T. - Dear Dharma Friends,**

I write this letter because I believe there’s a need for various things which need to happen in order to benefit all aspects of Buddhist prison outreach projects, such as:

1. A National Directory of organizations and groups offering programs and services in prisons and a listing of what services they offer and who local contact is. (Reason for this is I’ve written various, so-called “prison projects”, yet all I get is a referral to someone else who then refers me to another. So, a lot of wasted energy and stamps, and I still didn’t find what I was looking for)
2. Buddhist groups need to network with and invite teachers from other Buddhist traditions, yoga groups, Reiki masters, and other mental-physical-spiritual disciplines and healing arts to, A. visit as guest teachers to offer retreats and workshops or become volunteers in corrections to offer programs.
3. An information packet covering all aspects and elements of each tradition, so that inmates and staff can be aware of what is and isn’t an element or aspect of Buddhist practice. (The Missouri Dept of Corrections requires an inmate, policy and procedure, to fill out a “Request for Accommodation of Religious Practices” form which must list every practice, material needed, sacred and holy days, and related information. Then the inmate submits it to the institution Chaplain, who then processes it and then it’s sent to Missouri Dept of Corrections Supervisor of Religious/Spiritual Programming, who then presents it to the Missouri Dept of Corrections Religions Programming Advisory Council, who then checks out information provided and either approves or denies it. Sadly, a lot of people on the outside can’t understand the policy and procedures because they’ve never read them.)
4. Inmates need to support prison projects and become more pro-active in their efforts to see more programs offered by A. Local teachers and Sangha members who may be able or willing to come in and offer programs or B. Teachers in other states or countries who may be willing to visit as guest teachers, to offer a 1-3 day special program or C. Teachers and therapist from other mental-physical-spiritual disciplines and healing arts, such as Reiki or Pranic healing, Transcendental Meditation, Silva Mind Control method, yoga, medical chi kung to help deepen groups practice.
5. Inmates need to pick one or more prison projects and then set aside \$1 or \$2 a month for donation, or have their family and friends donate \$5-\$10 a month to prison projects, to help the people who volunteer their time to help prisoners have access to the Dharma. Because, without proper support, it may not be able to continue.
6. I also encourage teachers and Sangha members all over the world to become more informed and aware of A. the potential available in prisons and B. the need and importance of qualified teachers and therapist to offer programs in prisons and C. what other programs and services are needed or offered in local prisons to help inmates properly prepare mentally, physically, and spiritually to

re-enter society.

I sincerely believe if inmates, their family and friends, and prison project staff and volunteers all across America would become more informed about the need for legislative and prison reform in America and if they'd network and share information and support more programs in prisons and encourages all teachers and therapists from all traditions of mental-physical-spiritual disciplines and healing arts to at least visit one local prison in the next year, it would benefit everyone.

Inmates should take the time to read all the policy and procedures of their Dept. of Corrections and then research the state and federal laws which support civil and constitutional rights of prisoners, because, whether or not you are even considering filing a lawsuit, you should still be aware of what your rights are. (Even though most people assume inmates have no rights, that is a misconception, because we do.)

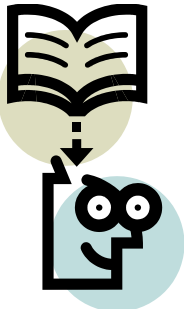
Imagine the unlimited potential if teachers and therapists from all mental, physical, spiritual disciplines and healing arts, would agree to visit local prisons all across America... to offer retreats, workshops, empowerments, Reiki attunements, seminars and other programs. It would help build a strong foundation for these areas to be studied, practiced, applied, and experienced in a segment of our society, which needs it desperately.

I formally send out this "cry for help", petition for teaching and invitation to all teachers and therapists who may be interested in - 1. Donating study and practice materials to our Dharma group here (Medicine Buddha Sangha) 2. Visiting as guest teacher (per policy, only once a year for a 1-3 day special event) to offer a 1-3 day retreat, workshop or program. 3. If local (within 2 ½ to 3 hour drive), become a volunteer in corrections to lead/offer programs here.

