



Dharma Friends

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

March 2012 issue # 181

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The Dhammapada The teachings of the Buddha



Verse XXI: Various or often called **Miscellaneous**

290. It is wisdom that enables letting go of a lesser happiness which is greater.

291. You fail in the pursuit of happiness if it is at the expense of others' well being. The snare of ill-will can still entangle you.

292. To leave undone that which should be done and to do that which should be avoided leads to carelessness and conceit. It will increase confusion.

293. Confusion ceases by maintaining a meditation practice focused in the body, by avoiding that which should not be done and by mindfully doing that which should be done.

294. By removing craving and conceit, eradicating wrong views, and by overcoming the deluded attachments of the sense realm, the noble being freely moves on.

295. Having cleared all the hindrances to the Path – greed, rage, dullness and laziness, worry, anxiety and doubt – the noble being freely moves on.

296. Disciples of the Buddha are fully awake dwelling both day and night in contemplation of the Awakened One.

297. Disciples of the Buddha are fully awake dwelling both day and night in contemplation of reality.

298. Disciples of the Buddha are fully awake dwelling both day and night in contemplation of the communion of beings who have awakened.
299. Disciples of the Buddha are fully awake dwelling both day and night in contemplation of the true nature of the body.
300. Disciples of the Buddha are fully awake both day and night taking delight in compassion.
301. Disciples of the Buddha are fully awake both day and night taking delight in cultivating the heart.
302. It is hard to live the life of renunciation; its challenges are difficult to find pleasant. Yet it is also hard to live the householder's life; there is pain when associating with those among whom one feels no companionship. To wander uncommitted is always going to be difficult; why not renounce the deluded pursuit of pain?
303. A traveler possessed of virtue, disciplined and committed to right conduct, will be received with honor, such a one can be recognized and can travel with confidence.
304. The good are seen even from afar. They shine like the distant Himalayan peaks. The untrained simply disappear like arrows shot into the dark.
305. With enthusiasm establish yourself on solitary practice – sit alone, sleep alone, walk alone and delight as if secluded in the forest.



Some thoughts about this *Dhammapada* Verse: **Various** or **Miscellaneous**

I love that there is a chapter in the **Dhammapada** called **Various**. In some other translations, it is called **Miscellaneous**. I would like to be able to personally make the leap into realizing that **everything** is **Miscellaneous**. I suspect that when the *Dhammapada* was compiled, they took lots of left-over but important short teachings that did not fit neatly into the other chapters and put them together in this catch-all called *Various* or *Miscellaneous*. To me, this title reminds us that the world is full of categories and patterns and we all try to fit most everything into all of these organizing boxes. We just love patterns and organization and schemas. But in truth, everything arises and dissolves away while standing completely on its own, yet always arising from everything else, and always inseparable from '**All That Is**'. In order to learn that lesson in life, it is helpful to throw away the boxes.

After Shakyamuni Buddha's death, students continued to tell the stories and teachings that he had told to them. It was an era where teachings were memorized verbatim and that was how they were passed on to others. No one said, "I think I'll add my own thoughts here." It was over 150 years later before the teachings were written down. Those verses were written in a version of Sanskrit that was the written language of that time in India. Since then, there have been many translations of the **Dhammapada** into other languages, each having an interpretation of the ancient Sanskrit words as the translator attempted to find a way to capture the sacred thoughts in their language. Curiously, as you may know, not all languages have words that convey the same concepts. When a language was developed to express subtle consciousness experiences, like Sanskrit and later, like Tibetan, there may not be an equivalent in the translator's more modern language. English is one language which developed in order to engage in trade and commerce and it does not have as many words that adequately express these meditation teachings. This language 'deficit' actually is at work in our lives as well. Those who grow up in a culture and with a language that conveys meditation and consciousness teachings from the time of their infancy have seeds planted in their minds that then grow easily as their consciousness evolves. In the West, we have different seeds planted with which we learn to conceptualize differently about life,

ourselves, and consciousness. We learn well how to use our language and concepts to survive, but for those on a path of transcendence, when it comes time to grow beyond ego and survival issues, we have less facility to express our experiences. As we experience increasingly more subtle awareness in meditation, we have to start from scratch to build our understanding of our path on a template that is foreign to such an evolution. In truth, it is the experience that is our path but it is helpful to receive understandable teachings until we get there. Such growth is easier for those speaking a language that is designed to express transcendence because those meditators have an embedded understanding. Bummer for us.