If a person or organization wanted to donate books, audio or video, CD's or DVD's or tapes, or other study and practice materials to a prison in Missouri, they need to call (per policy) the Institutional Chaplain and request a "Deed of Gift" form and information on who to donate materials. If a person is interested in visiting as a guest teacher, they need to contact (call) the Institutional Chaplain and ask for information on how to get approval. If a person is interested in becoming a V.I.C (volunteer in corrections) in a Missouri prison, it is relatively an easy process, which, once completed, the person can visit the prison weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or 4 times a year, and if 4-8 people would become V.I.C.'s and great teachers, it would allow more programs.

Please feel free to contact me if you need more information, plus I seek people interested in being Dharma pen-pals. Thank you. In the Dharma

***If a man should conquer in battle a thousand and a thousand more, and another should conquer himself, his would be the greater victory, because the greatest of victories is the victory over oneself. - Buddha***



### **Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream**

**Omar Muhammad** was one of our good friends. Many of you in our *Dharma Friends* community knew him through his writings. He died two years ago, just about now. As a prisoner in the Arkansas Department of Corrections, he led and mentored many towards achieving the goals of living a spiritual and productive life. He wanted folks in prison to educate themselves as much as possible because he knew that if people left prison without basic skills or ready to tackle a good job, they would return shortly. His dream was to have an educational program for young people to escape the challenges of poverty and ghetto life filled with violence and instability. I urge those of you who are leaving prison to start with his challenge to first educate yourselves to accomplish your highest goals. Then, return to your communities and offer something back, especially to those kids that might be as lost as you once were. Help kids to find a path to success and help them to be all that they can be. That would be Omar's dream.



### ***And if you have a burning question - ASK TIM!***

Write us with your questions. Tim will tackle almost anything - except how to file your legal paperwork. Questions about life, getting a job, which fork to use at the dinner table, anything you have wanted to know but did not know who to ask. Now try **ASK TIM!**

Write to our Compassion Works for All address and put ASK TIM on the envelope.

**From ES:** Hi All! I hope you are happy, healthy and safe. I read the following and felt like sharing: ***"Grant yourself a moment of peace and you will understand how foolishly you have scurried about. Learn to be silent, and you will notice that you have talked too much. Be kind and you will realize that your judgment of others was too severe."*** – ancient Chinese proverb.

## OKAY - So much serious stuff - time to laugh!!

### Southerner's Medical Dictionary

Artery..... The study of paintings  
Bacteria..... Back door to the cafeteria  
Barium..... What doctors do when patients die  
Benign..... What you be, after you be eight  
Caesarean Section..... A neighborhood in Rome  
Cat scan..... Searching for Kitty  
Cauterize..... Made eye contact with her  
Colic..... A sheep dog  
Coma..... A punctuation mark  
Dilate..... To live long  
Enema..... Not a friend  
Fester..... Quicker than someone else  
Fibula..... A small lie  
Impotent..... Distinguished, well known  
Labor Pain..... Getting hurt at work if

Medical Staff..... A Doctor's cane  
Morbid..... A higher offer  
Nitrates..... Cheaper than day rates  
Node..... I knew it  
Outpatient..... A person who has fainted  
Pelvis..... Second cousin to Elvis  
Post Operative..... A letter carrier  
Recovery Room..... Place to do upholstery  
Rectum..... \*\*\*\* near killed him  
Secretion..... Hiding something  
Seizure..... Roman emperor  
Tablet..... A small table  
Terminal Illness..... Getting sick at the airport  
Tumor..... One plus one more  
Urine..... Opposite of you're out

#### From D.K.: Dear Dharma Friends,

On your June 2010 issue its states on page two where it says "how do we grow beyond this cycle of suffering?" Then it goes on to say "when people were in therapy or a new class with me and they would dive headlong into their favorite drama about how so and so did what ever bad thing that they did to them, my stock response was to ask them how they themselves created the entire event. I don't want to listen to what the other person did, but I do want to hear what they did to bring about that result which had made them so mad. That is my rule - to take 110% responsibility for whatever happened. But not too many folks like my rules."

Now, are you saying that when you are about two or six years old and your babysitter wants to have sex with you and you do not want it but he or she does any ways, how is that your fault and how can you take 110% responsibility for that? What could a kid do to deserve that? Or how can you take 110% responsibility when you are in bed asleep and somebody breaks into your home and rapes you and takes all of your money. And you find out that you do not even know the person that did that to you. How is that your fault? Could you please break this down for me so I can understand what you are trying to say? Thank you. Sincerely, D.K.

#### A FEW THOUGHTS from anna about D's Questions:

Let me first share something that confuses most of us in the same way that D is confused with this commentary from last June's *Dharma Friends* issue. Our society often processes behavior and events through a lens of judgment. We assign guilt or blame to almost anyone for anything when something goes wrong. We are addicted to pronouncing who is the bad guy and who is the good guy.

When we talk about '*taking responsibility*', we are not judging or saying anyone is bad or wrong. In *taking responsibility*, we are heightening our awareness of the links that lead from one unfolding event to another. An example is: if we throw a ball against the wall and it bounces back and hits us, it is not because the ball had evil intent to attack us. We initiated the action and the unfolding result was a scientifically expected and predictable one. *Taking responsibility* is to look for the place where we entered or began the series of causative links. All of our actions initiate a series of events that cause predictable results. Only when we have greater clarity about how we enter this unfolding process of cause to results can we become more mindful of our 'responsibility' in the creation of our own reality.

We can also exaggerate our meditative awareness by saying that we take 110% responsibility. This level of self-examination enhances the ability to see how our actions initiated the subsequent causative links. Sometimes those links are directly perceivable and sometimes they are more subtle. For those of you more familiar with Buddhist and other eastern philosophies, you know that we talk a lot about karma. Karma is a scientific perspective of causative links that bring our future into being.

When we look at K's concerns that a child that was sexually abused or the robber and rapist that comes into your house when you're asleep are not 110% responsible for such horrors, we might also say, 'That event is not the responsibility of that child or that sleeping victim!' But the confusion is that most of us have substituted the emotionally laden word 'fault' for 'responsibility'.

This blurring of the lines between blame and the taking of responsibility has, in many ways, also skewed our legal system. Because of this confusion so prevalent in our culture, our legal system does not differentiate between incarceration as punishment for crimes committed and rehabilitation. In responsibility, there is rehabilitation where one may examine their actions and learn new and more effective ways to bring about positive results. As a society, if we could clarify our need for judgment and blame, we could interrupt our knee-jerk reaction that wants to severely punish the 'bad guys' as our response to disruptive and even violent behaviors.

This is one of our missions at **Compassion Works for All** which offers you *Dharma Friends*. We hope to extricate ourselves from this entanglement in contaminated views of moral judgment as we look at human behavior. If our legal system could abandon the perspective of blame and see instead see the unfolding thread of events in everyone's lives - including the perpetrators of crime and violence - we could offer a much more compassionate criminal justice system with greater potential to change lives into more productive ones.

I appreciate D's question because it allows us to look more clearly at this distinction. It reminds us all to look at our behaviors by taking 100% responsibility for our thoughts, words and actions as we set into motion the chains of cause and effect. To be aware of how we do this and to watch for the results that unfold allows us to create our future with awareness. To assign blame and guilt to our actions and those of others, is yet another level of setting into motion a negative intention that will also result in negative results.

In another discussion, at another time, we will revisit the topic of karma. With karma, we consider how our present, no matter whether it is good or bad in our conventional view, is unfolding because of seeds that we planted in the past. A very subtle view of karma may reflect on seeds planted even in previous lifetimes that result in negative consequences today.

This is a very challenging topic. Even for those who do not fully embrace it, it won't hurt to think that the positive actions of today will make our lives easier and more successful tomorrow.