But maybe not. That is why I like this verse. It jumps the tracks when it comes to templates. Whenever we are given something that we 'think' we can understand with intellect, we are more comfortable translating and relating what we hear to all that we 'think' that we know. This is actually an obstacle. "Miscellaneous" and "Various" is perhaps liberating us from all categories and even reminds us to stop thinking so much. It is a reminder to enter a free flow of resting effortlessly in mind and just watching what arises without trying to make anything fit into what we have conceptualized. Of course, it does not take much for our ordinary mind to try to find patterns and structure or to put anything new into all that we imagine that we know. But, by calling this chapter "Various", those of us who are trying to break out of boxes can smile at the reminder and the challenge. It tells us to just go for it with a meditation where we watch miscellaneous arisings come out of the box and explode like unique fireworks in our awareness.

Life and all that is **IS** miscellaneous. All is miscellaneous if we don't structure and grab hold and try to make sense out of all those arisings. We want to KNOW and UNDERSTAND and CONTROL. Our ordinary mind has a goal to keep our "I" intact, our life safe, and to get what we want. We are very persistent in attempting this impossible feat. It will never happen. But still we spend almost all of our waking moments and lots of meditation moments trying to corral all that is miscellaneous into some structure and control so we can be happy.

We ask: What can I read to better understand this? What can I do to get what I want? How can I meditate to reach the states of transcendence that will transform me with peace and happiness. Is this event KARMA or is there a scientific cause and effect? Is this because someone is at fault? Maybe my life is the result of my culture, my bad parenting, my mother's poverty, my mother was stressed while she carried me, my head injury, my drug use, or my poor impulse control because of a hyperactivity disorder, or that officer who is out to get me! Of course, we could go on and on – forever! At the level of intellect and living in a precious human body, survival is helped by this beneficial exercise of learning, understanding, and categorizing. It helps. But that is not our ultimate experience as a human being.

We are so much more. And, we come to a place in our growth where we then switch gears – actually, we switch views – and remember that our highest evolution is to integrate that world of "I", of categories, intellectual understanding and goal settings, and awaken into a knowing of "**All that is**". We let go and hold all of that in **ONE** "miscellaneous".

There, in that view, we just watch gently and effortlessly. We watch what arises and let it go. Without 'trying' or 'efforting', we just watch....and if mind clutches at thoughts of trying to categorize and to understand and aim for goals... then just let that go too. Wisdom within us is running the show, so there is no need to worry. What may very much look like tragedy or a wrong path, when seen from vast view of our highest evolution, we know that there are no mistakes.

Perfection is always unfolding.

ALL is always VARIOUS or MISCELLANEOUS.

Just let **All** arise – no need to do anything – just watch perfection unfold. Put away the boxes....





A MEDITATION – on **Various** or **Miscellaneous**

As life arises moment by moment into all of its many expressions, our smart brains go to work putting everything into some organization. **All** arises and we try to make sense of it in our favorite ways: we name, delineate, describe, categorize, point our fingers at, criticize, and layer on many intellectual descriptions in order to find meaning. We become experts and some of us become teachers in these descriptions of All That Arises. It does help us survive, make money, get fame and glory -- and that is good for a while.

In our growing though, there is a time to leave all of that behind. No longer do we need to do all of that.

On the path, we gain benefit from these various examinations of all that we call our 'self' and our world. Even in our early practices of meditative study or religious study, this effort to learn categorizations and how others understand reality is helpful. As we grow, most of us slide up and down throughout the universe of available experiences of consciousness and jump often from ordinary view to very subtle sacred view. And I suspect there are few of us that can stay in those states of pure and sacred awareness for extended periods. We tap into them and then we are back in our gross mind examining who said what to whom and focusing more on our hurt feelings. That is because most of us are not realized Buddhas or transcendent beings.



Until we are, we are on the path to our highest self. On this path, it is very helpful to just notice as we travel wildly around on our awareness journey. We can notice when our mind is resting effortlessly in vastness or when we have judgments and intellectual dramas. Without any attempts to do anything other than to watch what is arising naturally, we simply BE. Nothing needs to make sense or to be understood. Just watch. Nothing in this realm of subtle energy meditation work can even be spoken of or shared without leaving our primary meditation on life's 'miscellaneous' teaching for you. Your teachings are unique and no one else knows how your transcendence will unfold. No one else knows what your important teachings will be. To give you tasks, other than to rest and watch, would be asking you to *effortfully* do it MY way, rather than allowing and celebrating your own effortless and miscellaneous manifestation. Simply rest in vastness; the indescribably pure essence.

So, again and again and again, the task is to let go of any intellectual or emotional or even energetic tendency to take all that is sacred and 'make it' something else that ordinary mind can understand. This is not easy.

Start your meditation now and let it last forever. When you forget, just take something that works for you as your cue, your reminder, and start again. Anything that arises is a good starting point. This is the meditation -- forever. This is the path until there is no more path -- because we have realized what **IS**.