*"A human being is part of the whole called by us 'universe', a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. . . A problem cannot be solved at the same level of thinking that created it... We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humankind is to survive." Albert Einstein*

**From Brandon Boulton: Dear Dharma Friends,** I am in the process of writing and compiling a book called "Awakened Compassion." It will have a forward and commentary written by me, but will mainly be filled with poems, prayers, and quotes of compassion in all its forms (i.e. mercy, forgiveness, acceptance, love, encouragement, understanding, empathy, sympathy, companionship, peace and kindness.) I will also be doing all the artwork and all the sayings in calligraphic form. If you have anything that you think might work for this project, send them to Kristopher at Dharma Friends and note on the envelop that's it's something to forward to Brandon's book and he'll get it to me. Be sure to include the writer's name.

*Mindfulness: Cultivating a Clear Presence of Mind*

*"When you walk, walk.  
When you run, run.  
By all means don't wobble."  
-- Japanese Haiku*

**Subscription information:** We have gladly been offering this newsletter free of charge to those in prisons. We are so happy to have a vehicle for those who have little dharma support to feel united with others who identify with their life situation. It is truly important to remember that we are all mirrors of each other. We are all one with each other. And we can recognize that samsara is suffering for us all whether behind the bars of a prison or behind the bars of our own ego structure. For anyone who is not in prison and who would like to subscribe to *Dharma Friends*, here is what to do. Sent us an email and you may have your monthly issue free. EMAIL [dharmafriends@comcast.net](mailto:dharmafriends@comcast.net). If you want a paper copy, the fee is \$30 for one year. Mail a check or money order made out to **Compassion Works for All:** and send to **Compassion Works for All, Dharma Friends subscriptions, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, AR. 72217-7708**. This amount covers the subscription for you and a partial subscription for a prisoner. I also want to acknowledge the enormous generosity of many of those in prisons who have sent stamps and letters of support and appreciation. Far more important than anything material are the letters and notes that say that you are benefiting from being part of this sangha of **Dharma Friends**. I think that many feel less alone on their journey because we are connected beyond all time and space to each other.

**PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES.**

**SOME NEW OPTIONS:** I shared in past issues of Dharma Friends that we are trying to be mindful of \$\$\$ in order to keep publishing our newsletter, as we scramble to get additional funding.

**Here are some ways that you can help us.**

- Keep us apprised of your address changes. Most of you have been very good at this and we hardly have any returned issues.
- If you are receiving Dharma Friends but do not read it or know someone else who does not read their issues, either donate them to your library, or write and tell us to take you off the Dharma Friends list. Now, some have written and said that others need them more than they do so take their name off. Don't be too generous!! **WE WANT YOU TO KEEP GETTING DHARMA FRIENDS IF IT IS HELPFUL TO YOU!**

If you have family or friends who might like to receive Dharma Friends as well, they can just let us know and we will put them on the list. It is important for us to keep those in prisons connected to society, and most especially to their families and friends. We greatly value the opportunity to bring a loving community of support to those who are connected to people in prison as they are often made to feel uncomfortable by society. If those you love receive Dharma Friends too, think of the common growth that you would share and the bond that could develop. So, you might suggest Dharma Friends as something your friends and family might like to donate to and receive via email.

*As I breathe in, I know I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know I am breathing out.*

*Listening, I know I am listening.*

*Touching, I know I am touching.*

*Lifting, I am aware of lifting.*

*Sitting down, I am aware of sitting down.*

*Thinking, I am aware of thinking.*

*Experiencing fear, I am aware of feeling fear.*

*Experiencing joy, I am aware of feeling joy.*

*Intending, I am aware of intending.*

*Beginning, I am aware of beginning.*

*Reading, I am aware of reading.*

*Finishing, I am aware of finishing.*

*Joel & Michelle Levey - adapted from Wisdom at Work and from Luminous Mind*

**A TRIBUTE TO KRISTOPHER** - Last weekend, Kristopher Davis, who writes in response to most of your letters and helps to find you books, keeps up with resources for your resource list, and who transcribes your letters for Dharma Friends newsletter, had a celebration to mark 10 years out of prison. A quite remarkable feat, given that the chances of recidivism for many is so high. When we first began Dharma Friends newsletter in 1997, Kristopher was one of our early recipients. He had found his way to the practice of meditation, and participated in one of Anna's meditation groups in his Arkansas prison. He was one dedicated practitioner! When he was released in 2001, he immediately began to help with the Dharma Friends issues and to answer the letters of so many who write to us each month. He is still working all day every day, along with working another job in a flower shop, to give all of you support, guidance, and healing. At the party, there were about 45 folks whose lives he had directly affected through various 12-step groups, by leading meditations at the Ecumenical Buddhist Society, at his place of employment, and through *Compassion Works for All* and his Dharma Friends offerings. A number of those at the event said that he had literally saved them from the likelihood of death because of addictions. His story is one of hope and healing, no matter what challenges one has faced. I hope that all his efforts inspire all of us to keep our focus on helping others because that is where our own healing comes from.

*Martin Luther King, Jr., said about agape, this higher love: "It's an overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless and creative . . . the love of God operating in the human heart."*

**From CU..:** I pray this letter finds you, and all you know and love, in good health and spirits. As for myself, I am well. I need to ask for your forgiveness for not writing quicker, but a lot has happened since I last wrote to you. My grandma passed away. She was 98 and had a long life, so I was not too sad about that, but she was the last of my older relatives that were alive. I lost my dad in 1990, my mom in 2005 and now my grandma. Now I'm truly alone, but not alone. Most of my DF and pen friends were very encouraging and telling me to relax, but all I can think is, "I am alone". But then, I think back to my teacher's instructions. We are all alone here. Life goes on in death and in life and we will find something to help us go forward. All we have to do is act and so I am doing the best I can do for myself. I have been quite shocked by some of the letters that were written by the other prisoners and others. I know you give all the opportunity to express their thoughts and fears and hurts, but some need to understand their opinion is just that, theirs. It needs to sometimes be put on hold or toned down. The service that you and the DF do is an outlet to teach the Dharma. After all, what is the Dharma but serenity and peace. I hope that you do print this letter in the newsletter and let all see it. It may bring some peace to the troubled people and allow them to understand the goal of the DF and give their ideas of peace and serenity to others that are in need of it. Well, I just thought I would write to you and give my support to you and let you know as soon as I can, I will send a check. I hope all is going good. Until the next letter, keep in peace.

Compassion Works for All/ Dharma Friends  
PO Box 7708  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708

Webpage: [JustUsFriends.org](http://JustUsFriends.org)

**FREE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL**

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**From S.D.:** First and foremost, please know that I send this with all my love and deepest respects for the love and kindness that you all share with the world! Thank you! Kris, you made me laugh. You are truly a creative soul. I also appreciate the kind words, you seem to understand my biggest hang-ups. Chelle, I just re-read the intro letter to DF and it touched me how much love and effort you put into this project - believe me, it comes across the words and pages clearly.

Anna, it's hard to truly contemplate the amount of empathy and compassion that you have. It amazes me to meet people like you. I believe my grandmother was a Saint on this earth. She had such love for all life, she was my hero! And I am grateful that life has led me to this group. I have the same story as 90% of the prison population: controlled by anger, lust, jealousy, greed and status.

Since I was a baby (literally), I was a crook. I took advantage of everything and everyone. Self centered to the extreme.

Now, I find myself in a cell, looking at 450 years and 9 consecutive life sentences...I'm accused of numerous bank robberies in this county. Please understand, I've never HURT anyone! What I'm accused of is "note robberies", but with my priors, it adds up to FOREVER - innocent or not, it hangs over your head like a ton of HEAVY STUFF.

So, I've come to the point that I realize that wherever I go - there I'll be. It's not so bad, really. I think that peace is achievable; even for a guy like me. Love is free and walls CANNOT restrain it. I choose to bring positive energy into this world.