From Your Letters

Holidays for now until mid-March:

February 14 - Valentine's Day. Let everyone everywhere be your very special valentine. Tell them all you love them equally just as you love all beings everywhere.

February 22 - Losar - the Tibetan New Year. This coming year is the year of the Male Water Dragon. It is traditional to spend the day before Losar cleaning your home or workplace. Hold in your mind that you are cleansing all of your negative karma from the year before and starting your new year with a clean slate. For Losar itself, we usually do special prayers and then have a Losar feast. In Tibet, they have great celebrations and games. For those who feel spiritually connected to our Vajrayana Buddhist sangha that sponsors this newsletter, we will not celebrate Losar this year. The head of our lineage, Thinley Norbu Dungse Rinpoche, died December 27, and instead of a celebration, we are honoring this time with special prayers for his life and rebirth. We will wait until March 5 and then do special prayers for the benefit of all beings.

February 22 - for Christians, it is Ash Wednesday.

March 7 - for Hindus, Purim begins at sundown.

March 11 - Daylight savings time begins

March 17 - for Irish Catholics, it is St. Patrick's Day

and a few Dharma Friends reminders -

#1 - We are trying to become a well-oiled machine here and you can help us! It would help Linda a lot if you would briefly put on your envelopes what it is you want. If you are a subscriber who wants to change your address or if you are new and want to be put on the mailing list, say that. Also write on the envelope if you want a book, a dictionary or a Mindful Money book, if you have an Ask Tim question, or if you are including a letter for Jeff's Kids. Then she need not search through the letters for all that information and can send your letter on to the next person to take care of your request. Thank you.

#2 -ASK TIM -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 also wanted to know but did not know who to ask, now try: **ASK TIM!**

#3 -Become a DICTIONARY DROP TEAM PLAYER!

Here are the game plays for our Dictionary Drop !!

If you want a dictionary, there are two plays.

1-Drop a letter to us at CWFA/DF DICTIONARY DROP and tell us how you will be helped by having a dictionary. We have English and Spanish/English dictionaries. Specify which you want.

2- AND - get a new teammate! Give us the name of someone you know who would ALSO benefit from having a dictionary. Give us their name, number, and address, and tell us why you want to make this gift. (You might check this out with them first so they won't take it as an insult to their English skills!) You might see if they would also like to receive **Dharma Friends** and mention that to us too. We will send them a dictionary and a note that you have given them this gift - and **Dharma Friends** too.

and then... If you want to play the game... (you can get a dictionary and choose not to play, or if you already have a dictionary, you can use your own...)

3 - In each **Dharma Friends** issue we will have a word drop - and ask you to research it and send us a note that explains your understanding of it and maybe even what it means to you in your life.

4 - For those who are on the team and play the game, we will send you a CWFA/Dharma Friends Dictionary Drop Certificate after we receive twelve months' of letters successfully explaining the words we include.

Hooray - Your Team Wins!

#4 - For the women...

Kathleen Welton has graciously donated a handful of her latest book, "The Little Book of Gratitude Quotes", a beautiful book full of motivational and encouraging quotes. She requests that these books specifically go to women inmates. If you are a woman and are interested in having a copy sent to you, please let us know. A limited quantity is available. Please put on the envelope "**Quote Book**".

and **something new for WOMEN: "Bliss Sisters"** has graciously donated us some copies of their newest book, "**Unbreakable Spirit: Rising Above the Impossible**", with a special request that this book go to our women inmates. This is an uplifting book filled with inspiring true stories. If you're interested, send us a request! Please put on the envelope "bliss book".

We have a limited supply of both of these books.

#5- Jeff's Kids and your 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. 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. **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!**

#6- If you would like a free copy of Linda's **Mindful Money** book to learn a great understanding about money and your life - just send a letter to CWFA and put on the envelope - **MINDFUL MONEY BOOK** please We have a limited supply.

#7 - Dhammapadas are available for you - if you do not have a Dhammapada, we have put together our own compilation of verses into a pamphlet for you. Please write to Linda and put **Dhammapada** on the envelope and we will send one to you. We have a limited supply, but if we run out, we will start a waiting list.



It is through not understanding, not penetrating four things that we have run so erratically, wandered on so long in this round of existence, both you and I. What are the four? Goodness, concentration, wisdom, and liberation. When these four things are understood and penetrated, craving for superficial existence is rooted out and that which leads to continued return to the same conditions is ended. There is no more constant journeying.- Digha Nikaya

OUR DICTIONARY DROP WORD for March is "INTEGRITY"



by Alan Jay Cotton

The worthies of past ages all sought the truth and did not deceive themselves. They were not like moths throwing themselves into flames, destroying themselves in the process. - Ta-sui

From S.S.: Dear Mr. Davis, I just received your newsletter recently. Thank you for adding me to your subscription list. I had a couple of questions for you. These questions concern AVIJA. My understanding of Avijju comes from a Theravadin monk's explanation. When someone attains the state of no return and dismantles sanna their citta is basically "fermentation free", with perhaps a slight feeling of SuKHA, then duKKha, and a small fluttering of SAnKHaRa. In order to attain enlightenment at this point he said to notice the fluctuation in the CITTA and see that this state still has a fluctuation in it. He describes a bright point in the CITTA, saying this is the focal point and that by seeing this for what it is - a reference point, or self as a reference point - it will flip and attain Hinayana nirvana. He says this bright point is Avijja - fundamental ignorance. My question to you is, does this "bright point" or "nucleus that all fermentation has been reduced to" exist in our mental continuum while not in a physical body of some sort? I understand while in the intermediate body we seek out other bodies and stay in samsara. Is our tendency to do this while in the intermediary body due to this self as a reference point to existing in our mental continuum itself? Or from "imprints" left in it due to its existence in our human bodies due to the way our brain functions evolutionary wise and our mental continuum lacking something

else, like insight into the am team knows of the fermentation that occurs in a human brain? Are our mental continuums "too old" so to speak? Anyway, thank you again for everything. Sincerely, S.

PS - In your opinion could an Arhat shed tears or "cry"?

A note from Anna: Although many of you are delving deeply into traditional teachings of Buddhism, in Buddhism as in all spiritual traditions, there are many paths and sects. It is important to understand these teachings as much as possible so that they will be our guideposts along the way. More important is to do the subtle meditations that take us to 'knowing' what these teachings are saying beyond the words, many of which are ancient Sanskrit words with very specific meanings. S.S.'s questions are from the Theravadin studies of enlightenment and are different in many ways from some later pathways of Buddhism. They are, though, foundational teachings. I include S.S.'s letter to show how refined one's studies might be and how different this path might be from yours.

This is not to say that any one path or any religion is better than any other. It is to say that if you study one tradition, you must find a teacher who is from that tradition to work closely with you on your path. If I answered S.S.'s questions from the view of my Vajrayana practice, I would not be a helpful guide as my answers would be very different. I know it is hard for those of you in prison to find a personal teacher or guide, or even to find books that give you answers to specific questions. Kristopher is limited in the books he has at hand and we do not have the resources to search for and purchase specific books.

Here is my best answer - have faith and trust that whatever comes to you to support you on your path is perfect. Do not fret over questions and answers or the teacher or teachings you do or do not have. Take the one piece you do have and meditate and study with that as deeply as you can. I suspect there is a lifetime of wisdom in that one piece. You may not ever need piece #2 if you truly do justice to meditating on the one little clue to enlightenment that you have in your hands.

"There's something very wrong with our judicial system today. People have prejudices, people have fears, people have hates. These things cloud our ability to reason. We also have compassion, love, mercy...but what makes it so difficult in the judicial system is that the people who are there to protect and serve, they get so desensitized and they lose the ability to reason. There's got to be a way to reawaken the compassion in the people who run our justice system." Jason Baldwin, WM3

Jason Baldwin was in Tucker Maximum Security unit here in Arkansas until he was miraculously released from prison last August. Some of you reading these pages were Jason's good friends and had many fabulous discussions about life issues and spirituality with him. You watched him become a very wise man to be able to share thoughts like this quote above. Jason is one of the three men wrongly convicted of the murder of three eight year old boys in West Memphis, Arkansas eighteen years ago. The others were Damien Echols who was on death row and Jessie Misskelley who was also in prison in Arkansas. It is clear today, and maybe it was clear when the initial trial was going on so many years ago, that the three charged with these killings were innocent. In August, with a special plea agreement, Jesse, Jason and Damien were released but still not exonerated.

Now, movies are coming out one after another that share the story of the West Memphis Three. I was very pleased to get to see the latest movie, **West of Memphis**, just the other day. It is powerful. And it is haunting. There is much presented in the movie that is now in an evidentiary packet that was presented to the state's prosecutor and which highlights another individual as one who should be considered for additional questioning. This person is a step-father of one of the three murdered boys. He was ignored at the time of the original investigation but DNA and testimony from others now builds a compelling case to open the murders back up for reevaluation.

What has left me horrified is a justice system that pursues children (the convicted men were only 16, 17 and 18) that had no resources, no real support or legal guidance, and were convicted only on vague circumstantial evidence. Against them was the state of Arkansas represented by men with power and political aspirations and very suspect motivation.