My laziness is a challenge. However, it takes a challenge to make life interesting. I plan to live a monks life. I am creating a long-distance Sangha network - including this group.

My journey is only just begun, and I have a lifetime of karma to atone for. Yet, it seems it all starts with the first step. Which is what this basically is; a public vow and a blatant request for leadership. I'm totally rudderless.

This is my first attempt to write anything close to "feelings and thoughts", yet I haven't even scratched the surface...

The irony is, my goal in life is to write. I haven't a clue! Where do I learn? How can I pull my voice out? It seems to me I tell a "war story" as good as anyone. My audience is usually rapt into my sagas. Talk about a captive audience. I don't like to kid myself, simple minds are easily entertained. Give me a piece of string and I'm happy for hours. Well, I just wanted to write and send my thanks and appreciation for the goodness you ALL create!! So, thanks!

*If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are headed. - Lao Tsu*

# Dharma Friends

February 2011 issue # 169

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Additional Pages for EMAIL VERSION of *Dharma Friends*

*An Excellent Article from the Fort Worth Star-Telegram written by Bob Ray Sanders*

## **Paying for crime with life of failure**

In a report issued recently by the Pew Charitable Trusts, researchers document the scale of incarceration in the U.S. and its direct effect on their earning power of former inmates and their children. "Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility," should awaken us from our deep sleep of complacency.

The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, with 2.3 million Americans behind bars, a 300% increase since 1980, the report states. (That's more inmates than the top 35 European countries combined.)

While the costs of housing prisoners - \$50 billion annually for state correctional costs alone -- should be enough to cause us to rethink our way of doing things, the overall societal and human costs should be even more convincing. "One in 87 working - aged white men is in prison or jail, compared with 1 in 36 Hispanic men and 1 in 12 African American men," the study shows. "More young (20 - 34) African American men without a high school diploma or GED are currently beyond behind bars (37%) then employed (26%)."

Perhaps most disturbing is the 2.7 million American children who have a parent behind bars, a massive increase from 25 years ago when 1 in 125 kids had an incarcerated parent compared to 1 in 28 today.

We've known for some time that imprisonment makes it tough for an individual to get a job or find housing once he or she is released. The report notes that "serving time reduces hourly wages for a man by approximately 11%, annual employment by nine weeks and annual earnings by 40%." The typical former inmate, by age 48, will have earned \$179,000 less than if he had never been incarcerated.

According to the study, "Children with fathers who have been incarcerated are significantly more likely than other children to be expelled or suspended from school (23% compared with 4%)."

And noting that education and parental income are strong indicators of children's future economic mobility, the report points out: "Family income averaged over the years a father is incarcerated is 22% lower than family income was the year before a father is incarcerated."

We must come up with an alternative to lifetime punishment for those who make mistakes. Otherwise, we're dooming a large number of offenders and their children to a lifetime of failure.

*At Compassion Works for All - We have **BOOKS FOR SALE:***

*We now have more of Linda Bessette's **Mindful Money** book – order here by emailing Linda.*

***Mara Leveritt's books!***

***The Boys on the Tracks: Death, Denial, and a Mother's Crusade to Bring Her Son's Killers to Justice***

*And*

***Devil's Knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three***



*Email Linda ([lbessette33@comcast.net](mailto:lbessette33@comcast.net)) and she can give you more information about prices, mailing, etc. for all books.*

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***And anna's books –***

*Just As the Breeze Blows Through Moonlight, and Dharma Friends and the Healthy Living pamphlet are on our old Compassion Works for All web site – [www.dharmafriendsprisonoutreachproject.com](http://www.dharmafriendsprisonoutreachproject.com) for a free download – but donations are always appreciated! Or you can order a hardcopy book for \$15 plus shipping (\$5) at my email address: [anna@aristotle.net](mailto:anna@aristotle.net)*