Jason, Jessie and Damien lost twenty years of their lives. The three little murdered boys can never regain their lives. And there was another victim. This latest movie reveals the story of the younger sister of one of the murdered boys who is now 21. She has had a tragic life of addiction and trauma. The movie gives verified testimony, that is now part of the evidence packet, that family members had great reason to believe that she and her brother, one of the murdered boys, were being sexually, physically and emotionally abused by this step-father. Prior to his murder, this child was sharing with others that his stepfather was abusing him and forcing him to abuse his baby sister. Apparently, no one took action. No one reported the abuse. Even after the murders, what appears to be continued abuse of the little girl was not reported. This step-father had a known history of violence and abuse and was never investigated by police. The haunting thing for me is how often children's lives could be saved if they were believed when they ask for help. Whenever a child cries out for help, we must take steps to protect them.

From C.D.: Dear Kristopher (and all others at Dharma Friends), May your energies be blessed, your insights be inspiring, and your breathing be deep. Thank you for your friendship, your encouragement, and your continuing labors which bring DF into cages like mine. All the best wishes for you in the coming year and beyond. Until again – Peace and gratitude. Breathe deeply and smile.

There is something beautiful about all scars of whatever nature. A scar means the hurt is over, the wound is closed and healed, done with. -Harry Crews, novelist and playwright (b. 1935)

From Derrick “White Tree” Dominguez: Dear Kristopher, I am writing in the hopes that, first, this will reach you and find all of you at CWFA / DF well and in good spirits. As for me here, I am fine, trying to find my center, and am needing a bit of assistance in the way of books on meditation and Buddha's teachings.

Also, Kristopher, I have stage 4 throat cancer. Yeah, I'm one of the lucky ones. Yeah, I'm laughing about it, have been through the whole thing. Anyway, I'm looking for a cancer buddy, someone who is in need of a positive, strong willed and spirited individual. I find when you laugh at it, your reaction to it improves your demeanor and chances greatly of surviving it. I was given a 5 month expiration date. Hey, Derrick “White Tree” LIVES !!! And he gets stronger every day. I want, no, I need to help someone in need of this inner strength and peace so that they too may overcome this infirmity. I wanna help, need to help. So, if there is any Dharma Friends who need someone who has been there, done that, who has nothing but time to “devote” to a person in need of compassion, friendship, moral support, even just letters to keep them company, because a lot of people think it's catchy or can't endure being around a loved one who is dying, Hey, I understand this, and I have absolutely no problem being there, being that friend that knows, that feels or has felt what they do. I truly need to do this. Age, race, sex, orientation, does not matter, only the need does. Well Kristopher, I'm going to close. I have to write “Jeff's Kids” and Chelle about something. Please give my sincere request consideration. May the path you seek always be gentle upon your feet. Namaste



drawing by James Halbirt

From Dwayne Waterman: To all of my Dharma Friends, . . . I am 35 years old and have been incarcerated since 2004 for a crime I never committed. When I came to prison in May of 2004, I was hurt, angry and vengeful – I also weighed 600 lbs. I have endured so much heartache, harassment and violence; I've battled my demons both physical and spiritual. I've watched helplessly as loved ones have lost everything and currently reside in homeless shelters. I've watched helplessly as those involved with my false conviction fell prey to their own guilty conscience and took their lives. I've watched helplessly as children that used to be loved and cared for have been forced to live where they are tolerated and emotionally abused. I've watched as every aspect of my previous life has been irrevocably altered or shattered completely.

I hold firm in my beliefs that change is for the better, had I not come to this horrible place, I'd more than likely be dead. At 600 lbs, I smoked 2 packs of cigarettes a day, I ate enough to feed a small village, I was extremely lonely and longed to be loved and accepted; I so wished to have a special woman in my life, but I didn't know how to go about it – all I knew was the solitary, lonely existence that I had lived for 28 years.

This “new” existence in prison consisted of fighting, riots, stabbings, racial diversity, racism, sexism. Here “only-the-strong-survive.” Mentally, it's the first thing you learn – you either learn or get run over. Violent tendencies are considered an asset instead of a liability. A fight without spilling blood is not considered a “real” fight. Being 600 lbs in here is bad, very bad, because it makes you slow and easily taken. I had an edge, because I was raised in a violent home, at a very young age, my step-dad used to beat my mom and I brutally; I grew up thinking that it was a typical family activity. By the time I was 10, I was already an accomplished fighter. As shameful as it is to say, my abusive stepfather had killed whatever childhood innocence I had but indirectly prepared me for this environment.

To look at me, you'd think I was a psycho or gang member and that has helped me out in here. But please don't be fooled by my exterior. I am at heart, a very nice person. I have a good heart, a sharp mind and am 300 lbs lighter. I still hold to my Tibetan Buddhism; even though I am surrounded by gang members, violent prone people, hatred, malice and wickedness; I try to be a good person – a light in the darkness.

My impending release is in May of 2012. I am a little nervous and fearful as to the “new” world. A lot has gone on in the world since 2004. It's completely changed out there. I will step out of prison with nothing. I don't have any money, clothes, a place to live – I literally have nothing. But I have my faith in KARMA, all the good I have done will be visited on me and I will somehow make it.

I want you to know that this magazine has been an invaluable tool in my never-ending fight to prove my innocence, clear my name, get my life back on track and find true love. I guess I'll wrap this letter up for now, thank you for everything,

[name and address printed by request] Dewayne Waterman #1240913, 2664 FM 2054, Tennessee Colony, TX 75886

This mind and body is our household. If this inner household is not in order, no outer household can be in order. - Ayya Khema, "Being Nobody, Going Nowhere"

From (I'll keep his name confidential): Dear Dharma Friends, I thought I'd relate to you a little problem I ran into while “servicing” on the last (*meditation or special church) course here, and see what advice, thoughts or ideas you may have to offer. But first, I want to say that over-all it was a great experience, and I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to further my growth along (*my path). I learned a lot about myself, as well as a lot concerning the proper interaction with other servers and students, and was able to deepen my practice in a way not possible while “sitting” a course. But I also learned I still have a lot of ego to work on and need to sit a few more courses before I serve again. This was my first course “servicing” and I had a lot of expectations concerning myself as well as the other servers.

The way it's set up here is that there are three free-world people who come in and conduct the course. Then there's inmate servers who assist in food preparation, serving the food, and keeping everything clean. One of the problems we have here is that most inmate servers have ulterior motives for serving, and that is usually centered around stealing and selling the course food. Anytime there's programs such as this, there's always inmates who get in authoritative positions in order to exploit whatever advantages they can. (I'm sure you understand that's the nature of this environment) And it's hard to get truly honest inmates in these positions because a lot of the time the dishonest inmates have the backing of some part of the administration, and/or they work together to protect themselves. So, I already knew I was probably going to be the only one who wasn't there for what I could get. I had even made up my mind to ignore what the other inmates did and just concentrate on myself. I knew appealing to their sense of “doing what's right” wasn't going to do any good, as I had already tried that route and knew if I pressed the issue they would just do it (stealing) behind my back and that would create more distrust and ill-feeling between all of us, and I wanted to keep the atmosphere free of as much negativity as I could. For those same reasons, I didn't threaten to tell anybody about their activities. I figured my best course of action was to attack the problem from another angle.

If I could eliminate the opportunity for theft, then eventually those type of inmates would stop serving because there would be no advantage for them to exploit. So I sat down with one of the free-world course managers and explained that the amount of food had to be limited to just enough to feed the students, so that would eliminate waste and theft. And I went on to explain different ways they could trim and streamline the menu. As it happened, my mention of food being wasted and stolen caused him to be more attentive to the other servers, and he observed some of them taking food out of the course area. So they were confronted, and because it was due to my bringing it up, I was blamed by the other servers for getting them in trouble.

I take full responsibility for that. I should have been more careful about what I said, or waited until the course was over, or just put my foot down at the very beginning and told the other inmates I wouldn't ignore improper behavior (but I didn't really feel that was a viable option) – but I wound up doing what I was trying to avoid, and that was having a lot of negativity stirred up. I'm wondering what you would've done, in this environment, under these circumstances, dealing with other inmates etc ?? I know I used unskillful action. I also know I was too attached to my own views – even if my views were right, being so strongly attached was/is wrong. And of course, I'm still terribly caught up in my ego – judging others, and wanting to fix what I perceived to be wrong etc. It made me realize that we're all on the same path, but not all of us are at the same place along the path, and the proper course for all of us is help where you can, but for the most part, concentrate on yourself and you'll find you have more than enough to do.

In peace and compassion,

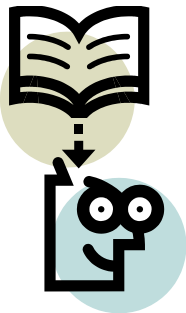
Response from Kristopher: Dear Friend, Prison mentality screams SNICH !!! But, of course, you knew that. Putting forth effort to try to eliminate theft and waste is commendable. Unfortunately, it usually doesn't do much good. We live in a society that is infested with entitlement; people actually believe they are deserving. The more aware one is, the less they can live with. I can't say what you should or shouldn't have done under the circumstances, but if you had done nothing, things would have stayed the same. I see theft at my job. Like you, the best that I can do is let my employer know that it's going on and try to help her make it less easy for it to happen. Petty cash has been a big problem, with hundreds of dollars missing. She finally bought a safe to keep it in. So, you

see, it's hard to find honest people no matter where you are. And like you stated, the best we can do is pay attention to ourselves and our motives.