***Join us at [www.JustUsFriends.org](http://www.JustUsFriends.org).***

***Check us out and help spread the news by emailing the site to your friends!***

***Along with informative and inspirational articles –***

***there are many videos in our video archive to lend a little support in difficult life issues.***



## ***PLAN AHEAD***

*Anna will be doing another meditation retreat at Joy Fox's retreat center, Wattle Hollow, near Fayetteville, Arkansas, on April 15, 16, and 17, 2011.*

*We have always filled up quickly so now you can sign up early! Go to - [www.wattlehollow.com](http://www.wattlehollow.com)- for details and to register.*

## *HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA IN ARKANSAS...*



*I am sure that many of you know by now that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is coming to Fayetteville, Arkansas, to speak on May 11, 2011. I've lifted the information below from our Ecumenical Buddhist Society web page - [www.ebslr.org](http://www.ebslr.org)*

*this drawing is by one of our Dharma Friends members, Don Wackerly*

### **Dalai Lama Coming to University of Arkansas in Fayetteville on May 11, 2011**



Where: Bud Walton Arena, University of Arkansas

The Dalai Lama will offer a public talk as part of the university's Distinguished Lecture Series. The Dalai Lama's visit is in response to invitations from professor Sidney Burris, director of the honors program in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, and Geshe Dorjee, a Tibetan monk and instructor in Fulbright College. The two met with the Dalai Lama during their most recent trip to India in summer 2009. Past distinguished lecturers have included Benazir Bhutto, Ehud Barak, Robert Redford and Martin Luther King III.

To get the most up-to-date information on His Holiness' visit, visit: <http://dalailama.uark.edu>.

Dr. Sidney Burris runs a blog and will have information on the visit as well as educational pieces all year long to prepare people before the Dalai Lama arrives. The blog is on TIBETSPACE (<http://readwrite.typepad.com/artibet>). Once on TIBETSPACE, readers can sign up for email notifications when a new posting appears. Simply, click on "Subscribe to this blog's feed" and then click on the reader of your choice on "Get TIBETSPACE delivered by email", if you prefer to get it that way.

### **Dalai Lama Visit to Feature Panel Discussion With Sister Helen Prejean and Vincent Harding**

**Free student tickets available March 1.**

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. – His Holiness the Dalai Lama will appear in two forums when he visits the University of Arkansas May 11.

1. He will take part in a morning panel discussion on "Turning Swords into Ploughshares: The Many Paths of Non-Violence", from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

2. He will deliver his keynote address, "Non-Violence in the New Century: The Way Forward" from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Both events will be in Bud Walton Arena.

- Free student tickets will be available March 1 and can be reserved by going online to [dalailama.uark.edu](http://dalailama.uark.edu).
- Tickets for faculty and staff will go on sale March 7.
- For the general public, on March 15.
- Tickets for the morning panel discussion will be \$15 for regular seating or \$18 for floor and prime seating.
- Tickets for the afternoon lecture will be \$15 for regular seating and \$22 for floor and prime seating.
- Tickets for both events will be \$25 for regular seating or \$30 for floor and prime seating.

To order tickets, call the Walton Arts Center box office, (479) 443-5600, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, or order online at <http://waltonartscenter.org>.

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***If you would like to host a Compassion Works for All fundraising lunch or coffee,  
Please let us know and we will plan details with you!!***

***This is a friendly and informative way to raise money for our efforts.***

***You invite those who you think would appreciate the philanthropic opportunity.***

***We will supply the food and I will gladly give a talk to your guests.***

***You may forward any past Dharma Friends newsletters, or this newsletter, on to anyone who you believe would benefit from them. If someone has sent this Dharma Friends issue to you as a gift and you would like to join us each month, please email [anna@aristotle.net](mailto:anna@aristotle.net) for more information about Compassion Works for All, our Dharma Friends newsletter, and our prison outreach program. You may receive Dharma Friends by email for a \$30 tax-deductible donation. If you would prefer a hard copy, the subscription fee is also \$30, but unfortunately it is not tax deductible because you receive a paper publication for your donation.***