On a similar note, I've had a really negative view of NA recently. When other members speak of how much better their lives are now that they are "saved" and have turned everything over to Jesus, I cringe. I am not opposed to the Christian faith. However, I do feel that the Christian overtones in the twelve-step meetings kept me from getting the program for twenty years. I personalize it and judge it and so rebel against it because I believe it to be wrong and that it could have the same effect on some new-comer as it had on me. It may. It may not. Those members who share that way could actually be helping someone. So, it ends up, the best that I can do is not bring up my religion in a meeting and focus on spirituality. Me doing nothing in a rebellious manner is doing something, even if it's just setting an example.

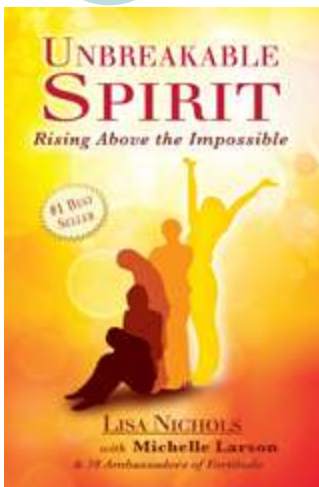
It is very important that you do not compare your actions to your partner's or judge your partner's behavior as unskillful. Rather, focus on your own actions and take responsibility for them. Recall those times when you looked into your partner's eyes and saw the pain you caused this person you love to suffer. If you can admit your own faults, if you can see how hurtful your actions were and tap into a sense of concern for your partner's well-being, then compassion and loving-friendliness will flow. - Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, "Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness"

*** a reminder - typically, we are not able to supply you with the books in this Book of Knowledge section - but these two books have had copies donated to be given to WOMEN ONLY! Sorry guys. But we still want everyone to know about them.



Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream:

A new book to recommend: Michelle Larson, co-author of the new book "Unbreakable Spirit" donated 50 books to CWFA with the special request that the books go specifically to women inmates. This organization is focused on supporting women and they're always posting positive and uplifting messages through Bliss Sisters on Facebook! Feel free to check out their website and blog at www.bliss-sisters.com (for those who have computers). Here is a little information about the book.



Unbreakable Spirit

\$15.95 (free shipping) through Amazon.com

In *Unbreakable Spirit: Rising Above the Impossible*, bestselling author and breakthrough specialist Lisa Nichols presents a collection of inspiring true stories, including that of Bliss Sisters founder, Michelle Larson. Michelle and the other co-authors have written their chapters with unfaltering honesty, hope and compassion for all circumstances and — are testaments to the unbreakable, unshakable power of the human spirit.

The stories in this book reflect experiences common to every walk of life. No matter who you are or what your circumstances, you will find yourself in these pages... along with the courage to rise above your own "impossible" and walk your path to greatness.

Little Book of Quotes by Kathleen Welton



Kathleen Welton Kathleen Welton began collecting quotes as long ago as she can remember. She thanks everyone who has shared their own favorite quotes with her over the years. She utilizes quotes to inspire success in others in articles, books, and publishing presentations

Subscription information: I have gladly been offering this newsletter free of charge to those in prisons. I am 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. 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.

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, tell them that you receive support from **Dharma Friends** and we would be very grateful for any donations that they might make. I know that most of you have very little money but we are enormously appreciative when some of you have made donations as well, and for the stamps many of you have sent.

Also: We are encouraging those who are not in prison and who have the ability to receive their issues by Email to let us know. Of course, we can send these issues for no printing and no mailing costs, while generating more interest and support in the newsletter. Most of you in prison cannot do this, of course, but if you are a chaplain reading this who has email and can print copies off for your library, that would be helpful. Or – 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.



Here is a letter that you can send to your loved ones if you wish.

Hopefully, this invitation will benefit your important relationships and your families. It might be a drop starting off ripples and changing your family and maybe even dysfunctional communities.

Dear

Here in prison, I receive a monthly newsletter from Compassion Works for All called Dharma Friends. It offers support from ancient wisdom with which we explore our spiritual path, no matter what tradition someone follows. We learn meditation teachings, psychological and emotional healing, and we build a community between those in prison and those out in the world through letters.

Compassion Works for All encourages communication and healing of old family patterns and relationship issues with those I have left behind - like you. If we are both reading Dharma Friends issues, one way to support such discussions between us is to use the issues as a basis for our discussions. I welcome this opportunity to share such healing and growth talks and letters with you and would like to ask you to go to www.CompassionWorksForAll.org and sign up for the twice monthly emails that will bring you Dharma Friends newsletter and also the Compassion Works for All web site updates. There are lots of healing videos on the web site as well, some especially for those with family members and friends who are in prison.

I greatly regret that we are spending this time apart and the challenges that it imposes on our relationship. I also look forward to being able to use all of these traumatic events as a way to grow beyond the issues of our past and find a stronger healing that will benefit not only me and you but all those that we love.

Thank you for considering sharing Dharma Friends and this part of my life with me. I hope it helps you as much as it has helped me.

Love,

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

Webpage: www.CompassionWorksForAll.org

FREEE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL

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Non-Profit organization
US Postage PAID
Little Rock, AR.



Just as material things are made of dust, so too are our perceptions and thoughts mere dust. Just as it takes only a moment to wipe the dust from the surface of a mirror, so it takes only a moment to become enlightened, the moment all defiled intentions are cleared from our consciousness, we will see ourselves in the mirror of perfect truth. - Master Hsing Yun, "Describing the Indescribable"



This is Pete.

Those readers who are able to get on the internet to read our newsletter and watch our Compassion Works for All videos, know about Pete. I want to let our **Dharma Friends** readers know about Pete too. Pete lives with one of our Compassion Works for All families. One day, eleven year old Claire went for a hike with her grandmother down by the river. Returning to the car, Claire saw a starving and cold dog who had been left in a crate. He had been abandoned. She begged her grandmother to take him home. Pete would have died for sure had he spent another night hungry and cold in the crate. After vet's visits, lots of patient love, and a big adjustment for this very traumatized pup, Pete is now a happy and playful little guy.

The teaching: Whenever we see anyone - people or puppies or any living thing - that is suffering, do whatever you can do to help.

Pete says thanks.



Dharma Friends

March 2012 issue # 181

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Works for All

Additional Pages for EMAIL VERSION of *Dharma Friends*



COMPASSION WORKS

Join us for our monthly **Compassion Works** sessions if you are in Arkansas.

The next sessions are: Tuesday, February 21 at 1 PM at St. Margaret's Church on Chenault Blvd, Thursday, March 1, 6 PM, Fletcher Library; and Tuesday, March 20 at 1 PM, at St. Margaret's Church.

- Compassion for You and Compassion for All.

Sessions are free, non-denominational and open to everyone.

We will add you to our email reminder list if you want information on times, dates and place, or you can go to www.CompassionWorksForAll.org/ and print out the schedule.

Compassion Works sessions offer a quiet experience of compassion. With a few gentle and guiding prompts, we will let go of the struggle, renew, heal, and send compassion into the world.

Then we head out again to live our question - How can I live compassion for myself and for all beings today?

(We also offer portions on videos and have a Compassion Works printout so that you can have an individual practice or you could start Compassion Works sessions in your locality)

Retreat with Anam Thubten Rinpoche

Little Rock, Arkansas

March 16 – 18, 2012 March 16 – 18, 2012

The focus of the retreat is to unburden ourselves from mental habits that cause unnecessary suffering and to realize our natural state which is the inner dimension of peace, joy, and love. Anam Thubten invites everyone to experience this spiritual transformation through meditation practice and the timeless teachings of the Buddha.

Public Talk Friday, March 16

7:00pm – 8:30pm

Unitarian Universalist Church

1818 Reservoir Road, Little Rock

Donations: \$10 – \$15

Retreat Location: Ecumenical Buddhist Society

1015 W. 2nd Street, Little Rock, AR 72201

Retreat schedule: March 17-18, 10:00 – 5:30

Cost: \$70/day \$130/wkd (no one is turned away for lack of funds)

To register, contact: Charlotte Besch, 501.664.1167

Sponsored by the Ecumenical Buddhist Society of Little Rock

8888

and another Wattle Hollow Retreat by Anna and Joy Fox April 27- 29

The Next Step in Your Spiritual Journey

April 27-29, 2012 – Friday 6 p.m. until 1 p.m Sunday
with Anna Cox and Joy Fox

This Spring Retreat fills early so please register soon.



Anna Cox, founder of 'Compassion Works for All'

Cost: \$125, includes meals and lodging. You may also offer dana (Pali word for “donation”) to Anna for the teachings which goes to Compassion Works for All.

Retreat Registration: Go to <http://www//WattleHollow.com> to sign up



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. see address below...

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) and she can give you more information about prices, mailing, etc. for all books.

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 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

Join us at www.CompassionWorksForAll.com

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.***

If you would like to host a Compassion Works for All fundraising 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 coffee and cookies 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 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 free but donations are always most welcome. If you would prefer a hard copy, the subscription fee is \$30, but unfortunately it is not tax deductible because you receive a paper publication for your donation.

